

On Jung and Bion (with mutual benefit and without harm to either)

Stefano Carta

Abstract

This article examines the theories of C.G. Jung and W.R. Bion. Their comparison is based on the identification of a paradigm common to the two authors, emerging especially after Bion's formulation of O. From this common paradigm emerges the possibility of usefully comparing, both in an epistemological and clinical sense, several specific aspects of the two theories that, although they do not exhaust the similarities, seem particularly relevant. Among these aspects they are: the role of the numinous/religious, O, the collective unconscious and the Self, pre-conception, the archetype-as-such, libido, K-function and symbolism, transcendent function and transcendent position, biocularity, projective identification, as well as the fundamental role of the teleological nature that both theorisations share.

Keywords: Jung, Bion, O, libido, collective unconscious, numinous

Bion: [...] This primordial mind I can pictorialize by taking as a model the fact that it is a survival of parts of our ancestry like the branchial cleft, signs of a kind of fish anatomy, or a vestigial tail.

Q: Is this similar to Jung's archetypes?

Bion: I think he was probably talking about the same thing. There exists some fundamental mind, something that seems to remain unaltered in us all. If the race develops sufficiently to be able to communicate in terms of articulate speech then it is only rational to assume that that is a total development. But it does not mean, therefore, that there is nothing to it except man's capacity to talk and his consequent ability to give himself the title of 'Homo sapiens'.

Four Discussions with W. R. Bion, 1978, Strath Tay: Clunie Press p. 62

1. Introduction: Reading Jung and Bion

This article is dedicated to the comparison of Jung's and Bion's thought. Therefore, it is doomed to a bleak semi-failure for several reasons.

First, because of the exceptional complexity of the thought of these two giants, and, in addition, because of the constant challenge posed by their writing, quite different, yet, in a way, complementary in style and concordant in intent. Indeed, at least with regard to writings such as *Learning from Experience*, *The Elements of Psychoanalysis*, or *Transformations*, (1965) Bion's style seems complementary to Jung's in its defining nature, in the precision of the terms used, and in the algorithmic structure of the texts. Jung, on the other hand, has an open writing style, apparently more discursive and certainly less precise and definitional. In this sense, the two authors are complementary with respect to style and may not be easy to read, albeit for opposite reasons. However, they agree on a fundamental intent: that of ultimately referring to something unspeakable, namely in Bion's case the beta elements or the alpha function and, later, O; in Jung's case for the reference to the unremoved unconscious and the archetype-in-itself.

Both styles essentially aim to give substance to an unsaturated, open form of communication, which at times, at least in Jung, may give the sensation of difficulty or confusion; a sensation that, in my opinion, was deliberately not avoided by him, precisely in order not to risk to saturate meanings and to allow the text to retain its symbolic charge; in order not to betray the sense of the object Jung was trying to describe: the unconscious. (1)

However, I think it is also interesting to make another comparison between Jung and Bion when they do not write but speak. Indeed, when we read the transcripts of their seminars, Bion's evocativeness even surpasses Jung's. In my personal experience as a reader of seminar transcripts I regret never having been able to attend Jung's seminars, in which his incredible erudition and psychological finesse allowed him to enter the depths of psychic life on several levels - the biographical, the intersubjective, the anthropological, and the cultural-historical, thus providing us with an incomparable glimpse of the complexity of the human mind in all its symbolic and symptomatic manifestations. Jung's seminars are full of life, verve, and endless clinical annotations that give us an insight into how he worked and conducted himself with his patients. But it is when I read Bion's seminars that I must confess to feeling envy (fortunately an envy *sui generis*; a 'good' envy) for those who were lucky enough to attend them. For my character, for my personal training, in fact, when Bion speaks in his seminars (2). I feel I understand him; I feel close to him; I think I know where he is speaking from and to. Often, I am literally jolted in my chair; often I have had to close the book to fully enjoy the amazement derived from what I had just read. Here it is: for me - looking at Bion as an inexpert, as a 'non-Bionian' - at the reading of his seminars I join Grotstein who, at a lecture on him, ended his talk by passionately declaring: "Bion was wonderful!"

Now, if the Greek origin of philosophy and, after all, its true nature was and is that of being *said*, entrusted to the *phonè* within a conversation, as in the - unfortunately (masterfully) simulated cases of Plato, Hume or Berkeley - then I would say that the

true character of Jung and Bion, the character from which they exercised their analytical work, lies in these seminars of theirs, which I like so much.

Above all, this is why I accepted the impossible task of writing this article, an article, I said, destined to semi-failure because, for both Jung and Bion, trying to understand in order to possess what another has said is not only a risky operation, but it is also essentially anti-analytic, anti-individuative. In fact, and first of all, for both Jung and Bion - but Winnicott is also clear on this point - no one can know the knowledge of another, and secondly, the moment something seems to be known, it immediately loses its significant charge, it becomes a fetish, devoid of any transcendence.

This means that if I were able to give the impression that I really understood Jung and Bion enough to really compare them, and if I therefore believed that I possessed the meaning of their thinking, I would only have betrayed their mandate: that I might *not* be like them (3). Hence, any inaccuracies I may have about their ideas will on the one hand be censurable, due to their inadequate nature, but, at the same time, they will also be evidence of my own personal attempt to think.

The third reason for the difficulty of my task is more prosaic: by studying both Jung and Bion I know that I have before me two minds superabundantly greater than my own. This process, which Bion would include in the container-contained relation (in which, starting from the condition in which the small - the finite - is in the large - in the infinite - one should realise the situation in which it is the large that is contained in the small) implied, during the incubation of these pages, the awareness of the need to capitulate before this impossible task, and *therefore* to try to write anyway, in order to highlight some (not all) of the elements, if not common, at least consistent between the two theories, as well as the profound similarity of their underlying paradigm.

This paradigmatic congruence, if it existed, would make Bion an extremely useful author to deepen, clarify, and systematise many aspects that, in Jung's theory and even today in analytical psychology have not been independently sufficiently elaborated. In fact, I have no difficulty in adding: such elements could easily be integrated into the theory of analytical psychology *as if* Bion belonged to its tradition. At the same time, I have sometimes found quite a few proposals, supposed discoveries, or innovations in the post-Freudian field (in the broad sense, including all other ramifications) that unwarily repeated, in slightly different but in essentially congruent forms, constructs and concepts proper to Jungian or post-Jungian analytical psychology. In these cases, the effort of discovery is wasted, because the discovery was already available, sometimes for decades.

I believe that a calm reflection on our theories - in this case the Jungian and the Bionian - freed from narcissistic and fetishistic investments, puts us in a position to try to think of them *socialistically*, so as to value the ways in which one can contribute to the other with "mutual benefit and without harm to". (4)

With this in mind, I shall discuss some interesting elements of these theories.

2. Bottom-up, Top-down

Although many contributions from psychoanalysis other than Jungian-derived psychoanalysis are also an important resource for analytical psychologists, in my opinion there are some authors who present aspects of exceptional convergence with Jung's underlying paradigm and that are useful in representing the unrepresentable object of the unconscious-in-action. In my opinion, the two post-Freudian authors (I do not know if it is correct to lump them both together as post-Kleinian), whose visions are somewhat complementary to Jung's, are Winnicott and Bion. Approached from my point of view, they both provide exceptionally useful and heuristic models that are missing in Jung's work and that can describe, *bottom-up* - i.e., from an evolutionary perspective - what Jung describes *top-down*.

In the case of Winnicott - also a psychologist of the Self like Jung - one example is the *object presenting* paradigm, which, combined with the references - in my view essentially 'Buddhist' - to the True Self, provide some invaluable tools of evolutionary analysis that are lacking in Jung.

This paper stems precisely from my opinion that Bion, as Bion, can contribute to Jung (and vice versa) without too much risk of epistemological syncretism, and that he is therefore definitely worth studying even for a 'Jungian' (I am not sure that I am one, but it is true that Jung has influenced me a great deal, as, on the other hand, have Bateson, Hillman, Melanie Klein or Winnicott himself).

In a later section I will go into more detail about the similarities between Bionian bottom-up theory of thought development and Jungian theory of psychic development.

3. The Self, O, the Infinite, the Trauma

What brings me back to something that *from my point of view* (5) seems to unite Jung and Bion, something that concerns their lives, their biography is traumatic affectivity. This something seems to me the true centre of the work and life of both: the contact with the unconscious - that unconscious that Jung would define *numinous*, and that Bion described as the *infinite, ultimate truth, noumenon, experience, thing, formless void, origin, unknown...* often referring to a 'religious instinct' and entrusting contact with it, not through knowledge, but through *faith*.

I shall use the sign O to denote that which is the ultimate reality represented by terms such as ultimate reality, absolute truth, the God-head, the infinite, that thing-in-itself. O does not fall in the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally; it can 'become', but it cannot be 'known'. It is darkness and formlessness, but it enters the domain K when it has evolved to a point where it can be known, through knowledge gained by experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically. (Bion, 1928, p. 39) (6)

According to this definition the self is a quantity that is superordinate to the conscious ego. It embraces not only the conscious but also the unconscious psyche, and is therefore, so to speak, a personality which we also are. It is easy enough to think of ourselves as possessing part-souls. Thus, we can, for instance, see ourselves as a persona without too much difficulty. but it transcends our powers of imagination to form a clear picture of what we are as a self, for in this operation the part would have to comprehend the whole. There is little hope of our ever being able to reach even approximate consciousness of the self, since however much we may make conscious there will always exist an indeterminate and indeterminable amount of unconscious material which belongs to the totality of the self. Hence the self will always remain a superordinate quantity. (Jung, 1928a, pp. 177)

The force of these references, in both of them, is immense and, in my opinion, as I will try to say, very similar, so much so as to ground my opinion - on which this paper is based - that Jung and Bion essentially share the same ontology, even more than Bion himself shares it with Freud or Klein.

Now, the *numinous*, that is, the *ultimate Truth*, the *Infinite*, are essentially traumatic, that is: *affectively* traumatic. The divine, the absolute, the infinite are traumatic by their very nature *unless one can think of them symbolically*. In fact, if this is not the case, they will present themselves as autonomous, overpowering, alienating emotional factors whose significance is both evident and null in psychosis. This 'something' seems to me to profoundly unite the two authors, so much so that they hold the same ontology from which their psychology emanates - this something that moves me is precisely their direct experience with the traumatic / numinous.

