Bion's ideal society: Germinating the seed of a social psychoanalytical theory

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Abstract

Unlike Freud who was widely read, used and abused by sociologists and social scientists, Bion is known in the psychoanalytical field for his theoretical and clinical work on psychosis and small groups, but is practically unknown to sociologists and social psychologists. The reasons behind this are the difficulty of his ideas and the way he expresses them in writing and speech. Nevertheless, Bion's legacy contains a large number of concepts and theories that have important implications for the understanding and study of large groups and societies. In the present study the author has gathered these Bionian concepts, theories, or, metaphorically speaking, seeds allowing them to germinate into an embryonic or rudimentary social theory. He concluded that, according to this theory, society functions at two levels, namely, work group level and the basic assumption group level. Social stability depends on the interaction between these two group levels. A stable society is characterized by a psychosocial state wherein the work group coexists in harmony with the basic assumption group. Social stagnation, deterioration, madness is the result of psychosocial state wherein the work group is entirely dominated by the basic assumption group. Moreover, a stable society is one that is capable of containing positively its members. The present study discusses in detail the basic social requirements, conditions and functions included in positive containment.

Key words: Wilfred Bion, basic assumption group, social containment, links

Introduction

Before becoming a psychoanalyst, Bion after World War I studied history or the study of the past of human race as a large group. He was also grew up among groups and very large groups from when he left his native province Muttra to his death. His experience of the psychosis of the large group as an officer of the British Army, his early experiences with organizational and therapeutic groups, and his encounter with the then famous surgeon Wilfred Trotter (1919), and his psychoanalytically based psycho-sociological ideas and his collaboration with his colleague and analyst John Rickman prepared Bion for his interest in small and groups. All these experiences has led to his now well-known theoretical legacy on groups, and suggestions concerning society.

I will, in the present paper, discuss another of Bion's facets, or his "sociological" ideas. I am using quotion marks for the term sociological, because I am not implying that Bion was a sociologist in the reductionist meaning of the term. What I want to convey through this short contribution is that Bion's work, not only his *Experiences in Groups* (Bion, 1961), contains a large number of concepts and ideas that may be used to understand large groups and society. It is a common tendency to

attach names to ideas by saying that a given idea belongs to a certain person. In other words, according to Bion (1987), ideas are usually considered as fixed private ownerships. He, on the contrary, suggests that ideas and thoughts are independent of the mind of the person to whom they are attributed. He suggested (1967) that an idea, like a seed, needs more than one hand to survive and develop. An idea is primarily without-a-thinker; it needs to be met, contained without being contamined by its container, in order to germinate, grow and, in the same time, contribute to its container's further growth. The present paper is the result of been able to meet and contain Bion's seeds until I was able to integrate them into an embryonic psychoanalytic social theory. Before starting the discussion of this embryonic theory in detail, I will first discuss briefly the influence of psychoanalysis on sociology.

Ⅰ. Psychoanalysis and social theories

The most prominent attempt to deal with society and social phenomena from the point of view of psychoanalysis comes from Freud himself, when he stated in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933) that "Sociology...dealing as it does with the nature of people in society, cannot be anything but applied psychology" (p. 216), and suggested that any kind of psychology is a social psychology.

In spite of the suspicion they display towards psychology and psychologism, some sociologists have turned to psychoanalysis to fill the areas left by sociological interpretation. One of these areas is the irational aspect of the human, or large and small groups behaviour. For sociology tends to put emphasis mainly on the rational, cognitive, and conscious aspects of society, even if it does not deny that society can behave irrationally, and unconsciously.

To remedy this negligence, certain sociologists have turned to Freud to borrow from him the concept of unconscious, drives (Eros and Thanatos), ego and superego to try to deal of the irational aspect of society, and the complex conflicts internal to the emotional lives of the people constituting it. As discussed by Craib (1989), Freud's suggestions about society has served as a basis for a number of social theories. As reviewed by Craib, some of these theories concerns the social regulation, and orientation of the drives, and the superego (e.g., Badcock, 1980, 1983; Marcuse, 1969). Other theories concerns principally the social organisation of the sexual drive, focusing on relationship within family, and the development of childhood sexuality as the basis of social organisation (e.g., Mitchell, 1975). Others deals with the types of relationship that results from social regulation and orientation and organisation of drives (e.g., Lasch, 1980, 1984). Freud's ideas are also reflected in, criticized and integrated in the works of many sociologists, especially those belonging to what is known as the Frankfurt School (e.g., Marcuse, Adorno, Habarmas, Parsons, Froom). Reviewing all these works goes far beyond the aim of the present study. Therefore, I will next discusst the kind of social theory that may be derived from Bion's work.

Ⅱ. Bion's embryonic social theory

1. The levels of functioning in the group

Since Freud and his work on group psychology (Freud, 1921), we know that the group functions at two different levels, conscious and unconscious levels, and psychoanalysis is supposed to deal with and shed light on the unconscious functioning. Approaching group functioning from a different perspective, Bion (1961)suggests three distinct levels of functioning: work group level, basic assumption group level, and protomental level.

The former two levels, work group and basic assumption group, correspond to Freud's conscious and unconscious levels, and the latter, protomental level, to one of Bion's most original contribution to psychoanalysis. When the group is functioning at the work group level, it is consciously centred on the task for which it was formed. That is, the group members are linked by a spirit of cooperation. Each member is evaluated based on his contribution to the task. Importance is attached to both the group as a whole and each individual. What characterizes principally the group is the fact that it is in touch with reality in general and the reality of its task. Using Freud's terminology, the group is governed more by the "reality principle" than by the "pleasure principle". As discussed by Bion (1961), the group resorts to scientific, rational thinking and methods required by its task. The group is able to think rationally, translate thoughts into task-related action, bear the feeling of frustration resulting from task performance, and learn from experience. Another of this level of functioning is the fact that the group is also aware of the importance of time and has a conscious need for achievement and growth. For time and growth are important elements of reality. As suggested by Bion, work group level characterizes healthy or stable groups and societies.

Work group level of functioning is, according to Bion (1961), frequently, if not always, "obstructed, diverted, and on occasion assisted" (p. 145) by another kind of functioning characterized by "powerful emotional drives" (idem.), namely the basic assumption functioning.

This kind of functioning is diametrically opposed to the work group functioning. When displaying this type of functioning the group is no more in touch with reality. This implies that the group or society is no more task-centered, and is rather phantasy-centered. The group is not united by cooperation but by "valency", or, as Bion put it,

> ... the individual's readiness to enter into combination with the group in making and acting on the basic assumptions...a readiness to combine on levels that can hardly be called mental at all but are characterized by behaviour in the human being that is more analogous to tropism in plants than to purposive behaviour (p. 116-117).

