

A CLINICAL APPLICATION OF BION'S CONCEPTS
VOLUME 3

VERBAL AND VISUAL APPROACHES TO REALITY



P. C. SANDLER



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OF BION'S CONCEPTS

Volume 3



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Verbal and Visual Approaches
to Reality

P. C. Sandler

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2013 by Karnac Books Ltd.

Published 2018 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 9781780490687 (pbk)

Typeset by V Publishing Solutions (P) Ltd., Chennai, India

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this book but points out that some imperfections from the original may be apparent.

To Ester, Daniela, Carolina, Clara, Luiz and Antoine

*To the memory of my parents, Dr Jayme Sandler
and Mrs Bertha Lerner Sandler*



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Solomon saith, *There is no new thing upon the Earth.* So that as Plato had an imagination, that *all knowledge was but remembrance;* so Solomon giveth his sentence, that *all novelty is but oblivion.*

—Francis Bacon, 1625

One of their heirs who gave utility to their wisdom, Freud, made an observation out of this: *out of the creativity of a couple, claims to originality are but deluded omnipotence.*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the closing volume of the series *A Clinical Application of Bion's Concepts*. The completion of this whole series of books would not have been possible without the kind support of Drs Eduardo Berger, Waldemar Ortiz, Luiz Paulo Kowalski, Marcelo Ferraz Sampaio, Gisela Tinoni, Mauricio Ibrahim Scanavacca and José Eduardo de Souza, who have dedicated their own lives to help and care for other people's lives. A similar kind of gratitude is due to Drs Jayme Sandler and Ester Hadassa Sandler, and Mrs Francesca Bion. I was blessed by their constant inspiration and loving stimulus. The seemingly inexhaustible help from Mr Oliver Rathbone and Mrs Anna Nilsen followed on; the model of a midwife furnishes a pale idea of their joint work, which resulted in a readable contribution. Another kind of stimulus, remarkable for its timing, came from Drs Klaus von Röckerath and Thomas Hartung and the psychoanalytic group from Cologne; and from Dr. Abel Feinstein, from the International Psycho-Analytical Congress at Chicago, 2009, who granted me the possibility to do the first Official Course about Bion's work in the programme of the Congress—the critical contributions of its attendance allowed improvements in one of the chapters, The multi-dimension Grid. As was the case with the previous books,

I owe the making of this book to the patients who came to see me looking for help; for ethical reasons it is not possible to name them. In this sense, I hope that my personal need to share, which generated both this series of books and its “older brother” *The Language of Bion: A Dictionary of Concepts*, may prove to be rewarding and nourishing rather than a waste of time for the prospective reader. In contrast to love, time is the one and only unreturnable, unrenovable and irreplaceable good in human life.

PREFACE

Rocco Antonio Pisani and Mario Giampà

We have tried to combine the two currents, starting from the presupposition that there is no dichotomy in the scientific approach, but an integration of discoveries that have scientific value.

It is really extremely difficult to write a preface to this important book by Paulo Cesar Sandler. I have decided that the best preface to his book could be a synthesis of what we both share in a psychosomatic holistic outlook.

On the occasion of his Seminar held in Rome in 2004, Paulo participated as an observer at a Median Group conducted by me in the Department of Neurological Sciences in La Sapienza University. It was conducted in accordance with the theoretical, methodological and technical approach of S.H. Foulkes and Patrick de Maré, originator of the Median Group. Paulo was very impressed by the group's profound level of insight-outsight. He made some comments, which supplemented Bion's thoughts, on the group of basic assumptions and on the work group, in a context basically pertaining to Foulkes and de Maré. We commented that free floating dialogue, corresponding to the free association of the psychoanalytic session in a wider context, is the fundamental premise for transforming a group of basic assumptions in a work group. I was totally astounded by Paulo's vast knowledge

that ranges from psychosomatic medicine to psychoanalysis, to group analysis, philosophy, anthropology, music, and generally speaking to every field of culture.

