

Wilfred Bion and the question of Neutrality

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Abstract Content (EN)

Wilfred Bion's formulation of the analytic stance as one conducted "without memory and without desire" (Bion1965,1967) can be understood as a radical reworking of Freud's principle of analytic neutrality. Bion, however, takes this principle to a new level of rigor. He addresses the analyst's capacity to renounce arrogance, curiosity and what he termed stupidity - that is attacking on the links. At the same time, he emphasizes the analyst's respect for "O", the ultimate truth of the analytic moment, grounded on the recognition that what one knows is mainly a representation of what one doesn't know.

Under these two conditions, one can use the normal projective identification to work through the pathological projective identification.

"Without memory and without desire" does not imply the absence of preconceptions, but rather the analyst's capacity to recognize and hold preconceptions—both his own and the patient's —without allowing them to predetermine the analytic process. In this stance, the analyst's awareness of the restrictions imposed on his mind (*negative realization*) creates the conditions for new conceptions: an understanding of how the patient's memory and desire resonate with, shape, and transform the analyst's own. This is the essence of neutrality for Bion.