WHY BION FIELD THEORY?

Violet Pietrantonio

(Accepted for publication 30 November, 2018)

Abstract: What kind of functions does a theory carry out in the analyst’s mind at work? The author tries to describe, using a few analytic trailers, how Bion Field Theory (BFT) can become an oneiric psychoanalytic tool in the mind of the analyst working with inaccessible states of mind and the violence of nameless turbulences. The hypothesis expressed is that BFT, as described in the works of its principal authors (Ferro, Grotstein, Ogden et.c), seems to evoke a psych-O-analysis that chooses O as psychoanalytic vertex, developing the bionian idea of unconscious as psychoanalytic function of the mind. BFT introduces explains and illustrates an oneiric model of the mind and of the analytic cure. The priority given by this theory to the contact with emotional experience and the capacity to stay at one ment with the unknown emotional experience circulating in the hic et nunc, seems, in author’s analytical experience, to promote both the development of an authentic analytic Self and analytic ethic and a process of subjectivation in analyst, patient, analytic experience.

Keywords: Bion Field Theory, oneiric model of the mind, transformation in dreaming, reverie, at one ment, O.
Why Bion Field Theory?

From my meetings with backpackers, I have memories of being charmed, as a young girl, by their readiness to face the unknown and the unforeseen, to bear fatigue and fear, to enjoy their discoveries and meetings as strangers in a strange land: observing their luggage I noticed they always travelled light, but always had novels and detailed maps. They didn’t know whom they would meet, where they would spend the night, but they did know where they were going….

Introduction


During my training process, the encounter with the oneiric model of the mind and the idea of analysis as the time and place to dream with another those dreams we cannot dream alone (Ferro, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014. Grotstein ibid, Ogden, 2005) and of the analytical field as a cultural ground, both instrument and location of such oneiric procreation, brought me in contact with a new vertex of observation, comprehension and significance of the analytical process, which truly transformed my outlook, my way of living and thinking analysis as process, work, cure. I felt I found Occam’s razor (Foresti, 2014) with simple instruments to tackle long journeys, even in little explored psychic countries, suffering high levels of accidents, discomfort and exposure to the elements.

I shall try to show, by illustrating some of my analytical experiences, how assuming a BFT vertex (Bion Field Theory Stern, 2013, Levine H.B., 2013, Ferro et.al. 2013, Ferro, Civitarese, 2015) has helped me feel that I could have a deeper understanding of the emotional experiences of the patient and to be less afraid of welcoming, suffering and crossing with them the
darkness in the mind, the chaos of catastrophes, the asphyxiation and mental dread that can enter and inhabit the analytical field, thanks to the compass-like effect of some BFT concepts, which, especially in analytic moments of darkness or whirlwind, have offered help, orientation and hope. I’m referring, in particular, to the concepts of field, reverie (Bion, 1962; Ferro, Grotstein; Ogden), negative capability (Bion, 1970), O and transformation in dreaming as function of the analytical cure. Concepts that I have experimented as dreams narrating the most profound depths of the analytical process: dreams capable of reawakening my capacity to dream analysis (Ferro et all. 2007), in analysis.

Exploring Bion Field Theory

When I use the term BFT I’m referring to the Bion Field Theory2, an appellation in which D. Stern (2013) grouped all those post-bionian authors who integrate the development of Bion’s ideas with the development of the concept of analytical field formulated by Baranger (1962). In my dream on this theory (Ogden, 2012) the cardinal points that make it up and that direct its theoretical elaboration and analytical practice are:

The Bionian Metapsychology as theoretical matrix: the idea of the mind as a group of functions (α function, ♂, ♂♂, reverie, contact barrier, Bion 1962) and of the unconscious as the psychoanalytical function of the mind which permits and produces the transformation in dreaming of our emotional life (Bion 1962, 1963, 1970, 1992).