With Paulo I share *the psychosomatic approach to all medical problems*. In the Symposium on Psychosomatic Medicine entitled "Group analysis and Psychosomatic Illnesses" held in Rome at the Accademia Lanciaiana in May 2004, we had an opportunity to compare our ideas on this subject. Citing Bion, Paulo declared that it is impossible to separate the body from the mind since it is an inseparable reality.

Foulkes also affirms that there is no contraposition between psychological illness and physical illness: everything that is psychological is at the same time biological and social, and vice versa: theory and the group analytic method do not have pseudo-problems such as biological versus cultural, somatogenic versus psychogenic, individual versus group, reality versus imagination (Foulkes & Anthony, 1965).

Psychosomatic disturbances express repressed unconscious meanings through somatisation. When the mind has lost its ability to symbolise it has also lost its verbal ability, and it is the body that speaks. The person has stopped speaking to himself, whereas it would be necessary to speak in order not to fall ill.

Paulo, with great perspicacity, points out that the purpose of analysis is not to interpret symbols but to understand that the absence of symbolisation and ways of expression are functions of nervous discharge, obstruction and acting out (Sandler, 2005b). I add that the translation of meaning rather than its interpretation, as group analytic practice teaches me, can encourage symbolisation when patients are ready and motivated to make the transition from the symptom to the meaning. It is a question of assessing the expediency of remodelling the psychosomatic defence mechanism. The question is this: is it expedient to demolish the defence mechanism or is it better to reinforce it?

I would like to return to some fundamental concepts expressed by Dennis Brown, which I feel are widely shared with Paulo. Brown is the group analyst who has studied psychosomatic disturbances most (Brown, 1985, 1989, 1997). Brown takes up Nemiah's and Sifneos' concept of alexithymia: the inability to find words to express sensations, emotions, feelings, fantasies and impulses.

For Freud (cited by Brown) the Ego is above all a corporeal Ego. Mental functions emerge gradually from bodily functions in the first and second years of life, from the original mother-child unity.

Development implies a process of desomatisation, a concept reiterated by Bion with the proto-mental state, beta elements and alpha function. Psychosomatic difficulties go back to preverbal, pre-symbolic experiences based more on psychotic parts.

An initial process can be the theory of alpha function where sensory impressions, including feelings, become elements that will form thinking, dreaming and memory (Sandler, 2005b). The child's physical experiences, from which his mental functions emerge, are basically influenced not only by the mother-child relationship, but also by the father, by the family and by the social culture in which the child is immersed.

Brown cites Joyce McDougall, according to whom the mind-body differentiation processes can be disturbed by the main attachment figures which may be very close and harmful or very distant at the moment when the Self emerges from the mother-child symbiosis and the mind emerges from the undifferentiated psychosoma. Real psychosomatic disturbances are more regressions to primitive preverbal states (Bion's proto-mental state). Genetic predisposition and environmental factors can be fostered by failures, on the level of mother-child interaction as well as on the level of familial communications and socio-cultural attitudes.

Physical symptoms represent a blocking of communication, and at the same time they are an indirect communication. Their treatment involves the creation of meaning and symbolisation on the part of individuals who remain chained to the somatisation of babyhood, in cases where this process is possible. Group analytic work consists of discovering the meaning of these symptoms at the most primitive (proto-mental) level so that they can be desomatised, translated into words and mentalised.

Sooner or later psychosomatic patients abandon their dependence on somatic forms of communication. The group proves to be a better container than one's own mother or family, frustration no longer inevitably activates the primitive (proto-mental) psychosoma. It is necessary to tolerate and control anxiety, pain, lack of help, dependence and rage (beta elements). The group facilitates communication and the conductor must facilitate communication on deeper primitive levels and eventually translate them into words (alpha function).

Psychosomatic disturbances, such as conversion hysteria, imply "the mysterious leap from the mind to the body". Their treatment, like dream analysis, can offer another "royal road to the unconscious" and

to the “mysterious leap”, revealing unrecognised and split affections within its matrix of relations from the beginning, before the mind-body differentiation.