In Jung, the direct contact with the traumatic *numinous* probably begins with his mother and is then found throughout his life in the form of a *secret*. An inviolable, unthinkable secret; in a certain sense the secret of an Other than oneself (cf. Saban, 2017). It seems to me that from this infinite and inexpressible, unrevealable space, Jung's life and work has sprung as an attempt to 'think' (as Bion would say) the unthinkable infinite. I refer especially to the crisis that Jung went through in 1916, when he simultaneously abandoned Freud (7), resigned from the Burghölzli, where he held the position of deputy director (the director was Bleuler), from the presidency of the International Psychoanalytic Society, from the editorship of its journal, as well as from the University of Zurich.

Jung abandoned everything he had, all his previously thought-out thoughts, and began the *Red Book*: a phenomenal journey of active imagination, like what Bion, in my opinion, describes in his own words in *Taming Wild Thoughts*. (8)

It does not seem to me at all irrelevant that the book that bears witness to this passage from the known to the unknown - this opening towards the secret out of which infinitely emanates the affective Truth of the meanings made by the mind - is *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido* (1912/1952), in which Jung makes the first adult (i.e., made by a mature mind) and experienced (therefore emotionally thought-out) of what he would then call *libido*, which I will refer to shortly, but which we can already interpret as the manifestation of what Bion designates as O. In short, with *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido*, Jung does not only write a book that will mark the break with Freud, but he also delivers himself to the contact with an experience that borders on psychosis, but is, at the same time, life itself. Jung's mature thinking begins here: at the very moment in which his ontology emerges, hinged on the concepts of libido, collective unconscious, Self, symbol and transformation.

This is an ontology within which human finiteness - constructed by and contained within the sensory apparatus of the ego - is constantly confronted with the challenge of thinking this urgent, infinite, unthinkable secret; this unknown factor that seeks to realise itself through infinite transformations at all levels of the real in order to re-veil itself in the human through the container of self-consciousness.

It is by seeing in Jung a subject constantly engaged in this process of translating the infinite, numinous unconscious (the collective unconscious, the Self) that we can place his idea of psychotherapy at the centre. Indeed, on 20 August 1945, a mature Jung wrote the following words in a letter to Paul Martin, founder of the International Centre for Applied Psychology:

The main interest of my work does not lie in the treatment of neurosis, but in the approach to the numinous. The fact is, however, that access to the numinous is the real therapy and insofar as one comes to the numinous experience one is saved from the curse of illness. (Jung, 1973, 1:377)

It is disheartening that Winnicott, an author whom I consider, along with Bion, the closest and most useful one to analytical psychology, and for whom I have a huge admiration, with a violent psychiatric blunt attack reduced Jung to a post-psychotic (1964). I have the feeling that Winnicott, so similar to Jung in many respects (which I cannot deal with here, because I am dealing with Bion), by projecting a psychiatrizing stigma on him tried to exorcise his own contact with the experience of the 'True Self' - itself also infinite, secret, unrevealable and traumatic (9), i.e., a limit-experience from which life itself springs (Winnicott's *going on being*) and from which one must paradoxically defend himself. In a way, speaking from this empty magnetic centre is like speaking from the realm of the dead (10), which, if we look at death from the perspective of the living, means coming into contact with the realm of 'images' (Jung) and 'thoughts' (Bion).

This biographical relationship with one's own death, with the inherently unrepresentable wound itself, unites Bion and Jung. Indeed, I have always wondered

what is the true meaning of Bion's statement: 'I died on August 8, 1918 on the road to Amiens-Roye' (Bion, 1982, p. 296) (11).

As Angelo Macchia (2020) writes, Bion is talking about being dead while not being deceased; of an experience that destroys everything while leaving everything intact. An experience that Bion himself defines as an example of breakdown in psychosis, in which a 'nameless terror' is produced by the sensation of going mad while being mad. It seems to me that, like Jung, Bion also experienced something that would have been a psychosis had it really become one, but that for both became the origin and goal - both asymptotic - of mental life. Like Jung, Bion too was ostracised and decided to move to the United States, I believe for the very fact that he did not belong completely, or sufficiently, to the community of the living, i.e., of those who imagine to really belong to an understandable, definable reality, out of which it would be possible to attain a positive, certain knowledge that can really rely on the sensory apparatus as the only possible form of knowledge (as in the English empiricist tradition). It is, in fact, the shift of the fundamental emphasis from the transformations in K to those in O (12) that Bion comes markedly close to Jung's ontology.

As with Jung, suspicions of 'mysticism' could also involve Bion. (13) Nevertheless, in my view such accusations would be empty and largely defensive accusations since, as far as contemporary science and epistemology allow us to know, knowledge about the 'physical' world (the ego's sensory apparatus) itself trespasses into a kind of mystical area, expressed by esoteric mathematical models, some of them untestable, yet profoundly elegant and coherent. Having said this, it would not bother me at all if, in addition to Jung, Bion had also agreed to use 'mystical' or 'religious' metaphors and allegories precisely because they adequately communicate the limiting experience that we all go through and avoid - that of living through life. (14)

Obviously, as Jung never ceased to repeat, this ontology of his never meant to be a metaphysics, but, instead, it meant to be a very precise psychology. This psychology had been expressed in very pregnant ways, even in pre-psychoanalytic times, by non-psychoanalysts, both belonging to non-western cultures or to past forms of knowledge, such as alchemy (unless one truly believes in the positivist and colonialist myth whereby, while physical and logical models are definitively consigned to indeterminacy by Gödel and Heisenberg, the various psychoanalyses are instead capable of formulating accomplished, ahistorical and universal truths. This would paradoxically make them fundamentalist religions).

4.O, Numinosum, Religious

Rudi Vermote has analysed in a particularly precise way the development of Bion's thought.

In the late Bion's model, the focus is no longer on thought or T(K) that takes place at the level of representations, but on psychic change at the level of experience. The unrepresented or T(O). (Vermote, 2011, p.1092).

In the course of his development, Bion's move towards O was derived from the attempt to relate the different elements involved in the transformative processes of mentalisation by expressing them through algebraic formulas, which was just partially satisfactory:

[...] in order to free psycho-analysis from the constraint of being merely descriptive [Bion] had to contend with the fact that there are too many unknowns to reconstruct the greater part of a process that involves a long series of transformations. (Macchia, 2020, p. 14)

According to Vermote, the next step beyond this level of abstraction, aimed at explaining the transformations T(K) (cf. Bion, 1965) - i.e., how something emotional is represented - was the shift to a level other and different from *representation* (the one that in Jung is already expressed by the symbolic transformations of the libido). This is the level of the subject's *experience* of something essentially unspeakable and unknowable, and potentially traumatic.

This point leads me to observe that, at the apex of his research in some way Bion reaches *the origin of Jung's thought*, for whom the feature common to all unconscious contents - that is, to the Unknowable, defined as being radically unknowable except *per speculum et in aenigmate* - is not the Sexual, or the Attachment, or the Aggressiveness, or the Nutrition, etc., but the "Religious". In fact, Bion has always been interested in "animate" subjects, i.e., in an experience endowed with affectivity as opposed to purely cognitive ones, relating to inanimate objects, which are devoid of affectivity and purely representational. But it is with the advent of O that Bion had the courage to draw all the necessary conclusions and thus discover what he himself really thought.

With the Religious - the Numinous - Jung wanted to indicate the feature of extreme effectivity, to the point of being anankastic, of unconscious contents - an aspect evident above all in psychosis and in the various states of 'possession'. In short, it seems to me that Bion arrives at the same outcome as did Jung, although in clinical practice he continues to use models, interpretations and vocabulary referring to early childhood, as if the latter and not O were the origin of psychosomatic life. Yet, in my opinion these references and interpretations do not mean that O's own religiousness is at the service of a sort of Kleinian-style sexuality and aggression, but that, on the contrary, they are at the service of the manifestations of O. In this sense, I do not completely agree with Civitarese, when he attributes the references to O to a "curiosity" of Bion's, who would be just referring to the tension of philosophers and mystics towards truth (2019, pp. 289 ff.), whereby Bion would be interested in their language just in order to attribute it to his own ends. While I completely agree with Civitarese that the use of O, as in Jung's reference to the Self or the Collective

Unconscious, needs to be completely de-theologised (in the sense of excluding any metaphysical nature), I do not agree to interpret these references just as allegories. In my opinion, Bion used the references to O as convincing and adherent allusions to what he perceived to be its fundamental reality. In short: O is not at the service of a psychoanalysis based on childhood, but these are at the service of O.

Finally, I would like to point out that the traumatic character of a direct contact with O (the beta elements), as well as of the archetype in Jung, is also closely connected with the character of unspeakability - hence of foundational, essential *secrecy* - of the very origin and destiny of psychic life as such. This unspeakability is derived from the completely other, alien, autonomous and objective nature of O – or the archetype (or the Winnicottian True Self). This would refer to an objective objectivity - thus alien to the subject - that urges the subject himself to objectify himself. (15)

This first point of convergence between Jung and Bion seems to me crucial precisely because it belongs not to a psychological level, but to an ontological one, which, in turn, determines a subsequent psychology - a psychology whose foundation is Affectivity (16).

We may proceed along this track by saying that both Jung explicitly, and Bion unstatedly, referred to the fundamental core of the Gnostic tradition. In fact, in my opinion, both authors - in Bion's case especially after the discovery of O – were, in some way, Gnostics, because their fundamental reference was to an infinite, alien, extra-cosmic factor (in psychology: foreign and antecedent and yet foundational the sensory apparatus) with which the subject must relate to, and which he is called upon to *realise himself* (in the double meaning of the term) through knowledge (K for Bion, the symbol for Jung), since he himself belongs to it.

By this I do not at all want to affirm that Bion's and Jung's thought was *exclusively and completely* gnostic. The whole, very important part of Bion's references to the transformations in K is not, nor it is the 'alchemical' Jung. But the references to O in relation to the grid as a Bionian fantasy of humanising the Alien Infinite, together with the corresponding infinitisation of subjectivity as a constant creative flux are. In fact, in its own way the grid belongs to the attempt by the Gnostics (I am thinking of Valentinus, or Basilides) to map the process of O's (the Alien God) entry/fall into the human body and mind, and of its recovery through 'gnosis' (which in English would be translated *knowledge*). In fact, in Bion this process is embedded onto a concept that would have been accepted by a second-century gnostic: that of the *cosmic* loss of the object; of the no-thing – i.e., of the intrinsic nameless negativity of the 'non-breast'.