Furthermore the Bion Field Theory (Stern, 2013) in the scientific laboratory of Contemporary Psychoanalysis seems to have become a greenhouse for the incubation, the gestation and the conceptual realisation of those latest Copernican intuitions on the functioning of our human mind, that Bion disseminated in cryptic preconceptions between the lines of his last work, published during his stay in California o posthumously (Bion, 1967, 1970, 1976-1979). A discovery that firstly concerns the most powerful active principle of transformation of our human mind and consequently the active principle most capable of generating psychic change in a psychoanalytical
treatment as a cure for the human mind. As T. Ogden masterfully explains in one of his last articles (Ogden, 2015), from “Notes on memory and desire” (Bion, 1967) onwards, Bion seems to talk to us ever more convinced of the idea of a human mind that does not change, does not evolve, does not transform though knowledge, understanding (K), awareness, but though the possibility of becoming and dreaming the emotional experience (O) by whom we are inhabited. A process that from the dawn of life often necessarily requires the presence of another mind. Another mind willing to feel what we feel, to become one with our own feeling (Grotstein, 2007, Ogden, 2015) in a position of unison (Bion, 1970) which becomes an inescapable access portal to experiences of reverie and transformation in dreaming of our emotional experience, as well as being in itself transformative experience for both minds transiting it. Thus, amongst the thick forests of Bion’s last lines, a new idea slithers, an idea on what is, may be and perhaps has always been the fundamental psychoanalytical experience for the growth and the development of our mysterious human mind; an idea pouchéd with a kit of unprecedented preconceptions on the analytical method and competences necessary to its realisation.

The primacy of Interpretation as preferred analytic drug falls into decline, after having been theorised as the therapeutic instrument endowed with the most transformative potential: we cannot change, become ourselves through the revelation of any knowledge (K) on us that we are shown, but we can start to feel that we exist only if that chromosomal magma of proto-mental jelly (O) of which we are β-carriers at the dawn of our first existing bumps into α-donors (♀) who, recognising the primordial value of oneiric mine of our β-heritage, accept becoming sensitive dream decoders and passionate myth-makers (Ferro, 2009, 2013, 2016, Grotstein, 2007, Levine, 2015).

Otherway from BFT perspective all of the psychoanalytical process focuses and coincides with the possibility of containment and transformation in dream of those area of emotional experience that have remained at the stage of nameless proto-mental terror, because never α-literated in the oneiric relation with another mind.
The oneiric model of the mind and analytical cure (Grotstein, Ferro, Ogden): the idea that a sufficient capacity to be able to dream one’s own emotional experience is the mental function that allows a human being to give a sense, name, form and narratability to one’s own feeling, permitting a mentalization of both the conflictual blocks previously explored by psychoanalytic thought and the dark, unnamed areas of trauma: the symptoms are but fallout from dreams that can’t be dreamed. The scope of analytic work is to try to give womb (♀), gestation and oneiric life to these βαzygotes of unborn dreams, hypothesising that they will nestle in the field to be intercepted (Manica, 2014) and dreamed.

An idea of analytic cure as oneiric stem cell cure: each oneiric experience in analysis could serve as stem cell for the genesis/repair/development of the dreaming ensemble (♀♂, α-function, rêverie) of patient, analyst, analytic couple, field.

The field as the inter-subjective: intersubjective unconscious area that comes to life in the meeting of two minds in analysis and that becomes at the same time site, object and instrument of all the analytic work. An O-Narnia that teems with wild dreams, preconceptions awaiting realisation, primordial turbulence in search of♀♂, α-function, rêverie. Stem cell experiences can gemmate in the field if, and each time that, circulating β-spectres can gain α-literacy through the transformative transit in the oneiric work spectrum (hallucinosis-reverie-transformation in dream Civitarese 2014) active in the session. With this idea of field in mind, an analyst can attempt a type of analytic work impossible with just the tool of interpretation (K→O), intervention (♂) with strong emotive impact, that requires the presence of a sufficient capacity of containment (♀) and α-function to be able to be embraced and metabolized, without generating an increase in persecutory anguish, fragmentation or an empowering of an obstructing-tyrannical Super ego (Bion, 1967, Ferro, 2002, Eaton, 2005; Grotstein, 2007, 2009, Civitarese, 2013). And it’s just this generation/growth of container (♀) and the vitaminization of α-function that working in the field enables: feeling, watching together at one ment something found in the field and trying to narrate together the emotions that arouse, feed, hydrate and collagenase the container (♀) and starts the process of transformation of macrobalomi (♂) (Barale, Ferro, 1992) in containeds (♂♀) for possible intercourses ♂♀ and oneiric conception.
Each analytic couple, in each analytic session, generates a unique, original field, whose characteristics depend on those of the respective dreaming ensemble in that precise personal, analytic moment.

The field can become, in the analyst’s mind, the device/vertex that allows the focalization and psychic figurability of the oneiric function of the mind and of the oneiric work that is rousing and developing in the session and in the long wave of the psych-\textit{O}-analytic process (Meltzer, 1971).

