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Abstract: “The theatre of identities: from a reading of ‘A Memoir of the Future’ and other writings from the American period of Wilfred R. Bion (1969-79)”

The paper examines some passages from the writings taken from the ‘American period’ of Wilfred R. Bion (1969-79) and, especially, from the Trilogy of “A Memoir of the Future”, which have seemed useful to grasp and formulate interpretations on the theme of “identity”, of its construction, of its “tale”, in the post-modern universe.

“A Memoir of the Future”, after open initial hostilities and misunderstandings, still seems today to be a work that has not been sufficiently reflected upon or closely studied in the varied and complex world of theoretical-clinical studies of psychology, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy. The predominant interpretations with reference to the Trilogy (for authors such as P. Bion, A. Baruzzi, F. Corrao, C. Sandler, M. Harris-Williams) describe it as a very complex staging, on a large “multidimensional” stage, of “psychic reality”, of the functioning and “structure” of the mind, of its mobile “functioning”, of its keeping together embryonic and adult aspects and of every age of life (in the text’s intersecting and merging of autobiographical aspects and clinical descriptions, as well as literary and mythological references typical of different cultures). Or they describe it as an articulate and dynamic synthesis of the fundamental Bionian theoretical suppositions (in the only language, that of the “novel”, which seemed possible for him then to describe them and integrate them).

In our paper, we would like to highlight how “A Memoir of the Future”, just as in other writings by the “later Bion” also reveals a large effort of elaboration, reflection and description of the theme of the identity of man in the contemporary world, in individual, interpersonal and socio-cultural components, groups and transgenerational, in a more direct relationship with the community and historic dynamics. Here there is, in Bion, differently from the writings of the “classical period”, even a complex attempt at detecting the intricate forming processes, the unstable transformations and the evolutive passages of identity in that uncertain fluidity which is debtor of the cultural transformations of the post modern era, and of now deeply globalized values. It seemed to be of great interest to us therefore to grasp some passages from the “novel” by Bion, to reflect more closely upon the muting role of the various characters, “drawing them closer” in their dialogues and the interpersonal exchanges, and try to give, amongst other things, a less superficial sense and a progressive, and all the more decisive, “self-promotion” on the scene of the character of the

psychoanalyst (called in various ways: Bion, “me myself”, “P.A.”, psychoanalyst) who seems to intensely describe the conflict, which may never be remediable, between necessities, needs of analytical comprehension, of integration and donation of sense and stability to the various parts of oneself and of the personal identity (“looking beyond things”) and the “attraction” towards the unknown and the eternal mutability of the world and of the psychic reality. In an infinite presenting of “characters in search of an author” to construct stories and works never completely definable. We think that it’s possible to grasp, in the writings of “later Bion”, some basic and necessary premises of a “psychoanalysis of the future”.