This unconscious, or more precisely promental way of combining with each other leads to the formation of a number of phantasies, or "basic assumptions" that the group members will share. Bion adumbrated three different basic assumptions, namely basic assumption of dependency

(baD), basic assumption of fight/flight (baF), and basic assumption of pairing (baP). When the group is functioning under the influence of baD, the prevailing belief "is that the group has met in order to be sustained by a leader on whom it depends for nourishment, material and spiritual, and protection" (Bion, 1961, p. 147), and not to perform a given task.

In the case of baF, the group behaves as if, it "has met to fight something or run away from it... the accepted leader...in this state is one whose demands on the group are felt to afford opportunity for flight or aggression and if he makes demands that do not do so, he is ignored" (Ibid., p. 152).

Under the influence of baP, the group behaves as if its task is to wait for the birth of a messianic leader that should be unborn and that will save the group "from feeling of hated, destructiveness, and despair, of its own or of another group" (Ibid., p. 151). Besides their differences, these basic assumptions and the types of functioning based on them share the common features that no sense of time and no process of development exist.

Moreover, under the influence of these basic assumptions, the group is unable of rational reasoning and thinking. Another important aspect is also lacking, namely absence of coherent language, or a language as a means to communicate thoughts, meanings and experiences. Bion (1961) writes that:

> Instead of developing language as a method of thought, the group uses an existing language as a mode of action...The language of the basic assumption group lacks the precision and scope that is conferred by a capacity for the formation and use of symbols (p. 186).

In other words, the group speaks a language that is not merely primitive, but rather "debased". The group speaks to say nothing, creating further misunderstanding and confusion. As an illustration for the language characterizing the basic assumption level of functioning, Bion refered to the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. The group confined to this level of functioning lacks also the ability to learn from experience. That is why, regardless of the group, Man is continuing to build towers and rationalizing their existence, learning nothing from the Biblical group. Useless to say that that level of functional characterizes unstable group and societies, or societies heading towards self-destruction.

Besides these two levels of functioning, Bion (1961) suggests a third one, the proto-mental type of functioning. According to Bion, work group always operates in combination with one basic assumption which will suppress "the overt activity of the other two basic assumptions" (p. 102). Attempting to determine the whereabouts of the two inoperative basic assumptions, he postulates the existence of a conceptual "place" he called "proto-mental system" (See, Hafsi, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004). It is within the proto-mental system that the inoperative basic assumptions groups are confined, contained or suppressed depending on the nature of the relationship between the work

group and the operative basic assumption groups. These basic assumptions are kept in the proto-mental system as of prototypes. By prototypes Bion meant undifferentiated proto-mental phenomena, that is phenomena that are clearly neither physical nor psychical or mental. To get the status of basic assumptions these prototypes have to become psychological phenomena.

When the relationship between work group and the basic assumption coexisting with is such that the two other basic assumptions are repressed and confined to a proto-mental existence, they will continue to influence the group or society. They will form a group matrix from where the so-called group or societal pathology will spring. The latter will thus indulge in a protomental activity, displaying reactions and behaviours and strong emotions that can hardly be qualified as clearly physical or mental. Bion regards this proto-mental level of functioning as a sign indicating the existence of latent group diseases with both physical and psychological aspects. Being aware of this level of the group activity, enables us to distinguish it from other types of activity, and deal with it at the right time in the here-and-now. This will neutralize the disease at its roots, and prevent catastrophic consequences.

2. The individual and the group

According to Bion (1961) the human is fundamentaly a gregarious animal. His physical and mental existence, and growth depend on the presence of a group, first the family group. Even the most socially and physically isolated person is not marginal to a group, or free from the influence of group psychology. As discussed by Grotestein (2003), Bion (1959)seems to imply that the beginning of society is the mother-infant dyad. As demonstrated by his ideas of container/contained (Bion, 1962), normal projective identification, and the dialectic of narcissism socia-lism, Bion is one of the psychoanalysts who have most "socialized" the individual psyche. As discussed later, he postulated that our thinking ability itself is the outcome of our interaction with our early part and whole objects (breast or its substitute, and mother or her substitute, group, etc.). Here is how Bion (1961) emphasizes the importance of group to the life of the individual.

> "Aristotle said man is a political animal, and in so far as I understand his Politics,
> I gather that he means by this that for a man to lead a full life the group is essential...I
> think that this statement is one that psychiatrists cannot forget without danger of
> achieving an unbalanced view of their subject....(p. 53)... I consider that group mental
> life is essential to the full life of the individual, quite apart from any temporary or
> specific need, and that satisfaction of this need has to be sought through membership
> of a group (p. 54)."

Useless to say that this statement was made concerning small therapeutic groups, but I believe that it applies also to groups of any size, small, median, large, and to society as well. For Bion

(1961), like Freud (1921), does not attribute a great significance to the factor of number, or size. This fact is clearly visible in his experiences in groups, where he uses, as illustration for his small group phenomena, examples from countries, societies and cultures. Discussing the difference between individual and the group, Bion follows Freud in rejecting the necessity of using the group as entity larger "than the sum of its members". He regarded the difference between individual psychology and group psychology as an illusion created by the abvious fact that the group is, in terms of numbers, larger than a single individual, and displays characteristic behaviors and attitudes. Here is how he puts it:

> "My experience convinces me that Freud was right to reject any such concept as, on present evidence, unnecessary. The apparent difference between group psychology and individual psychology is an illusion produced by the fact that the group brings into prominence phenomena that appear alien to an observer unaccustomed to using the group" (idem., p.169).

Bion (1961) concluded also that the human being is a group animal; "he can not help being a member of a group, even in complete isolation. This implies that individual psychology, such as psychoanalysis, is in last analysis a group psychology; it involves the analyst, the analysand and other absent members or, as Ogden (1994) puts it, third objects. Therefore, causes and explanation of certain seemingly individual characteristics and phenomena (diseases for instance) must be sought not in the individual, but in what he called the "group matrix". Puting it differently, Bion writes that:

> "there are characteristics in the individual whose real significance cannot be understood unless it is realized that they are part of his equipment as a herd animal and their operation cannot be seen unless it is looked for in the ... group." (ibid., p. 133).

However this does not imply that these characteristics are created by the group. The presence group is not necessary for these characteristics to exist. They are aspects of the individual's groupishness, or the internal group. The external and real group serves only to highlight their existence and effect. The real presence of the group has only a secondary importance for Bion. Hence, supporting Freud, Bion (1961) argued that since the human being is basically a social and political animal, there is no need for a "herd instinct" as a concept. He writes that he has "not at any time met with any phenomena that require explanation by a postulation of a herd instinct" (p. 168), opposing thus his mentor and "role model" (Bléandonu, 1994), Wilfred Trotter (1919) who advocated its existence in Man.