The narrative voice (Ogden, 2014) vibrating amongst the weave of this theory has evoked in me images, sounds, experiences of an analytical cure electing \textit{O}, the protomental emotional truth in search of dreaming, as the vertex-object-hypocentre of changes and transformations within the analytical process. Analysis and analyst leave $K \rightarrow O$ (Bion, 1970) trajectories, peeling away the oracular-investigative functions of revealing-interpreting mental secrets hidden in the unconscious: analyst and patient find each other in the unconscious inter-subjective space created by the analytical encounter (field) to try “to unconscious” together (Civitarese, 2014), to transform into dreams the β saturating the field. The oneiric model of the mind (Ferro, 2013, 2014) that seems to proliferate from the fruitful marriage between Bion and field (BFT) becomes both a Renaissance man of definition, in-depth analysis and pictograms, of Bion’s intuition of the unconscious as psychoanalytical function of the mind, and an abstract painter sketching the universe of \textit{O}\rightarrow\textit{K} routes (Bion ibid.), which become the planet to be explored by this Psych’\textit{O}’analysis³. The idea of the field as the \textit{O}-habitat and the onirogenic area of the analytical couple expands the potential of oneiric transformation involved in Bion’s concept of being at-one-ment with \textit{O}: the field unfolds to analyst and patient as experience laboratory for the breath and physics of being at-one-ment, fertilizer of commensal relationship ♂♀ (Bion ibid.), moment of possible oneiric narration of mysterious and unforeseeable encounters with epiphanies, deflagrations or evolutions of \textit{O}. The voices narrating BFT talk about a dreaming stem cell cure analysis that can be transformative, revitalizing or birth experience of psychic life, only if there is a real contact with emotional truth (\textit{O}) causing the field’s entropy. Dreaming stem cells can form in the analytical field and become the tissue of the patient’s new,
or repaired, dreaming ensemble⁴ (Grotstein), only if there is an analyst disposed to experience unison (Bion, 1970) and absorbent containing (♀) for all containeds (♂♂) that might explode, stagnate, intoxicate, mine the field of the analytical encounter. Only if the analytical pair is able to dream the emotional experience permeating the analytical hic et nunc. For the analyst there is a strong, clear call to the priority of emotional listening, to a humble and brave hospitality (♀) for every possible type of manifesting ♂♂ anywhere in the field, and to a willingness to suffer, to become (Bion ibid., Grotstein ibid.) the circulating O as necessary, founding conditions for the potential transformation in dreaming of interrupted cries and nightmares besetting the patient’s mind. Elements that I have felt as being both F⁵-prophylactic to the risk of K-superegoic obstructions to the emotional development of analyst, patient, analytical experience and powerful probiotics to the development of an authentic analytical Self (Bolognini, 2008, Grotstein ibid., Winnicott, 1965) and an analytical ethos rooted in the responsibility issuing from contact with emotional truth (Levine, D., 2013).

Working within the BFT helps analysts in training have more trust in the emotional truthfulness of their feeling, feel less frightened in also receiving, containing, experiencing all the un-representable: unrepresentable that may present itself via the mute pressure of bgas, breaches of the setting or body actions, considering them as potential expressions of O, opportunities for reverie and access to inaccessible states of mind (Bion, 1977, De Mattos, Braga, 2013, Civitarese, 2014). As analyst, assuming a BFT vertex has meant no longer feeling K-subdued by the idea/task/urgency of having to understand in order to be able to interpret, but rather feeling O-called to immerse myself, with the patient, in the field, to try to give a name, shape, sense and tale to all the proto-mental magma that might agglomerate in the characters interpreting the field (2009, 2013), echo in the narrative plots co-created with the patient (Ogden, 2001, 2009), soothe or stun in proto-sensorial implosions or explosions. An analytical journey towards the unknown-O that I think, I try to live with few, fundamental

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⁴ Dreaming ensemble is conceptualized by Grotstein as a mental chromosome for dreaming, constituted by the ensemble of all those factors/functions that take part in the dreamwork: function, contact barrier, ♂♀, reverie, transformation, emotional ties H, L, K.

⁵ Faith: “Ability to be at one ment with O represents an act of what I’ve called Faith. It’s... for me “Faith” is a scientific state of mind.” Bion, (1970). Attention and Interpretation, p.31.
tools: the current state of my dreaming ensemble, which might grow, or also black out in mental coupling with patients; the field as location, place but also GPS (signals from the field, Levine. H.B., 2013) of all the β (♂) in search of containing (♀,♂♀) and α-work; the awareness that the field might/must sicken with the patient’s nightmare in order to dream it, and that real dreams may sometime emerge from dark and lengthy moments of at-one-ment with O (Bergstein, 2014, Bion, 1970), in which I will have to tolerate the darkness of not knowing (faith, negative capability) to be able to start dreaming (reverie). This has also been the pleasure of discovering being able to dream with the patient undergoing analysis and the wonder of observing the measure of psychic relief and symptomatic remission it can generate. And thinking and living my relationship with colleagues as a dream lifeboat of oneirc decongestion in case of analytical β-burns. (Lucantoni, Pietrantonio, 2014).

