

Michele Minolli: In Memory of a Mentor

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ABSTRACT. – In remembrance of Michele Minolli, the Author will retrace the essential aspects of the theoretical and clinical model that Minolli developed during his lifetime, highlighting the issues that stimulated his research and his commitment to psychotherapy training.

Key words: I-Subject; interaction; process; presence-to-oneself.

“We need a theory for men and women of the 21st century that is centred on the faith that it is possible to take charge of one’s life and live it fully.
We need a theory that stops endorsing man in delegation and alienation.
We need a theory that does not sanction tears as being due to a mother who was not good enough. We need a theory that helps us to understand where the nucleus of renunciation, the emptiness and inconsistency are in human beings.”

With these words Michele concluded his speech at a conference held by our Institute, with guest Miguel Benasayag, entitled *Psychoanalysis today?* It was 2016.

With these words he announced the manifesto of his way of thinking and the inspiration behind the last few years of his life, which were entirely dedicated to researching the meaning and causes of human suffering and on ways to face them in the world today.

Simple words, as was his style, for transmitting information so that it could remain engraved in the mind of whoever listened and knew not to judge a book by its cover. He chose his words to be deliberately simple, in order to be sure that they reached listeners clearly and directly. For this reason, he avoided psychoanalytic vocabulary with almost obsessive care, as the words and meanings had by then become flaky in time and were irrevocably characterized by epistemic premises of the cultural and historical context in which they had taken shape.

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Michele did not love professional rhetoric, nor did he appreciate overly polished discourse because he was used to say these covered up meaning rather than expressing it: in his professional life and in every other aspect, when he used words he had a deep need for honesty and coherence, which always guided him to strike straight to the heart of people and issues with disarming simplicity. At times these embarrassed some, but they enlightened many more.

Often we would tease him because he was totally unable to compromise in using diplomatic and formal gestures that in the world are seen as proof of competence and seriousness. With his genuineness he was able to involve even illustrious guests in passionate discussions, even though they were used to rituals of convenience. He became passionate without sparing anything or anyone, but he knew how to do it with politeness and with that unmistakable humanity that captivated even the most reluctant of interlocutors. Then we would go for dinner and around a good bottle of wine we built long-lasting relationships.

Within our Association, Michele instigated strong passions, love, hate, admiration and aversion, but all of us recognized that we had met a Mentor who knew how to inspire us, provoke us, help us think and make us use our critical sense, even if, as he slyly stated, he was always right.

Maybe because of this, he was not always understood. His was not arrogance, and he was certainly not interested in predominating over others, but he opposed any falsehood, presumption or exploitation of his figure with all his might, even at the cost of his popularity.

He searched for real discussions so that he in turn could be stimulated and contested, to test his convictions and revise or perfect his hypotheses. It was certainly not for complaisance that in various circumstances he expressed gratitude to colleagues and students with whom he had confronted himself with.

Son of an era that was still culturally and socially marked by a sense of authority and brought up in a context in which psychoanalysis was still locked in dogmatic knowledge and in rigid conceptions of clinical practice, it was a conquest for him to legitimize space and freedom for his own path, without forefathers, without protectors, and without compromises. He began together with the original group, fondly remembered by Gian Paolo Scano as the *Carbonari*¹ in the 1970s, to talk about relationships in psychoanalysis, which at the time seemed a heresy.

Much time has passed since then, there have been many meetings, obstacles, crises, changes of pace and travel companions, but he never lost the common thread that oriented him and it is due to this coherence that he

¹A secret revolutionary society active in Italy in the 1800s.

sometimes found himself taking difficult paths rather than shortcuts, renouncing easy leads and losing the esteem of those who did not understand him any longer. He hoped for a psychoanalysis that would look forward and respond to the needs of modern man. But looking ahead is frightening. One needs courage, but also a lot of audacity in order not to surrender to the temptation of some truth or the allure of a consolidated knowledge. One must legitimize oneself in an autonomous way of thinking that, until the correct and valid thoughts are identified in the conformity of principles and tradition, it can be seen as arrogance, or even megalomania.

Michele was among those who believed it was necessary to run this risk, for vitality and for the future of psychoanalysis, because the gratitude to Freud as founder of the discipline cannot be translated into deference or subjection, without betraying the spirit that inspired its creation.

If ideas are not abstract concepts that go around in circles to serve an intellectual ambition, but they are the result of a suffered and incarnate experience of the endeavour of living, then Michele, as only true Mentors of psychoanalysis are, was an extraordinary example of that coherence between being and doing that is at the base of every possible ethic.