As in the recovery of the divine nature sunk into *physis*, also in Bion the psychoanalytic experience as a transformation into O begins with its most alien trace through the sensory apparatus as a beta element, and then describes the infinite transformation and reconstitution in the mind of something that was lost. In short, the experience of loss, of the non-breast, triggers the mentalisation and humanisation - the contact and recovery of O.

This specific point of Bion's theory differs from Jung's, for it seems to me that in the latter's theory the processes of mentalisation are *not all* derived from frustration - from the absent / lost object. For Jung, in fact, what he calls the archetype-as-such describes a potential empty noumenon that tends to self-present itself to the mind not only as a sensory datum, but also as an imaginal schema (17). For Jung affects and representations are not originally dissociated, except in advanced cases of schizophrenia, in which the patient appears to be truly 'Bionian' (or Freudian) since, due to schizophrenia, the sensory presentations (one cannot call it representation), the beta elements, are effectively dissociated from their affective charge and their potential representational schema.

In this regard, Grotstein's suggestion of the genetic precedence of alpha elements over sensory - beta - elements is interesting (18). I mention it here because it would agree with Jung's idea of the precedence of abstract, potential expectancy patterns over sensory, somatic, 'innervated' contents.

The Jungian theory of such a dispositional tendency - for which mentalisation is not always the derivative of a loss - is constantly interpreted by Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalysis as a manic removal and denial of the depressive mourning given by the impact with the non-breast. I do not think this is correct, especially if we refer to Jung's *Answer to Job* (Jung, 1951), a Jungian archetypal example of a *realisation* arising precisely from the constitutive alienating contact with the numinous and from an archetypal Loss.

In fact, in Jung the Gnostic inheritance is already manifest at the very beginning of his reflections in the *Septem sermones ad mortuos* (1963) and although throughout his work this is re-dimensioned and made much more complex, yet it is proposed again in the late years of the maturity of Jung's thought precisely in *Answer to Job*, whose protagonists are God and Job himself - the latter represented as a tortured *body* crossed by beta elements coming directly from the infinite, unconscious, traumatic and absolutely alien god. Job's body is a body (an ego) that, precisely from its own suffering - from the loss of almost everything, but not of its "capacity to hold" (which perhaps saved also Jung and Bion themselves) - not only becomes conscious of the infinite preciousness of the finite nature of us humans, but also allows the Infinite/Unconscious itself (the god of Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius) to recognise itself in the finiteness of (inter)subjective experience. In Job's myth this may take place through his incoercible impulse *not* to stop questioning God, precisely in order to think (K).

In Jung and in Bion's theories, the unconscious and the infinite - the traumatic and the meaning (defined as the becoming-of-the-meaning) - are if not overlapping, definitely very similar references. In this sense, I wonder if Bion ever cited St. Paul's doctrine of the *kenosis* of the Pleroma (Philippians 2:5-7), i.e. of the emptying, the "collapse" of the infinite - O - into the human condition of transience: the capacity, in short, to bear and think a "stray thought", a "wild thought" thanks to a transformative container. This doctrine connects St. Paul to the core of Gnosis and serves as a model

for a vision - an ontology – of human psychology as an infinite process aimed at transforming an initial state, in which we are contained within the world, into a transformed one, in which it is the world that is contained within us.

In short: the ultimate destiny of cosmogony is intimacy. (19)

5. Transformations in O, in K, Symbols of transformation

By referring to O/Numinous/Self, I have mentioned an aspect that seems to me to connect Bion and Jung - a generative and fundamental aspect that we could also consider as a paradigm common to both. I will now move from this to highlight some specific concepts that immediately derive from it, and then I shall direct my attention to the theory of knowledge and symbolism in Jung and Bion.

In my opinion, the term *libido* in Jung corresponds to a description of O's infinite life process. Obviously, this refers to a non-human life process, yet a partially humanisable one. On the other hand, in Jung the libido is an unknown factor (and this may recall the role of Bion's "factors" and "functions" - primarily the alpha function – themselves unknown yet postulated) (20) totally devoid of any intrinsic *quality* - such as a supposed sexual, or attachment-like nature, or of any particular character of any other kind. In fact, Jung's' libido has a purely quantitative nature, although the measurement of this quantity is an extremely complex, if not an infinitely unsolvable matter, since it would depend on the 'instruments' that are supposed to measure it, for example a perceptual apparatus, or the affective functions of a mind.

As it is a continuous, absolute flow, the libido is simultaneously life and death, just as in Bion O is absolute Truth, since there is nothing beyond it. I think these concepts are similar to the Dionysian Zoé of the Greeks.

For Jung, the hypothetical postulate of the libido (which obviously does not belong to the sphere of *existence* but, like the Winnicottian true Self, belongs to that of the *being*) forms the constant and most qualifying conjunction (Bion) between forms which, coming into existence diachronically, synchronically, or synchronistically as epiphanies of the libido itself, realise the infinite process of 'development' of Being.

Although Jung did not confine the libido within the human psychology but referred to it as a cosmological *Eros protogonos* of Orphic memory (i.e., an evolutionarily creative force, from organic matter down to the human body) here it is advisable to limit ourselves to exclusively psychological and psychosomatic references for which the libido represents that constant conjunction manifesting itself through potentially infinite symbolic forms. Each form, therefore, would be the product of a transformation from and into further forms that are in constant conjunction with the latter ones, as both are transformations of the same movement of the libido. For example, should a child stop playing a specific game, or should a transference element disappear, or should an attitude change, Jung would suggest to carefully look at where, how, and which new element making its appearance. That element would be the new form the libido has acquired.

At this point the question arises as to *who* the subject is - a question to which both Jung first, and Bion later, give the same answer: the subject that 'thinks' is, originally, an alien and infinite objective Subject, to which Jung gave the name of Self and Bion - I believe - of O. Through the development of the individual self – first of all the ego, the human subject must acquire an adequate apparatus to think these (proto) objective 'thoughts' (21), which are the *prima materia* (22) of thoughts, as well as of dreams. In fact, both Jung first (23) and later Bion said that we dream all the time, even when we are awake. Therefore, for both of them the problem of problems is consciousness (Jung), or the development of the apparatus to think these thoughts (Bion), an apparatus which makes it possible to distinguish the conscious from the unconscious, i.e. - as both Bion and Jung write (using different wordings) - to be able to wake up from a dream. (24)

6. Affectivity, Effectiveness, Reality

Earlier I wrote that for Bion the factor that distinguishes animate beings from inanimate objects is affectivity. Indeed, Bion's reference is *always to the emotional* experience of patients and to the problems inherent in its transformation through the alpha function.

For Bion, affectivity distinguishes the experience of psycho-analysis from that of the natural sciences. I would add that Morgan's classical canon, according to which affectivity - emotions, feelings - must be excluded from scientific observation (i.e., sensory perception) confirms his opinion.

On the nature of psychoanalytic knowledge, i.e., on the knowledge of 'animate' beings, Bion writes:

My first point is that L or H may be relevant to K but that neither is by itself conducive to $K \times K y$, the analyst K the analysand, I K Smith; these are statements that represent an emotional experience. Like L and H, K represents an active link and has about it a suggestion that if $x K y$, then x does something to y; it represents a psychoanalytic relationship.

(Bion, 1962, p. 314)

In his mature theory Bion refers these reflections about K to O. Therefore, he shifts their emphasis from the level of representational knowledge to the level of *experience of/through* affective effectivity, which alone will realise O within subjectivity. This means that the sense of the infinite - that *numinosum* to which Jung had referred in his letter to Martin - will partially, ceaselessly, asymptotically *realise* itself into the finite.

On the other hand, for Jung, already from the time of his collaboration with Bleuler at the Burghölzli in the early 1900s, affectivity corresponds to effectivity, that is, to psychic life itself. Indeed, as it is well known, the stronghold of Jungian theorisation

is the construct of the *complex*, which Jung developed 'experimentally' in those very years. The complex, often interpreted in a pathologising way as a symptomatic indicator, is on the contrary a sort of equivalent of what for cognitivism is the *schema*. (25) In fact, that upon which all psychic experience is founded and organised is the complex, which, in turn, is made possible by the bivalent, cohesive/dissociative force of affectivity: (26)

Every affectively event becomes a complex. (Jung, 1907, p. 75.)

According to my interpretation of Jung's theory, that unknowable and infinite *movens* which, at the level of the unknowable Real (the collective Unconscious, O) he designated by the name of *libido*, at the subjective level (i.e., when it comes into contact with the subject's body through the body and 'ignites' it) manifests itself in the form of anguish/activation/affectivity. Hence, "libido" would be the name of an unknown factor belonging to the level of the Real-unknowable (archetypal), from which a constant demand for the realisation of the Infinite in its various empirical forms emanates. (27)

The radical conception of effectivity in Jung is clear from these words:

The scientific creed of our time has developed a superstitious phobia about fantasy. *But Real, however, is what works.* And the fantasies of the unconscious work: there can be no doubt about that. Even the sharpest philosopher can be the miserable victim of a thoroughly idiotic agoraphobia. [...] Something works under the veil of fantastic images. [...] It is something real, and for this reason its vital manifestations must be taken seriously. (Jung, 1928a, p. 217. My italics.)

The human real (28) - what Bion defines as *realisation* - seems to me to correspond to this Jungian position. And, in this sense, Bion's studies on the genesis of the thinker and the articulations of the grid, which I will address in a moment, seem to me to be potentially useful for Jung's theory, since they propose precisely that bottom-up genetic model that is missing in it. However, it seems to me that this potential Bionian contribution to analytic psychology is made possible precisely because Bion and Jung converge on the subject of the effectivity of affects with reference to an 'archetypal' dimension, or, in Bion's terms, to preconceptions and O. As I have said, what distinguishes the animate from the inanimate in Bion is the subject's capacity for emotional experience. Here it is again affectivity - emotion - which, combined with sensory impressions, must be mentalised by means of transformations produced by the alpha function.