I wonder if, in the evolution of psychoanalytical thought, BFT may embody an oneic leap allowing the conceptual figurability of deep nuclei of the analytical process and of its functions, which perhaps had always been present albeit unthinkable before Bion’s O→K rolevolution and its scientific blossoming in the clinical and theoretical works of his successors (Civitarese, Ferro, Grotstein, Ogden etc.). A highlighting of therapeutic processes and active principles present in the unconscious inter-psychic areas of the analytic couple that seems the focus of ample areas of clinical discovery and theoretic elaboration in contemporary psychoanalysis (Bolognini, 2008, Birksted-Breen 2012, Botella 2001, Diamond, 2014, Levine, H.B., 2012, 2014, Levy, 2012); a contemporary psych’O’analysis that enucleates the seed of life and mysterious growth of the mind in the oneirc photosynthesis, which can happen during the unconscious intercourse between two minds, reminding future Homo Sapiens that the feeling of existing (Bion, 1979, Ambrosiano, Gaburri, 2008, Vallino, 2010) as a person depends on one’s remaining a member of the tribe of story tellers instead of mere technicians (Gottschall ibid., Grotstein ibid.). An oneic revolution that deepens the analytical

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6 “The value of psychoanalytic formulations therapeutically is greater if they’re conductive to transformations in O...The psychoanalytic vertex is O... Every object known or knowable by man, including himself, must be an evolution of O. It’s O when it has evolved sufficiently to be met by K capacities in the psychoanalyst”, Bion (1970), Attention and Interpretation, p. 27.
probe broadens the field of research and cure in psychoanalysis, becomes a transfer object for the ripening of a subjectivation-differentiation between analyst and psychoanalysis (Bion, 1970): the aim of analysis (BFT) becomes the development of the personal capacity of dreaming their own emotional experience by analyst, patient, analytic couple and field.

Robbie: are you willing to live the nightmare? … Body field and somatic reverie

Robbie had landed in my study like a giant ET on a meteor: tall, bald, wearing thick-lensed glasses behind which I felt I couldn’t discern his eyes, as if they were blanketed behind a dense fog. He had started nervously moving around the room, talking disjointedly and trying all possible positions: the sofa, the chair, the couch. A brief halt vis-a-vis: “I’ve come for the pushing...I do that”, and then his exiting after 15 minutes, leaving me alone in the room, dealing with a Niagara of terror and a Nile of tenderness. A second encounter, 15 more minutes wandering in the room, the appearance of the first characters: Nirvana, The Grunge, Basquiat and Guernica. Then his absence: an emptiness which was also a clap of thunder. Robbie missed the third appointment and for months I heard nothing from him. His parents then called me back for a consultation and terrifying scenes of domestic violence ravaged the field: blows, punches, kicks and knife threats. The angst of being unable to decide between intake and referral to a psychiatrist-analyst, imagined as more competent than me in moving around the ruins of the psychotic catastrophe in which Robbie seemed to stagger aimlessly. Terror, dangers, violence and desolation: Robbie was asking me to try surviving together in a world where everything seemed to be dead, agonizing or intensely persecutory. But, like the child and his father in The Road (McCarthy, 2006), he had enabled me to glimpse the possibility of stories we could try narrating together: proto-stories that he had scattered in the field like pebbles, names-characters-concentrates of proto-emotions, proto-fantasies, proto-sensations, protozoa of dreams seeking oneiric transformations. He had made me experience the need, the potential and the important hope that perhaps he had sensed in the analytic experience: he had come back, showing me a surprising capacity to maintain contact and ties, compared to his apparent mental wreckage. My initial brutal
temptation to reject had turned into a blend of fear and poignancy and I had felt an emerging courage/desire to try to work with Robbie analytically.