Using another of Bion's idea, we can thus suggest that the difference felt between the individual and the group is an illusion created by the presence of a "caesura" (Bion 1977) between the two aspects of the human condition, namely Man in physical isolation, and Man in company of others. For a more complete view of Man, it is indispensable to transcend, or go beyond this caesura to discover the continuity between the two aspects of human condition. As a tool or a means to this journey beyond the caesura, Bion (1962b) would recommend having a "binocular vision", that is, "a capacity similar to that which is in evidence when the two eyes operate in binocular vision to correlate two views of the same object" (p. 54), namely, Man.

3. The individual's dilemma

Like Freud, Bion （1961）also suggested the existence of an individual dilemma related Man's social nature, and society. According to Freud, due to his instinctual package (life and death instincts), his dependence on external objects (mother, group, society), and his inclination to seek unconditional immediate gratification of his instinctual needs, Man finds himself confronted with a dilemma. He has to choose between instinctual gratifaction, and the risk of facing repression, reprimand from society, and from the internalised superego, and, finally real or subjective isolation and alienation. Immediate instinctual gratification has for outcome, destruction of society. Therefore, Freud (1929) suggested that the role of society and civilization is to restrict, control, and channel the individual's instincts towards more social aims, to protect itself and the individual. This task is reflected in Freud's concept of sublimation. It goes without saying that this reaction from society does not concern solely the death instincts and the destructiveness inherent in them. It concerns equally the life instincts and love with its different forms, namely genital and aim-inhibited love. For as put by Freud, although love is necessary to the formation of non-sexual social relationships, and to the formation of families, they oppose society's interests under certain conditions. For love isolates or keeps the individual away from his community, and may lead to the desintegration of the latter. Therefore, according to Freud, by requiring partial instinctual renunciation, society protects society and the individual from destructiveness associated with immediate and unconditional instinctual gratification. The paradox here is that this will entail a certain amount of unavoidable and necessary misery. This Freudian idea has been further developed, slightly altered, and used by Marcuse (1969)to construct the social theory discussed in *Eros and Civilisation*.

It is not difficult to deduce from what Freud wrote about society and groups in general that the perspective from which he was thinking is, as suggested by Bion (1961), neurosis. That is, in Bion's words, "Groups would, in Freud's view, approximate to neurotic patterns of behavior" (p. 181); hence his resort to such concepts as, for instance, repression and sublimation. Approaching groups from a different vertex, namely psychosis, Bion was led to different but complementary conception of groups and individuals in groups. He thus clearly stated that groups seen from his vertex would

appear to display psychotic behavioral patterns.

According to Bion (1961), being in and a part of the group and/or society requires the ability and the will to meet the demands that societal and group life involve. Unlike Freud, Bion distinguishs clearly healthy or reality-based demands, and phantasy-based demands. The former correspond to the demands under what he calls the "work group", and the former to those characterizing the "basic assumption group" with its three different types (dependency, fight/flight, and pairing). When group or society is functionning under work group mentality, members are expected to consciously cooperate for the collective task, be able to tolerate the unavoidable feeling of frustration which results from the task. For without cooperation and the ability to tolerate frustration, there is no task, and consequently no need for the group. Cooperation is the most important *sine qua non* condition of work group, according to Bion. On the other hand, what is unconsciously required of the members functioning under the influence of the basic assumption group is being able to spontaneously combine with each other by means of "valency", that is "a spontaneous, unconscious function of the gregarious quality in the personality on man" (Bion, 1961; p. 170).

This distinction between group demands under work group and basic assumption group suggests two kinds of individual dilemma. Under work group, the individual is under pressure to choice between on one hand enjoying freedom of movement, speech, unconditional satisfaction of one's libidinal, aggressive and epistemophilic needs and risking alienation, isolation and aggression, and on the other hand, to unconsciously and consciously suppress one's needs, cooperate for the smoth execution of the collective or (group and societal) task, and the resulting individual and group growth even if this may lead to losing one's distinctiveness.

Whereas under the influence of the basic assumption group the individual dilemma is such that the individual has to choose between, on one hand, evading reality (including cooperation for the basic task) by resorting to phantasy (the phantasy of an omnipotent leader, a messianic savior, or a persecutor, depending on the dominant basic assumption) to avoid any frustrating experience, and confronting or leaving the group, running thus the risk of becoming a scapegoat. Regardless of which choice is made, in this case the outcome is the same: the collapse of the group.

Confronting group mentality: In spite of their differences, these two types of dilemma have in common the fact that as a group animal Man has to experience frustration, and reacting to it by fighting oneself and the group. It is thus to this perpetual fighting that Bion (1961) was refering when he wrote that:

> The individual is a group animal at war, not simply with the group, but with himself
> for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his
> 'groupishness' (p. 131).

As shown by this statement, it is easy to notice that Bion was building on Freud (1921), and then developing further the latter's idea, as discussed later. What he seems to mean by "those aspects of his personality" is the superego, as the internal psychic representative of the group and society in general. The person, or precisely speaking the Id in Freudian terminology, is perpetually in conflict with the Superego, because they are guided by two different principles; the former by the pleasure principle, and the latter by the reality principle. In my view, it is this internal conflict that Bion had in mind when he depicted the individual as being "at war with... himself".

Concerning the individual's war with group, Bion (1961) suggests two battles: one with the group mentality and the other with the group culture. He used the term group mentality to shed light on the political aspect of Man, the formation of the group's will and its expression, and the relationship between the individual and the group will. The group will is not always, if not never, favourable to the individual's will and desire. In other words, belonging to a group is at the same time a source of instinctual gratification, and a source of frustration, because of the existence of a group mentality different from the individual's one. Here is how Bion introduces group mentality:

> Group mentality is the unanimous expression of the will of the group, contributed to by the individual in ways of which he is unaware, influencing him disagreeably whenever he thinks or behaves in a manner at variance with the basic assumption. It is thus a machinery of intercommunication that is designed to ensure that group life is in accordance with basic assumptions (p. 65)...I postulate...group mentality as the pool to which the anonymous contributions are made, and through which the impulses and desires implicit in these contributions are gratified (p. 50).

According to Bion (1961), the individual is always trying to decode the messages flowing through this "machinery of intercommunication" that is group mentality in order to assess what the group wants and the group's attitude towards him. For it is on this capacity to assess the group mentality that social life depends. In Bion' words,

> ...anyone who has any contact with reality is always consciously or unconsciously forming an estimate of the attitude of his group towards himself...this kind of assessment is as much a part of the mental life of the individual as is his assessment...of the information brought to him by his sense of touch (p. 43).

Bion seems to suggest that failure to succesfully carry out the decoding and assessment task of the group mentality, and therefore losing the battle with it, leads to isolation, alienation, scapegoating, bullying of the individual, and finally collapse of social life and the group.

