EPF CONGRESS

Oslo

March 28 - 30, 2026

IRED Panel

NEUTRALITY IN THE INTER-REGIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIC DICTIONARY (IRED)

March 28, 2026

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ABSTRACT

The first panelist, drawing on entries such as *Ego Psychology*, *Free Association*, *Amae* and *Intersubjectivity*, explores a link between neutrality and otherness within the IRED's multi-theoretical and multicultural framework. The presentation highlights encountering psychoanalytic cultures 'from inside' and 'through the eyes of the other', converging at a neutral point of intimacy *and* distance. Fortified psychoanalytic identity, as distinct *and* connected to the others in the IPA, ensues.
The second panelist addresses neutrality as a challenge in the analytic situation, linked to the analyst's equidistant position between the patient's id, ego and superego, and their own. Following Laplanche and Glover, neutrality is a function rather than a personal trait and must not be confused with full objectivity. With Wright's "transference to theory", the paper asks what neutrality is needed to craft an IRED voice and what attitudes support contributors.

For the third panelist, the analytic situation is paradoxical, demanding distance and closeness to the object; within this frame, neutrality becomes paradoxical. In the IRED, this appears as co-writers first negotiate with their own theoretical references and then with those of others. The oscillation between neutrality and identification organizes relations to internal and external objects and enables shared theoretical construction.

NEUTRALITY AND OTHERNESS IN IRED

Eva D. Papiasvili

In a radical epistemological turn away from the reductionistic integration of only a few decontextualized 'mainstream' perspectives, IRED strives for as full as possible realistic *representation* of regional and theoretical diversity, richness and complexity in evolution, including mainstream, non-mainstream, 'hybrid' and emerging formulations, areas of ambiguity, uncertainty, contradictions and controversies.
Process of constructing the entries starts with the grassroots identification of the general and regionally specific concepts most relevant to today's analysts' thought and clinical work.
It then proceeds from regional to interregional stages of team writing, before being published in the IRED e-book. This process of interactive teamwork has many recursive
feedback loops and intermediate stages, as one learns about the other (psychoanalytic culture) from inside, and about oneself (one's own psychoanalytic culture, conceptual network) through the eyes of the other, *converging at a neutral point* of intimacy and distance, while guarding against stereotyping and mistranslation**.** As a cohabitation of cultures, psychoanalytic cultures, languages and psychoanalytic languages, this collaboration prominently involves *encounters with otherness at every step.*

The unique features of IRED could be summed up as working with
'Evolving Plurality', 'Complexity' and 'Otherness'.
In this context of Evolving Plurality and Complexity, Otherness and Neutrality are inextricably linked.

Culture of IRED

It is through the '*culture of IRED'*, through the inter-active and inter-perspectival, regional and inter-regional *translation of meaning*, that *translational bridges* can be built that ultimately transform the 'alien other' into the 'familiar other'. *Translational bridges provide a liminal space* where various perspectives, cultures and languages can meet in *a neutral translational-interpretive territory that belongs to all of them and to none of them exclusively*. This liminal space where we learn about the other from inside and about ourselves through the eyes of the other, prompts deeper knowledge of both - the other, and oneself.

Transformation of the 'Alien Other' into the 'Familiar Other'

1In "La Conquete de l'Amérique: La Question de l'Autre", Tzvetan Todorov (1982/1985) theorizes the historical links between the cross-cultural experience and alterity. He brings up an example of a Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca (1531/2013), who lived among native peoples of Central America during 1538-1546 and, according to his own detailed reports, reached a neutral point of knowing the other culture from within, an equivalent of other as oneself perspective.

Learning about the Other from Inside through Translation of Meaning

One example of how a translation of words from the outsider perspective differs from a translation of meaning (through knowing the other from inside) is noted in the entry EGO PSYCHOLOGY, where Francophone analysts "mistranslated" (and therefore misunderstood) the meaning of *equidistance*, the equal distance from all psychic agencies and external reality, as a constant distance from the patient, which they contrasted with their flexible distance approach. We call such occurrences *finding in the translation of meaning of what gets lost in the translation of words*. We learn about other psychoanalytic cultures from the inside by letting the Ego Psychologists on the North American team explain what they mean by equidistance.
Only when the meaning gets properly translated, can we see connecting points which were not in view before.
In FREE ASSOCIATION**,** expansion of the concept brings to view underlying connections between North American Contemporary Freudian/Ego Psychology & French approaches & Contemporary Bionian approaches.
Neutrality in both Free Association as a concept, in IRED work and in IRED e-book as a product convey a value neutral accepting non-judgmental attitude, not prioritizing, not pre-editing, fomenting expressive freedom / freedom of expression, including expression of differences; receptivity to surprises at every turn. In addition, benevolent neutrality becomes a ground for creative understanding (Anzieu 2021) and facilitating the process of translation among different experiential domains (Bucci 1998, Mancia 2006, Scarfone 2018, Papiasvili 2016) in FREE ASSOCIATION as a concept, and facilitating the process of translation among different perspectives in IRED.