In 2018, at the end of the academic year, Michele was saying farewell to the last role he had maintained (teaching at the SIPRe Psychotherapy Training School) with a speech that he had carefully contemplated and prepared in his little hometown, as he always did when he had to speak publicly. It was a difficult decision to step down, but he felt it necessary, not due to tiredness or exhaustion, but in order to make way for the younger generation. It was an act of love for his SIPRe (*Società Italiana di Psicoanalisi della Relazione*) to decide that his creation was no longer his, that the SIPRe conceived by him would pass into the hands of future generations.

Even in this occasion, he advised that the young people, in whom he so believed, ‘think with their own mind’, always keep the spirit of research alive, without being seduced by the need for security, but to make space for doubts, uncertainties, curiosities, intellectual honesty, feel *secure in insecurity*: these are only present if we accept and recognize ourselves for how we are, taking ourselves seriously rather than emulating or repeating the path of others.

This is how he conceived training, as an experience in which to take risks and experiment, by keeping in mind the objective of meeting with the patient but also trying to find the path to pursue together with the patient. He was steadfast in discouraging research in people who were still inexperienced of footholds, of rules, of crutches, of know-how, of role identities. Moreover, he blamed teachers that assumed the role of *savants* and that considered young people like containers to be filled or plasticine to be moulded.

‘Making one’s own way’ was his motto. In this way he interpreted existence, up until the end, when he died as he would have wanted to, where he wanted to, next to who he wanted, smoking his cigarette in the short pauses in which his breath still allowed him to.

This was Michele. I could stop here, because it is not easy to return to his way of thinking and to try to transmit its sense and value. It is not easy because in an article we can only touch upon some aspects, without an in-depth analysis which, in this case, would be appropriate and which Michele would have considered important. Most of all, it is not easy because too little time has passed since he left us, there are too many intimate memories between us, as though it was still not the right time to say farewell to him and to the memory of his work. But I’ll try to.

The centrality of the subject

Minolli had always kept himself busy in creating a general theory that combined the conception of the subject with the relational dimension of its existence. This was the theme that inspired the historic nucleus of what subsequently became SIPRe.

The elaboration of a general theory of the I-Subject went well beyond a purely speculative interest: deep down there was a conviction that, only by overcoming self-reference and being up to date with the modern epistemic paradigm, psychoanalysis could have continued to express its cultural, scientific and therapeutic potential. It was a project for psychoanalysis that identified its objective not in the theories, which could evolve and change, but in the end goals for which our discipline was born: studying and understanding human beings in their complex and unique reality, comprehending the profound reasons for their suffering and the qualitative ways of change.

The neologism *I-Subject* was conceived to emphasize the globality and unity of the subject without breaking it down to the psychic instances, nor substantivizing it to a phenomenal-experiential self, nor assimilate it to its states of mind.

Nevertheless, up until the 2000s the definition of I-Subject remained clearly identified with its psychic dimension and the operative concepts remained those of classical psychoanalytic tradition, of desire and defence, of identity, unconscious strategies and conflict, with reference to the Hegelian dialectic of self-consciousness (Minolli & Tricoli, 2004). The unity of the subject was placed next to the sense of Self introduced by Stern (1985), to the idea of a subjectivity as the core of the identity of a person (Minolli, 2004). The unity was fundamentally psychic. A turning point in the theorization of the I-Subject was given by L. Sander’s contribution on

non-linear dynamic systems (Sander, 2002; 2007), where Minolli found efficacious tools to formalize his vision of the I-Subject on conceptual grounds that were updated with the logic of complexity. Therefore, he was able to overcome dichotomous thinking, reductionism and psychic determinism as this was sufficiently unsaturated of general contents and therefore sensitive to contemplating the I-Subject in its unique and specific singularity.

Incidentally, in his book *Essere e divenire*² (Minolli, 2015) Michele abandoned any reference to a system for fear that the uniqueness of the I-Subject would be lost in a too-literal identification with this concept, a risk that did not seem defeated by his insistent clarification of the metaphoric sense of the noun ('as though it were a system').

From the year 2000, Minolli, who in the meantime was becoming interested in the contributions of neuroscience and cognitive science, focused his efforts on ways to liberate his theory from the centrality and absolutization of the psyche. Human beings no longer seemed to be governed by the mental but, if anything, we would speak of a diffused psyche in the entire body, of a cognition of the living being as a self-eco-organizing being (a concept taken from Morin 1981) that exists as a defined reality, that interacts with the external. From this moment, the unity was no longer connected to the psychic but employed as a fact of the nature of the living organism.

