

TEORIA E EPISTEMOLOGIA – DIÁLOGO ESPECULATIVO

THE URGE TO ASSIMILATE NEW IDEAS ARE EXPERIENCES EQUIVALENT TO FALLING IN LOVE

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Psicanalista em prática privada. Profundo conhecedor da obra de Donald Meltzer, com quem esteve em supervisão durante treze anos em sessões privadas em Oxford, tendo publicado um livro acerca do seu pensamento teórico-clínico. É, ainda, estudioso e investigador da obra de Wilfred Bion, sobre a qual publicará em breve um livro pela Routledge. *E-mail:* gloucester11@gmail.com

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I first met Donald Meltzer privately in London the 18th July 1985 and interviewed him at that time. This interview was tape-recorded, and later transcribed and edited. All that Donald Meltzer said in this interview remains unchanged, however, including hesitations and repetitions. Most of the three dots shown in his printed responses stand for the time, sometimes brief, sometimes long, he took to ponder over what he was saying. I, however, contracted some of my questions, reformulated others, and excised a few others. The title and the footnotes are of my sole responsibility. This interview has never been published before. In 1985 the Instituto Piaget in Lisbon held an international meeting on epistemology. Donald Meltzer was invited to present a paper. He could not attend the meeting but sent a paper to be read during the meeting. The paper he sent was chapter xvii of his *Studies in Extended Metapsychology*, 1986, a book that was by then just going to the press. The book was issued the following year. This chapter bears the title: “A Swiftean Diatribe” (pp. 191–202). However, Donald Meltzer crossed out this title on the copy he sent to the meeting in Lisbon and wrote, in his own handwriting: “Science and Social Structures”. He furthermore suppressed the last two pages of the original chapter.

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Donald Meltzer was therefore already anticipating, at this point, one of the foundational ideas of his theory of aesthetic conflict (cf. *The Apprehension of Beauty*, Meltzer & Williams 1988).

ENTREVISTA A/INTERVIEW WITH

Donald Meltzer

João Sousa Monteiro¹18 JULHO/JULY 1985²

JSM: In your paper you stated that symbolic functions grow out of the emotional experience of the beauty of the world. Furthermore, addressing the key issue of the nature of mental pain, you claimed that we must shift the emphasis on the *absence* of the mother as the main source of anxiety...

DM: ... to the *presence* of the mother... to the presence of the mother as an unbearably aesthetic object, as an *unbearably beautiful object*.³

JSM: Could you please explain your idea?

DM: Well, it's a concept that really grows out of the philosophy of aesthetics and art history... well... the idea of Bion is that mindlessness and behaviour in groups is a defence against having to think, and that thinking is something that grows out of the pressure of thoughts generated by emotional experiences. Now, psycho-analysis really since Freud, but particularly since Melanie Klein, has tremendously emphasized the child's need for services, and his dependence on the mother for services. But it seems to me that the study of history, and particularly the study of art history and aesthetics suggest that the emotional experiences of the infant are extremely powerful, and that they are related to his perception of the mother as an object of great beauty... representing the beauty of the whole world, and that this experience, which is borne out really by... I mean... all the poets... that the ability to tolerate this experience and the pain of the impact of the beauty of the object is *the first mental pain that is defended against by alienation*. And it's my opinion, from my clinical work, that it is necessary for the analyst to *shift*, to make a very great shift... it means really paying attention to the experience of the patient in the transference as an object *in the room* that arouses in him emotions of an aesthetic sort; that he not only experiences the analyst in the transference, and the analyst's voice, and the analyst's ideas, but gradually comes to experience the analytic process and method as an aesthetic object, which he defends himself against... not only defends against the feelings of separation from it, but defends against the experiences of having it when it is there with him. This is an entirely different slant, really, on the experiences in the consulting room.