Through the Eys of the Other

The complementary 'oneself as another' perspective has historical roots in the writing of twelfth-century scholar and forefather of experiential learning, Hugh St. Victor (1096-1141), who wrote:
"The person who finds his homeland sweet is a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place." (St. Victor 1120-1130/1991, p. 101).

An example of the self as another and one's own perspective through the eyes of the other is found in the entry AMAE (a special kind of dependency wishes for affection and consideration). AMAE also presents another example how during the work of IRED, new connections between previously unconnected conceptual networks emerge. This is especially apparent in the case of highly specific regional concepts, which until then had lived in isolation from the world of psychoanalysis, outside of Japan.
During the grassroots-selection of concepts, AMAE was brought up by analysts from the Japanese Psychoanalytic Association as well as by analysts on the West Coast of the US. Patients of Japanese ancestry described typical interactions between themselves and maternal figures, but also between the parents, e.g.: "Then my father told my mother 'No Amae'!"
Takeo Doi's highly culturally specific Amae needed to be 'translated and understood.' The final

entry, using the Japanese Psychoanalytic Dictionary as a baseline, was explored further by a Japanese-born and Japanese-literate North American analyst, Nobuko Meaders, from New York City, who reread the original sources. The result of teamwork was a comprehensive developmental dynamic elaboration far exceeding any Japanese Dictionary definitions: Now Amae could be connected to such theorists as Erikson, Winnicott, and Bowlby. Freud's early, instinct-based "affectionate current" (needed for survival), Bion's "Containment/Contained," and Mahler's post-symbiotic pre-oedipal "refueling" could also be associated with amae.

After reviewing the AMAE entry, the Past President of the Japan Psychoanalytic Society Dr.Takauki Kinugasa of Tokyo (2017), wrote:

> "Thank you for sending me a very good, expanded article on Amae. I am much pleased to know that there are some excellent psychoanalysts outside Japan who have such deep interest,

understanding and appreciation of the concept of Amae. I am actually very *surprised* to know studying on Amae outside my country has made a great development and contributed to understanding multi-dimensional sides of Amae. I feel we can learn
more from these foreign scholars…"

Alannah Furlong, of Montreal, during a Contributors luncheon discussion at the IPA Congress in Boston, 2015, stated regarding AMAE: "This was truly the work of the passage 'through the eyes of the other' that brought new enriching insights to the native concept."

***Utilizing both perspectives*,**

coupled with the etymological study in the entry SELF led to the understanding of why self as a concept started in English-speaking psychoanalysis, mostly in the United States and Great Britain.

In IRED, as much as in clinical communication, otherness is a condition that is fluid and in motion, oscillating between knowing the other from inside and knowing oneself through the eyes of the other. Accordingly, neutral points between and among them are fluid as well. It is in this way that the multiple neutral territories as intersections of '*multiple alterity*' of the culture of IRED can be understood.

The pluralism of cultures and psychoanalytic cultures, languages and psychoanalytic languages, implies connectivity and otherness: The not-I as the other culture//language (der Andere) is always
filtered through the not-I representing the *other* (das Andere), as the unconscious of the individual,
or as an unconscious investment in one's own psychoanalytic culture or conceptual network. It is through the work of the culture of IRED, that *translational bridges* can be built that ultimately transform the '*alien other' into the 'familiar other'*.

Although ***specific methods of building translational bridges*** to effect the transformation from the 'alien other' to the 'familiar other' may vary, the common element to all of them is increasing the understanding – the 'familiarity'- of what is deemed as 'other'.

These methods may include:

a. Finding a commonly accepted understandable root:
In the '*Ego Psychology'* entry, for instance, we find Nancy Chodorow's (2004, p. 214) reading of Hartmann's (1939/1958) "*Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*" as "an attempt to rethink 'On the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' through the structural theory…".

b. Mitigating the 'outside' reductive view by providing 'inside' perspective:
The example may be the often repeated outside reductive view of Kleinian theory as 'focusing on aggression'. To mitigate this, the 'OBJECT RELATIONS THEORIES' entry carries a clarification, supplied by North American Kleinians: "While Klein is often viewed as focusing on aggression,
Kleinian analysts believe it would be more accurate to say her theory focuses on splitting, which can include the split between love and hate, that takes a central role in psychic life."

