

11. on reciprocity

*Youme knows what Meyou wants
Meyou knows what Youme wants
and it's granted*³⁰

The reciprocity is one of those magical terms which are self-meaning, but also which are mostly misconceived.

As I am interested to explore the magic of the relational dynamics, any magical word is surely welcomed.

In general term, the idea of reciprocity refers to a mutual exchange, leading to a mutual benefit. So far, this definition is just a basic principle of any economical trade. There is no magic in this.

The magic lays in other elucidations from different points of view, such as in grammar, in Latin, in geometry, in mathematics, and, of course, in physics.

As the grammar is there to structure any speech, it is interesting to enlighten its denotation: in grammar, the reciprocity is a characteristic of pronouns and verbs which express a basic mutuality within the very nature of their interrelations, actions and relations.

This concept is helping anytime emotional and symbolic representations of the dualistic relation of care come through. The reciprocity intervenes, and represents the grammatical fundament of any transference and counter-transference dynamics.

To have it clear as a day, the etymology in ancient Latin defines the term as a combination of two opposites: “*recus*”, meaning backward, and “*procus*”, meaning forward. In ancient Latin, the word reciprocity was an oxymoron, one of those enchantments where two formally

³⁰ Einstürzende Neubauten, *Youme & Meyou*, from the LP Perpetuum mobile, 2004

opposite words congregate to open up new horizons of significations.

Anything which is on the table will pass and moves from one part to the counter-part, and back, and forth, and back again, within a circularity of movements which will rest as long as the relation is open and awake.

The dynamics regarding the different relational positions is introduced by the geometry, where the term reciprocity indicates the two-way correspondence between the points on a surface and the straight-lines of another. Different points of view are connected and bound together by their perspectives, which defines their quality and possibilities.

In mathematics, it is a quality of specific expressions and functions which are connected to produce a unit as result. In terms of expressions, this means that anytime a collection of symbols jointly express a quantity of one as result, there is reciprocity.

Relating to the functions, any time a relationship or expression involving one or more variables produce a unit as result, there is reciprocity.

So far it seems already enough to fix reciprocity as the fundament of any care-work relation.

Moving further to the electromagnetic physics, it is a principle used to demonstrate the relation between the transmitter and receiver antennas, specifying that the emission and the receiving patterns are identical. More technically in Lorentz³¹ theorem and in his analogous followers, shows that the mutual impedance of a first circuit due to a second is the same as the mutual impedance of the second circuit due to the first.

If it is specified that impedance is the effective resistance of an electric circuit to alternating current, arising from the combined effects of resistance and reactance, again we have a physical clear definition of what in psychoanalysis are the transference and counter-

³¹ Hendrik Lorentz, *Attempt of a theory of electrical and optical phenomena in moving bodies*, 1896

transference dynamics within any relation of care.

All of these definitions contribute to enlighten what it is evident for many various fields of human knowledge: that the basis for any relation is set in reciprocity. Any other assumption is mistaken, or, more appropriately, it would enlighten the oppressive power-game that one part is proposing to the other.

Still, there is another aspect of reciprocity which I find significant, and that I always clarify during supervisions and in my group-work sessions. It happens quite often to hear from some group-members that “trust” is an issue to discuss about.

Risking to be unfair, I always repeat that trust is nothing so importance to make it an issue. This might sound shocking, but in truth, trust is not a cause, but an effect. We know well that whenever the effects are taken as the issues, there will be not much chance for a real change. This is why trust is not that charming as an issue to me.

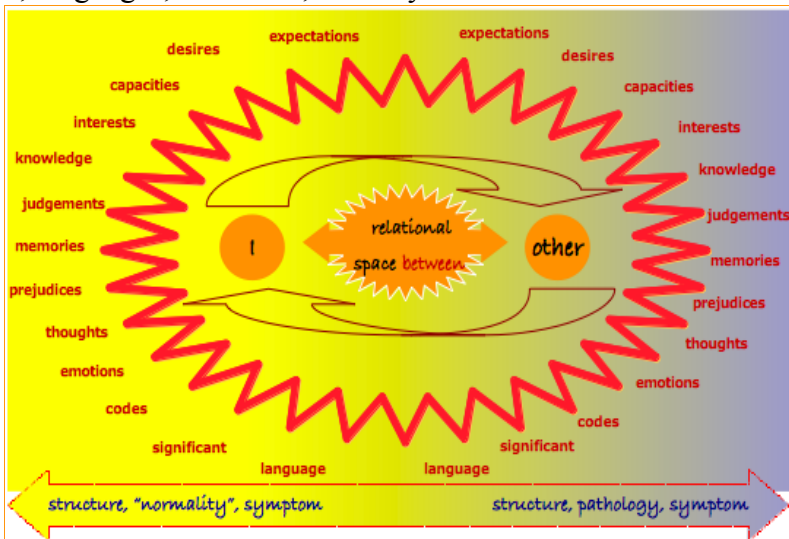
Within this wider signification of reciprocity, trust is a direct effect of the existence of respect and dignity within the relation: respect for the other, in whatsoever quality an individual would appear and manifest. Dignity, because any living being is the bearer of its own dignity, which can not be touched except during a direct oppressive intervention of one relational part to the other. Which, of course, it is nothing to happen during a care-work.

More largely, the concept of reciprocity allow to expand the vision of what it is defined as the relational space. There is, of course, all the internal space between two persons. And it is clear that there are all the movements and dynamics between the two, as the communication theories and literature clarify so well.

But there is another space, which is at once internal and surrounding the two parts, and which is composed by all the dimensions, significations, variables, functions and expressions that each of the two is bringing to the relation.

Those are their expectations, desires, capacities, interests, judgements, awareness, knowledges, prejudices, memories, thoughts, emotions,

codes, languages, and so on, as many as one can bear.



On one part, all of them, and the effect of the relation within the concept of reciprocity and the relational space between me and the other, will contribute to define the structure of a person, which is commonly considered as normality, more seldom as symptoms.

On the other hand, all these components are the basis of what is usually perceived as the personal structure delineating a pathological dimension, and less often as a symptoms.

But since Latin ancestors to mathematical, geometrical, physical and grammatical today evidences, the concept of reciprocity clarifies as also at the meta-level of the symptoms there is a functional, expressive and dynamical relation.

Having this in mind is something which might support the care-worker in handling the professional activities. My suggestion is that it is not necessary to consider such awareness as a specific attitude to be proud of, which is always at risk of increasing the power-games. It is much more simple to bear it as a knowledge to be responsible of.

Sometime the easier can also be the better.