A lot of this has been mistaken for erotic transference, and, of course, there is an aspect of it that is erotic... I mean, the erotism has to be acknowledged, but what has been studied primarily of the erotic transference is really an aspect of aggressiveness that manifests itself as erotic demands, and erotic tyranny, and so on. The real erotic transference is an aesthetic response to the beauty of the object and the wish to *know it*, to *explore it*, and to *be known by it*... and this makes a very different emphasis in the consulting room.

JSM: How do these emotional experiences stir the child to form symbols? How is it that the aesthetic impact of the beauty of the mother compels the infant to form symbols?

DM: Now, that's contained in another paper in this book called "What Is an Emotional Experience?"⁴... this book that's just going to the publisher, to the print... this is a paper that I read in Toronto to the Self-Psychology meeting last year⁵... (I would really have to give you that paper but I'm afraid I don't have any extra copies of it)... it's a paper in which I do attempt to trace the nature of emotional experiences and how they demand transformation into symbols so that they can be thought about... which is Bion's formulation that if they cannot be transformed into symbols so that they can be thought about and stored as memories, and so on, then they have to be evacuated by some means, and that the means of evacuation are generally either in mindless group identification and behaviour, or psychosomatic disturbances, hallucinations, and things of that sort. That is the *core* of Bion's theory of thinking... and it's a great theory, really.

JSM: But what exactly, then, is a symbol, in your sense?

DM: Now, a symbol... now, this is another chapter in the book [laughs]. Now... it's very important to distinguish between symbols and signs, of course. Signs are simply designatory, conventions, and so on. Symbols are really essentially *rather mysterious bringing together of formal structures which are brought into a kind of creative intercourse with one another*, from which a symbolic relationship between them develops which modifies the meaning of both of them, that each part of the symbolic relationship takes on an increment, an increase in meaning, because they have been brought together into this conjunction and then brought apart again... and it's a very mysterious process, really... it may even be *essentially* mysterious... but it's the *core* of mental processes as against brain processes of computation and so on... and... there's a very splendid book... (I'll show you... [gets up to check it] it propounded really a theory of aesthetics emphasizing the relationship between emotion and form in the various arts. She [Susan Langer] and Ernst Cassirer... and... it's very much influenced... bringing together Bion's work and the work of Langer⁶ and Cassirer⁷, that this theory, or this way of looking at things has been formulated.

JSM: It seems that a *leit motiv* of your paper was what you called our basic incapacity for thought... our deep resistance to think... Where exactly does this incapacity come from? What is its genesis... or should I call it resistance?

DM: Well, I think resistance is a good enough term... I mean, Bion's formulation of it is that the impact of a new idea in the mind stirs what he calls *catastrophic change*. It means that in order to accommodate a new idea every other idea that you have formulated in the course of your development has to be readjusted, and that in order to do this, a period of total disruption and chaos has to be tolerated before the new idea is assimilated, and that every developmental step is a step involving this catastrophic change to admit the new idea into one's structure of the world.

JSM: Is there any close connection between this basic resistance to thinking and the aesthetic experience of the beauty of the mother?

DM: Well... the idea is that it is *essentially* the aesthetic impact of new ideas and new objects that represent these ideas which creates this catastrophic pressure for *thinking* in order for the new idea to be assimilated.

JSM: But what exactly is it that stirs in us the urge to assimilate new ideas?

DM: Well, essentially, each of these is an experience equivalent to falling in love... and it is a *momentous* experience that generates creative thought... or if it is withdrawn from, of course, the experience is abandoned.

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Studies in Extended Metapsychology – Clinical Applications of Bion's Ideas, Chap. 2, pp. 21–33.

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The 7th Annual Self-psychology Conference held in Toronto in October 1984.

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Both *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*, and *Feeling and Form*.

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The Philosophy of Symbolic Form.

JSM: What, then, is thinking? Why the nuance in your paper between ‘think’ and ‘thought’?