Thursday morning. I’ve been meeting Robbie once a week for a year. I’ve just been asked to move a consultation scheduled for this time slot. I fill in a monthly accounting table and I have the disquieting feeling I have forgotten someone. Once I’ve finished, I leave my study. About an hour later my mobile rings, while I’m absorbed in a sensation of dispersion pervading a weird morning: “Violet, a patient called for you...” I immediately recall Robbie, our session, and I live the terrifying experience of re-emerging, reawakening from a state of utter stupor, an absence of thought and mental life: the psychotic experience of being mindless (Bion, 1962, 67, Grotstein, 1979, Ogden, 1991, Schlesinger, 2006)? As I cycle as fast as I can to the study, fear, angst and pain of an overwhelming sort overrun me: “But how could this have happened to me? In 15 years of practice I have never missed an appointment... Am I deteriorating? Going psychotic? And how lacerating will the experience of not finding me at the usual time and place have been for Robbie.” I’m assaulted by a myriad of theoretical concepts/explanations: breach of the setting, acting out, projective counter identification. I have no way out of the grip of my psychoanalytic Super ego: it really does seem to me that an irreparable catastrophe has occurred. Locking my bike, 8 minutes late, I find myself, surprised, hosting an unexpected reverie: for the first time I feel, with heart-breaking tenderness, that I can see and recognize in Robbie, waiting outside my study, the lonely, adopted Nigerian child, lost in the catastrophic landscape of desertion. Robbie is by now a young man, adopted in early childhood by a couple of F.A.O delegates, information that was recorded in my mind... But that morning had I not perhaps experienced in my own mind’s viscera (Ferro, 2014) what being adopted might really mean? Being adopted in analysis? At the end of every session being suddenly dispersed in the immense emptiness of an absolute lack of contact, losing one’s mental life in the absence of a mind bearing you in mind. And then, the piercing pain, at the beginning of every new session, of feeling oneself recalled, reawakened from the abyss of this soundless whiteness. I felt that the experience I’d just undergone was bringing to life, within me, a new, deeper understanding of the quality of the emotional experience Robbie was carrying inside. Perhaps
the bubble of a nameless catastrophe had found in the soma of the setting (somatic field Civitarese, 2013) and in my sub-thalamic: subthalamic area (Bion, 1976, De Mattos Braga) a field’s locus where it could reveal itself? Had I hallucinated and, upon awakening, started dreaming the unutterable nightmare devastating Robbie’s mind? (Civitarese, Lucantoni, Pietrantonio) An acute enactment (Cassorla, 2012, Grotstein ibid.) in which Robbie had cast me to represent a nightmare lurking in the field, so we could achieve an authentic unison and start dreaming it? Thoughts begotten by the first reverie which helped me to bear the deep pain caused both by what had actually happened between us, and by thinking that the terrifying experience I had suffered for a few minutes might be the same colonizing Robbie’s mind. The terror of mental ruin transformed in hope for oneiric possibilities. Grasping the hypothesis of a projective counter-identification (Grindberg, 1979) (K→O) perhaps I might have realised I acted the role of the mother, of the abandoning parents, probably projected onto me by Robbie… but, at least in my feeling, the inkling of an insufficiency of containment and thought capability on the part of the analyst, entailed by this concept, would have aroused in my mind a –K super egoic phase spreading fear, impotence, guilt, self-reproach and criticism that would have strangled the possibility of housing the pain of this experience as humus for the analytic cure. A memory and desire laden K would have sealed any O-infiltrations, blocking their passage, stay and possible evolutions. Finding the BFT lens enabled me to recognize, in the reverie appeared in my mind, the possible incipit of a (O→K) transformation in dreaming within the analytical field.

“Doctor! I was afraid you’d forgotten me!!!” Robbie happily greeted me, perhaps he glimpsed in my sorrow for the delay, in our staying together in the session the upsetting nature of new emotions and comprehension racing through my mind.

Joker, Hitman, Tak the mole cub searching for a home, Dodo the frozen mammoth egg scientists found, were the new characters bringing into the field the possibility of experiencing and narrating the brutal violence of murders ♂♂ that can haunt the mind of those who have suffered extreme desertion, but
also the affection and hope reviving at the thawing of baby ♂♂ preconceptions, waiting for a home ♀ to play ♂♀ and feed on amilk.

**Janet: reverie as oneiric criteria for analysability**

Janet rang me late one evening on the eve of Halloween.

“... Do you practice analysis? ... What is your fee?” A faltering voice, mumbled words, the abusive forcefulness of an interrogation I cannot avoid answering, question after question, as if a knife was at my throat.

Waiting for her in my study at the appointed time, I find my mind beset with images of killers, stalkers, fantasies that she might enter with a knife and kill me, that she might follow, even stalk me... Is this the Horror Janet feels hounded by?

When I open the door I’m greeting a young hippy, with a soft voice and clumsy, slow, lopsided movements. As soon as she’s seated in front of me and talking, I am reminded of Janet Frame in “An Angel at my Table”. In a disorganized and piecemeal way Janet explains that she had stopped taking lithium because she thought she could make it, but then she felt terrible once again. Only stumbling sentences on angst and her pathology, the wrong womb operations, her fear of losing her job. I sense her lost, confused, adrift: a woman who seems to have managed to land here, with unspeakable exertion, from a vortex of nothingness... as if she had no history, home, ties, only a deep seated angst-ridden inferno where she fears burning alive...