Group culture and its function: Besides group mentality, the individual may confront also what Bion (1961) calls the "group culture". As discussed above, the individual has a number of mental needs that can be gratified only by the group or society. The nature and content of these needs seems to reflect the individual's "valency type" (Hafsi, 2006, 2010). Moreover, the needs the group can or is willing to gratify as well as the way to gratify them do not always, if not never, correspond to what the individual expects. Consequently, this creates a conflictual situation opposing the individual to the group's will, the group mentality. According to Bion, for the sake of its own preservation, and continuation to operate under the unconsciously desired basic assumption, the group will try to resolve this conflict by the elaboration of a specific "group culture". In this term, Bion includes the type and nature of the group structure, organization, and its conscious and unconscious preoccupations characterizing the group in the here-and-now, or at a certain point of its development.

To put it differently, group culture is, according to Bion (1961), a direct consequence of the conflict opposing the group mentality and the individual with his valency. Bion writes that:

> Group culture is a function of the conflict between the individual's desires and the group mentality...[and] the group culture will always show evidence of the underlying basic assumptions. (P. 66)

Therefore, as long as the individual is able to contribute and behave in confirmity with the prevailing basic assumption, there is, as suggested by Bion, no conflict between him and the group mentality, and thus no need for a group culture to deal with the conflict.

Of course, this suggestion was based on Bion's own experience of small groups at the Tavistock Clinic, Northfield Hospital, and also on his experience as a soldier and officer in the british army during the two world wars. However, if we take in consideration the fact that culture is also a set of social rules aimed at helping the individual adapt to and behave in conformity with his social environment, then Bion's ideas are not confined to small group, but apply also to society and its culture. People tend to conceive and experience culture as if it is an assess or a legacy from parents and ancesters, forgetting about its social necessity and functions. Bion's triology concerning the relationship between the individual, group mentality and group culture can serve as a foundation for further research by sociologists and socially-oriented psychoanalysts as well.

Ⅲ. On the social nature of the individual mind

As briefly discussed above, Bion has no doubt concerning the fact that Man is a social and political animal. By thinking so, he is merely echoeing a number of philosophers, and mostly all sociologists. However, Bion is neither a philospher nor a sociologist, he is a clinician psychoanalyst. Emphasizing primarily the social character of the individual for a psychoanalyst is far from being

a usual way of thinking. It is true that Freud (1921) himself has attempted to discuss Man from a social vertex, and that a number of sociologists have been inspired by some of his ideas to develop social theories, but in the last analysis, Freud, have as demonstrated by his drive theory, and narcissism, remained ambiguous. Bion can be considered as one the few psychoanalysts who have "put the individual in a social system context". In the following I will discuss some of his ideas that reflect the social nature of the individual mind.

1. Thinking as a social process

In his Theory of thinking, Bion (1962b) suggests that thinking is the result, in a narrow sense, of an intersubjective interaction between the infant and the breast (the mother). In other words, it is not merely and intra-psychic phenomenon; it is also fundamentally a social one in a broader sense. Bion distinguishs between thinking, thinking apparatus, and the result of thinking process, or thoughts.

Thinking for Bion, is a mental capacity that develops in order to deal with, and process thoughts (Bion, 1967). That is, thoughts preceed the development of thinking and thinking apparatus. The emergence of thinking requires the existence of thoughts and a thinking apparatus to deal with, or to use Bion's terms, "think" them. This corresponds to the primitive form of adult thinking. Initially this primitive or basic form of thinking serves to make sense of the baby's emotional and psychosomatic experience under favorable social or intersubjective conditions. For thinking needs the presence of a stable object, the breast, and later the mother, to take place. According to Bion's model, the baby needs to be linked to the mother through a psychosomatic channel. At the beginning the infant is unable to process alone his psychosomatic and emotional experience. He needs his mother to do it for him through this channel. This will be discussed in more details later; it suffises to say now that thinking does not take place without the presence of a significant other.

Moreover, Bion distinguished three categories of thoughts, based on the nature of their developmental level, namely "pre-conception", "conception", and "concept". The most primitive category of thoughts corresponds to pre-conception. A pre-conception designates an innate state of expectation. That is, the neonate comes to life with a pre-conception that a good object (breast and the mother) exists, and that he can get in touch with it. When the baby succeeds to get in touch with that object and realize that the object does really exist, the pre-conception becomes thus a conception, the second category of thoughts. Then, following repetitive experience of the object, the conception finally becomes a concept.

Hence, as shown by this classification of thoughts, Bion seems to suggest that the baby may be aware of the other (embodied in the breast) even before birth, and depends on it, for the acquisition of the means which will make of him a little homosapiens, namely primitive form of thinking. This implies that socialisation process does not begin with the physical contact of the neonate with the other outside the womb. The path to socialisation begins rather before the encounter with and the

realisation of the existence of the object, or the other; it begins in the mother's womb, as a state of expectancy of an object, or another being.

Furthermore, according to Bion, the infant's socialisation process continue beyond birth under favorable conditions. That is, the continuity of the socialisation process depends on two factors: a social and individual factors. The social factor includes the presence of a stable object that will help the infant adapt to his new gaseous world, and to his self and its new needs, (breathing needs, nutrition needs, security needs and all psychosomatic needs) by gratifying them. The infant's survival and psychic growth depends on this object, usually personified by the mother and her substitute, and the interaction of the two. Thanks to this interaction, the infant will be able to give meaning to his emotional and physical experience. By individual factors, Bion meant the infant's ability to benefit or not from this interaction. Among these factors, the infant's lack of the capacity to bear frustration associated with the interaction with his early internal objects and caretakers, and the dominance of death instincts, hate, and his envy of them with all its destructive features discussed by Klein (1946).

2. The container-contained model and socialisation

In order to describe the infant's early interction with his first caretaker, Bion (1962a) used a model dubbed "container-contained", and abbreviated it using respectively, the signs for male and female, namely ♀ and ♂. According to Bion, any kind of relationship can be interpreted in terms of a container (♀)containing a contained (♂). This applies also to the the mother-infant relationship. As previously discussed the neonate is incapable of giving meaning to or understanding what he is experiencing, even if he has the feeling of something. Useless to say that not knowing what one is experiencing is a frightening experience, a nameless dread for the infant. To be able to understand what is happening to him the infant has to contain his experience, tolerate it, and finally decipher and name it. This containment and deciphering task requires the possession of a mental function Bion called "alpha-function". This function represents an abstraction used by Bion to describe the capacity to transform sense impressions, sensuous information, or what he called "beta-elements", into meaningful elements that one can use for learning from experience (Bion, 1963), problem solving, and mental activity in general (thinking, dreaming, etc.). Bion called these meaninful elements "alpha-elements".

The neonate is not equiped with an alpha-function. He has to rely on his mother to put her alpha-function at his disposal. Under positive social conditions, the infant, unable to tolerate and name his experience,will try to deal with them using projective identification. He projects his nameless emotional experience, or beta-elements into the mother who will introject, contain and, through her alpha-function, transform them into alpha-elements to give them meaning, so that the infant will understand and learn from his experience. When this interaction is successfully repeated, the infant will finally acquire his own alpha-function, and introject in a stable manner a positive

relationship between ♀ and ♂.