DM: Well, this also is following Bion who’s introduced, really, into philosophy, a reversal of traditional philosophical thought. Traditional philosophical thought has dealt with thoughts as something generated by thinking. Bion has reversed that [idea] and has suggested that thoughts come first and that thinking is the process of manipulating them, generalising them, abstracting them, raising them to levels of coordination, organization, and so on. But those thoughts are generated through symbol formation and dream, and that it is these *thoughts* that then have to be manipulated and used for thinking; and it’s that differentiation between thoughts and thinking that I follow. It’s a very fundamental step, philosophically.

JSM: Once Van Gogh cried out: “If only I had raised my voice from the beginning instead of being silent in every language of the world...” Don’t you think that most people have eventually learnt to be silent in every language of the world, although in the opposite sense of Van Gogh’s, that is, to be silent in the language of deep affection and of creative thought?

DM: Yes, well, I mean... obviously only a *very small number of people* persevere in the direction of creative thought...

JSM: ... Why?

DM: ... and in the direction of art and science that embodies creative thought. Why is it? Well, one answer is that we are only a few thousand years out of the caves... that we are a very *primitive* people from the point of view of mental and social development; that’s one type of answer to it. The other type of answer is that our way of raising children is still more tribal than familial, really, that our educational system is more training for conformity than it is encouragement of development, and so on. That’s another type of answer.

JSM: Is this what you had in mind when you wrote that you are sure where to begin, that we have to change our methods of rearing and...

DM: ... yes... and this is why I devote myself really to problems of child development and child psychiatry bearing on family life and the rearing of children... that seems to me to be *the essential* starting point. And of course, I’m not the first one, I mean, it’s been going on now for fifty years and it’s making a *tremendous difference*, really... A tremendous difference... I mean, the whole attitude towards children and family life and education is influx and developing... and it’s the hope of the world... I mean, nobody thinks that political solutions are going to accomplish anything anymore. Everybody who thinks realises that political solutions accomplish nothing, that they are just circular, and come back where they start... until *values* have changed, in a really deep way, you know, this is Nietzsche all over again, as it were... until the *values have changed* nothing permanently is altered... that there won’t be any change in the armament race until the atom bomb is *unthinkable*.

JSM: I would like to relate Van Gogh’s very impressive claim with the idea of a universal language of meaning, as it were, and to be able to share it...

DM: ... and be able to speak in every language of the world which is art.

JSM: You ‘burden’ the whole attitude towards children with no less than the hope of the world... On the other hand, media seems to be constantly echoing, giving many voices to unthinking parts of ourselves in ways which seem themselves to be unthought and unthinking...

DM: ... what Bion distinguishes between *knowing* and *knowing about*... that one knows about it *out there* and one knows it *in here*...

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“The difficulty lies in our limited capacity for thought and its foundation in adequate emotional responsiveness. It may seem, superficially, that cataclysm stirs up deeply but careful examination suggests something quite contrary. Such spectacles, descriptions, statistics and prophecies of doom excite rather than stir. That is, they excite in us the orientation of opposition to what is already known but do not stir us to discover the unknown. In that sense, they activate perverse tendencies of mind, the negative links, -L, -H and -K.” (Donald Meltzer 1986, p. 191)

JSM: You opened your paper with a comment on the way we often weigh the unparalleled threats that our planet, looked at within the span of recorded times, now seems to face. But first of all, what is *fear* which seems to be such a powerful manipulative tool?⁸

DM: *Fear?*

JSM: Yes.