Janet asks me for an analysis: “It’s the last resort before the asylum, I have no faith, but I must try...” I feel I am afraid, afraid of embarking on a difficult, dangerous journey. Yet, being with her, I also feel that I am connecting to the typhoons and tsunamis of my past, and the certainty that analysis has helped me rebuild, navigate, dream: perhaps it could also help her to break free of the nightmare in which she is agonizing? Would fear make me omit assistance I could provide?

I’ve been seeing Janet three times a week. Sessions for the first three years were vis-a-vis: Janet was afraid of the couch... I decided not to force her, waiting for possible thalamic transformations.

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7 Thalamus in Italian Talamo means both thalamus and marriage bed.

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In the image of Janet’s body buried to the neck and paralyzed under a cover of debris and rubble (β) appeared in my mind in our first meeting. I identify the reverie-prelude to my dreaming analysis with Janet as possible: I traced, in the confused chaos of the verbal fragments uttered in the room, the SOS her exhausted voice murmured, engulfed by the angst, urgency and terror felt by someone dreading the slide into psychical death. Recognizing in Janet’s nightmare the obscurity of my past nights and the possibility of finding the light of oneiric life through analysis was, I believe, the dream like memory (Bion, 1970) I felt I should use to embark on this analysis; an analysis I might perhaps not have undertaken if I had delved in the forest of analysability criteria (Etchegoyen, 1986) that was gaping open in my left hemisphere (Grotstein, 2009), because in the contradictory teeming of voices and assessment categories (Paolino, 1981) I would have felt paralyzed by confusion, fear and uncertainty. It seemed to me that, by assuming a BFT vertex, I could recognize an oneiric criterion of analysability, capable of showing me, as well as terror and dangers, the need and the potential for a psychic reawakening that Janet’s request for analysis brought within itself. 

Janet-Janet Frame who had saved herself by narration, who had escaped lobotomy thanks to meeting a doctor who recognized in her suffering not the signs of malignant schizophrenia, but of her panic from emotions: perhaps this had been the firstborn dream come to light in the analytical field of our first contact, a signal/dream signalling both the need and the potential for oneiric function and space, which would also make me think about grafting dreaming stem cells in the field at the beginning of analysis, in sessions controlled by the psychiatric interrogations of a Lombroso-Super-ego. A hypertrophied super-egoic presence, which, in a state of primitive conscience (Bion, 1976-1979; De Mattos Braga), opposes access to the emotional experience, like a solitary sentinel, taking up arms at the slightest sound of emotional ♂♂, sensed as possible assassins of an inane baby, orphan of ♀♀♂, reverie. A –K Lieutenant who perhaps might only get paranoid if faced with an interpretation (perceived as oracle shot out by an enigmatic and bizarre sphinx Eaton, 2005), but that, like Shahriyar, might instead doze off and

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8 Telling her stories, proposing images appearing in my mind as reverse.
9 Arabian Nights.
start dreaming, at least for a while, if coming across a *Shahrazad function*… And we are on the dreaming roads that BFT has brought onto the field of contemporary psych’O’analysis.

**Super-super Ego and oneiric din-dins: Blanko and Lola**

Lola and Blanko, a child and a man who, like Janet, have made me feel and suffer in the analytic field the hardships and terror of a psychic life/concentration bcamp, where the blind tyranny of a Super-ego is in force, trying to silence any and all whispers of emotional life, blocked and starving in a state of violent, nameless, terrifying proto-sensations (due to absence of ♀,♀♂ and reverie). They have placed before me the analytic task of softening this obstructing Super-ego and of introducing a work melting these bmasses petrified in the body or in the mind to the point of clogging all possibility of intimate relationship (♀♂). They made me discover the potential for oneiric orientating and transformation housed in exercising negative capability and in the analytical work of approaching and narrating the characters who enter the field or appear in the analyst’s mind as “flash type” reverie (Ferro, 2013).