Bion (1970) described three kinds of ♀/♂ relationships: symbiotic, commonsal, and parasitic. A symbiotic relationship is such that one element depends on the other for the benefit of both. An example of this kind of relationship is a healthy mother-infant relationship, that is a growth-inducing relationship. A commensal relationship corresponds to a kind of relationship wherein container and contained share a third element or object for the benefit of the twos and the third object. This relationship will last as long as the third object exists; it will end when the shared object is no more necessary or when it has, for a given reason, disappeared. For instance, the relationship between a therapist and his client is commonsal when the encounter benefits both and the analysis as a their shared object. On the other hand, a parasitic relationship refers to a kind of ♀/♂ interaction in which one element depends on the other, producing as a result a third element which will cause the destruction of both its generators (♀ and ♂) and itself. A highly dependent and uncooperative patient and his analyst constitutes an example of this kind of relationship. Useless to say that Bion suggests that the most favourable kind of ♀/♂ relationship is the symbiotic one, followed by the commonsal one; because both are associated with mental and physical growth. The implications of this idea will be discussed later.

Moreover, Bion's work suggests that it is this introjected ♀ · ♂ that will serve as a foundation stone and template for future social interactions. For, seen from a Bionian perspective all social interactions between individuals, or between the group and the individual or between society and the invidual involve a container (a person, a group, family, society) containing, or trying to contain a contained (individual, a group, a social class, etc.). Therefore, Bion seems here to suggest that without the introjection of a positive, or favorable ♀ · ♂, human society is unconceivable. I will return to containment when I will discuss the ideal society suggested by Bion's work.

3. The social links: Love, Hate, and Knowledge (L/H/K)

Bion's legacy includes a theory of emotional links. This theory is introduced in three works, manely *Learning from Experience* (1962a), *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* (1963), and *Transformations* (1965). According to this theory, objects, or people can be linked by three differents kinds of links: Love (L), Hate (H), and Knowledge (K). Orthodox psychoanalysis forcussed principally on the former two. Because, the latter kind of link was considered as included in these two, and therefore did not attract the attention it deserves. Moreover, a relationship resulting from these three emotional links is by definition a bilateral one, even if it is often first initiated by one person.

Furthermore, Bion opposes these three links to their negative counterparts, or minus Love (−L), minus Hate (−H), and minus K (−K). These links constitute anti-links, or links that destroy the link itself (Athanassiou, 1997). Unlike the positive links which are associated with growth of the two partners, the negative links are associated with destruction and psychic death of the subject, the object, and their bond and combination. Bion conceives of the emotional link as "key"

for the understanding of the psychodynamics of the relationship and the meaning of the emotional content experienced within the relationship. In other words, it is the nature of the link that determines the meaning of the behavioral and verbal exchange which takes place between, for instance, the therapist and the patient. For instance, a simple and clear statement like "I am tired", may have different meanings depending on which link is prevailing at the moment it was expressed.

Of course, Bion developed his theory of the links based on his clinical work, in order to help clinicians focus on the analyst-patient relationship in the here-and-now. However, if one regards the group and society as the outcome of the kind of emotional link bonding members, or people altogether, then it is not difficult to realize that the utility and significance of the links theory goes beyond the narrow frame of the therapeutical relationship. The suggestions which this theory may have for society, will be discussed later.

4. Narcissism Vs. Social-ism

As discussed elsewhere (Hafsi, 2013), the two concepts of narcissism and social-ism used as a set is another important Bionian legacy. While refering to Freud's work, Bion wanted to transport us beyond the caesura and, in his words, the prevailing penumbra of associations concerning these concepts. He first changed the vertex, by alterating the orthograph of the term socialism adding a hyphen, and writing it social-ism. Then he conceived of these two concepts as two tendencies characterizing Man's basic instincts, the death and life instincts as described by Freud and Klein. According to Bion (1992), the instinct's tendency can be narcissistic, or social-istic. In Bion's words, these terms

> might be employed to describe tendencies, one ego-centric, the other socio-centric, which may at any moment be seen to inform groups of impulsive drives in the personality (p. 106).

Furthermore, these tendencies are equal in terms of strength, and differ concerning their objects, namely the self, or the group. This is what Bion meant when he stated that these tendencies "are equal in amount and opposite in sign" (ibid., p. 106). In order to explain what he means by the opposition of sign, Bion compares love and hate impulses, writes that "if the love impulses are narcissistic at any time, then the hate impulses are social-istic, i.e., directed towards the group, and vice-versa" (ibid., p. 106).

However, developing further his idea about these trends, or, as he refered to them later, poles, he suggested that the object (self, group, society) towards which the impulses are directed are not sufficient to conclude whether the trend of a given group of impulses is narcissistic or social-istic. That is, when one displays love towards himself, this does not necessary mean that his love impulses are ego-centric or narcissistic. On the other hand, love of the group or society does not

mean that the trend is social-istic. This seems to imply that to determine the direction or the trend of impulses, we need to go beyond the manifest content of a behavior or statement, and seek further clinical evidence, and truth before drawing any conclusion. For that Bion would recommend changing vertex, and having a binocular vision.

Bion did not develop further his idea concerning the two trends characterizing impulses, but in my opinion, the main implication here is that healthy growth and adaption to one's social environment depends on the individual's ability to integrate, in a balanced way, narcissistic and social-istic trends.

5. Different forms of social change

Bion discussed change in different contexts, and from different vertices. For instance, he discussed change within the phenomenon of mental growth (Bion, 1962a; 1963; 1970), and psychic transformation (Bion, 1965), refering to it using the letter Y to, like usual, avoid being influenced by the penumbra of associations related to the term "growth". According to Bion, Y can be positive or negative (−Y or +Y). The nature of Y depends on whether the infant's pre-conception concerning the presence of a good object, or a positive container (+♀) has been confirmed, and the infant has, consequently, had a real experience (a positive realisation in Bion's terminology) of a +♀. In another context, he linked growth to the two trends characterizing Man's basic instincts discussed above: narcissism and social-ism. That is, when the trend is narcissistic, growth will be negative (−Y). When, on the contrary, the trend is social-istic, Y will be positive leading to maturation, capacity to relate to and think internal and external reality, and learning from its experience. However, growth is always associated with pain; no growth is possible if the individual evades the experience of pain. It is fear and evasion of pain that is at the roots of the resistance to therapy, for instance. Growth is thus associated with the capacity to experience, tolerate and modify (modification) the experience of pain to be further able to learn from it for further learning.

Bion's work on groups (Bion, 1961) contains also new ideas concerning change. Bion discusses different types of change: change from work group to basic assumption group, change from basic assumption to work group, change from one basic assumption to another, change from a given basic assumption to the same basic assumption after a pseudo change, ou aberrant forms of change. He also makes a distinction between false or mock change and real or "catastrophic change".