DM: Well, I think one has to distinguish, first of all, between anxiety, fear and cowardice. Now, anxiety is a manifestation of thinking process’s influx. There is no possibility of thinking, as in catastrophic change, without anxiety. Fear is largely a matter of unwillingness to face the consequences, and it is based largely not on thinking, but on prospective phantasy, and most of Melanie Klein’s work deals with fear in the form of unconscious phantasies in which prospects, outcomes and consequences and so on are envisaged. Now, there’s no possibility of acting in the world without fear, just as there’s no possibility of thinking without anxiety. But cowardice — which is, of course, really what people mean when they say ‘I’m frightened’; they mean ‘I’m coward’ — cowardliness is a matter of *fantasy-ing*, it is not a matter of unconscious *phantasy-ing* in which the possibilities are explored. Cowardice is based on *fantasy-ing* all the dire consequences that you can possibly imagine, intimidating oneself by *fantasy-ing*. Now, this distinction between unconscious phantasy and *fantasy-ing*, or daydreaming, corresponds very much to the distinction in literary philosophy, say, Coleridge’s distinction between *imagination* and *fancy*; and Milton made the same sort of distinction, in different words, between *imagination* and *fancy*, and so on. So I think one has to make those distinctions between anxiety, fear and cowardice... Now, anxiety is mental pain... and Melanie Klein’s differentiation between persecutory and depressive mental pains is, I think, very fundamental. But those are mental pains; fear is not a mental pain... fear is a mental state.

JSM: In every mature and active scientific branch it often happens that scientists see themselves edging towards the frontier of research. Then, it is sometimes useful, even important to put in sequence what at that stage of research appears to be the more interesting open research problems, the so-called *frontier-problems*. When taken together, these are expected to give a fair picture of the frontier line of research in that particular area at that particular moment of the advancement of research. What are, in your view, the most interesting open research problems at the frontier of psycho-analysis today?

DM: Well, I think that *the* most interesting *problem* is... is this...the problem of struggling out of group identification toward individuality. That seems to me to be *the* most interesting *clinical* problem.

JSM: *Clinical* problem?

DM: Yes... and a corollary of it is the problem of thought disorder... because in order to achieve this movement from group identification to individuality, *thinking*, the capacity for creating thoughts and thinking them has to be developed; and it is very *poorly* developed in most people. So, those two seem to me the frontier of psychoanalytic research.

JSM: In what directions would you like to see psycho-analysis develop?

DM: Well... I mean, *organizationally*, I’d like to see it dismantled... organizationally; I would like to see it treated as an art form and for it to be taught in different ways, as the arts are taught... I would like to see psychoanalysts drawn from other professions than medicine, primarily, and for it to divorce itself more from psychiatry and to ally itself more to the humanities, particularly to literature, and so on... so that I would like to see psychoanalysis become, in a certain sense, more *academic*, in terms of its alliance with philosophy and the humanities; but I would like to see its *practice* developed more as an art form... and I think it will happen... I think that

the institutionalization... [I mean] the quasi-medical institutionalization of psychoanalysis is collapsing, really... And because of the poor quality of the people attracted to it. Psycho-analysis has not attracted the right people, by and large. And, of course, I would like to see it lower its economic expectations — but that is largely a matter of the quality of the people attracted to it... I mean... in allying itself to medicine, it is assumed the necessity of analysts being people of high income, and so on... and that will change, when it modifies its position in the world.

JSM: Are you actually working in this direction? I mean, are you actually planning to form such a group?

DM: Well, *I have* such a group...

JSM: Oh, you *already* have such a group?

DM: Well, an informal group in Oxford of people who've had analysis with me and whom I've taught, and so on... my wife⁹ has analysed and taught other colleagues... and it's a little informal group that teaches one another and practices and teaches other people; very much an analytic atelier... that is a fact... that we have done... and we hope that other people will follow our example.

JSM: Is there any other group already following your example in this direction?