The I-Subject, on par with any living form, is *one* (going beyond the mind-body dichotomy 'I think with my feet and walk with my head') *that is composed of parts that are connected with each other* (overcoming fragmentation: the part is the whole, the whole is the parts), and *is related to the environment* (synchronicity of the self-eco-organization as a way of overcoming the internal-external dualism).

The fundamental motivation that every living organism converges towards is survival, and every part of an organism works in concert with other parts and in equilibrium with the environment to ensure the necessary conditions for its existence. If these conditions cease to exist, the living being simply dies, but before that, whatever the solutions are that are implemented by the organism, they must be interpreted as the best possible for itself.

What may seem incongruent, inappropriate, inaccurate, conflicting, dysfunctional, and contradictory in the eye of an observer, are in reality coherent, necessary, and optimal for the organism's survival in its internal logic.

²*New frontiers of Relational thinking in Psychoanalysis. A meta-theory of being and becoming.* Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group. In press.

To give you an idea, Minolli would use the example of a plum tree he had in his orchard:

“Normally plum trees, like all trees, grow upwards, vertical to the ground, but this specific old plum tree has a twisted and horizontal trunk that is propped on the ground for a meter or so. Yet it is alive and thriving, and it produces exquisite plums.”

The psyche and the value of thought

Every cell and every part of a living being operates in order to maintain a point of coherence that coincides with the feeling of being alive, where *alive* includes even the plane of consciousness, that Minolli - following Morin (1981) - attributes to the cognition of the being and describes it as a perception of the self as separate and distinct from what is not self.

Consciousness is therefore framed in functional terms, as an aspecific capacity, free from the strictly psychological meaning of *awareness* and *reflectivity*.

The psyche has no supremacy on the other parts, it is not the control centre room that governs the proceeding of life, and from a functional point of view is equal to any other component, and it adheres to the logic of maintaining the structure of the living being.

The content of consciousness is given by *feeling*, a term that is purposefully vague and unsaturated, useful in indicating the diffused and immediate impact with reality, with facts.

For human beings, emotions, sentiments, and mood states are *objective*, real and must be considered as such, which is different from thinking they are for example a neurotic expression of unresolved dynamics.

In addition to this definition consciousness is when any living being tends to affirm its existence separate to the rest of the world, supported by the consciousness of ‘I am (me)’ that inevitably coincides with the self-referential and egocentric experience of ‘I am the centre of the world’, which is not to be intended as a narcissistic accident, but as a natural and necessary implication of the cognition of the living organism. Minolli speaks of *affirmation of self* to indicate this functioning of consciousness that, we could say, finds in its *feeling* a unique measure of reality.

The cult for introspection and mythology of the self must come to terms with the fact that the reflective dimension is framed and dealt with in its significance of cognition of the living being that, on par with every other function of the living being, responds and is therefore subordinate to the maintenance of the existential coherence of the subject.

What differentiates a human is the possibility of a *return to oneself* that fuses together with the human quality of *self-presence* (in 2015, Minolli

goes on to specify the concept of *presence* introducing *consciousness of consciousness*). It is with this *consciousness of consciousness* that the I-Subject goes beyond its feeling and recognizes, grasps and comprehends its existence on another level, and from here the capacity to choose and pronounce oneself arises.

The return to oneself is not the result of a deliberate decision, of an introspective exercise, and it is especially not an eventuality that can be determined from the external. It is an option which the I-Subject has access to uniquely for itself, that unfolds in a fortuitous manner, caused by circumstances or events that destabilizes some certitudes, that up to then were given for granted: the key steps in growing up, that expose new life scenarios; the experience of our fragilities, accidents, illnesses, old age; any event can become a stimulus, an opportunity for the I-Subject to realize it is alive, that life has an ending and that life is its own, that it can take it by the reins and decide what to do with it (to appropriate).

This ability is the fertile ground for creativity, interpreted as the exclusive possibility that the human subject has to reposition itself with regard to living.

“If a swallow at some point decides not to take flight and migrate with other swallows towards warmer places, that swallow would not be a swallow but a human being.”

Being and becoming: the process of life, the subjective configuration and creativity

In *New frontiers of Relational thinking in Psychoanalysis* Minolli (Minolli, 2015) proposed his most accomplished formulation of a meta-theory for the I-Subject, that is, an unsaturated model (‘the contents are put in by the single I-Subject’), based on criteria that help to trace the process of the I-Subject. These were the processual criteria and not the meanings inferred by the theory, to allow for the comprehension of the I-Subject.