7. Preconception, Archetype, Conception, Complex

In both Jung and Bion we find the Kantian distinction (a very important reference for both) between noumenon and phenomenon, conveyed in Bion's works in terms of the relationship between beta and alpha elements, and in Jung between the archetype-as-such and the personal complex. In my opinion, both the concept of "presupposition", or "*preconception*" in Bion, and that of archetype in Jung point to the same direction. Obviously, between these constructs there are differences, but these do not seem to me to make the two visions incompatible, or to disprove one theory over the other. In fact, their compatibilities seem to me more relevant than their differences. They are compatibilities that can *correct and add* something to the theory of the other.

Not only the aspect relating to the Kantian noumenon seems congruent between the two authors, but also the transition from the noumenon to the phenomenal world: for Bion as the realisation of the presupposition into the conception through its saturation, for Jung through the saturation of the archetype-as-such through the subject's experiences - first and foremost the childhood experiences.

Let us first look at the side of the noumenon.

Both Jung and Bion describe the archetype (Jung), the presupposition (or *preconception*) (Bion), in terms of a *disposition to expect something*. I consider this convergence to be extremely relevant, since it affects the deeply dispositional nature of both theories, in which the presupposition and the archetype play an essential function.

The archetypal representations (images and ideas) mediated to us by the unconscious should not be confused with the archetype as such. They are very varied structures which all point back to one essentially "irrepresentable" basic form. The latter is characterized by certain formal elements and by certain fundamental meanings, although these can be grasped only approximately. The archetype as such is a psychoid factor that belongs, as if it were, to the invisible, ultraviolet end of the psychic spectrum. It does not appear, in itself, to be capable of reaching consciousness. I ventured this hypothesis because everything archetypal which is perceived by consciousness seems to represent a set of variations on a ground theme.
(1946/1954, p. 213)

Let us read Bion's definition of presupposition (*preconception*):

(a) Pre-conception. This term represents a state of expectation. The term is the counterpart of a variable in mathematical logic or an unknown in mathematics. It has the quality that Kant ascribes to an empty thought in that it can be thought but cannot be known.

(b) Conception. Conception is that which results when a pre-conception mates with the appropriate sense impressions. I have used a phrase in which the implied model is obvious. The abstraction from the relationship of preconception to sense impressions is ♀ to ♂ (NOT ♂ to ♀).

(Bion, 1962, p. 357)

Bion's formulation can be considered an extremely useful bottom-up contribution to the evolutionary study of the formation of personal complexes, as well as of the ego. This is not only because it addresses the problem from the side of the formation of thoughts, i.e., of the thinker, but also because it describes the unfolding of this process within the mother-infant relationship which, in turn, refers to a structure, which Jung would have called “archetypal”, described as a relationship between container and content. We will see shortly that this relationship invests in the Kleinian and Bionian theories (but not just them) the theme of projective identification discussed by Jung, in his own way, in various writings, including *Psychology of Transference* (1946).

In the process I describe, it is implied that the situation cannot be recognised as objective: if there is a good breast, a sweet object, it is because it has been evacuated, produced; and the same applies to the bad breast, the need for the breast, the bitter breast, etc.

...the situation can be recognised neither as objective nor as subjective. Sweetness, bitterness and harshness are extracted from these objects, which once abstracted and are reapplied: the abstraction, once made, can be used whenever it encounters a realisation, different from the original one from which it was abstracted, that comes close to it. (Bion, *ivi.*)

This Bionian description is compatible with Jung's when, for example, he writes:

In my studies of the phenomenon of association I have shown that there are certain constellations of psychic elements grouped round feeling-toned contents, which I have called “complexes”. The feeling tone content, the complex, consists of the nuclear element and the large number of secondarily constellated association. The nuclear element consists of two components: first, a factor determined by experience and causally related to the environment; second, a factor innate in the individual's character and determined by his disposition. (Jung, 1928b, p. 10)

According to Jung, the perceptions (experiences) that will prove noteworthy are those that fall within the sphere of action of the archetype's expectant disposition. The

others will slip away. (29) This process leads to what Bion calls "realisation" and to a *kenosis* of the infinite in the finite, and thus to a subjectivisation of the objective otherness of the archetype (or of O) into experience. This process marks in Jung the transition from the archetypal, unconscious and collective - which one cannot really experience - to the personal conscious, of which the subject can make his own (I think that Winnicott refers to this when he mentions the nature of *illusion*).

8. The Archaic, the Historical, Teleology, Interpretation

Jung often refers to the collective unconscious as a repository of evolutionary traces deposited in the present. For him every form of the past acquires meaning as a past-of-the-present, which prepares and organises the future-of-the-present.

[...] the collective unconscious is in no sense and obscure corner of the mind, but the mighty deposit of ancestral experience accumulated over millions of years, the echo of prehistoric happenings to which each century adds an infinitesimally small amount of variation and differentiation. Because the collective unconscious is, in the last analysis, a deposit of world processes embedded in the structure of the brain and the sympathetic nervous system, it constitutes in its totality as sort of timeless and eternal world image which counterbalances our conscious, momentary picture of the world.

(Jung, 1927, p. 376)

Let us now read Bion:

The reason why we concern ourselves with things that are remembered, with our past history, is not because of what it was – although that might be quite important in its own right – but because of the mark it has left on you or me or us now. In what way are any of these things detectable? The embryologists say we can detect remains of a vestigial tail, branchial clefts, etc., seeming to suggest a fishy origin of a very primitive kind from which we have diverged. But if that is the case physically, I think it is possible that it might also be mentally; there might still be traces in the mind or character or the personality, in the present, of particles that have a long history, things that we would expect to be fundamental, basic, primordial. Do any of these remnants betray themselves in what we can now observe in the human speech of the person we are talking to, as well as in ourselves who are doing the talking? That is what seems to me to be one of the fundamental discoveries of psychoanalysis: archaic states of mind, archaic thoughts and ideas, primitive patterns of behaviour are all detectable in the most civilized, cultivated people; in more primitive people we would expect them to be less hidden.

(30)

(Bion, 1997, pp. 185-86)

I have decided to include these references to the question of the archaic for a reason I consider important. In fact, if they are well-founded, what is the role and cogency of interpretations that refer to childhood within a theory whose cornerstones are hypotheses such as O, the presupposition, the selected fact? I ask myself this question because, after all, in his interpretations Bion seems to continue to attribute direct causality to the events of childhood and to treat the patient (his unconscious) as an ex-infant. In my opinion, if the unconscious were no longer coincident with what was repressed (Jung's personal unconscious) but were referred to O (Jung's collective unconscious), such references to infancy would be either unjustified, or would have a necessarily different meaning than that of the unconscious equated with childhood. Therefore, when Bion makes references and interpretations to 'bodily' events, such as those to the 'breast', faeces, being a fart, or to co-protagonists of the infantile world such as the 'mother' or the 'child', what is he referring to?

Now, no one is so crazy as to question the importance of childhood: *this* is out of the question; but, if we really want to be consistent with a theory that includes O, we must consider what happens in childhood as the first mode of embodiment/realisation of the 'unthought thoughts' by the thinker, yet emanating not from his childhood, but - through his childhood - from that infinite Subject that Bion called O and Jung called the collective unconscious, which, in order to realise itself, initially does it so through the body and expresses itself by means of a bodily code.

I am now in a position to introduce another aspect common to the two theories of Jung and Bion, a common paradigmatic affiliation: the teleological nature of both theories. In fact, as we have seen, in Jung's profoundly dispositional theory, psychic and psychosomatic experiences are self-organising from an original expectant disposition (the archetype-as-such), just as the preconception does in Bion. These innate organisers - probably intrinsic to the structure of the brain (in the sense that the brain is one of their products) - entail first and foremost an outcome of crucial importance, both epistemologically and clinically: the necessary teleological and entelechial implication of the transformative processes, and thus of the genesis of the mental apparatus itself, as well as of its own products. (31)

In Jung, the entelechial and teleological nature of his theory, which derives from the archetype, is explicit. In fact, from such inherent entelechy it derives the epistemological and clinical necessity to refer to psychic processes not only as caused by causes, but also and foremost as directed towards purposes. Of course, in a clinical setting this not only *does not* exempt from the analysis of supposed causes (32), but makes this archaeological work necessary on the condition that we reconfigure those causes - in a kind of epistemological *après-coup* - as causes-for-a-purpose.

The teleological and entelechial nature of this theory cannot but imply the existence of *systemic* processes of self-organisation. In fact, the theories concerning the Self in Jung and the functioning of the True Self in relation to the object presentation

paradigm in Winnicott underpin their psychologies and imply principles of systemic self-organisation. It is indeed the systemic, complex approach to the observation of phenomena - an approach not governed by abstract principles of linear causality - that *forces* a paradigm shift from pure causalism to a teleology, whose movement does indeed proceed from one cause to another, but from causes all moving towards an implicit goal. It can therefore be understood that a teleological - not reductionist - view is *paradigmatically incompatible* with a causal theorisation.

On the clinical side, the teleological and entelechial nature of a theory should therefore inhibit causal interpretations referring to events within a causal past, but allow both what Jung called *amplifications* and interpretations that will rely on causes (factors placed in the 'past', i.e. in a psychic space imagined as such) understood as elements that acquire and give meaning for the patient's psychic configuration *in the present*. (33)

We will shortly see an example of Bion's interpretation, which literally *opens the* patient's mind towards the infinite future. For now, I would dare to state that, in the light of the epistemological dichotomy casualism/finalism, Jung and Bion belong to each other more than Bion himself belongs to Freud.

The *virtual* character of the purposes must be emphasised. They are deduced as hypotheses through a reconstruction of the genesis of mental contents, so to speak: backwards. As it is abundantly clear from Winnicott's theory of the object presentation, the purpose (the future aim) of the choice of an object in the present puts in motion the whole process from the beginning to the end of life, although it is constantly identifiable, and identifiable *precisely*, only at the moment of its final 'realisation'.

On the basis of the necessarily teleological and entelechial nature of both theories (another aspect that necessarily follows from the theory of pre-conception as an expectant disposition) in a 'normal' subject the code and metaphors most suitable for a realisation *should no longer be those of an infant*, but should have had evolved, along the patient's development, from the same origin from which childhood sprang. This origin is O. Therefore, all interpretations that refer to an adult and his unconscious as if he were still an infant would only be appropriate in the case of neurosis and would only concern the personal unconscious, not its objective, collective and infinite origin: O.