DM: Oh yes... that's a group in Oxford, and of course my wife and I have centred our teaching on the teaching of child psychotherapy, here and... well, mainly in France and Italy and Norway, and a bit in America, South America, and so on,¹⁰ and there, too, to develop psychotherapy as a non-medical and non-institutionalized art form semi-profession, and so on. And, of course, it has made very great strides... I mean, in Italy and in France, psychoanalytic child psychotherapy has developed outside psycho-analytical societies, as child analysis has withered and died in the Societies. And that's largely because of the structure of the Societies, and their insistence that people must train to be adult analysts before they become child analysts, which is obviously exactly the wrong procedure. Well, the psychoanalytic societies that have aspired to teach child analysis have all insisted that people must train to be adult analysts first, and then go on to do child analysis. The result is that hardly anybody has done that, whereas it's young people in their twenties who need to be trained to do child psychotherapy, and then, in their forties, go on and develop to do work with adults. And this is what happens here at the Tavistock, and with the people we teach abroad, and so on. It's quite a widespread movement, but quiet and unformalized... quiet... Working; not talking. (Laughs.)

JSM: ... and publishing as well?

DM: Publishing what's *necessary*, but not publishing for status... publishing what has to be published... and what has to be published is *primarily* extraordinary clinical experiences, that really discover phenomena... because it's the phenomena of mental functioning that needs to be published. Theories one doesn't... I mean, there's only one Bion, one Melanie Klein, and so on, who need to publish theories... I mean, I have no theories; my theories are only just extensions and clinical elaborations of Melanie Klein and Bion. I have no theories of my own. Melanie Klein and Bion were people who had original ideas...

JSM: ... which grew out of concrete clinical experience...

DM: Growing out of clinical experiences, yes...

JSM: I once had the privileged of talking privately with Roald Hoffmann, who was awarded the 1981 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and he was particularly emphatic on the importance of observation and thinking about *concrete* problems: everything I've published, Hoffmann said, everything I've thought,

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Martha Harris.

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Similar groups then developed largely along the same lines in Sweden, Finland and Germany.

was just out of the endeavour to carefully observe and solve *concrete* problems that emerge in the lab, even apparently *simple* problems which, the moment you really try to ask the right questions about them, you find out that, after all, they may surprise you being critical questions. And then, occasionally, an idea, or a hypothesis grows out of the...

DM: ... yes, I mean, when it comes to teaching psychoanalysis, what needs to be taught primarily is *observation* — for people’s eyes, and ears, and nose to be open to the experience with the patient... and you must observe inside and outside simultaneously. What Bion calls reversible perspective.

JSM: Let me turn back to the beginning of this interview and ask you about a famous, and indeed most impressive passage in *Macbeth*. Just before the soldier announced to Macbeth that the forest of Birnam was...

DM: ... coming to Dunsinane... yes...

JSM: ... yes... and we hear him murmuring: “Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player...

DM: ... that struts and frets his hour upon the stage...” Yes... (Laughs.)

JSM: I wonder if you could comment on this *extraordinary* passage, and this disconcerting figure in the light of what you said before about the emotional experience of the beauty as the mother and the incapacity for thought, as well as the distinction between anxiety and cowardice.

DM: Well, Macbeth is a group creature, who has been driven by ambition; ambition to rise in the hierarchy of the group. And for him, life is a walking shadow, that is, *the meaningless* of life in the group; and it is a very beautiful description of it, really. But Macbeth is a groupie, he’s not an individual, you see, and that is why he is such a tragic figure — not despicable, just tragic. Whereas his wife is a more despicable figure. But Macbeth himself is just a tragic figure... caught in the group and unable to escape from it. Lady Macbeth should be played by a beautiful woman. Because Lady Macbeth really illustrates the great aesthetic problem: is the mother as beautiful inside as she is outside? And, of course, Lady Macbeth should be played by a beautiful woman because she is obviously very evil and ugly inside. And this is... what one has to guess what sort of mother Macbeth had, whose external beauty was contrasted with internal ugliness... but *disillusioned*, deeply disillusioned... that’s why he is a tragic figure... and why they are represented as childless... their intercourse is not creative, it’s political.

JSM: Your group doesn’t pay much attention to the unborn child?...

DM: Oh, no... that is what we’re most interested in at present. Studies... one of our group is doing ultrasound studies, of foetal behaviour, and so on. Something we’re tremendously interested in is the pre-natal personality... and really to try to do away or to minimize this old concept of constitution... of constitutional differences... but to emphasize that babies at birth already have had *months* of emotional experience and personality development.

