# FIELD -THEORY IN THE STUDY OF COMPASSION Phenomenology and dynamics

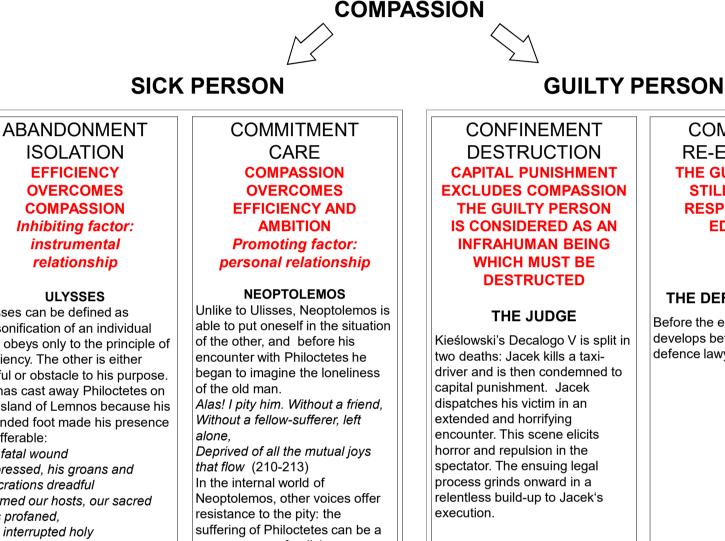
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"The dynamics of the processes is always lo be derived from the relation of the concrete individual to the concrete situation, and, so far as internal forces are concerned, from the mutual relations of the various functional systems that make up the individual." (K. Lewin 1935)

According to Lewin the dynamics of compassion derives from the relation between the requiredness of the situation, in the sense of Wertheimer and Köhler. and the internal world of the individual who experiences compassion.

According to Heider, we believe that insights concerning interpersonal relations are embodied in literary texts and in other artistic works; for this reason we will analyse the text of Philoctetes by Sophocles: and Kieślowski's movie: Decalogo V. We consider the characters of the story as personifications of the internal forces of the individual. In the play of Sofocles, we will analyse the compassion on a sick person; in the film by Kieślowski, the compassion on a guilty person.

We define compassion not only as a feeling of sympathy for someone but as a commitment to take care of the person. At the opposite there is the repulsion and the abandonment or the destruction of the person. After a global examination of the two stories, we can elaborate the following diagram that presents two situations: that of the sick person and that of the guilty person. In both situations there are characters in which compassion can be analysed in its inhibiting or promoting factors.



# **RE-EDUCATION** THE GUILTY PERSON STILL DESERVES **RESPECT AND RE-**EDUCATION

COMMITMENT

## THE DEFENCE LAWYER

Before the execution, a dialogue develops between Jacek and his defence lawyer Piotr.

## ULYSSES Ulysses can be defined as personification of an individual who obeys only to the principle of efficiency. The other is either useful or obstacle to his purpose. He has cast away Philoctetes on the island of Lemnos because his wounded foot made his presence insufferable: "his fatal wound Oppressed, his groans and execrations dreadful Alarmed our hosts, our sacred rites profaned, And interrupted holy sacrifice."(10-14)

But when the decree of fate was revealed that Troy should be taken by Neoptolemos. Achilles' son, assisted by the bow of Heracles in the hands of Philoctetes, Ulisses undertook to bring Philoctetes back, and took with him Neoptolemos. Ulysses tries to seduce the young man into using deceit to get Philoctetes on board of the ship to take him back to Troy.

consequence of a divine punishment.

Nor doth this sad disease inflict him still Incurable, without assenting gods? (235-241)

After meeting Philoctetes and talking to him, Neoptolemos enters in state of conflict between his project to trick the old man and the compassion to him. The dialog with Philoctetes and the perception of his pain creates an interpersonal relation between the

Neoptolemos resists but ultimately tries Odysseus' way, because his ambition could only be gratified through the return of Philoctetes with the bow.

Ulysses When thou hast, remember A double prize awaits thee.

Neoptolomos What, Ulysses?

#### Ulysses

The glorious names of valiant and of wise.

### Neoptolomos

Away! I'll do it. Thoughts of guilt or shame No more appal me.

two men and promotes genuine compassion.

## Philoctetes

Pitv and save The poor and wretched. Think, my son, how frail And full of danger is the state of man. Now prosperous, now adverse. (623-626)

#### Neoptolemos

In generous pity Of the afflicted thus to be o'ercome Were most disgraceful to me; he shall go. May the kind gods speed our departure hence, And guide our vessels to the wished-for shore! (653-661)