c. The description of influences of specific historical-cultural-linguistic milieu
on the evolution of theoretical thought, pertaining to various concept entries, e.g., in 'INTERSUBJECTIVITY':
"The philosophical influences, cultural conditions and different translations of Freud's opus that shaped psychoanalysis in French-speaking countries are different than those that defined the conditions in which psychoanalysis developed in English-speaking countries (Tessier, 2005). The translations in French were less uniform, until Laplanche undertook the publication of the OCFP in the 1980's (Laplanche, 1989-2015) but contributed greatly to specific directions through lexical and semantic choices. For example, the German word *Seele* was translated as « Mind » in English and, in French as « Psychè » … The word « *Vorstellung* » is translated in English by « idea», which is the usual translation, but is very different from the French translation which is « *représentation* ». Another example would be *Verdrangung*, in English « repression » and in French « *refoulement* ».
One can note the social, even penal connotation, of the word *repression*, and the hydraulic metaphor of the French translation…"
(INTERSUBJECTIVITY, French North American section)

d. The description of different etymological roots, as in the entry *'SELF'.*
"*German 'Selbst' and English 'Self'* imply *illusory substantiveness*, which has no exact equivalent in Roman (French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) languages. While the French translation of Freud's opus '*Oeuvres Complètes de Freud/Psychanalyse – OCFP*' (Laplanche 1989-2015) retains the ambiguity of Ich, translating it mostly as 'le moi' (tonic form of 'I'), that is subjective, more a self than the defensive ego creature of Ego psychology to begin with, it has its own problems when it comes to translating 'self' into French. Without 'Je' (for 'I') being brought into play, Winnicott's translator pronounced 'self' essentially untranslatable into French. Overall, in differing ways, neither 'ego' nor 'le moi' are equivalent to German 'Ich'. While in English-speaking psychoanalysis, there is an increased need for the development of the concept of 'self' to account for, and theorize, the subjectivity lacking in the 'ego', in French psychoanalysis there is a diminished need for a comparable development of the self, as 'le moi' is already'self-saturated'."

In the paradigm of evolving pluralistic complex thought, the whole and the parts mutually influence and potentially constitute each other, without eliminating differences among the parts. In the paradoxical dialectic between the whole and the parts of one psychoanalysis and many, the whole does not fragment into many, and the many perspectives do not disappear into the whole. *The identities of specific perspectives are fortified* as they interface with other perspectives.

On an experiential level, many contributors stated that collaborating on entries with colleagues who espouse different perspectives forces one to delve deeper into one's own way of thinking and clarify one's position. "This contrast pushed me to formulate my ideas with greater precision, resulting in a truly enriching experience." Interfacing with other perspectives inevitably led to a fortification and deeper understanding of one's own perspective, enriching and expanding knowledge of the particular concept and, consequently, the entire field of psychoanalytic knowledge. How this can be
transformative on a personal level is reflected in the inter-regional work on "Self":

For me it was a very enriching experience. It gave me the opportunity to delve into an aspect of psychoanalysis that interests me (the Psychology of the Self) and that is not as developed in Argentina as other schools are … The search for the etymology of the term in English led me to find a valuable contribution, made, curiously, by a classic Argentine author of Kleinian roots (LeónGrinberg), which was useful not only in the historical dimension, but also in the conceptual one …through the emails that we exchanged, I clarified … that a term was translated as "sameness." I was left thinking that after this hard and stimulating cooperative task, my "selfhood" was no longer the same and my identity as a psychoanalyst, a member of IPA, was strengthened. (R. Groisman, personal communication, July 2021).

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All other references on file

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THEORIES AND NEUTRALITY OF THE ANALYST

Sandra Maestro

The theme of neutrality in psychoanalysis has its roots in the analytic situation and describes the analyst's ability to maintain an equidistant position from the various instances of the patient's personality, namely the id, the superego, and the ego."

Freud introduced the ideal of analyst neutrality and abstinence.
The analyst should function like a mirror, remaining non-judgmental and avoiding the gratification of the patient's wishes. The aim of neutrality is to facilitate the emergence of transference and unconscious material. Although neutrality was conceived as a technical principle, it has often been interpreted in an overly rigid way by later authors, while others were more critical

Edward Glover, for instance was critical of the idea of absolute analyst neutrality.
He emphasizes that total neutrality is a theoretical ideal rather than something fully achievable in clinical practice. According to him, the analyst is inevitably emotionally involved in the analytic relationship, and countertransference cannot be completely eliminated. Therefore, it may be only a technical neutrality, that means that the analyst should avoid acting out personal conflicts, refrain from imposing values or solutions on the patient, and maintain an observing and interpretive position while remaining humanly involved. **Laplanche** in his dictionary of Psychoanalysis reminds us that neutrality is linked to an analyst's function, not to his/her person, and must be distinguished from a supposed ability to objectify one's vision or, to paraphrase the term, "neutralize" all the artifacts of the relational field (scotomas, blind spots, perceptual or receptive distortions) that interfere with the analytic process.