Work group requires enormous energy, individual sacrifice, and toleration of frustration, fear and anxiety that results from the contact with reality and with others. The most common response to these aspects of the work group is for the group to change to a way of functioning based on a given basic assumption in order to protect itself from desintegration and collapse and the painfull experience that is thought to result from this collapse. As discussed above, Bion (1961) adumbrated three types of basic assumptions groups (dependency, fight/flight, and pairing).

Inspite of their instant and brief effect, basic assumptions will not, in the last analysis, provide the group with an effective and satisfying defensive means against its phantastic fear. Since no basic assumption satisfies the group, the latter will spend its time and psychic energy moving from one basic assumption to another, seeking temporary remedy to its fear of the work group.

Groups will tend unconsciously to resort to false change to satisfy its members' common desire to continue operating under the influence of a given basic assumption. Bion (1961) called this kind of change "aberrant forms". The content of these aberrant forms of change depends on the prevailing basic assumption. When the group is operating under the influence of the basic assumption of dependency, and is obliged by external or internal force (for instance, fear) to change, the group will resort to an external authority (a person, a group, etc.) to depend on it, treating it as a divine figure. This allows the group to change without really altering its basic structure and assumption. When the basic assumption of fight/flight is prevailing, the tendency of the group is to absorb another group to magically incorporate its strength to be able to strengthen itself and continue its fight and flight with its phantastic enemy as dictated by the shared phantasy, and its resistance to work group.

If the basic assumption is active, the group will resort to what Bion calls "schism". When the group is compelled to change and is unconsciously unwilling to yield to any demand, it will splitt in two subgroups: one reactionary and the other pseudo-progressive. The former which is smaller in terms of membership, will have, for mission, to continue displaying opposing to any idea associated with change, and consequently will not change. The latter will apparently show more comprehension and desire to integrate the new ideas, or requests for change. Its task will consist in containing the new ideas on the behaf of the whole group, transforming it into less dangerous and more accepted one, and consequently completly different from the original one. As a result, this sub-group, due its limited membership, and the fact that the new idea has been stripped of its goodness, will not be able to bring change to the group. Hence, in spite of their apparent differences, these two subgroups have the same goal which is reached from different paths, and with different means, namely, evading change, especially "catastrophic change" that a new idea may induce.

According to Bion (1965), a new idea comprises a destruptive and destructive aspect; it often leads to the subversion, restructuration of the system or the field (group, society, academic field, etc.) wherein it emerges. It is thus associated with catastrophic change. The change is catastrophic, because it generally occurs violently and suddenly, arousing thus painful feelings of disaster, and of being left "naked, incongruous, alien, without a point of reference that made sense" (Bion, 1990; p. 27) in the members of the disrupted system or field.

Moreover, catastrophic change is related to the denial of natural change, the unknown and unknowable nature of internal reality, violent and fearful inner truths, and reactions to deny, violent, and unexpected external events, such as a terrorist attack. Catastrophic change is usually experienced when a system or field is unable to contain a nascent change, or a change that is

gradually occuring. Using the container-contained model, Bion (1970) suggests that catastrophic change represent the third destructive object resulting from a parasitic relationship between the container (group, society, system, etc.) and the contained (new idea, and the new change).

Another idea about change is implied in his discussion of the relationship between the two positions described by Klein (1946), namely the paranoid-chizoid (PS) and depressive positions (D). Unlike Klein, Bion (1992) thinks that these positions are not merely characteristics of infancy; they are also related to the individual's capacity for knowing, learning, thinking, and transforning his emotional experience. This capacity, writes Bion, depends on whether he is able to tolerate the PS position with the desintegration characterizing it, the D position with its painful experience of integration, and the back and forth movement between the two positions. This implies that change is a kind of repetitive movement from a pre-change state of desintegration to a post-change state of integration and vice versa, and that the individual needs to have the capacity to tolerate this ceaseless and two-way change from desintegration to integration.

Like other Bionian ideas, the ones concerning change refer to clinic experience, but they contain important implications for the comprehension of small groups, institutions, and societies. One of these implications is that a social change is not always a positive one, that is, change towards emancipation, progress, better welfare and a change that will satisfy people's conscious needs, and desires. Change can be also negative, regressive, reactionary, or catastrophic. Therefore, it is recommended to take seriously all those numerous changes that are actually observed, and try to determine the nature of their direction (positive or negative), if we want to avoid deception, and unnecessary pain.

IV. Bion's good-enough society

I have hitherto collected up some of the conceptual seeds that Bion has sowed in the psychoanalytic field. In the following, I will resort to what Bion (1987) called "imaginative conjecture", in order to let these seeds germinate into a hint of a Bionian social theory, and a vision of what would be a good-enough society for him.

As suggested by a number of his original ideas, Bion would not see the necessity of trying to derive a social theory from his theoretical and clinical ideas. Because, like Freud and even more strongly than him, he does not, as discussed above, distinguish individual and group psychology. He believes that these two fields deal with the same phenomena from different vertices, and that the difference between the individual and the group is merely a matter of numbers; it is an illusion created by the quantitative difference in their membership.

Echoing Freud, Bion emphasized the uselessness of the concept of herd instinct. He argued that Man is basically a social animal, his physical and mental existence and growth depend on others as a group or society. He maintains that for Man, society is not only a real, external, and public entity; it equally exists as an internal object, that is a private (personal) society. Initially, this

private society exists as a "pre-conception" (Bion, 1962b) the neonate brought from his pre-natal world behind the "ceasura of birth".

This pre-conception which fulfills the function of an internal object which prepares the neonate for the encounter with the external group, first the family group then the large group, or society. Bion suggests that the future of this pre-conception depends on the nature and quality of this encounter and the neonate capacity for toleration of frustration. Under favourable societal (including familial)conditions, namely when the neonate's experience has confirmed the presence of a good group, the pre-conception becomes a conception of the group. My imaginative conjecture is that this primary conception which will be internalized by the neonate, determines the individual's future encounter with society as a member of a family (his first external group), kindergardener, school pupil, and a fully active adult in a company. If the neonate's first experience of society did not satisfactorily match his pre-conception, and the latter is unable to tolerate the frustration resulting from his experience he will be unable to introject a "good society". What he will introject instead is "no-society", or an absent society, representing a "no-breast" (Bion, 1962a). As a result, he won't be able to work through this early stage of development and experience the next stages that psychoanalysis has taught us. This will deprive him of the opportunity to learn in order to prepare himself for a full social existence and participation, and be, as depicted by the Japanese word *ningen* (人間) meaning human being, a person living among and interacting with others. This implies hence that socialization of the individual depends on the nature of the infant's earliest encounter with society.

Applying Bion's container-contained(♀/ ♂) model to the individual-society relationship, se can conceive of society as ♀ and the individual as ♂. As a ♀, a good enough society is expected to fulfill a containment function. Like in the case of a mother and her infant, containment includes being receptive to and satifying the individual's basic (conscious and unconscious) needs for social freedom, integration, and stability. Containment includes protecting the individual from himself and from other. It is the function of society for preventing the individual from harming others, himself, and society, and being harmed by them.