JSM: The way you see the unborn’s mental life must make a huge difference...

DM: ... quite, quite.

JSM: Do you think that it is possible to speak about thoughts and thinking within the womb...

DM: ... yes, the problem of trying to imagine what kind of symbol formation could take place... and this is why this book of Susan Langer’s is of some importance; that one can imagine primitive symbol formation in the form of... essentially of music and dance, as being the symbol formation by which the foetus experiences and represents his emotionality. Primarily, dance, in response to the music of the intra-uterine situation. She has a wonderful chapter on that.

JSM: Let me go back again to this puzzling question of what is a thought.

DM: Yes... Now, this is what three of Bion's four books are about... about thought formation and the processes of thinking: *Learning from Experience*, *The Elements of Psychoanalysis*, and *Transformations*. Those are the first three, after the group book on experiences in groups. And they are about how thoughts are formed and he has developed what he calls the "grid", to illustrate the way thoughts are made and the way in which they grow in complexity, abstraction, generalization, and so on. And this "grid" is like a kind of chemical periodic table of thoughts used for thinking. It's quite a lovely conception of it, a lovely way of representing it; the genesis of thoughts, and the different uses to which they are put, and how a thought develops in its genesis and in its uses, and so on. It's quite a poetic... It's very much like Mendeleev's periodic table. It has the same format to it. Very, very imaginative.

JSM: Why have you crossed out the original title of your paper 'Swifteam Diatribe' and instead written 'Science and Social Structures'? Why science?

DM: Well...

JSM: ... because there is a saying by Max Born that science is everything through which we succeed in disclosing what was veiled before; through which we finally succeed in understanding what was not understood before...

DM: Yes... I mean, the division between art and science is unfortunate and spurious. I mean, art has to do with all of the *representations* of our understanding of the world, and science has to do with the exploration of these representations, whether they be chemical or physiological or emotional, and so on. So that is really art-science, it's really the creative activity. I mean, every painter is a scientist of painting and is studying space, and studying representations, and studying formal structures. I mean, the whole division between art and science has been misled really by the failure to distinguish between science and technology. I mean, so much technology has gone into science in this century that has been rather confused with science. But all scientists are great artists, really. They have imagination, they have intuitive visions they dream about it... And they see the beauty of it. Mathematicians are all artists, really...

BIOGRAPHY

DONALD MELTZER

Vida e Obra

Donald Meltzer nasceu em 14 de agosto de 1922 em Nova Iorque de mãe norte-americana e pai eslavo recentemente imigrado nos EUA. Morreu na noite de 13 para 14 de agosto de 2004 em Oxford. Fascinado pelos enigmas da vida mental, Meltzer decide tornar-se psicanalista. É com esse propósito que se forma em medicina, na Universidade de Yale, especializando-se em Psiquiatria e depois em Pedopsiquiatria. Trabalhou num hospital pediátrico público em St. Louis e fez a sua primeira formação como psicanalista no Instituto de Psicanálise de Chicago. Essa primeira formação foi dominada pela figura tutelar e pela obra de Freud. A Dra. Lauretta Bender (1897–1987), médica neuro-pedopsiquiatra e sua professora no Instituto, e que foi pioneira no ensaio do tratamento da esquizofrenia em crianças pela terapia eletroconvulsiva, deu-lhe a conhecer todos os trabalhos de Melanie Klein publicados até então. Esses trabalhos viriam a transformar a vida de Meltzer para sempre. É que ficou de tal modo impressionado com o que leu, que decidiu fazer uma segunda formação em Psicanálise, desta vez em Londres, e com a própria Melanie Klein. Quando deu a conhecer à direção do Instituto de Psicanálise de Chicago o seu projeto, foi informado de que não voltaria a ser admitido como membro daquele Instituto.