Merendino (2003) studied cases of serious organic pathology: leukaemia, cancer, AIDS, etc. His opinion is that deadly disease in general and cancerous diseases in particular come from the subject’s early loss, beyond a given threshold, of communicative ability with regard both to the outside world and to the internal world. For Merendino “there is no mental operation that does not have its correspondence in the soma, there is no somatic operation that does not have its mental correspondence”. This means that in treating the mind we also treat the body, and in treating the body at the same time we treat the mind.

A similar concept to the one expressed by Paulo: “When Freud and Klein tolerated the paradox of the indivisibility of the life and death instincts, or Bion of the ‘minus’ ambit, which Green suggests calling ‘negative’, they gave us a way that sometimes allows psychosomatic medicine to be also somatopsychotic” (Sandler, 2005b).

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Even before reading the book, the chapters listed in the contents as well as the bibliography highlight “emotional disturbance” as W. R. Bion understands it: when two thinking minds meet. Here the reader’s mind meets Wilfred Ruprecht Bion’s mind and Paulo Cesar Sandler’s mind. Mental becomes a word inadequate for describing psychic reality, which in my opinion is the purpose of the book. So we find we are reflecting between verbal thought and unconscious thought, when we put ourselves in the mental position of having little memory and little desire. Sandler encourages us to think again, together with him, about what Bion proposes in his “scientific psychoanalysis”, namely, about experiences that cannot be learned through the senses, an attempt—not an easy one for us Westerners—to understand the autonomous life of the unconscious.

In 1977 Bion wrote that real life is a mystery, and real life is the concern of real analysis! We should think of the mystery! Psychic reality is Bion’s field of study, and Paulo Cesar Sandler discusses this psychic reality in his book, examining it and reflecting on it from the dawn of the birth of thought, through philosophers and psychologists of the

calibre of Julius Jaynes (1976), who postulated the existence of the bicameral mind and its collapse, up to and beyond Jacob Arlow (1996), who wrote about the concept of psychic reality. Sandler suggests that we should go further in the knowledge we have of the functioning of the mind, recalling the Grid and the consequent structure of the apparatus to think the thoughts presented by Bion. The epistemologist Bion proposes the apparatus of the Grid, using the scientific deductive system in order to understand the individual and group unconscious both in psychoanalysis and in groups. To understand what there is in the myths of Babel, Eden and Oedipus and in the basic assumption of the messianic expectation that will free us from the nameless Terror. Undoubtedly he proposes a method for “scientific” thinking that unites Western thought and Asian thought. In a seminar in Rome, Parthenope Bion Talamo described her father as a Eurasian.

In this work Paulo Sandler is not alone, in that giving a “scientific” answer to the functioning of the mind is the theme of all modern thinkers. Roger Penrose, who investigates the fundamental laws of the universe, published *The Road to Reality* (2004), concluding that the answer to profound questions arouses even more profound questions. This is what Bion maintained and what Sandler re-proposes: the search for the formless, for the infinite, for the ineffable of non-existence.

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INTRODUCTION

Antonio Sapienza

When I wrote the preface to *The Language of Bion: A Dictionary of Concepts*, published in 2005 by Karnac Books, I felt that it was a valuable contribution to practising analysts. In hindsight, provided by observation over a seven-year span, I see that I was not alone in such an evaluation. As a companion to the dictionary, the author has delivered another timely publication: *A Clinical Application of Bion's Concepts*, in three volumes. It presents many correlations which link remarkable theories from Bion with a detailed selection of personal clinical experiences spanning almost four decades of psychoanalytic practice.