In this I agree with Jung's theory and its interpretative (but, above all, amplifying) references. In my own words I would say: if in psychopathology the adult is a former child, in healthy psychic development it is the infant (or the newborn child) who is a *potential* future adult, precisely because he or she is *dispositionally* and from the start moved by the preconceptions - the archetypes for Jung - emanating from O.

At this point, the question becomes: if the images and the somatic-infantile metaphors (breasts, penises, faeces, etc.) do not *necessarily*, not always represent the realisation process, what images might there be? Jung's answer would refer to the so-called *archetypal images*.

Here we are confronted with an important difference between Bion and Jung. As we have seen, for Jung the inputs coming from O - from the psychoid collective unconscious - are intercepted by the psychic apparatus primarily as endowed with affective valence (originally in the form of activation/anguish) and not only as raw sensory stimuli (Bion's beta elements), but - and here is the difference with Bion - they are *immediately* intercepted also under the form of empty and potential *imaginative schemata* which, moved by affectivity (34) and saturated with perceptions, will function as unconscious complexual nuclei. For Jung, the structure of the archetype would thus differ from that of Bion's preconception, which nevertheless fulfils the same function, precisely because it is inseparable from an imaginal schematism organised by affect.

The original non-dissociability between affect and imaginal schema (a sort of Gestalt, or mathematical geometry) in Jung implies the existence of archetypal images self-produced by the mind, also, but not only, in contact with experience. It is the empirical, relational experience which progressively gives them personal form. In this sense, Bion's grid or, for example, his formalisation of the mother-infant relationship in ♀♂ seems to me to represent an effort to de-saturate all pre-formed contents, and thus, above all, the pre-formative scope of the infantile past itself. To a certain extent, with his grid (35) and his lexicon, Bion endeavored to produce a paradoxical description in which systematicity, and abstractness would compel not meticulous precision, but openness to combinations other than those the analyst has produced and with which he risks identifying. (36) In short: this is a Bion who produces something similar to an 'alchemical' system.

In fact, while Jung would say that it is not the cycle of the sowing/harvesting that imitates the mother, but that it is the latter that imitates the former, Bion would say that it is not ♀♂ that represents the infant/mother relationship, but the opposite.

All this authorises reliance, in clinical work, also, if not especially on images emerging from the non-infantile repressed unconscious but from its non-removed strata, endowed with autonomous and collective imaginal schematisms, such as mythological, fairy-tale, religious, artistic, or psychotic images.

For the sake of completeness, with regard to the inseparability of affects and imaginal schemata, it must be said that the Bionian observation of a state in which the beta elements are dissociated from this original, immediate imaginal integrative faculty of the mind-brain could indeed be found in cases of dementia or catastrophically degenerated psychosis, where this original function also fails.

For Bion, both the appearance of bizarre objects (disintegrated complexual splinters) and the inability to distinguish primary and secondary processes would both be attributable to a deficit of the alpha function. On the other hand, for Jung the ability to dream, to produce imaginative schemata in sleep, would be due to the intrinsic association between affects and representational schemata (the archetype-as-such), while the collapse of the 'contact barrier' would be due to the dissociative force of affects:

[...] whereas, in the normal end neurotic, the acute affect passes comparatively quickly, and the chronic affect impairs the general orientation of consciousness and its adaptability in ways that are barely perceptible, the schizophrenic complex has an incomparably more powerful effect. Its expressions become fixed, its relative autonomy becomes absolute, and it takes possession of the conscious mind so completely that it alienates and destroys the personality. It does not produce a “double personality” but depotentiates the ego-personality by usurping its place, a phenomenon which is otherwise observed only in the acutest and most severe affective states - which for that reason are called pathological- or in delirium. The normal, preliminary form of this state is the dream, which, in contrast to schizophrenia, occurs in the sleeping and not in the waking state.

(Jung, 1957, p. 269)

At times, therefore, it seems to me that Bion is still anchored to the vision of an unconscious equated to infancy and childhood (as well as to a supposed animal bestiality), but then it also seems to me that he takes the Kleinian theory of internal objects to its extreme consequences - to the epistemological consequences resulting from the premises of his theory - and considers somatic images from infancy and childhood as *myths*, images and metaphors to be desaturated, precisely because, in his mature theorization, causes are no longer identified with childhood events, but, as purposes, with O's preconceptions. What, on the other hand, we can certainly find in the childhood of the disturbed adult patient (thus, to a certain extent in all of us) are the specific modalities and deficits of the realisation process when the alpha function had not been able to function adequately during childhood, and it was thus limited to regressive defensive adaptation outcomes.

Instead, we fully find the coherence of Bion's interpretative metaphors with the premises of his O-theory when we look not at the kind of images he refers to (which, of course, may also be those related to childhood, if the processes of realisation and transformation are fixated at that period), but at the *use he makes* of them and the *consequences* his interpretations produce. In fact, through these interpretations the form of knowledge that they seem to allow is that of an unsaturated, paradoxical knowledge; an allusive indication of something that cannot yet, nor ever, be fully thought of, nor possessed as an object. Indeed, Bion ceaselessly obscures that which is illuminated and simultaneously illuminates that which is obscure. In this sense, his interpretations are far from the risk of the reductionist interpretation constantly denounced by Jung and avoided by his teleological approach. In fact, such a regressive form of interpretation, which proceeds from the unknown to a supposedly known would be a kind of pseudo-explanatory activity; the substitution of one thing for another, but *ignotum per ignotius*.

As an example of a non-reductive interpretation, we may refer to a beautiful closing of a cycle of interpretations by Bion in a short clinical case he describes when, after a series of interpretations, he told the patient that

[...] he felt he was a puff of flatus. I therefore said that he felt the car accident was a sexual intercourse between a puff of flatus and the car and its driver. He said he felt better and added he felt he was going mad. (Bion, 1997, p. 113)

I believe that at that point, this patient was on the verge of a transformation into O, before which there were particular mental contents in which he found it difficult to recognise himself and after which there could have been the triggering of a process of a creative and non-deterministic growth, which correspond to the possibility of a part of O being reversed in a person's subjective life.

So there may be interpretations centred on the ego - aimed at consolidating and protecting it through the meaning of what is already known, although removed - and others centred on O - on the unknown, on the collective unconscious. These are necessarily unsaturated, and I know of no author who, more than Bion, has been faithful to the need to desaturate what is saturated.

Jung has the same attitude towards saturation, and his founding distinction between 'sign' (the reference to the known) and 'symbol' (the best possible reference to the unknown) is its foundation. From this derives a precise clinical attitude:

It is therefore convenient in practice to consider the meaning of the symbol above all in its It is therefore advisable to consider first and foremost the meaning of the symbol in relation to the conscious situation - in other words, to treat the symbol as if it were not fixed. This is as much as to say that we must renounce all preconceived opinions, however knowing they make us feel, and try to discover what things mean for the patient. In so doing, we shall obviously not get very far towards a theoretical interpretation; indeed we shall probably get stuck at the very beginning. But if the practitioner operates too much with fixed symbols, there is a danger of this falling into mere routine and pernicious dogmatism, and thus failing his patient.

(Jung, 1931b, p. 157)

In essence here Jung warns the analyst and admonishes him: remember that you do *not* know; forget what you know! Do not interpret, therefore, through the known, but listen to the unknown!

[...] any deviation from this attitude amounts to therapy by suggestion, the kind of therapy whose main principle is: "The individual signifies nothing in comparison with the universal." Suggestion therapy includes all methods

that arrogate to themselves, and apply, a knowledge or an interpretation of other individualities. Equally it includes all strictly technical methods, because these invariably assume that all individuals are alike.

(Jung, 1935a, p. 6)

Loyalty to this attitude should absolutely forbid the use of (supposed) archetypal images as explanations or illustrations; as Wittgenstein wrote at the end of the *Tractatus*, one should never say anything about them; one should only evoke them, and speak infinitely not of them, but from them. Unfortunately, this strictly anti-reductionist discipline is not always followed either by Jungians, nor by Jung himself, who sometimes, in his seminars, but perhaps for didactic reasons, gives the feeling of clarifying, of defining too much). A little too often one hears someone give an 'explanation' of an archetypal image. If the explanation were correct, exhaustive, the image would be saturated, and nothing would remain of it.

Now, if a vital experience ultimately concerns the constant intersection of O - of the collective unconscious - with the mental apparatus, and not only and exclusively the form this intersection took in infancy and childhood, then the emphasis of our analytical attention migrates from the past - a structural past that will never pass - to a present - a present that is always passing.

In constructing a theory which derives the neurosis from causes in the distant past, we are first and foremost following the tendency of our patients to lure us as far away as possible from the critical present. *For the cause of the pathogenic conflict lies mainly in the present.* (1912, p.166, italics by Jung).

[...] Those reminiscences determine only the form, but the dynamic element springs from the present, and insight into the significance of the actual moment alone gives real understanding. (*ibidem*, p. 167)

Apart from the similarity between Bion and Jung regarding the value of the present, these quotations also underline two other common aspects: the first is the distinction between the 'formal' aspect of meanings (ultimately derived from the archetype / preconception) - an aspect entrusted to the reminiscences of a past as much historical as structural - versus the 'dynamic' element; the second is their common position regarding the necessary incompetence of the analyst, who must also be willing and able to access O.

The analyst needs to be divested or denuded of his memories and his desires so as to leave room for him to be open to the present – what I call the present.

Psychoanalysis gives the impression, by which I think we are liable to be misled, that what is important is the past. The past is not important, because you can do nothing about it; the only things about which you can do anything are the remnants, the vestiges of the past, of past states of mind or archaic parts of our physical make-up – the branchial clefts, the vestigial tail, etc., our simian ancestry – but it is possible to make use of these vestiges that are discernible in the present if we allow ourselves to discern them.
(Bion, 1997, p. 192)

[...] if I wish to treat another individual psychologically at all, I must for better or worse give up all pretensions to superior knowledge, all authority and desire to influence. I must perforce adopt the dialectical procedure consisting in a comparison of our mutual findings. But this becomes possible only if I give the other person a chance to play his hand to the full, unhampered by my assumptions. In this way his system is geared to mine and acts upon it; my reaction is the only thing with which I as an individual can legitimately confront my patient.
(Jung, 1935a, p. 10)

Once again, it is important to remember that the implication of the reference to the present corresponds to the acceptance of the capacity for knowledge (K) as a perpetual infinite *flow-towards*, not to a possession of something in our memory or, worse, to a habit. Being able to bear this – to contain a potentially persecutory anguish - corresponds to the acceptance of not having before someone (for instance, our patients) a definable and precise identity, except in the present instant.