Life is a movement that is always open and in development, has its start with the configuration that the I-Subject receives from genetics and from the environment.

The I-Subject is the result of completely contingent factors, that beginning from the act of conception – where it receives genetic material and an environmental context, that includes the investment received by one’s parents - constitute it and define it in its reality.

Minolli thus puts into crisis the concept of *active subject* on which many had lingered on in the past. The I-Subject moves within the lines of force inscribed in its configuration: it puts in place what is, on par with any other organism that acts according to its nature. The *active* component is

necessarily conditioned because, indeed, the configuration lies outside of any initiative, willingness, self-determination and responsibility of the I-Subject.

It is not a subject, nor an idea of an abstract, pre-existing subjectivity, nor an *authentic* virgin subject, that then the vicissitudes of life divert, corrupt, betray, distort and whose integrity will be found again through the recovery or discovery of its truth, but it is a subject that is constituted, defined, and configured within its own reality that makes it what it is.

Minolli insisted a lot on this point: to root the subject in concreteness and to contrast the habit of searching for reasons and causes of suffering in the past or in the deviation from supposedly adequate conditions for healthy development.

The self-eco-organization of the subject is founded on its configuration and cannot do anything but face life from that existing form that belongs to it, in relation with the world within which it happened to exist: to make hypotheses on 'what would it have been like if', or intervening to remedy supposed insufficiencies or deficits distances the I-Subject from itself and from the possibility of recognizing and accepting itself, which instead is the only leverage from which to appropriate and seize life.

Far from an evolutionary perspective based on the idea of progress, the process of I-Subject is not a sequence of chronological stages and steps, but the articulated and complex carrying out, in the literal meaning of the word, of the vicissitudes of living and the elaboration of their impact.

This means that, once it has come into the world, the I-Subject proceeds in the course of life on the basis of its configuration. This configuration is affirmed via consciousness but can be tangled up with the quality of *consciousness of consciousness* (*id est* a return to oneself). That is, the realization of oneself can open up to creativity and to take charge of one's life, these bring about a self-pronouncement in one's life (being active means assuming and mastering of one's life).

All human beings, in their journey, can at any time access a creative and active contact with what they are and only in these conditions, can avoid passively enduring their reality. It is worth underlining the fact that the access to creativity does not produce structural changes. The I-Subject cannot become anything else apart from what it is, but only - and this is what the quality of living depends on - can take on first-hand his or her living experience, putting themselves in a position of subject, and not of direct object.

The key to growth, or emancipation, does not derive from the liberation of one's own characteristics and idiosyncrasies and from one's own story, but from the appropriation of what one is, making it the centre of gravity. Only in this way can the I-Subject gain *consistency*, that is the term used by Minolli to give the idea of a subject that is staying on its own two feet: a subject that does not depend on affirmation of self, nor does it therefore ask continuous confirmation of itself in the world.

Consistency and creativity make us confront solitude, because they remove the misleading comfort of a delegation of the self to others, where others should be the answer to one's need, but they give back a sense of living life fully, living one's life in first person.

The relationship as interaction

It is not possible to appreciate Minolli's contribution fully without keeping in mind his work with couples (Minolli, 2016), which was an area that revealed itself to be fundamental in reflecting his concept of the I-Subject and in operativizing the concept of relationship.

This topic deserves a chapter all on its own, but here it will suffice to mention those that we consider the most important points of his theory.

When in 2003 we launched the first post-specialization course in Couple Psychoanalysis, which has now reached its 8th edition, couple's interventions were still given little consideration as a specific target for psychoanalysis.

Despite important developments in the understanding of intersubjective dynamics, and proposals from areas that were more frankly relational, they based the couple relationship on interpretative categories that were of dualist imprint (self-other; internal-external; real-phantasmatic; and so on). These had the inevitable consequence of bringing back the analysis of the dynamics between partners to an equilibrium between the parts, in search of mutual feelings, complementarities, functionalities and dysfunctions of the dyad, so as to find a point of no return in the assumption of an irreducible and intrinsic conflict between self-other of human nature (Pizer & Pizer, 2005).

This operation, in hindsight, retraces the representations of common sense when, in the absence of ulterior criteria, it bases its evaluations on the personal characteristics of each person and on the dynamics that are established between the two partners, attributing these a definitive and definitory weight (let us think, for instance, of the typification in the diagnosis of couple relationships).