In accepting the invitation to introduce the third volume, I was faced with the following eminently practical issues, often put as questions rather than affirmative answers by authorities: *A Multidimensional Grid*, *The Verbal Irruption of the Unknown*, *Free-Floating Attention: The Personal Factor*; *Psychoanalysis and Epistemology: Relatives, Friends or Strangers?* and *Truth*. The book ends with considerations on a theme which marked Bion's earliest incursions in the field: *Groups: A Sixth Basic Assumption?*

Sandler dwells on these issues, profiting from one among many of Bion's instigating questions, which pervades the whole text: "It seems absurd that a psychoanalyst should be unable to assess the quality of his work". The reader is invited to get in touch with theories of

observation devised by Bion in the 1960s—which, alas, still are unknown to a sizeable number of members of the psychoanalytic movement. Starting from Bion, Sandler proposes models and modulating tools borrowed from Mathematics and Physics. He aims to get fundamental support to link to different clinical phenomena. For example: alpha function is related to capability to dream; levels of maturity obtained by the evolution from sensations and feelings towards the inception of thinking processes; preservation or destruction of the contact barrier, linked on the one hand to states of consciousness and on the other hand to intuition. Sandler also points out situations where emotional discharge and impulsiveness prevail; he assesses some characteristics that compose the psychoanalytic object through the use of formulations stemming from the philosophy of mathematics. Special care is given to describing clinical situations in which the presence of hyperbole and transformations in hallucinosis prevail. Sandler proposes some neologisms that may better describe the psychoanalytic posture, such as *de-sensifying* and *de-concretisation*, which may be gauged in the transition through the Grid categories such as A, B, C, D.

When I had the opportunity to write the preface to *The Language of Bion*, I focused on just one entry (Dream-Work-Alpha) in order to illustrate the general tone of the work. Now, what took my attention was the part of the work in which the author dealt with the multi-dimension Grid, an expansion from Bion's original two-dimension Grid. It was the result of theoretical and clinical research which took three cycles of about ten years. In the first one, Sandler proposes a tri-dimension Grid, composed of the psychogenesis of Thought Processes as its first dimension and Ego functions as its second dimension—corresponding to Bion's two-dimension Grid—to which is added a third axis, Intensity. They are represented graphically by three axes in a Euclidean-Cartesian plane. In the second cycle, Sandler introduces a fourth dimension: Time. In the third cycle, he resorts both to the research of Bion and to the research of modern physics, in a subtle way, proposing a six-dimension Grid: (1) Genetic development of thought processes, (2) Uses of the thought processes, (3) Instant intensity, (4) Dimension of the senses, (5) Dimension of Myth, and (6) Dimension of Passion. The author also explores the roots linked to the panel of mythical nature published by Bion in *The Grid*. Part I is a significant meta-psychological work and requests conditions of receptive minds, endowed with discipline and daring, to foster our adventure into exploring the Unknown in our

clinical practice. Sandler's acknowledgement of what I would name the *phylogenetic consensual memory* unites Darwin, Freud and Bion with regard to the evolution which has as its starting point what Bion called, after Kant, the Pre-Conceptions. The evolution can be put as Bion did:

Pre-Conception → Conception → Concepts

Sandler chose the narrative of a dream with an atomic bomb related by a patient who makes moving incursions using Einstein's concepts as his free associations. It constitutes an exercise—to my mind, beautiful—of architectonic drama, which fairly expresses the reality of an analytic session, similar to fictional suspense in an environment made by the political and cosmological fields. The author emphasises Bion's claim that the psychoanalytical exercise provided by the Grid is to be cultivated and trained *outside the session* by each analyst. In this case, it was used to detect the continuous bombardment of beta elements, which Sandler had earlier (in Volume 2 of the same series, which expands the content of a paper published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1997) classified under two types: the seemingly intelligible beta elements and the seemingly unintelligible beta elements, providing clinical descriptions of the seminal concept of the beta screen. They are among his expansions from Bion's concepts, in the proposals of an Anti-Alpha Function and the Minus Grid.

In Chapter Five, *The Verbal Irruption of the Unknown*, Sandler describes with precision the free associations, and the evasions represented by free dissociations, within the environment marked by the allowing tolerance of the analytic meeting. He demonstrates the real existence of conditions that allow dialogue and clinical investigation by the analytic pair.