However, if we extend the concept of neutrality to theoretical frameworks, the issue does not become any simpler.

The Controversial Discussions

Psychoanalysts have never been fully capable of neutrality, especially in the theoretical domain; one need only recall the famous *Controversial Discussions* of the last century. These consisted of six conferences organized by the British Psycho-Analytical Society between January 1943 and February 1944 to address the theoretical and scientific divergences that had emerged between two groups within the Society, led respectively by Melanie Klein and Anna Freud.

The dispute concerned the status of child psychoanalysis and was beginning to generate deep divisions within the British Society, with significant repercussions on the training of candidates,

on institutional life, and on the development of psychoanalysis itself. [1]The strong engagement in the conflict (and its absence of neutrality) is illustrated by a well-known episode that occurred during the second meeting: following an air-raid alarm, Winnicott remarked that the noise of the bombing could be heard outside—"I would like to point out that there is a bombing in progress"—yet all those present remained glued to their seats …. At the subsequent meeting, it was decided that in the event of an air raid the session would be temporarily suspended**.** Interestingly, the Controversial Discussions did not lead to any **t**heoretical agreement. It was decided instead that Melanie Klein and Anna Freud would continue, within the framework of the training program, to hold two parallel seminars on child psychoanalysis, in which each would go on to develop her own theories and their implications for technique.

Further Reflections on the Relationship with Theory

Drawing on the experience of these events, **Bion** found inspiration for the elaboration of one of the key concepts of *Experiences in Groups*, namely the notion of schism,[2] and developed a deeper hypothesis concerning what might fuel the struggle over ideas within the psychoanalytic community.

In a passage from *Attention and Interpretation*, he suggests that Freud had underestimated the strength of the messianic hope that his thought and his person aroused among his disciples, in terms of competition for loyalty to his theories or identification with his role as a genius. The psychoanalytic institution, like a church, would thus be organized so as to foster in the individual the illusion of being in a state of fusion with the divine, particularly when the individual is—or feels—called upon to engage in the creation of new theory. I quote directly

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[1] The aim of the discussions was to present certain concepts drawn from Klein's new theories and to argue for their validity and their consistency with the psychoanalytic tradition. The burden of proof, in fact, lay with Klein's followers: each new hypothesis was required to demonstrate its congruence and continuity with established psychoanalytic concepts and Freud's theories. The analysts involved in the presentations included Susan Isaacs, W. Ronald Fairbairn, Paula Heimann, and Melanie Klein herself, while all other members took part in the discussion. Many historians attribute the intensity of the conflict to the historical and social context of the ongoing Second World War, namely the economic and numerical impoverishment of the British Society: many analysts were in thevwar, others had taken refuge in the countryside outside London, and opportunities to meet and convene were scarce**.**

[2] Schism represents the form of resistance that emerges when a group—or the individuals composing it—is asked to undertake development. A subgroup may advance a new idea, but in such an extreme and radical manner that it causes stagnation in the developmental process. Another subgroup resists the novel idea, which could potentially bring about change or further progress, appealing instead to a sense of loyalty toward the object of dependency—be it a leader, a canonical text, or an overarching idea. The "schismatic group" attempts to resolve its problems through internal conflict.

"This *(individual's continuing tension toward fusion with the divine)*is reflected in the present reality of human relationships and contributes to arousing the group's hatred toward a condition that does not allow individuals, even to glimpse, the possibility of direct access to the great man (as they may once have had with Freud). Individuals cannot reconcile themselves to a discrimination that entails a conscious separation of themselves from a belief in their own Freud-like qualities and that involves recognition of the fact that Freud, a genius -a mystic- no longer exists." (Bion, 1970, p. 106). Conversely, the refusal of these "Freud-like" qualities appears to be a fundamental prerequisite for fostering both individual and collective creativity. Bion further explores what unfolds within a group as it awaits the rise of a new genius, a mystic, or an original thinker capable of introducing ideas as groundbreaking as those of the father of psychoanalysis. It is therefore plausible that the particularly intense theoretical debates of the past century may have functioned as the group's collective response to the absence of such a genius.