**Working through the field: short trailers from the analytic room. Blanko and Pasquale, the killer.**

Blanko is almost 28 when he arrives at my practice. With a fair professional life as dubber and lupus covering his skin and all the genital area with blisters that itch and break, bleeding. A Lupus obliging him to avoid all type of intimate contact, experienced as horrifying and impracticable. A Lupus that from a BFT point of view could be dreamt as a leprous agglomerate of nameless proto-sensations and proto-emotions needing a Folleraucentre-function in the field to enable their being welcomed, felt, narrated. A Lupus that in the fifth year of analysis (4 sessions a week) seems to have disappeared, letting Blanko have a girlfriend and intercourse, yet still only using a condom. An analysis which has mainly been the attempt of implanting oneiric function by the narration of the emotional background encrypted in the characters emerging in the field.
First month of analysis. Monday

Blanko enters prey to a havoc-wreaking death angst. The concreteness of the menace he seemed to perceive was so strong that I found myself twitching, confused:

P.: “I am so out of it. Yesterday evening I drew up my will…”

A.: (surprised, dazed, as if he’d thrown a Rosetta Stone of sombre premonitions at my head) “Will?”

P.: “Yes, I feel exposed. I’m afraid Pasquale may come up and kill me. He’s sent me a mail where he wrote: ‘Just so you know, even if you’ve thrown me away, I still exist’. I’m afraid that he may come up, make a Mafia scene and kill me…I feel in danger!!”

A.: “Are you afraid that this person feels so full of anger he wants to kill you, having experienced this separation as a desertion?” (And I realize it’s Monday!!!)

It’s only by approaching the Pasquale character that I myself, as an analyst, find in my mind a path to follow in the emotional storm suddenly crashed in the room; a path that will unexpectedly lead me to an insight. An insight that will allow me to intuit that perhaps Pasquale is simply the personification of killer-separation’s contents that Blanko fears will internally attack him at the week end. Once Pasquale has become less terrifying and tamer to me, I can also propose to Blanko a work of sensitive-narrative approach to the “killer Pasquale”; a work of narrative transformation that seems to allow him a progressive familiarization with the violence of feelings that may be experienced during a separation… Feelings that, nearing the Christmas holidays, appear to begin transforming in emotions that can be told in the story of The Little Prince:

P.: “That passage in “The Little Prince” is a con. The Little Prince says goodbye to the fox after having tamed it. The fox has changed, it has transformed itself,… but the fox is the one who gave itself and it is the one remaining…while the Little Prince returns to his rose…”

The work of narrative transformation of the characters that popped up in the field seems to have led Blanko to a recovery/reanimation of his α function, (Grotstein ibid., Pietrantonio, 2015) slowly allowing his oneiric singing of mental states hitherto completely aphasic, partly evacuated in the
other and partly, perhaps, in his body (Bion, 1979, Ferro, 2006, Meltzer, 1986, Rosenfeld, 1987).

If chosen and approached through a work of casting (Ferro, 2009), characters may, for both analyst and patient, become real mediums for the revelation, discovery and literacy of proto-emotional devices mutely hovering or wandering, camouflaged in the field, highly charged with symptomatic explosive/implosive power. My analytical practice with Blanko and other patients has also made me experience what seems to me a compass function offered to the analyst by working with characters (BFT), in situations of btornado that may stupefy or overwhelm the analyst’s oneiric-function itself.

Wreck-It Lol: negative capability, reverie and introduction of a character

Lola (9 years old, 3 sessions a week) had not spoken during our first meeting, arriving from Zurich overweightand with a diagnosis of dyslexia… and perhaps a bomb/mass of nameless shrink-wrapped in the silence we discovered: a bubble full of things that cannot be said; perhaps because one cannot speak if one doesn’t know the alphabet of emotions. Perhaps it is because we hate words if they have always only been addressed to us to establish rules (♂) and never to give a name to our feeling (♀). The silence of emotions has long been the Hannibal Lecter keeping the field: a silence boxed in an icy love of rules, injected with subtle dream killing botulin, a silence to breathe and suffer. A curfew-silence imposed by a regimen of terror of emotions? Throughout the entire first year Lola “The teacher” would arrive with a timetable of games and rules to carry out: drawings, picture cards, gymnastic lessons. It was absolutely forbidden to talk, think, approach the characters: I could only obey. A year of sombre and stifling analytic alexithymia, in which I would waver between temptations of interpretative rebellion and the feeling of being within an un-representable/ indigestible O-bbolus that perhaps needed ♀ and a slow αα protease to be metabolized in dreams. Just before first summer holidays, Lola’s invitation to taste one of her First Communion sugared chocolates, the unexpected, vivid sensorial reverie of breast feeding that pervades me as I suck the chocolate filling and the first oneiric flash: had being at-one-ment been as sweet and fundamental
as breastfeeding? Feeling in *communion*, for the *first* time, the humiliation, the pain, the impotence one is made to feel impaled upon by the mute, stifling violence of the “rules”? A dream experienced in silence, which however had marked a caesura in the field: Lola’s first dream-stories had blossomed with the first games germinated in the hic etnunc of the analytic togetherness… Her first successes and comprehensions at school, and the parents’ idea of *ending* analysis. Under threat of this premature separation, *Bully-Lola* bursts into the room.