A Guerra da Coreia tinha, entretanto, subitamente começado, em 1951, e Meltzer é alistado na Força Aérea dos EUA como médico psiquiatra. Acabada a guerra, em Julho de 1953, Meltzer consegue, logo no ano seguinte, ser colocado em Londres. Nesse mesmo ano, começa a sua análise com Klein. Seis anos depois, em 1960, a sua análise é bruscamente interrompida pela morte inesperada da sua psicanalista. Embora estivesse já no fim dessa sua segunda análise, Meltzer considera fazer uma terceira análise, desta vez com Wilfred Bion, um projeto que acabou por abandonar.

Ainda no decurso da sua análise com Klein, e durante os 25 anos que se seguiram, Meltzer trabalha intensamente com todas as figuras centrais do grupo kleiniano: Wilfred Bion, Esther Bick, Hanna Segal, Herbert Rosenfeld, Betty Joseph e Roger Money-Kyrle. Ensina muitos anos na Tavistock Clinic de Londres, e a sua formação em observação de crianças é supervisionada por Esther Bick nessa mesma clínica.

Embora seja o membro mais novo do então grupo kleiniano, o seu talento como supervisor é rapidamente reconhecido, e é admitido como

formador e supervisor da Sociedade Britânica de Psicanálise (BPS). Ainda no início da sua análise com Klein, Meltzer começa a publicar (Meltzer, D. (1955). *Towards a Structural Concept of Anxiety. Sincerity and Other Works*. Karnac Books, 1994). Desde então, não mais deixará de publicar extensamente.

Particularmente crítico do programa de formação da BPS, começou a trabalhar numa proposta de profunda remodelação desse programa, com o conhecimento da direção da Sociedade. Durante seis anos, e em estreita colaboração com Esther Bick e Martha Harris, Meltzer elaborou uma detalhada alternativa ao programa em vigor. Durante esses seis anos, o novo programa foi sucessivamente testado e aperfeiçoado na Tavistock Clinic, e dessa experiência nasceu uma das suas obras ainda hoje mais divulgadas: *The Kleinian Development*. Essa obra desenvolve-se em três volumes: o primeiro volume é dedicado ao ensino da obra de Freud; o segundo, à obra de Klein; e o terceiro, ao ensino da obra de Bion. Porém, no dia em que a reunião com a direção da BPS estava marcada para se proceder à apresentação da sua proposta e dar início ao debate sobre a revisão desse programa de formação, Meltzer é oficiosamente informado de que a direção daquela Sociedade tinha determinado não proceder a qualquer alteração desse programa, não se dispondo, por isso, a debatê-lo. Este incidente juntou-se às duras críticas que Meltzer já vinha fazendo explicitamente à direção da BPS pela ausência de democraticidade no funcionamento institucional no que à escolha dos membros da direção dizia respeito, sempre em violação do que antes tinha sido formalmente assumido. Por outro lado, o processo de admissão dos candidatos era outro ponto de atrito com a direção da BPS. Estas foram as razões para que Meltzer tomasse a decisão de abandonar, em definitivo, a BPS.

Começa aí o período mais intensamente criativo da sua vida como psicanalista, quer do ponto de vista teórico, quer do ponto de vista da clínica e da supervisão psicanalítica. Publica, sucessivamente, *Dream Life*, 1984, *Studies in Extended Metapsychology*, 1986, *The Apprehension of Beauty*, 1988, e *The Claustrum*, 1992. Além disso, publica inúmeros artigos, textos de conferências, de seminários e de entrevistas, que constituem parte essencial do corpo teórico e clínico da sua obra psicanalítica. Durante os 30 anos seguintes, dirige grupos de estudo e orienta seminários clínicos em