Free-Floating Attention: The Personal Factor (Chapter Six) introduces a question: can free-floating attention be regarded as a personal factor or not? Some readers may feel the path travelled by Sandler as shocking: sometimes full of awe and frightful. As in most situations like that, it may promote sensible and energetic rewards. I dare to say that "A personal equation in two movements" demands a loving reader equipped with courage and strict confidence, and shielded by mature compassion!

Despite its eminently practical intention, the book presents to some readers agreeable surprises in the form of developing theoretical elaborations. Chapter Seven, for example, whose title is again formulated

as an instigating question (*Psychoanalysis and Epistemology: Relatives, Friends or Strangers?*) leads to chapter Eight, synthetically and perhaps enigmatically entitled *Truth*. Both are part of Sandler's research in the transdisciplinary relationships and analogies between Psychoanalysis, Physics, and the origins of those fields from the theories of knowledge and scientific knowledge (epistemology). What could be the consequences for the reader's own personality raised by Sandler's proposition in "Epistemology is to knowledge as unconscious is to mind"? "An epistemological-psychoanalytic fable" provides another paradoxical irony that may cause one to lose sleep. The pitch is heightened with "A psychoanalytic vertex: two naïvetés". Sandler's forays into the theories of knowledge extend Kant's classical formulation of the existence of Naïve Realism (that is, the belief that the apprehension of reality is obtained exclusively with the use of the sensuous apparatus) with Naïve Idealism (the belief, equally wrong, that the world or reality is a mere product of an individual mind). A lower pitch, allowing for a breath of fresh air, is found in "Truth is Beauty, Beauty Truth" as well as in "at-one-ment".

Partial access to or apprehension of truth should be distinguished from lie; it must be distinguished from feelings of ownership of Absolute Truth. Equally, there is a need to elicit the search $K \rightarrow O$, which unveils the theme related to destinies of mystics (genius or messiah). It is necessary to distinguish mystics from false prophets, liars and delirious personalities.

"'Passionate love' is the nearest I can get to a verbal transformation which 'represents' the thing-in-itself, the ultimate reality, the 'O', as I have called it, approximating to it" (Bion, 1975, pp. 197) is the quotation that heads the final chapter, which deals with groups—again, in a self-questioning tone: *A Sixth Basic Assumption?* If it is read with temperance, sobriety and serenity, mainly in the part "Some factors in the sixth basic assumption", the reader may see the emergence of the concern for life and consideration for truth that characterises "real psychoanalysis"—a formulation by Bion which is dear to Sandler.

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PART I

THE MULTI-DIMENSION GRID



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CHAPTER ONE

Scientific research in psychoanalysis

It seems absurd that a psychoanalyst should be unable to assess the quality of his work.

—Bion, 1970, p. 62

I assume that the permanently therapeutic effect of a psychoanalysis, if any, depends on the extent to which the analysand has been able to use the experience to see one aspect of his life, namely himself as he is. It is the function of the psychoanalyst to use the experience of such facilities for contact as the patient is able to extend to him, to elucidate the truth about the patient's personality and mental characteristics, and to exhibit them to the patient in a way that makes it possible for him to entertain a reasonable conviction that the statements (propositions) made about himself represent facts. It follows that a psychoanalysis is a joint activity of analyst and analysand to determine the truth; that being so, the two are engaged—no matter how imperfectly—on what is in intention a scientific activity.

—Bion, c. 1959, p. 114

Indeed, I can say that an early casualty in trying to use the Grid is the Grid itself.

—Bion, 1977a, p. 12

Proof and refutation of psychoanalytic research is best expressed by Freud's observation about free associations (Freud, 1937b). If the analyst utters something that propitiates an insight, the patient must react to it by uttering a free association. Conversely, if the patient issues a free association, the analyst must react through his or her own free-floating attention.