3rd year of analysis. One day Lola enters definitely ablaze with unleashed anger. She tries starting the usual game where she is the *master* and I am the *servant who must be quiet and only obey*. Then she suddenly starts fuming and, at the mercy of a fury no longer repressible by her super-egoic apparatus, she starts violently emptying the toy chest, ransacking the furniture, and wrecking, by stomping, throwing, and tearing, all the toys. All my attempts to name or to search with her for an emotional reason or sense to what is happening only exasperate her violence and hostile scorn: “*You really are a dim-witted old hen… I told you to shut uuuuuup…!!!! Got it?? You twit!*”

Dismayed, my mind in total darkness, I feel I can but only wait: respect her request for silence, searching for a silent unison in this *samba* of wreckage and destruction that Lola seems to be dancing, drunk with excitement and pleasure “*I like breaking everything .. I do what I want… so then you have to work hard to tidy up…*” In my mind images of the French Revolution, 1968 are racing… Violence expressing rebellion against an unbearable status quo, violence antiphon to change…

**We are already at the fourth “Black Bloc” session:**

After 10 minutes of stomping on the unbroken objects, she is serially decapitating and mutilating all the baby dolls. Every time I’ve tried to utter a word, she has scornfully cut me off. Crushed, I nevertheless feel it important to find a way enabling me both not to lose my oneiric function and to let her know that I’m still here, that I haven’t lost my head, that I’m trying to attune to the tsunamic *O* rampant in the room. Would drawing, writing help me? At this point an image springs to my mind: it’s a pictogram of a character and of
a possible oneiric story to tell. I silently rise, get a scrap of paper and the only surviving pencil and start writing:

A.: Once upon a time there was “Wreck it” Lol.
She was an intelligent girl, with a rich, gentle spirit…
One day she suddenly caught an odd fever.
(I stop: the scrap of paper is chock-a-block).
P.: “What have you written? Read it…”
An.: I read it.
P.: “I like the name (she snickers)… Keep on writing, it’ll be the only comic I won’t destroy.”
A.: I look for another piece of paper and I continue:
She didn’t know how and she didn’t know why. But suddenly she felt ablaze with the irresistible urge of breaking everything. And the more she broke, cut and wrecked, the more she wanted to break, cut and wreck.
(I stop again: this scrap full too).
P.: “Read.”
A.: I read.
P.: “Go on.”
A.: “Oh, the time has come to say goodbye for today, if you want we can continue Monday…”
Lola asks me to continue the story during the following sessions.

Monday
A Doctor arrived at Lol’s home and told her Mom:
“Madam, it seems it’s a fever… And if it’s a fever, something must have caused it: stodgy food, germs or perhaps a bug, like the ones there’s so many of around before Christmas… Perhaps Lol could help us…”

Wednesday
Lol’s Mom: “Doctor, this is a bit of a problem: Lol hates words… they seem to bother her… especially when she’s got this fever…”
P: as if waking up after abintoxication: “Violet, you must do something for me. Look for all the broken things and put them in one pile, and then the whole ones and put them in another: so that then I can see the ones I can throw away…”

During the following sessions before Christmas (holidays) she asks me to help her in tiding up the objects and cleaning the room… Together, in the
calm after the storm, silently feeling the relief mingled with the pain of heavy emotional clots arising from the vision of the storm-after…

Lola hates words, perhaps because the sound of words talking about emotions may have vibrations of intolerable intensity (Schneider, 1992) to ears that have never heard them before. Images/characters born in my mind from experiences of being at-one-ment and reveries with the ultrasonic violence that ran throughout the field have hitherto enabled me to feel I can dream in silence, in expectation/trust/hope (F) that this silent oneiric work in the field may become mental tissue for a film of thought (Hautmann, 1998) and a contact barrier (Bion ibid., Collovà, 2007; Grotstein ibid.) perhaps necessary, not just to the dreamwork but also to the non-deafening audibility of proto sensorial uproar.

Conclusions

From a BFT perspective the analysts’ mind is a place in the field where passages, evolutions, oneirisations of O can generate transformations of the field itself, even if not verbalized. I believe my analytic life with Lola has revealed to me, made me rediscover (Ogden, 2009) and better understand the oneiric-essence of transformation in psychoanalysis: talking is not necessary to the dreaming cure.

Of course, I think this is just a small dream of mine as analyst on a theory (BFT) whose oneironergic properties of oneiric-transitional-object in the analytic field I have the impression I have been able to experiment myself.

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