9. Selected fact, Arrangement, Symbol, Transcendent position

I would like to continue my discussion by examining another central element in Bion's theory, which is consistent with his teleological approach; another element that seems to be consistent with Jung's theory, although, fortunately, Bion treats it differently and draws from it different considerations from Jung's. I write 'fortunately' because, in my opinion, the compatibility between these two formulations allows Bion's further, refined deductions, i.e., his originality and differences with respect to Jung, to be used even within the framework of Jung's theory.

I am referring, for instance, to Bion's *selected fact*, which I think is very similar to the notion of *arrangement*, or *enactment* in Jung.

Bion prefigures his concept, which he would later develop, of the 'selected fact', borrowing it from the mathematician Henry Poincaré (1963), which resembles the strange attractor of chaos theory, in that it represents the

appearance of an observable or conceivable pattern in a sea of incoherence and uncertainty. Such a pattern becomes a realisation.

(Grotstein, 2007, p. 233)

The selected fact, then, indicates the organisation, a pattern, that provides coherence to hitherto scattered elements or phenomena.

Bion asserts that the “constant conjunction” is a function of the observer's consciousness (cf. Bion, 1965, p. 105)

This description closely resembles the psychoanalytic theory of the schizoparanoic and depressive positions put forward by M. Klein. In order to illustrate what the psychoanalyst must experience during the synthesis process, I used the expression 'selected fact'. In order to emphasise this fact, the name of that element of realisation is used that seems to bind together elements that have hitherto appeared unrelated. (Bion, 1962, p. 339)

One aspect that I would like to emphasise is the relationship between the preconception and the selected fact. This relationship points to that the possibility that a movement from the schizo-paranoic position to the depressive position may not be attributable to contingent, superficial or negotiable factors, but may be foreseen by the original disposition of the pre-conception, which initiates the whole process of transformation and synthesis. This is why it is difficult for me to understand why Bion attributes the formation of a selected fact to consciousness, whereas it seems to me that what actually contributes to its foundation is the preconception. This seems true also because, in describing the psychoanalytic situation, Bion recommends to the psycho-analyst the ability to contain his anguish while waiting for the selected fact to present itself, thus realising the meaning of a pre-conception in the conception and then into the concept. As a matter of fact, in my opinion, the emergence of the selected fact is an *unconscious* process. Furthermore, I think that the contribution that consciousness is called upon to make to the process is its capacity to recognize the selected fact – if not to sometimes capitulate in the face of an uncomfortable, yet true meaning. In this sense, it is possible that there could be also selected facts in the form of symptoms.

Obviously, this capacity by consciousness presupposes the possibility by the ego of being able to contain the anguish produced before the looming on the horizon of a selected fact, since its emergence is something like a promise of integration that follows a period dissociative suffering.

Let us now turn to a brief description of Jung's theory of the *arrangement*, which seems to me to be consistent with the basic lines of Bion's selected fact.

In Jung the concept of *arrangement* derives from the dispositional and teleological paradigm of his theory. By *arrangement* (also an Adlerian concept) Jung means the constant, active *mis en scène* operated by the psyche in its goal-directed life process. An interesting example of *arrangement* concerns Jung himself, and is cited in his biography. (Jung, 1963) (37)

At the age of twelve, I had a fateful time. One day - in the early summer of 1887 - I was in the cathedral square, waiting for a classmate who was going the same way as me to his home, and the morning lessons were over. Suddenly another boy gave me a push, causing me to fall, and I hit my head against the edge of the pavement, so hard that I almost fainted. For about half an hour I was a bit dazed. The moment I fell, this thought flashed through my mind. Now you won't go to school any more. (Jung, 1963, pp. 57-59)

From that moment on, Jung developed a 'neurosis' that for a time prevented him from going to school and engaging in any constructive, purposeful activity. Only at some point does the situation resolve itself. What interests us is Jung's interpretation of what had happened:

Little by little it came back to me how the whole thing had started, and I can tell you quite clearly that it was I who had brought about this unfortunate situation. That was why I had not taken it seriously with the comrade who had brought me down. I realised that he had, so to speak, blamed him for everything, and that the whole thing was, on my part, a diabolical conspiracy.
(Jung, *ibid.*)

Once again, as it may be seen, the symptom is for Jung the condensed expression of a staging, put in place not by causes - although there are causes - but, above all, by purposes, which are in turn the result of a plurality of psychic elements in interaction and conflict with one another. In this sense, the symptom would seem to fulfil the same function as Bion's selected fact and, in any case, may be considered as the element that coherently organises a psychic complexity that, in Kleinian/Bionian terms, we can describe as schizo-paranoid.

Discussing the case of a hysterical patient who had suffered a shock from some galloping horses, Jung writes:

The intensity of a trauma has very little pathogenic significance in itself, but it must have a specific significance for the patient. That is to say, it is not the shock as such that has a pathogenic effect under all circumstances, but in order to have an effect, it must impinge on a special psychic disposition, which may common in certain circumstances, consist

in the patient's unconsciously attributing a specific significance to the shock. (Jung, 1917/1943, p. 14)

The theoretical gain from this story is the clear recognition that an unconscious "intention" or tendency stage-managed the fright with the horses, very probably using for this purpose the infantile reminiscence of the horses galloping irresistibly towards disaster. Seen in the light of the whole material, the nocturnal scene with the horses - the starting point of the illness - seem to be only the keystone of a planned edifice. the fright and the apparently traumatic effect of the childhood experience are merely staged, but staged in the peculiar way characteristic of hysteria, so that the *mise en scène* appears almost exactly like a reality. (Jung, 1912 p. 161-2)

As it is often the case, psychopathology allows us to understand 'normal' psychology. In the case cited, it seems important to me to note that the staging is self-organised through the aggregating value of a symptom. In this sense, as I already said, the role of Bion's selected fact can also be supported by a symptom. The outcome of the deficiency in the integrative and teleological capacity of the systemic mind, thus the lack of integration of a certain scene, is studied and illustrated by Bion's concept of the selected fact as a function of the transition from the schizo-paranoid to the depressive position.

In any case, what seems to me most relevant is the constant presence of dispositional factors, i.e., of what both Jung and Bion describe as <<expectant dispositions>>, calling archetype or preconceptions-emergent-from-O. As I said, this characteristic makes both theories inherently teleological theories, in the sense that the meaning is *not* produced from contingent facts (what today is often called a "trauma") by means of a conscious decision, but it is always the emergence of meaning *per gratia dei*.

What Jung calls a *symbol* - the best possible representation of an unknown factor - is the device of the 'transcendence of the opposites' within a 'wider' signifying unity (38). I think it is clear that this conflict between opposites is Jung's description of what was later called the <<schizo-paranoid position>>, and that transcendence can correspond to the <<depressive position>>, though only when it is limited to the compensatory function. But when a piece of O emerges from the conflict between opposites, it can convey to the ego a piece of reality *previously unthinkable and non-existent* (in the Winnicottian sense of non-existent). This is a *genuinely creative* experience, although it is also a potentially inflating one, given the extreme proximity between the ego and the Self (Jung); the patient's *imminent* contact with the ineffable Infinite, which the ego itself is, in some way, *on the verge of* becoming.

I have said that a valuable bottom-up, i.e., evolutionary, contribution to Jungian theory is provided by the Bionian analyses of the processes of mentalisation described in his grid, analyses which are absent in Jung's typically top-down. However, on the merits of these questions Grotstein's suggestion seems to me highly relevant, according to which, in addition to the two Kleinian positions – the schizo-paranoid and depressive positions - (corresponding to Jung's observations on the dissociability of the psyche up to schizophrenia, and its associative and integrative potentiality through the “transcendent function” and the production of meanings), one should add a third one - the *transcendent* position. Here again, it seems to me that the two theories find a very interesting point of encounter and integration. Such a transcendent position, so congruent with the operation of the transcendent function in Jung - the function of generating of symbols - integrates in the transformations in O the refined description of the processes of abstraction and concretisation that Bion treats, for example in *Learning from Experience*, when he deals with the transformations in K.

10. Projective Identification, Reversible Perspective (Biocularity), Coniunctio

I would now like to emphasise one last aspect that reveals the compatibility between Jung's and Bion's theories: the mutual, constant, meaningful contact between the conscious and the unconscious; the impossibility of getting at any knowledge and reality except through the circular (or spiral) relationship of conscious and unconscious. This is what Bion calls 'reversible perspective', or biocularity.

Bion (1965) describes situations in which patients could alter their position in relation to external objects by changing their point of view as a result of splitting the dimensions of time and space. He refers to this mechanism as 'reversible perspective', a pathological defence directed against the possibility of developing biocular vision and insight, due to the patient's unmentalised pain. The patient's conception of time and space operates in a different dimension from that of the analyst, similar to Rubin's vase in which one can see a vase or two faces looking at each other, depending on what one chooses as figure and what as background. Bion used the reversible perspective model for insight situations in which the personality can switch from one point of view to another.

For Bion, the deductive scientific system is used because of the insufficient abstractness of the model constructed in the course of the emotional experience (the psychoanalytic experience) which is supposed to clarify.

The elements of the model are drawn from previous emotional experiences through the operation that runs parallel to the emotional experience of the alpha function, that is, the model is formed through the exercise of a capacity similar to that manifested when the two eyes operate in biocular vision in such a way as to correlate two perspectives on the same object two points the use in psychoanalysis of the conscious and the unconscious to observe a

psychoanalytic object is analogous to the use of the two eyes in the observation of a visible object, a theory, this, different from Freud's, which attributed the function of the sense organ of the psychic quality to consciousness alone. (Bion, 2009, p. 138)

This attitude is theorised and illustrated by Jung especially in his 'Psychology of the Transference' (1946), in which the (analytical) relationship is seen from both a conscious perspective first, and an unconscious one.

In the first perspective, the analyst and the patient - understood as representing the "Other-than-self", the "living Unknown" - are embedded in a fourfold network of relationships between:

- conscious (a) / conscious (p);
- unconscious (a)/unconscious (p);
- unconscious (a) / conscious (p);
- conscious (a) / unconscious (p)

It should be noted immediately that the last two forms represent the structure of projective identification, which Jung, without calling it by this name, has constantly in his mind throughout his work.