In more recent times, **Kenneth Wright** has elaborated a further hypothesis regarding the relationship between the analyst and theoretical frameworks, introducing the notion of theory as a kind of transitional object to which the analyst clings in the face of the "reality" represented by the patient's enigmatic aspects. This transferential investment in familiar theories entails a temporary regression on the part of the analyst, which risks developing into an avoidant withdrawal. As Wright writes, "one might thus observe an avoidant analyst who clings to their theory in the face of the disturbing reality of the patient and refuses to relinquish it. Rather than attempting to expand his resources through a temporary separation from the theory, the analyst would seek refuge in the sense of security it provides, making omnipotent efforts to confine the patient within the theory itself." (p52) In this way, the production of new theories is suspended, and the transitional relationship is transformed into a rigid, dogmatic entrenchment.

It appears that this model can be extended beyond the analytic setting to more generally encompass the role played by individuals' theoretical affiliations within the psychoanalytic community. In this regard, **André Green** suggests that psychoanalytic traditions are not merely schools of thought, but "family units"—systems of belonging that function analogously to families. Each tradition is organized around founding figures (the "fathers" or "ancestors"), canonical texts, origin myths, and specific modes of knowledge transmission. Entry into a tradition entails processes of identification, loyalty, and theoretical fidelity, often accompanied by mechanisms of exclusion toward what is perceived as foreign.[3]

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[3] These theoretical families, suffused with affective bonds and needs for belonging, develop blind spots of group unconscious, shared repressions, and dogmas that shape ways of thinking—often without the analyst being fully aware, particularly in relation to the broader psychoanalytic community. Controversies between schools, therefore, are not merely conceptual debates but may take the form of familial conflicts, involving splits, fraternal rivalries, and generational ruptures.

4The explicit aim of this research was to bring conceptual precision and comparability across different models, rigorously defining the boundaries of specific concepts in order to avoid confusing dissemination between theoriesThe analysis reveals that differences between models are not limited to secondary concepts or clinical techniques, but often involve fundamental theoretical assumptions—concerning the functioning of the

While recognizing the structuring role of belonging to a theoretical family, Green warns against the dangers of rigid loyalty. **Kaes** describes this as a totalitarian defeat to the narcissistic pact, capable of stifling creativity and the freedom of thought—especially the capacity to generate new ideas. For this reason, Green advocates a form of critical pluralism: engaging with and learning from various authors without renouncing one's own roots, sustaining a living dialogue between traditions, and safeguarding both personal inclinations and the independence of analytic thought. As **Stefano Bolognini** notes, such theoretical families—simultaneously formative and affective—profoundly shape the analyst's identity and influence their position within the psychoanalytic institution.

In the issue 4/2021 of the *Rivista di Psicoanalisi* **Fernando Riolo** presents the conclusions of a theoretical and conceptual research on the fundamental axioms of major psychoanalytic theories (Freud, Klein, Bion, Winnicott, Hartmann, Kohut), their compatibility or incompatibility .[4]

. The main conclusion is that contemporary psychoanalysis does not constitute a homogeneous theoretical system, but rather a pluralistic field founded on diverse axioms which requires greater epistemological awareness to avoid apparent obscure eclecticism. However, in this "epistemological awareness," I intercept an implicit exhortation to adhere with "fidelity" to the original formulations of the theories—a fidelity that sometimes may function as a defense against the inevitable mutations and changes of psychoanalysis' theoretical corpus, insofar as we conceive it as a living discipline, capable of adapting to or surviving the challenges of contemporary. Let's consider, for instance, the ongoing debate within the IPA regarding the topic of tele-analysis, or the themes addressed in the last IPA Congress. Lisbon in July 2025.

Difficult, but not impossible: the experience of IRED

One of the guiding principles in IRED's methodology is the description, in-depth analysis, and exploration of the development of the foundational concepts of our discipline. This is undertaken through a comparative study of psychoanalytic traditions across the three continents—North America, Europe, and Latin America—where psychoanalysis has spread as a clinical, theoretical, and training practice over the past 130 years.

IRED could thus be described as an experiment in the "glocalization" of psychoanalysis (a combination of globalization and localization): a reconstruction of how psychoanalytic concepts have evolved, adapted, and been integrated within various geographical, cultural, social, clinical, and linguistic contexts. Alternatively, it can be seen as the creation of a conceptual container

mind, the genesis of conflict, the role of relationships, and the status of the unconscious. Furthermore, some axioms may be partially integrable, while others are structurally irreconcilable, rendering a unified theoretical synthesis problematic

within which the theoretical corpus of psychoanalysis can be understood and studied in its mutable and ever-evolving nature.

Between Saying and Doing

In my experience as a contributor to the development of a new IRED entry, I am continually confronted with conflicting feelings. The question of fidelity to the original formulation of a concept resonates deeply, prompting a careful reading and rereading of texts, in a constant effort to perform an exegesis of the author's thought. Through which passages and in which writings can one trace the emergence and development of the idea?