Objectification is obviously not only a problem of working with couples, but with couples it stands out more because in the setting the partners put into play the firmness of the knots that they are unable to unravel, often leaving even the most expert of therapists feeling helpless and discouraged. Also because on a theoretical level, on account of the weightiness of these dynamics, but especially due to individual and mentalist presuppositions, the relationship is treated like a co-built product, like a third person between the partners, and is framed on a symbolic level like an object of investment for both parties.

'The couple does not exist' this was Minolli's way of stating that in reality a relationship container does not exist, it is a result of meanings that act as single factors, but there are two I-Subjects at play, each with its own self-eco-organization, and with that of the partner that in turn, finds an optimal context to assert itself in that equilibrium.

In order to control the resorting to inferences and abstract meanings that are associated with this, Minolli specified the concept of relationship as an *interaction*, that on a concrete level of observable reality circumscribes the exchange that exists in a continuous, reciprocal and simultaneous manner between the two subjects. The investment on the partner and the bond that is established with them is an expression of the I-Subject (Morin stated that the subject is its bonds). Therefore, each partner puts himself or herself in that affirmation of self that makes him or her feel like the centre of the world and asks for confirmation of him/herself from the world.

We could say that the interaction is in continuity and thus coherent with the affirmation of self of each of us, and this is the case independently of form and contents that the relationship can assume to the eye of an external observer. Since life is movement and we are all submerged in the process of development, it is inevitable that crisis occurs and gives way to suffering, that emerges as an elaboration of passage.

There is no couple crisis but always and only a personal crisis of each partner, that in the balance constructed together no longer finds validation and possibility for self-confirmation but a stimulus to evolve, that is painful and destabilizing up until the point of being rejected.

When the turmoil of the couple's crisis is no longer allowed in or tolerated, the I-Subject will become entrenched in its solutions, which must be protected at all costs, because they are felt as the only possibility for it to exist.

From the rigidity that makes one's own solutions untouchable, derive stalemate solutions, that continue to suffocate and paralyze, and that impose themselves as objective and dependent from outside, from the partner.

The partner, becoming the receiver of a love request that is a self-referential and ego-centric pretence and imposition, disappears. He or she disappears because they are not seen in their otherness and they disappear because, in turn, in order to not be nullified in the imperative request of the partner, imposes itself even more categorically to affirm itself for how it is and not for how the partner wants them to be.

The firmness of the dynamics must not therefore be thought of fatalistically like a symptom of a wrong relationship or like the end of a relationship, but like a signal that the crisis has not found the I-Subject as ready and susceptible to that return to the self that is necessary to take control of one's own investment and deal with the bond that one has built with the partner.

Clinical practice for human suffering

Who is *that* patient? Why is he or she suffering? How can we help them? These are the three questions that Minolli used to set up his clinical comparisons.

Questions that are simple but necessary in order to free the field of psychoanalysis from pre-established symbolic universes that short-circuited clinical reasoning and lost *that* patient in a world of theories that are more useful to the therapist (to find footholds and orient themselves) than *that* person who, in the meantime, looks for ways to find themselves.

Minolli has always cared about uniqueness, singularity, and originality of *that* I-Subject and in meeting with a new patient he always considered it important to specify that, even though he knew many theories about human beings he knew nothing about the person who was in front of him.

For this reason, he criticized any explanations that hypothesized the I-Subject within general categories that do not explain but describe phenomena. In describing phenomena, inevitably they appeal to relative and arbitrary parameters and references that in measuring the phenomenon, also judge it.

On this basis, Minolli explained that observation informs the therapeutic act, that even though it is finalized for the good of the other person, it will intervene in a corrective way, so so as to produce changes in the way the subject is.

The issue inserts itself in a historical debate on the criticism of psychotherapy and on the ethics of treatment, in which Minolli never entered because his focus remained on the application of the clinical method.

Our theories are a result of history, and they are valuable until they are heuristically useful, that is to say that they orient us, they give us sense and finalize our actions efficiently. And they are useful for us, because they are also inevitably personal: they answer to our way of being, to our deepest convictions, to our values, to our vision of reality and to our way of existing in the world.

It is a shared opinion that in Psychology, our observations cannot be based on the objectivity of data. Symptoms do not have the same value as a physical symptom, nor etiological explanations like medical pathologies. Even the most advanced studies, can at the most identify correlations between physiology-neurology and psychological symptoms, but the complexity implies that there is no possibility to establish links between causes and effects.