In the second perspective, the situation is reversed. The two protagonists (alchemical, unsaturated with respect to what they are supposed to allude to, like the elements of Bion's grid) are *Rex* and *Regina*, who represent the subject as seen from the unconscious. This obviously refers to both the patient and the analyst. Hence, within this perspective the one is feminine (*Regina*) and the other masculine (*Rex*). This preserves the oppositional dimension for which one implies the other, *while not yet being it*. If we were to factualise this representation, we could imagine that *Rex* would represent a *female* analyst, and *Regina* his *male* patient. But, of course, such a reduction of the symbolism and the perspective of the images coming from the unconscious to a conscious realisation would collapse the images into factuality and prevent us from continuing to think about it.

Jung, therefore, asks us to preserve a bi-ocular vision, one from the perspective of the conscious, the other from that of the Other - the unconscious. In the same way, he asks us to accept the possibility of perceiving the patient - as Bromberg says taking up the same concept - *inside-out*, through our internal world - thus *dreaming of him*. In my experience this is an emotional-imaginative situation that can reveal to me something visible/invisible about the patient through the emotions that I feel, as well as the somatic sensations I perceive and the images that are self-produced from them. Simultaneously, the reversible perspective, or the ability to 'go where the patient is' (Jung), implies finding myself into the other; seeing and feeling myself from his or her perspective, which implies the challenge of suspending not only what our pre-

judgments inform us about the other's nature, but also what we believe we are and know about ourselves.

This situation is described in alchemy as *coniunctio oppositorum*, in which the subject is Other and the Same in relation to his/her object. In fact, what is outside must be found through the inside (39), and vice versa; just as what is conscious can be through the unconscious background, and vice versa. It is in this sense that we should interpret Jung's words when he states that when something unconscious becomes conscious, something conscious becomes unconscious. With this, Jung not only describes a characteristic of Bion's alpha-function and the refined functioning of the contact barrier as a two-ways border between opposites, but he also emphasises that the constellation of opposites themselves takes place in order to be able to transcend them so to find, on a different level, their mutual belonging. The transcendent function in Jung and the transformations in O - T(O) - in Bion are two description of the way Jacob's latter must be build, and how it functions. In fact, *this infinite process gives form and meaning to the relationship between living subjects, between the living subjects that we are.*

I close these reflections aware of their narrowness. I know that the themes that belong to Bion's and Jung's thought that I have dealt with - and many that I have had to neglect - would certainly deserve more space and a deeper elaboration. Here I only wanted to mention them as contents springing from my curiosity for both authors and for the admiration for their thought.

Notes

1. I developed this thought in: *Elogio della penombra*, 2008.

"The language I speak must necessarily be ambiguous. It must have two meanings in order to do justice to our dual psychic nature. I strive consciously and deliberately for ambiguity of expression, because it is superior to unambiguity and reflects the nature of life." (Jung, 1973. pp. 69-70)

2. For example, *Discussions with W.R. Bion* (1978).

3. Jung's phrase: "Fortunately I am Jung and not a Jungian" expresses this position, obviously in the author's sometimes cutting style.

4. Obviously, this is a quotation from Bion, who thus describes the nature of the 'convivial relationship' as distinct from those termed 'symbiotic' or 'parasitic' in *Learning from Experience* (1973).

5. I remember the time when I had a negative transference towards him and started to criticise his fellow Kleinians in London. I said something about 'perfidious Albion'. He asked me, "Hey, is this a joke?" [...] In the same session I criticised Melanie

Klein, which prompted him to ask me, "Did you know Melanie Klein? How did he know her? What a beautiful demonstration of L, H and K connections! How can you really know someone if not through your own emotional reactions to that individual, in person? These are analytical facts. ' (Grotstein, 2007. p. 40)

What moves me - the starting point of this writing - perhaps does not really belong to them, but to my desire to be, I hope *convivially*, with them.

6. I believe that the sign O, in Bion, refers to the same content of the pictogram which,

in Japanese, is called *enso*  : the empty centre, infinite producer of being. I see a

similar image in Jung's mandalas, symbol of the unattainable Self:



7. The relationship between Freud and Jung is documented mainly by the private correspondence between the two from Jung's first letter to Freud on 11 April 1906 to his last on 20 April 1914. While in 1952 Jung's letters to Freud had already been made available to selected readers, both from the Jungian side (Aniela Jaffé and Carl Maier) and Freudian side (Ernest Jones and Kurt Eissler), Freud's letters to Jung seemed to have been lost by then. It was only in 1954 that all the correspondence on the Freudian side was found by Anna Freud in a crate.

While reading Jung's letters alone, C.A. Maier had shared a feeling of moderate interest, but when he was able to read the complete exchange of letters he wrote a letter to Eissler that opened with these words: '*My first impression is truly that of a devastating tragedy*'.

8. <<When you have, as honestly as you can, allowed your imagination to play on the material and allowed yourself to state it in such terms as you can, then you can assess the nature of the product. I would say, therefore, that it is a good thing to say what you think you have seen. Never mind what your state of mind is; let's forget all that, let's have respect for the information that you gather in that state of mind, no matter what it is - whether it is a state of mind that subsequently you can assess by saying you dreamt it, or you hallucinated it, or you just painted it, or you 'doodled' it onto a piece of paper when you weren't thinking about anything in particular, or that you might, if you were gifted in that way, actually compose it or play a tune or whistle or sing it. I have heard people say it is useful for a stammerer to try singing, and then he becomes able to articulate in the ordinary manner. I regard speculative imagination as worthy of concern - never mind whether you dreamt it, hallucinated it, or whether it is an object of delusion, or - I don't know what a drawing or painting is the product of. I take it that presumably the artist saw or thought he saw what he has drawn. >> (Bion, 1997, p. 189).

9. Bion (1985) writes: << The discovery that you have a MIND is always a shock

because you never know what the strange object is going to turn out to be. Up it bursts; is it a psychosis, insanity – diagnosis please somebody! – genius, philosopher, poet, musician, composer? Then, while you try to survive that, whatever it is, up bursts your BODY shrieking for attention and complaining of neglect.>> (pp. 248-249)

10. Cf. Hillman, (2003).

11. I think it is useful to quote the passage a little more precisely. Bion is in a Turkish bath, in London, but the day before he was still on the front line of the First World War. In the bath he remembers the frightening experiences that had happened to him the *previous day*. The two situations are incommensurable and are described in terms of a traumatic, mentally incommensurable experience.

<< [...] These old ghosts, they never die. They don't even fade away; they preserve their youth wonderfully. Why, you can even see the beads of sweat, still fresh, still distinct, against the pallor of their brows. How is it done? Like the dewdrops on the petals of *Rédoutés* roses. Marvellous isn't it? So, so . . . death-like, isn't it? But of course it's just a trick - he's not really dead, you know. Please, please shut up. I will write, I really will. To Mother England - that old whore! The Turkish bath was very refreshing; I felt so clean. It's not real, you know; just a kind of trick. Really, of course, one stinks. They have a way of making people look so life-like, but really we are dead. I? Oh yes, I died - on August 8th 1918'>> (Bion, 1982, p. 296)

12. From the early 1960s, Bion entered what his biographer Gerard Bleandonu (1994) calls his epistemological period in which he employed what Bion himself terms a << scientific deductive system >> (1963, 24). Bion was trying to adapt a neopositivist project to psychoanalysis (Sandler 2006), by the development of a theory based on ideal mathematical objects in the Platonic tradition (especially in the *Thaetaetus*).

13. See, for instance the interesting discussion in: White (2011)

14. The mention of 'life' is intended to refer both to the libido as understood by Jung, and to living vs. dead, as understood by Bion (cf. 1962, p.25).

15. It seems to me that we could distinguish between: a) objective objectivity (to which Jung, for example, refers when he describes Job's god (Jung, 1951) as a 'natural phenomenon', obviously unconscious, incoercible and infinite); b) subjective subjectivity (the opinions we have about ourselves, defensive of the – ultimately unknowable - objective objectivity that surrounds us); c) subjective objectivity (the convincing reality of the contents of the mind and (d) objective subjectivity (the realisation that we do not decide who we are, but yet precisely feel that we cannot be otherwise, and that being as we are - not being alienated into someone else / something else - corresponds to a kind of miracle.)

16. In the sense that perceptions are not sufficient to qualify the experience of the animate beings, but only that of inanimate objects.

17. See the following paragraphs.

18. << In my view, the fundamental thesis is that: (a) 'α' precedes 'β'; the α-element could have an earlier beginning in ideal forms; that is, it could have already been conceived by an assumed Intelligence or Presence (Bion's and Meister Eckhart's 'god').>> (Grotstein, 2007, p. 55)

19. I refer to the intimate nature of the *rêverie*, an internal/intersubjective space-time that contains and transforms the Traumatic Infinite into an order endowed with reflexivity, aesthetics and feeling. On the aesthetic and reflexive side the most beautiful example is for me the Entsu-Ji temple in Kyoto, whose garden is a miniaturisation of the nature - sacred, unconscious, infinite and agent - in which it is embedded, with the majesty of the forests and Mount Hiei in the background. The emotional side, on the other hand, expresses the *rêverie* through transformative events that are often contained and produced by infinitesimal mirroring gestures, by unrepeatable instants, by a certain glance, an inflection of the voice; by that *something-I-quite-don't-know*, that *almost nothing* that, in its miraculous and occasionality full of grace, transfigures, just like the Entsu-Ji's garden, the uncontainable infinite into the grace of the *charm* from which it spreads and which it diffuses.

<<Blessed be the almost-nothing, which of the nothing makes something; and, finally, blessed be the *charm*, without which things would only be what they are.>> (Jankelevitch, 2011, p. 94. My translation)

20. For example: << [...] I propose that the elements of psychoanalysis be considered all, without exception, as functions, meaning this term in the sense I have just indicated. The sign that represents an abstraction must therefore represent a function that is unknowable, even if its primary and secondary (in the Kantian sense) qualities are knowable>>. (Bion, 1963, p. 17)

21. Later, I will discuss this point more precisely.

22. In the sense therefore of the raw material of alchemy.

23. << What we call fantasy is simply spontaneous psychic activity, and it wells up wherever the inhibitive action of the conscious mind abates or, as in sleep, ceases altogether. In sleep, fantasy takes the form of dreams. But in waking life we continue to dream beneath the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexes.>> (Jung, 1931a, p. 56)

In his seminar on children's dreams from 1936 to 1940, Jung says: <<We are quite probably dreaming all the time, but consciousness makes so much noise that we no longer hear the dream when awake>>. (Jung, 2008, p. 3)

24. The dream/psychosis equation was already posited by Freud (1899). Around the same time, in 1907, Jung wrote: <<Let the dreamer walk about and act like a person were awake, and we have the clinical picture of dementia praecox. >> (Jung, 1907, p.