However, during the reading process, as I become more familiar with the contributions of authors who have engaged later with the same idea, the "tension toward fidelity" tends to diminish. My focus gradually shifts toward exploring the contiguity between different formulations of the same concept, developing a greater tolerance for nuanced boundaries, by observing the transformation of the idea, while undergoing through a process of "separation" from its original thinker.

An Example

In approaching the new entry on the concept of Representation, I initially encountered challenges that led me to seek guidance from colleagues: some from France, including a member of the Lacanian Society of Psychoanalysis, and others from the Catalan Society of Psychoanalysis. As I traced the roots of Representation in Freud's thought, I gradually became aware that Freud himself constantly reworked and transformed the concept, which made it difficult to form a coherent, unified understanding. I hoped that discussions with colleagues might help me establish some clarity among the many branches, revisions, and transformations that this idea underwent in Freud's work. In practice, however, the four online meetings that we organized to discuss on the concept of representation, did not so much establish boundaries around this topic ; on the contrary, they lead us into a rich exploration of nuances, definitions, and redefinitions. These discussions sparked lively debate and, for a time, complicated the process of writing and synthesizing ideas. The debates often focused on questions of orthodoxy and fidelity to the concept—whether emphasis should be placed, for example, on language in translating or trans-leading representation, or on perception as a means of storing images that would later, via mnemonic /mnestic traces, would be transformed into psychic representations. Throughout, there was little neutrality but abundant passion. In the end, we agreed to follow a chronological thread trying to trace, albeit in a preliminary and incomplete way, the historical evolution of the concept within Freud's thought and highlighting its transformations in the shift from the first to the second topography. Two years later, when I came across contributions from the colleagues of the

other two IRED regions, North America and Latin America, a whole new world of perspectives opened up before me—ways in which the same concept can be described, interpreted, applied, and elaborated, sometimes to the point of almost losing sight of its original matrix. Therefore, I came to see that what might be called "neutrality" could be understood as the capacity to reflect on the nature of blind spots or resistances that interfere with embracing the multiple perspectives from which a single concept can be explored, to continue learning from the experience.

Conclusions

Toward the end of his article, Kenneth Wright suggests that theory represents, for its creator, the equivalent of an aesthetic object: a form of recognition and a way of giving voice to an intimate part of the Self, but also a support in the relationship between the Self and external reality. He goes on to add, "I believe this idea offers a way of understanding the powerful investment that individuals or groups make in particular theories—an investment that so often interferes with creative dialogue and creates barriers to the emergence of new ideas" (Wright, p. 60), and, I would add, to the presumed neutrality as well.

William Glover (2025) in his paper *"Rewilding Psychoanalysis."* approaches the issue related to how continue nurturing the pioneering and innovative nature of our discipline and the capacity of psychoanalysts transmitting psychoanalysis, to adapt its theory , its technique and clinical practice to the cultural, social, and economic specificities of the new geographies.

Perhaps this endeavor requires from psychoanalysts a considerable degree of "neutrality," understood here as the capacity to position oneself at an equal distance from one's own theoretical foundations, while maintaining curiosity and openness toward what is new, different, and unfamiliar. It may also be conceived as the ability to move fluidly between passion and enthusiasm, on the one hand, and a substantial measure of critical distance and epistemic humility on the other.

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THE POSSIBLE NEUTRALITY IN THE IRED

Antonio Pérez-Sánchez

I. Neutrality in the analytic situation

We cannot speak of neutrality —analytic neutrality, that is— as a concept already developed in the IRED, since we have not yet been able to work on this entry. Nor is it possible to refer to the concept as each of the speakers on this panel imagines and conceptualizes it, anticipating what the eventual outcome might be. And this is because the outcome of the entry does not depend exclusively on us —even in the hypothetical case that we were part of the team that might eventually write the entry on “neutrality”.
As you may know, due to the IRED methodology, authorship of the entries does not strictly correspond to the names that appear beneath each concept —those whom we call “contributors”. Their task is to gather, summarize and formally integrate the authors who have studied that concept. Therefore, if we were to speak of authorship —for someone must assume responsibility for the result— it would consist in the inevitable bias that each collaborator introduces when selecting the references they find most significant and, within them, deciding where to place the