The cycle goes on, in a development which includes turbulence, setbacks, partial glimpses that can be regarded as good enough successes, trial and error, possible corrections, revision and expansion of something concluded earlier, and so on. The cycle can be expressed by Freud's formulations in "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937a).

Bion expanded this scrutiny through a theory of observation drawn from mathematics, bringing the models and concepts of Saturation, Transformations and Invariants (1965), which were already intuited by Freud in "The Interpretations of Dreams" (1901). Bion's concepts of Saturations and Non-saturations have their origin in Freud's theory of bounded and unbounded instincts (for example, in "Instincts and their Vicissitudes", 1915a, and "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", 1920).

The medium of communication in psychoanalysis comprises semantic and non-semantic realms of talking. In other words: verbal, linguistic representations and non-verbal, ultra- and infra-linguistic expressive-impulsive formulations. Both can easily be seen in artistic formulations; the former in poetry and prose, and the latter in the so-called expressionist and impressionist schools of painting or music, which rely on non-verbal modes of conveying emotional experiences. Starting from Klein's work with children, Bion and Winnicott were able, to an extent, to expand psychoanalytic apprehension of the non-verbal compounds which are always and constantly added to the verbal ones that were mainly studied by Freud. A disclaimer is due in order to avoid misunderstandings: this immediately previous statement does not imply that Freud did not notice the non-verbal compounds and their manifestations, which would be equivalent to denying his forays into the unconscious realm. But in many ways Freud was a harbinger and

opened some broad avenues that were later expanded or explored by a few of his followers—a possibly apt designation due to the fact that they followed his path.

For some years (roughly from 1950 to 1964) Bion was influenced by part of the neo-positivist epistemology that attained high respect from the late 1920s to the early 1970s but had diminishing influence after that time. It looked for mathematical syntaxes in scientific statements in order to check their truth value. Interested readers who are not familiar with this may look at the work of Moritz Schlick, who had some indirect influence on psychoanalysis through one of its pupils, Roger Money-Kyrle; better yet, they might save some time with the work of Rudolf Carnap, who was born in Germany but moved to the United Kingdom. One of its last exponents was Imre Lakatos. It had almost nothing to do with the positivist school, even though the very name unavoidably recalls it, except that in both frameworks of knowledge there are attempts or pretensions to provide a basis for scientific thought and research.

With this inspiration, and armed with Freud's technique of the "talking cure", Bion devised a proposal to scientifically test the extent to which an analyst's intervention apprehended the patient's psychic reality. It was a psychoanalytic, non-positivistic view of proofs and refutations *to scrutinise both patient's and analyst's verbal formulations, according to as many vertices as one could possibly gather, in order to assess their truth value*. Bion hypothesised that this measure should increase the scientific value of psychoanalysis. The main difference between Bion's approach and that of others before or after him lies in a different underlying rationale. All approaches intend or pretend to have the same general goal. The latter usually believe in a more limited positivistic¹ outlook: limited for it is seen as the one and only science; limited in relying on conscious external appearances, thus risking putting itself outside of psychoanalysis. Leaving aside earlier attempts, nowadays there are emphases which include political backing² within the psychoanalytic movement on "empirical research" (as it is understood in the school of academic psychology devoted to consciousness) and on "neuro-psychoanalysis".³ As such, they are not of concern to this study, which bears on psychoanalysis (Solms, 1995; Fonagy, 2001; Roth & Fonagy, 2005). Moreover, those approaches are the source of controversy. They are flawed by major epistemological and scientific drawbacks (Dornhoff, 2005), in my view due to their being based on

positivistic tenets and their rival claims to have advanced beyond and/or superseded psychoanalysis proper.

Material and methods

In psychoanalysis, both material and methods are one and the same: mind itself. This could not leave the analyst hapless, because other non-positivist sciences, like modern physics (post-Einstein and post-quantum) share the same feature. Research into the unknown in physics is based on probabilistic calculus of a measured interference of energies between a given known particle and a given unknown particle. Interference, in mathematical, musical and psychological nomenclature, is a synonym of relationships.