Inglaterra (Oxford e Londres), Noruega, Suécia, Finlândia, Alemanha (Frankfurt e Munique), Itália (Florença, Veneza e Roma), França (Paris), Espanha (Barcelona), Argentina (Buenos Aires) e Brasil (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo e Porto Alegre). Além da direção de grupos de estudo e de supervisão, Meltzer continua a fazer conferências e a orientar seminários clínicos ocasionais em Amsterdão, Viena, Lisboa, Nova Iorque e Chicago. Recebe em supervisão analisandos e analisandas oriundos de vários países da Europa em que não existem grupos de supervisão estruturados de orientação teórica kleiniana e pós-kleiniana (Holanda, Áustria, Suíça e Portugal). É consultor da OCDE (e das Nações Unidas) sobre questões relacionadas com a situação da criança na família e na comunidade. Em resposta à solicitação da OCDE, elabora, em colaboração com Martha Harris, um relatório intitulado «A psychoanalytic model of the child-in-the-family-in-the-community». Esse relatório é imediatamente publicado em francês, italiano e castelhano, e apenas em 1994 em inglês (cf. *Sincerity and Other Works*. Karnac Books, 1994).

É no decurso da sua atividade de supervisor em Itália, juntamente com Martha Harris, que trabalha com a Professora Romana Negri, médica neuro-pedopsiquiatra e investigadora com mais de 140 artigos dedicados a problemas médicos e psíquicos relativos à neonatologia e à vida fetal, tendo mesmo iniciado trabalhos de investigação sobre alterações psicossomáticas fetais. É em colaboração com Negri que Meltzer estuda a observação da vida fetal e as conexões entre a vida fetal e a vida pós-natal. Essas investigações viriam a provar ser de uma enorme importância para a psicanálise de crianças e de adultos.

Durante 30 anos, Meltzer segue em tratamento uma média de 14 analisandos por dia e durante os 10 minutos entre cada sessão toma notas da sessão imediatamente anterior, registando, muito em particular, os sonhos que cada um dos analisandos traz à sessão. Neste período, integrou o grupo Imago, interessado pela psicanálise aplicada à cultura, do qual faziam parte Bion, Segal, Stokes, Wollheim, Money-Kyrle, Milner e Gombrich. Por esta altura, adquire a cidadania britânica.

Após Bion se ter afastado da BPS e radicado nos EUA (em Los Angeles, lugar em que viveu os últimos 10 anos da sua vida), Meltzer visita-o por duas vezes. Bion comunica-lhe a sua profunda preocupação relativamente ao futuro da psicanálise

e, muito em particular, ao funcionamento dos Institutos e Sociedades psicanalíticas. Meltzer é geralmente reconhecido como um dos mais dotados e criativos psicanalistas pós-kleinianos. Esta atribuição, porém, é apenas parcialmente sustentada pela extensíssima obra clínica e teórica que integra estudos sobre o autismo e uma inovadora teoria clínica, a teoria do *claustrum*, que revolucionou o conceito de identificação projetiva. É estritamente nessa medida que a designação de pós-kleiniano tem substância claramente demonstrável. Já a sua teoria do *conflito estético*, apesar da sua natureza essencialmente clínica, tem profundas e fecundas implicações metapsicológicas, cujo alcance está ainda muito longe de ser devidamente investigado. Trata-se, assim, de uma teoria sem clara filiação psicanalítica, em relação à qual se pode quase afirmar que não tem, na história da psicanálise, quer antecessores, quer, até agora, seguidores. Por aí, a teoria do conflito estético, apesar de ser essencialmente clínica, permanece ainda hoje basicamente ignorada no campo teórico e epistemológico da psicanálise.

Finalmente, Donald Meltzer é um dos psicanalistas mais prolixos da história da psicanálise, com mais de 90 trabalhos publicados até agora, já que os seus trabalhos permanecem inéditos. As suas obras mais conhecidas estão traduzidas em francês, italiano, alemão, castelhano, catalão, brasileiro, búlgaro e japonês. Em 2020 e 2021, Meltzer começou a ser ensinado na Rússia e na China. 📄

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JSM