86)

This view is confirmed in 1956, when, in one of his last writings, Jung expresses himself as follows: <<But from what derives the fact that in schizophrenia the proper character of neuroses is shattered and instead of analogies and systematics, i.e., equivalents, their abstruse, grotesque or otherwise unexpected fragments are produced, remained at first incomprehensible. It could only be ascertained that such a disintegration of representations is characteristic of schizophrenia. It has this peculiarity in common with an entirely normal phenomenon, namely the dream.>> (1956, p. 272) This is the same position from which Bion's theme of the alpha function, the container/content relation and the 'contact barrier' begins.

25. Although complex and schema are profoundly different, first of all because of the essential role that affectivity plays in the complex and, no less importantly, because the personal complex is the 'realisation' (in Bion's sense) of a noumenal, potential and unknowable presupposition that Jung calls an archetype as such.

For the sake of clarity, I recall that the complex of affective-toned representations can be conscious, unconscious, removed, non-removed, personal, or collective. While the collective, unconscious, non-removed complex (Bion: << It would be the case, likewise, to consider an unconscious that has never been other, that is, that has never been conscious >> [Bion, 1997, p. 197]) would be the archetype itself, the conscious, personal and non-removed would be the 'I'.

26. Jung writes: <<The persistence of the complex is guaranteed by a *sustained affective tone*. If the affective tone is extinguished, a feeling-toned complex naturally has the same constellating effect on the rest of the psychic activity as acute affect. Whatever suits the complex is assimilated, everything else is excluded or at least inhibited. The best examples of this can be seen in religious beliefs.>> (1907, p.43)

Or: <<*Every affectively charged event becomes a complex*. If it does not encounter a related and already existing complex and is only of momentary significant, it gradually sinks with decreasing feeling-tone into the latent mass of memories, where it remains until a related impression reproduces it again. But if it and encounters an already existing complex, it reinforces it and helps it to gain the upper hand for a while. The clearest examples of this can be seen in hysteria, where apparent trifles may lead to tremendous outburst of affect.>> (Jung, 1907, p. 67 [italics by Jung].)

27. This question is complex, because it concerns the fact that the libido shapes both the perceptual structure of the real (here mathematics takes a prominent place in Jung's epistemology) and, therefore, also of the living. It expresses itself in *particular empirical forms and organisations* and, in a further step, it acquires *symbolic forms*, i.e. it presents itself to the mind as an image.

28. Because, evidently, there are as many realisations as there are beings participating in the Real - O, the collective Unconscious.

29. See my discussion of the 'selected fact' in the following pages.

30. (Sic!) It is unfortunate that, besides Jung, Bion also fell into the trap of simplifying the psyche of the 'others' as less evolved, savage. Perhaps, this also makes them similar.

31. For an explication of the entelechial nature of Bion's theory, see, e.g., Grotstein (2007, p. 55): <<Moreover, in my view, the child projects not only his fear of dying, due to an insufficient containment of his death instinct, but also his fear of "living without help", i.e., the spontaneous impulses of his evolving entelechy (the activation of his being-in-itself in potency, i.e., the feared premature arrival of his future). The idea of entelechy leads me to suggest that ideal forms generate the child's own rudimentary α -elements (yet to be transformed) that join with the pre-processed sensory stimuli (Bion's β -elements) to form what, with Ferro, I call balfa elements.>> (cf. also Ferro, 1999).

32. Jung's position is exemplified in this quotation, which shows that for him childhood and the past were by no means neglected, but placed within a broader context:

<< If dream-analysis at the beginning of the treatment shows that the dreams have an undoubtedly sexual meaning, this meaning is to be taken realistically; that is, proves that the sexual problems of the patient need to be subjected to a careful review. For instance, if an incest fantasy is clearly shown to be a latent content of the dream, one must subject the patient's infantile relations with his parents and brothers and sisters, as well as his relations with other persons who are fitted to play the role of father or mother, to a thorough investigation. But if a dream that comes at a later stage of the analysis has, let us say, an incest fantasy as its essential content - a fantasy that we have reason to consider disposed of - concrete value should not under all circumstances be attached to it; it should be regarded as symbolic. The formula for interpretation is: the unknown meaning of the dream is expressed, by analogy, through a fantasy of incest. In this case symbolic and not real value must be attached to the sexual fantasy. If we did not get beyond the real value we should keep reducing the patient to sexuality, and this would arrest the progress of the development of his personality.>> (1913, p. 329)

33. The present, synchronic state of a complex system governed by non-linear causality, contains all necessary information about its past probable configurations, and of the probabilities of its future configurations.

34. Thus, not purely cognitive. Which should impose caution in translating useful cognitive theories, which do not take affectivity into account, into the analytical field.

35. Which has the *opposite* function to that of any grid.

36. For Bion, the first function of the grid was to <<keep the analyst's intuition in shape>>.

37. See in this regard the discussion by Giegerich (1995).
38. This is also the intrinsic way a metaphor works.
39. I point out that this circuit, which Grotstein describes as a kind of Moebius tape (2007) corresponds to the definition of the activity of the subject's conscious attitudes as theorised by Jung in *Psychological Types* (1921), in fact, extroversion, when it is well functioning (perhaps when it is informed by the alpha function) represents the possibility of finding one's internal objects through the external, while introversion is the mode of finding external objects through the internal.

Bibliography

- Carta, S., (2008). *Elogio della penombra*. In: Edinger, E. *Anatomia della psiche*, Vivarium. Milano.
- Civitaresse, G., (2019). *I nomi di O: Bion è un mistico?* La Rivista di Psicoanalisi. 2019/2.
- Bléandonu, G., (1994). *Wilfred Bion, His life and his Works 1897-1979*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bion, W.R. All quotes come from: Bion, W.R. (2014). *The complete works of W.R. Bion*. Edited by Chris Mawson, Editorial consultant Francesca Bion. London: Karnak.
- (1963). *Elements of psychoanalysis*. Vol. 5.
- (1965). *Transformations*. Vol. 5.
- (1962). *Learning from experience*. Vol. 4.
- (1978). *Four Discussions with W. R. Bion*. Vo. 10.
- (1997). *Taming wild thoughts*. Vol. 5.
- (1982). *The long weekend*. Vol 1.
- (1985). *All My Sins Remembered Another Part of a Life*. Vol. 2.
- Ferro, A., (1999). *La psicoanalisi come letteratura e terapia*. Milano: Cortina.
- Freud, S., (1899). Freud, Sigmund (2010). *The interpretation of dreams*. Strachey, James. New York: Basic Books.
- Giegerich, W., (1995). *Il concetto di nevrosi secondo Jung*. Milano: Vivarium.
- Grotstein, J.S., (2007). *A beam of intense darkness. Wilfred Bion's Legacy to Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnak.
- Jung, C.G., All quotes from C.G. Jung come are from: (1953/1979) *The complete works of C.G. Jung*. Princeton: Princeton Un. Press.

- (1907). *"On the Psychology of Dementia Praecox*. Vol. 3.
- (1912). *The theory of psychoanalysis*. Vol. 4.
- (1912/1952). *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*. Subsequently: *Symbols of the transformation*. Vol 5.
- (1913). *General aspects of psychoanalysis*. (vol. 4)
- (1917/1943). *Psychology of the Unconscious*. Vol. 7
- (1921). *Psychological Types*. Vol. 6
- (1927). *Analytical psychology and Weltanschauung*. Vol. 8
- (1928a). *The relations between the ego and the unconscious*. Vol. 7.
- (1928b). *On psychic energy*. In: *Opere*. Vol. 8.
- (1929). *Problems of modern psychotherapy*. Vol. 16
- (1931). *The practical applicability of dream analysis*. Vol. 16.
- (1935a). *Principles of practical psychotherapy*. Vol 16
- (1935b) *General problems of psychotherapy*. Vol. 16
- (1946) *Psychology of Transference*. Vol 16.
- (1946/1954). *On the nature of the psyche*. Vol. 8.
- (1951) *Answer to Job*. In: *Opere*. Turin: Boringhieri, Vol. 11.
- (1957) *Schizophrenia*. Vol. 3.
- (1973). *Letters*. Selected and edited by Gerhard Adler in collaboration with Aniela Jaffé. 2 vols., Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1973, 1: 377.
- Jung C.G., (1963) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard and Clara Winston. London: Collins; Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jung, C.G., (2008) *Children dreams*. Princeton: Princeton Un. Press.
- Macchia, A., (2020). *Tracce Mute: Sull'ineffabile nella relazione analitica*. Milano: Franco Angeli)
- Jankelevitch, V., (2011). *Il non-so che e il quasi niente*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Sandler, P.C., (2006). The Origins of Bion's Work. "International Journal of Psychoanalysis", 87: 179-201
- Vermote, R., (2011). "On the value of 'latÈ Bion to analytic theory and practice". *The intern. J. of Psychoanalysis*. 92:1089-1098.
- White, R.S. (2011). "Bion and Mysticism: The Western Tradition". *The American imago; a psychoanalytic journal for the arts and sciences*, 68(2):213-240

Winnicott, D. W. (1964). ‘*Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by C. G. Jung. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 45, 450– 455.

Saban, M., (2017). “Segreti e bugie. Un'area cieca nella psicologia Junghiana?” *Rivista di psicologia analitica*. Nuova serie. N. 43, Vol.95/2017.

Stefano Carta is an Analytical Psychologist, trained at the C.G. Jung Institute Zurich. He is Professor of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology at the University of Cagliari and is Honorary Professor at the University of Essex, UK. He was president of the Italian Association of Analytical Psychology in 2002-2006. He currently directs the *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica*, the oldest publication in the sector in Italy. He has published over 100 articles, chapters and books on dynamic psychology and analytical psychology. He lives and works between Rome and Cagliari.

Email: cartast@unica.it