As a good enough container society must help the individual digest, or give meaning to his social and emotional experience. Like a mother and her infant, society is expected first to put its "alpha-function" (Bion, 1962a, 1965, 1970)at the service of the individual to digest, detoxicate, transform the latter's socio-emotional experiences (or beta-elements) that he is unable to process, and therefore dreads due to his lack of an effective alpha function of his own, into meaningful experiences (or alpha-elements) that can be used for further processing, thinking, and learning from experience. Under favourable social conditions, this kind of containment which is provided by the different agents of society (e. g., family, school, band, group, etc.) is expected to last until the individual develops his own alpha-function, and therefore be able to transform his own experience by himself.

What characterizes a good enough society is, besides containment of the individual, symbiotic relationship. As discussed above, a symbiotic relationship is a kind of interaction between society and the individual wherein both, the individual (♂) and society (♀) depends on each other for the benefits of the twos. In this kind of individual-society relationship, individuals are willing to cooperate, do their obligation, contributing thus to the growth, prosperity, and stability of society. But this spirit should not be confused with blind or extremist, and exploiting nationalism. This kind of nationalism is characteristic of societies and social systems which expect total submission and unconditional sacrifice from the individual. This large group mentality is, in my view, a feature of capitalism. It is implied in the following famous and often quoted statement by John F. Kennedy, "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Seen from a Bionian perspective, Kennedy's statement reflects a parasitic relationship, namely a kind of relationship wherein one exploits and lives at the expense of another for the destruction of the twos. It is here society that is parasitic, and the individual that serves as its host. In the type of socialism human society has hetherto experienced, it is the individual who behaves parasitically towards society which is expected to and has the obligation to satisfy equally all the individual's needs, regardless of their contribution to it. Hence, in a society wherein a symbiotic kind of relationship prevails, the recommendation would be rather to ask for both, what one can do for society, and also for what society can do for the individual. In a few words, in this kind of society the individual is not asked to sacrifice oneself, or die for society, but to live for and with it.

A society characterized by a symbiotic individual-society relationship is also a one where work group mentality and culture prevail over the three basic assumption groups. What differentiates work group from the basic assumption group is, among others, the fact that both the individual and society, and their interaction are attributed equal importance. Whereas the basic assumption group emphasizes the invidual or the group, but not the two at the same time. For instance, when the dependency basic assumption group is dominant it is the individual that has priority. But under the reign of the fight/flight basic assumption group, the individual is neglected for the supposed benefit of society.

According to Bion, work group corresponds to the sane part, or what he calls the "non-psychotic part" of a society. Like in the case of the individual, this sane part always coexists with and is threatened by another unconscious and unsaine, namely the basic assumption group with its different forms. That is why, as revealed by history, and as the present is still revealing, the sanity of society is precarious. Depending on the nature of the relationship between these two parts, a society can change from a progressive sane society to a mad one. When it is work group that is dominant, and the basic assumption groups sufficiently tolerated and contained, the tendency is towards sanity. When, due to a lack of sufficient containment and toleration of feelings, emotions, and behaviors reflecting basic assumption groups, work group is dominated by the basic assumption group, society is prone to disaster, catastrophy, and/or madness. The face social

madness displays depends on the basic assumption dominating society at a given period of its history. Under the domination by the basic assumption of fight/flight, madness is what human society has experienced during the two World Wars, and will experience in a possible third one. As an example of madness trigerred by the domination of the basic assumption of pairing is the wave of euphoria, "hyppism" (and its "make love but not war" slogan) which we have witnessed during the sixties. When it is the basic assumption of dependency that is dominant, social madness will display another face, a face of despair, alienation in a Marxist meaning of the term, which will lead some people towards religion, and other towards self-destruction in form of suicide.

Moreover, a good enough society, suggests Bion, is characterized equally by narcissistic and social-istic tendencies. But it is neither a narcissistic society as discribed by Lasch (1976), nor a society where only society as a whole is valued, and the individual is treated as a selfish and egoistic being and therefore strongly oppressed. As an example of these societies, I have in mind those few "socialist" and "religious" countries where individual oppression is still conducted in the name of a given ideology, or secular and divine law. A good enough society encourages both narcissism and social-ism, and their interaction as discussed by Bion.

Bion would also suggest another feature of a good enough society, namely its capacity to tolerate, and generate thinking in its members. It is difficult to define what a thinking society is; but it can be defined negatively by what it is not, and by comparison to a society lacking thinking ability. Thinking ability of a society should not be taken for granted. For the majority of societies have no sifficient thinking ability, because, to use Bion's terminology, they have failed to develop an apparatus for thinking, or an "alpha function". Unlike, societies which can think, they are thus unable to process and transform thoughts. Thoughts are experienced as unprocessed and unwanted elements good only for evacuation by projective identification as described by Klein and Bion. Due to a lack of or a defective alpha function, these societies, compared to a societies with sufficient thinking ability, are always ready to evade, discourage, and even prohibit thinking. They consider thoughts as dangerous and destructive elements, and thinking as a road to catastrophic change, a change they fear, and will want to avoid at any cost. Consequently, original thinking and its products, namely new ideas or thoughts are heard but never listen to, suspected, devaluated and finally oppressed before they reach the rest of the people, and disturb the system. The motto of this kind of society would be "don't think, and leave it to us !", or "don't think, just follow blindly the directions !". Moreover, due to a lack of an alpha function these type of societies won't be able to transform their experience in something meaninful, or, as Bion puts it, alpha-elements and use them for further thinking.

Furthermore, when new thoughts or ideas have survived neglect, oppression and destruction to which they are usually subjected, society will establish a commonsal or parasitic relationship with them. As a result, the possibility that these thoughts will grow is very slim. To conclude, a society capable of thinking is a one diametrically opposed to the one discussed hitherto.

As discussed above, Bion adumbrated three types of healthy interpersonal or social links, Love (H), Hate(H), and Knowledge (K), and their pathological counterparts, namely minus L(-L), Minus H (-H), and minus K (-K). Like in the case of a person, a healthy, or good enough society would correspond to a kind of society wherein healthy links (L, H, and K) prevail. In this king of society, people are inclined to display unconditional L towards each other and respond to it whenever possible. L link is reflected is daily life, in the street, in the train, at work, and schools, everywhere, and in the basic ideology of that society. People are capable of mutual care, help, empathy, and trust. Besides love, a good enough society is also expected to recognize H and its linking function, tolerate it, and channel it for constructive aims. For linking through H allows society to be competitive. For no real growth is possible without a fare interpersonal and intersocietal competition. Owing to its association with aggressivity, H is indispensable for self-defense and protection. It allows a society (and its people) to defend itself from internal and external threats. Discouraging or repressing H would lead to self-destruction with all its various forms.