Despite this, the mental structure of the psychotherapist remains strongly imprinted to the medical model, and so does the ritual of the role. From the gathering of the medical history, to diagnosis, to treatment, every

moment of the therapy in and of itself risks conveying a message around which the experience of the therapeutic relationship becomes imprinted, generally, it aims to resolve the experience of suffering via an external intervention that produces change.

With the proposal of a meta-theory, Minolli tried to move the referential axis of observation onto the process, providing unsaturated criteria that, much like a lighthouse, help shed light on the movement of the I-Subject.

He reiterated that we need criteria that help to comprehend human beings *starting from what they are and taking them seriously for what they are*, assuming that *how they are* is the best possible for them in order to keep going. What does he mean with *how they are?* and *taking them seriously?* It means welcoming the patient starting from them, trying to understand them, not yet taking into consideration their symptoms or signs which easily appeal to a diagnostic-clinical view, but rather in function of these being constantly inserted in a process of elaboration of their relationship with their reality. This means avoiding interpretations that establish shortcomings, deficiencies, conflicts, *etc.* (attribution of intentions) because the I-Subject is what it is, in the only way it can be and that belongs to it. Taking it seriously means maintaining a perspectival view of its development and founding our action on the trust that everything they do, whether it be absurd or inexplicable, is at the service of maintaining their existence, under the conditions that each being guarantees.

Regarding this, Minolli founded the positive view of human beings, not as a philosophical or ideological position, but as a central and operative dimension of his conception of the I-Subject.

Suffering is part of life, not because human beings are structurally condemned to a conflicting or lacking existence, but because the reality of life, in every moment, makes us face the stressors of the world in which we live, with the pressures of growth, with new demands that develop. Much like how a plant suffers when it is transferred from the greenhouse to an open field, human beings must deal with requests for flexibility and change that life continuously exposes us to (the future) and, in the transitions and changes of state, in facing chaos, destabilization and crisis.

Standing by and support suffering therefore only means the ability to accompany the transition, staying by their side and supporting their possibility of giving an elaborative sense to their suffering, to tolerating and undergoing their experience, at their own pace.

In this sense, we could say that the therapeutic process consists in the interception and support of the process of life of the patient: therapy does not unfold as an independent journey that, via specialized procedures, tools and techniques can modify the pathological conditions and restore some equilibrium that is more adequate, but by rehabilitating the humanistic matrix of our profession, it is offered as a place for the subject to connect

with him/herself and to his or her need of recognizing him/herself and living his/her life in first person.

The objective of the method is not the change, but the *presence to oneself* for the patient and at the same time, we could add, even of the therapist. Here we could insert the issue on which Minolli concentrated the last of his work on, with the development of an *epistemology of presence*, that he placed at the centre of his method, of his idea of therapy and his project for psychotherapy training.

Personal involvement of the therapist, the impossibility to be neutral, intrinsic subjectivity in every act that we make, the respect for the uniqueness of others, are well-established principles but, are often theoretical statements, corollaries that do not find true evidence in the therapeutic system and in the ways of understanding and interpreting the actions of a psychotherapist.

Clinical practice combines with ethical sense of treatment when it is based on the recognition of human symmetry with the patient: the enterprise and the challenges of living concern all of us. Being a psychotherapist does not mean being resolved, or that we have acquired the best tools to face issues, much less have the certitudes for or immunity from the challenges of existence.

Of course, this is how patients can see us, and with this illusion, they are convinced that they are not adequate, that they are a failure or too penalized by their personal story. They reinforce the expectation that someone, more expert and knowledgeable, can resolve their problems.

To have the suffering of the patient, one must dismantle this investiture, suspend the therapeutic zeal that pushes us towards producing changes in the patient, renounce the barricades of our role behind which we search protect us from the impact that the the patient's grief may have on us. We should, in other words, get in touch with the choices and the reasons for our actions step by step, recognize them as our own and that they are made for us, in relation to our needs for personal and professional affirmation. We must work constantly on this return to ourselves that can make room for others and their right to not only be the receivers of our requests for confirmation.

Michele Minolli has paved new roads to traverse and continue to explore so that Psychology and Psychotherapy always remain open to contributions from other sciences, that they remain sensitive to emergencies in a world that is continuously being transformed and they remain aware of the responsibility that they have in contributing to the culture and self-image of human beings in our time.

Our hope is that all of us who were lucky enough to meet him, will be able to not stop where he arrived but that we will be able to continue in research, and in this way, not betray his most important teaching: going forward.

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