Our twofold method consists of excerpts of analytic sessions and a Grid expanded from two dimensions to n dimensions. Bion's original Grid proposed a two-dimensional representation that constantly conjoined two individual axes. One axis was numbered from 1 to infinity and represented a genetic development of thinking. Understood after Georg Cantor's set theory of ordinal and cardinal numbers, the unconscious as a kind of infinite set was a model explored by Matte Blanco. Cantor gave preference to the term transfinite, which means not absolutely infinite but, paradoxically, infinite as far as it is submitted to research. This use of his theory does not mean approval of the theory as a whole, which is beyond a psychoanalyst's task, or even as the one and only mathematical theory as a contribution to psychoanalysis. It is quoted just to use this definition, which is useful to analysts who accept dealing with the infinite. Adding Brouwer's intuitionist theory and other criticisms to Cantor (for example, Russell's paradox) may furnish a more workable contribution to psychoanalysis. The other axis, lettered from A to G (with an infinite inner classification still waiting to be named), represented the functions of thinking (or ego-functions, after Freud in "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning", 1911a). Each cell plotted in relation to the two axes can be used to characterise each verbal statement coming from both components of the analytic pair. Therefore, according to the vertex under which it is uttered, *any verbal statement may fall into one or many different grid categories*. Even one category may fall into another one.

This allows us to formulate statements that avoid descriptions of particular clinical entities being made to fit some quite different clinical entities: "Correct interpretation therefore will depend on the analyst's

being able, by virtue of the grid, to observe that two statements verbally identical are psychoanalytically different" (Bion, 1963, p. 103; 1965, p. 116).

This observation has a seminal importance to the practising analyst. Each assigned category changes kaleidoscopically according to each moment of the sessions and according to each vertex assumed by the patient and/or the analyst.

Why assign one particular category to a statement instead of any other? The decision depends on an "analytically trained intuition" (Bion, 1965, pp. 34, 50). The Grid was intended to improve it, together with other means. Chief among them, the analyst's personal analysis: "the best possible one analyst may get" as Bion emphasised many times (1977, 1979). The Grid attempts to convey the human apparatus of thought as an observational theory in psychoanalysis and this nature and intent have as an intrinsic factor the truth-seeking function.

When Bion states that the Grid has some functions, it is obvious to state that the Grid must have a *functioning*; this endows with value the idea of a mental apparatus and a mental apparatus of thinking—which are truthful formulations that come from Freud and were followed by Bion.⁴ The functioning of the original two-dimension Grid elicited, at least to me, two additional dimensions implicit in it: the axes of intensity and time (Sandler, 1987, 1999).

Bion had doubts about the success of the bi-dimension Grid to effect the improvements mentioned above, for he noticed its built-in representational flaws (1963, 1977, 1979). In principle, the Grid has in common the limitations of any human representations that strive, but cannot present reality as it is—in any given realm (artistic or scientific), which has any given discipline and media it may adopt, according to its nature, artistic or scientific. But it was soon discovered that the Grid (again, in common with some of the psychoanalytic tools that preceded it and also with those which followed it in time) had more than its share of limitations. For example, at least in my experience, it was comparatively rare to find people who realised that the Grid is endowed with a functioning.⁵ Also, the implicit dimensions of intensity and time have been difficult for many people to realise. It became noticeable (even in Bion's time, a fact detected by him) how a great many students of his work seemed to be imprisoned by the representational formulation of the Grid—which seemed to them, thanks to its form, something like a prison. The clinical utility of the Grid was put into doubt, with no reference to the availability of capacity or possibility in the onlooker or student to have grasped it, halting the studies in its very medium. Was the medium a problem? If it was, it may be useful to consider that any medium must be within the spectrum of