A good enough society is also characterized by active encouragement of knowing or K. It is a society that values self-disclosure, social and political transparency, and the need of its members to know and be known, and share information. Therefore, this kind of society values highly freedom of expression, and curiosity. It is the opposite of such society where K is feared and therefore prohibited. Germany under the domination the Nazis as well as the former Soviet Union are both examples of this kind of society. For instance, Freud and his psychoanalytic ideas were ignored and prohibited in these societies. Because the establishment in these societies were afraid that these ideas may influence people inciting them to thinking, and consequently producing catastrophic change, a change they can not tolerate due to the pain it involves.

To recapulate, a good enough society, as Bion would imagine it, is a one linked by L, H, and K. It is a society wherein people can think freely, be themselves, and enjoy their right to love, hate and know each other without fear, threat and social repression.

Conclusions

Although most of Bion's work is founded on his clinical experience with individual patients and experiences with small groups is a psychoanalysis, it contains a large number of, what he may call, seeds ready to be cultivated into a social theory. In the present paper I have attempted to gather a number of concepts and theories developed by Bion, as a part of his contribution to psychoanalysis, and integrated into an embryonic and sketchy Bionian social theory. According to this theory, society functions at two levels, namely, conscious and unconscious levels, or to use Bion's terminology, work group level and basic assumption level. It describes also the characteristics of these two levels of functioning, and the different types of interactions between the work group and basic assumption group. For the social stability and growth is understood as depending on the

nature of the interaction linking these two groups. A stable society, and society capable of growth is characterized by a psychosocial state wherein work group coexists with the basic assumption group without being hindered or dominated by it. This kind of society is opposed to a pathological society, or a one wherein the basic assumption group dominates, contact with reality is lost and society is confined to a state of stagnation, deterioration, or social madness.

This Bionian theory addresses also the dilemma experienced by the individual as a result of being a member of a society interacting with other members. Man is conceived of basically as a social animal whose life and growth depend on its presence among and interaction with others. Most of Man's psychical and physical activity is stirred by and directed towards others. Even thinking, which is usually conceived of as a function of the individual's mind and personality, is attributed to this individual's social interaction with others, first the mother, than the group. However, the group does not completely satisfy the individual's needs; it gratifies some and frustrates others which do not reflect the group's unconscious will, or group mentality. This leads to a conflict between the individual and the group or, specifically speaking, the group mentality. The individual's dilemma is such that by being totally dependent on the group (including society) the individual is attracted to the group due to his social-istic tendency (social-ism) or groupishness, and is "at war" with it because of his narcissistic tendency (narcissism).

The conflict which opposes the individual to the group mentality is resolved by the group by creating a group culture. Bion (1961) suggests that group culture is a means that results from this conflict and serves to resolve it. This has significant implications for the understanding of the conditions leading to the emergence of culture in general. Furthermore, he also seems to believe that the dynamics of the group or society can be apprehended from the interaction between the group mentality, the individual's desire, and the group culture.

Without exageration, Bion is one of the rare theoretician in psychoanalysis who has explicitly tried to socialize man's psyche and its functions (such as thinking, symbolization)by attributing the reason of their emergence and development to the early emotional interaction of the neonate with his internal object, and the mother as a part and whole external object. Bion suggests that without the early social environment that serves as container for his (the neonate and the infant) experience of birth and its consequences, the infant's physical and mental survival is unconceivable. It is positive or successful experience of this containment and its introjection that will make of the infant a social animal.

Bion's legacy includes a theory describing the links linking people of a given society to each other, namely love (L), hate (H), and knowing (K) links, and their negative counterparts or the minus links. What distinguishs the positive and negative links is the fact that the former is associated with social stability and growth (+Y), and the latter is at the roots of social instability, pathology, destruction, turmoil, turbulence and stagnation (-Y).

Concerning social change, Bion suggested different types, namely the change from one basic

assumption to other forms of changes, namely, aberrant change, change from the basic assumption group to the work group, and finally the "catastrophic change". Aberrant type of change is considered as a false change associated with or resulting from resistance, fear, and anxiety. It is different from the other types of change which are real, that is, associated with real growth, positive and negative. However, the fundamental difference between these types of change is the change duration. The catastrophic change is more profound and permanent than the one from the basic assumption group to the work group, and involves more suffering and higher capacity of toleration of frustration and pain.

Finally, from the review of Bion's work, I have deduced what may called a conception of what might be called a Bionian good enough society. This conception of society preexists as a "pre-conception" (Bion, 1962b) in the *psyche* before birth. It becomes a conception when it is mated with a positive realisation of others. This implies that the baby is born with the expectation of society. The fate of this expectation or pre-conception and its consequences depends on the experience of the first encounter with the external social world.

Furthermore, a good enough society is one that has a sufficient containment capacity, and allows and encourages symbiotic relationship with its members. It is a relationship wherein both society as a whole and the invidual depend on each other for the benefit of the twos. It is a society wherein work group reigns and the basic assumption group is contained and mobilized for the process of the task. This implies that Bionian good enough society stimulates and encourages both social-istic and narcissistic trends in the individual. As a container it has also the capacity to generate thoughts and thinking, and L, H, and K in its relationship to its members. In a words, it is a society sufficiently tolerant of individual differences, free from despotism, social repression, exploitation, indifference, and parasitism.

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要　　旨

　　Bionは、社会学者や社会科学者によって広く読まれ、引用されるFreudとは異なり、余り知られていない。勿論、彼の精神病と小集団に関する理論的かつ臨床的仕事が精神分析のフィールドにおいて知られているが、社会学者や社会心理学者に殆ど知られていない。その理由は、彼が用いる概念が困難で、言語的に表現しにくいということにあると考えられる。しかし、それにも関わらず、Bionの理論的な遺産には、大グループや社会の研究や理解のための重要な概念や理論が含まれている。本稿の目的は、著者がこれらのBionの理論、概念、見解、あるいは比喩的に言えば、種を集め、基本的な社会理論に発芽させることである。結論として、このような理論によれば、社会は２つのレベル、すなわち、作動グループのレベルと基底的想定グループのレベルにおいて機能している。比較的に社会的安定性は、これらの２つのグループ・レベルの間の相互作用に依存するものである。安定した社会または大グループは、作動グループと基底的想定グループが共存し調和しているような心理社会的な状態によって特徴づけられる。一方、社会的不安定や停滞、衰微、社会狂気は、作動グループが基底的想定グループによって支配されるような心理社会的状態の結果である。さらに、安定した社会や大グループとは、その社会や大グループに属する成員を、精神分析的な意味で肯定的にコンテインメントが出来るものである。本稿では、著者は社会的コンテインメントの条件や状況について詳細に論述している。

【キーワード】ウィルフレッド・R・ビオン、基底的想定グループ、プロトメンタル・システム、社会的コンテインメント、連結