emphasis, together with the product of their interaction with the other team members.
What we can speak about, therefore, is neutrality in relation to methodology, drawing on more than en years' experience in the construction of other concepts. We can indeed set out some reflections on how neutrality —understood in psychoanalytic terms— may have an influence on the methodology of the IRED.
Let us begin, then, with what we understand today by psychoanalytic neutrality. We are far removed from the Freudian position of a supposed scientific objectivity of the analyst, conceived as a screen reflecting the patient's psyche, or as a mirror in which the patient contemplates themselves. Clinical reality increasingly imposed itself on Freud as he realized that the analytic field of observation did not conform to the scientific criteria of his time: the emotional factors that initially seemed to function as interferences could not in fact be excluded, for they constituted an essential part of the investigation. Thus, transferential love and other feelings linked to the analytic relationship came to be regarded not merely as obstacles, but as indispensable elements of analytic work.
The experience of psychoanalysis —as well as that of other disciplines— has shown that the supposed objectivity of the observer, aimed at avoiding contamination of the object of observation, is not viable, since the mere presence of the observer already modifies the observed reality.
Moreover, as the development of psychoanalysis has made clear, not only is the patient affected by the methodological device of observation; the analyst is also influenced by it. It therefore becomes evident that absolute neutrality is an unattainable ideal.
As psychoanalysis progresses, we might say that it moves towards a more realistic position. Freud ceased to regard transference as an undesirable secondary phenomenon and transformed it into a central instrument of analytic treatment. Furthermore, for this to be possible, it is essential to recognize the impossibility, on the part of the analyst, of maintaining absolute neutrality in the sense of remaining outside the lived analytic experience. On the contrary, the impact on the analyst —countertransference— proves necessary to understand what the patient has been unable to verbalize, or not sufficiently so.
And more than this: as we acknowledge the impact that certain manifestations of the patient have on us, we realize that we are not only affected, but that we also act —responding in a way that is not strictly analytic, but in line with what the patient has "pushed" us into doing. Such a reaction —enactment— was initially regarded as an undesirable phenomenon, attributed either to the analyst's lack of experience or to blind spots in their inner world, or else to the patient's psychopathology. While these factors may indeed play a part, it has been shown that enactment is a phenomenon that may occur with any analyst and any patient, and that it is more frequent than we might wish to acknowledge —which, we might add, required a greater degree of professional
honesty in recognizing such "failures" and sharing them with the analytic community.
This even led to the question of whether the difficulty lay in the analytic method itself, which appears to aim at something impossible: accessing the patient's unconscious while at the same time requiring the analyst to immerse themselves in the analytic relationship —a situation which, at certain moments, may prompt actions that hinder their work. And once again —as with transference and countertransference— what had initially been considered an obstacle was eventually included within the field of observation in order to be analysed and understood. The result is an expansion of our understanding of the patient who, by making us act at a given

moment, reveals the intensity of something that could not have been communicated in any other way.
Thus, although the ideal of an objectively scientific neutrality is not attainable in psychoanalysis, a certain discipline does seem necessary —one that helps ensure that such interferences do not prevent the analyst from performing their analytic function. We are therefore dealing with a form of neutrality in which identification with the patient is possible, followed —at a subsequent moment— by the capacity to take some distance from that affective involvement. Put differently: we identify with the patient's projections in order to understand them better, but then we step back so as not to act like the patient —nor like the projected internal objects— thereby enabling us to analyse the analytic relationship and the patient's inner world. This oscillation entails an inevitable, yet
productive tension, insofar as it stimulates analytic work and contributes to growth.

II. Paradox as a structural feature of psychoanalysis

In a recent paper, based on the IRED entry on "Free Association" (Pérez-Sánchez, 2025, Dresden), I suggested that this concept represents a paradigmatic example of the paradoxical character of psychoanalysis: freedom and determination, spontaneity and discipline coexist within the same formulation. In my view, this feature is present in most psychoanalytic concepts, because it is intrinsic to the very nature of psychoanalysis as a discipline that studies the unconscious through consciousness.
Something similar occurs with "analytic neutrality". Far from being understood as an absence of implication, it may be conceived as an oscillating movement between closeness and distance in relation to the object and to the patient. Paradox is therefore not a defect of the method, but one of its epistemological driving forces.
The task of IRED contributors has something of an artisanal quality: gathering disparate fragments, bringing them together and organizing them in such a way that the overall configuration adds nuance to what the main conceptualizations would be if they were presented in isolation from these minor elements.

III. Shared spaces as containing instruments

As I noted in another paper (Communication presented at the IPA Congress, Cartagena de Indias, 2023), my long-standing experience in the EPF Clinical Working Parties, together with my participation in the IRED since its foundation, led me to the conclusion that it is no coincidence that both initiatives —first clinical, later theoretical— emerged as shared spaces.
If the psychoanalytic movement has at times risked fragmentation, this is because analysts observe clinical reality from their own particular perspective and, in this sense, cease to be neutral. This situation prompted Wallerstein to pose his well-known question: one psychoanalysis or many?
In that paper, I suggested that these two developments —the Clinical Working Parties and the IRED— opened a third path for the development of psychoanalysis: "one and many psychoanalyses". One, because each analyst acquires and internalizes the psychoanalysis of their group of affiliation and develops it in their practice; many, because these various forms of

psychoanalysis coexist within the shared institutional framework of the IPA. The crucial issue lies in creating tools that facilitate dialogue between them.
From this perspective, both the Clinical Working Parties and the IRED may be regarded as shared spaces functioning as containing instruments within the psychoanalytic movement of the IPA.
These spaces allow divergences and contradictions to be brought into play within a working frame —in the Bionian sense— where the resulting tension becomes a constructive element.