human catchment and apprehension. This apprehension may be extended beyond the human sensuous apparatus through our technical ability to augment it. In order to address this issue of improving the "analytic intuition utility" of the Grid in diminishing the flaws imposed by the chosen media, it was suggested that two additional representations should be added that focus on the dimension in which realisation was hitherto lacking. The present expansion tried to follow some steps in the history of science as exemplified by its earliest manifestation, mathematics. As occurred in the mathematical realm, the suggestion of a three-dimension Grid, with an axis of magnitude or intensity, expanded the two-dimensional Euclidean space of the original Grid into a three-dimensional space.⁶ A decade of further clinical experience indicated that the three-dimension Grid still had some limitations; a fourth axis, to represent time, was added. Again, the three-dimension Grid was encompassed by a four-dimension Grid; in both cases there was no replacement, just expansion. Therefore, the four-dimension grid had two axes added to the earlier two-dimensional representation in order to represent intensity and time of phenomena (Sandler, 1987, 1997). Ten years later, a representational formula for a six-dimension Grid was proposed, using other observations from Bion conjoined with data obtained in further clinical experience: the added dimensions encompassed the realms of the Sensuous, Myth and Passion, representing a more detailed scrutiny of both intensity and time axes. As in the earlier proposals, the six-dimension Grid tried to integrate scattered observations found in other parts of Bion's work.

It seemed that the six-dimension Grid, based on the achievements of the two other powerful methods of apprehension of reality, mathematics and physics, could not represent the multi-dimensional reality of psychic reality. The same situation also occurred before with mathematics, whose researchers had to, and now are able to think along n dimensions. Therefore, both three- and six-dimension Grids are provisional steps towards a more precise model to appreciate the truth value of analytic statements in the analytic session. The original Grid and its three- and four-dimensional expansions may help the reader to realise the instrument step by step. I do not claim to make more than provisional, albeit developed, expansions.

Clinical validation of psychoanalytic constructions⁷

Freud's empirical-clinical criterion: There is nothing to be gained by telling the patient that which he already knows; the obverse is valid when

he tells us what he knows. A correct construction (or interpretation) in the context it is given allows the emergence of renewed free associations. These access psychic reality to the extent that they display love of truth and regard for reality, and dispense with fraud and evasion: "The unconscious is the true psychical reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs" (Freud, 1900, p. 613; 1937a, pp. 237, 238, 248).

Extensions from Freud by Bion: "Correct analysis ... formulates what the patient's behaviour reveals"; verbal interpretation dispenses with "an emotional discharge (e.g. countertransference or acting-out) ... If analysis has been successful in restoring the personality of the patient he will approximate to being the person he was when his development became compromised". A successful outcome of analysis depends on "resolution of the Oedipus complex". "Considering any psychoanalytic session as an emotional experience, what elements in it must be selected to make it clear that the experience had been a psychoanalysis" and not "an *imitation* of psychoanalysis rather than what is genuine"? "The work of the analyst is to restore dynamic to a static situation and so make development possible ... the patient manoeuvres so that the analyst's interpretations are agreed; they thus become the outward sign of a static situation". "In reversible perspective acceptance by the analyst of the possibility of an impairment of a capacity for pain can help avoidance of errors that might lead to disaster. If the problem is not dealt with the patient's capacity to maintain a static situation may give way to an experience of pain so intense that a psychotic breakdown is the result". And vice-versa: "The interpretation given the patient is a formulation intended to display an underlying pattern". The underlying pattern is unconscious: "The psychoanalyst tries to help the patient to transform that part of an emotional experience of which he is unconscious into an emotional experience of which he is conscious" (Bion, 1965, pp. 35, 143; 1963, pp. 94, 14, 62; 1967a, p. 131; 1965, p. 32).

Bion's term "real psychoanalysis", in its original formulation, is free from moral judgments. It allows discrimination between true and false. The moral vertex turns "true *and* false" into "right *or* wrong". "And" present a paradox which calls not to be resolved; "or" turns it into an idea of attaining an absolute truth. Bion quotes Darwin: "*judgment obstructs observation*" (1962, p. 86).