IV. Neutrality and the methodology of the IRED

In both of these spaces, neutrality is impossible —or, more precisely, it is only possible up to a certain point, as is the case with everything in psychoanalysis. In the Clinical Working Parties, we may temporarily place ourselves in the position of the colleague presenting the material, even when they approach it from a perspective different from our own: this involves a temporary identification.
At the same time, however, our own analytic identity generates affinities and resistances that 12enable us to gauge how near or distant we are from one another, and from there some form of dialogue becomes possible.
In the IRED, the process is similar, although what is shared here is not clinical material but theoretical developments. Analysts belonging to the IPA undertake the task of constructing concepts on the basis of the knowledge accumulated within this institutional framework, regardless of the school of origin of the members of the writing team. It is in this encounter between those who gather and organize the existing material on a concept that a certain form of neutrality is once again required.
We know that IRED entries do not seek consensus, but inclusiveness: the inclusion of both predominant and minority conceptualizations, even when they are controversial. Here the paradox of neutrality reappears. The contributor inevitably begins from their own bias —their belonging to a particular group, with its specific theoretical and training traditions— but the collective work confronts them with other perspectives. The process involves movements of approach and withdrawal, moments of identification and moments of distance.
This dynamic becomes more intense when the regional draft has to be articulated with those of the other psychoanalytic regions. The resulting tension is not an accidental difficulty, but a constitutive part of the methodological device of the IRED: it requires a relative and disciplined neutrality which does not eliminate differences, but enables them to coexist within a shared construction.
A brief example from my own experience with the IRED —developed in greater detail in a previous paper on the *Enactment* entry— may illustrate this point. In the entry on *Enactment*, the inter-regional methodology required us to include a wide range of perspectives: those influenced by field theory, relational approaches, internal object relations, as well as French notions such as *mise en scène* and *enaction*. The final text reflects this plurality. For instance, the conclusion states that “the analytic dyad becomes destabilized”, a formulation that clearly bears the mark of field theory and its emphasis on co-created dynamics. From the vantage point of an internal object relations perspective, however, enactment can also be understood as a failure in the analyst’s containing function, even when it unfolds within the analytic relationship. Both

readings were kept in the entry, not by averaging them out, but by allowing them to stand side by side within the same conceptual framework.
As a contributor and reader, I found myself oscillating between identification and distance. I feel closer to the European mainstream, which thinks of the analytic relationship primarily in terms of interaction rather than full co-creation. At the same time, being confronted with the notion of co-creation led me to reconsider interaction itself as something that the patient and the analyst do together: at times in alignment with the analytic task, at other times not —particularly when the patient's psychotic or omnipotent infantile aspects are opposed to analysis. In this sense, my own reading process mirrored the kind of "possible neutrality" I am proposing here: not the absence of a position, but the capacity to move between one's theoretical belonging and an openness to other frames of reference, without resolving the tension too quickly.
We might say that, just as in the clinical situation neutrality is impossible yet necessary as a horizon, in the IRED neutrality functions as a condition of possibility for theoretical co-authorship: it organizes the movement between one's own frame of reference and openness to others, allowing the final outcome not to exclude, but rather to integrate, multiplicity and nuance.

V. Conclusion

Neutrality —both in the clinical situation and in the IRED— is impossible in an absolute sense, yet necessary as an aspiration. The oscillation between identification and distance —between belonging and openness— makes the shared construction of psychoanalytic thought possible. In this respect, the IRED does not merely describe concepts: it institutionalizes paradox as a mode of work, turning it into a condition for theoretical co-authorship and for the coexistence of multiple perspectives within the same field.

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Discussion during the Panel and during Contribution Luncheon

included remarks by Stefano Bolognini, Antonio Perez Sanchez, Sandra Maestro, Marco Conci, Dimitris James Jackson, Jeff Taxman, Ester Palerm and others centering on learning from short term challenges to achieve long term objectives, such as dissemination of IRED among the wider psychoanalytic community. This has a particular relevance in view of preparation of IRED E-Book for the long-awaited print publication, presently in the process, culminating with the contractual agreement with Karnac.