

**System explained by Humberto Maturana**

*Relational dynamics - Conversations as the braiding of language and emotions.*

**Speaker 1, Humberto Maturana:**

SPEAKER 1: How do you relate these concerns with coordination of coordination with conversations. How is that phenomenon appearing?

HUMBERTO MATURANA: OK, that what arose here is language. But organisms have also another dimension with respect to their interactions, which is it is position in the interactions. And these, we acknowledge in our daily life, in the distinction of emotions. When we speak of emotions or we distinguish of emotion, we distinguish in the other dispositions for the kinds of interactions in which they participate. In fact, kinds of relational behaviours.

For example, if you say, oh, so-and-so is very angry, I don't want to go to visit him. What you are saying is, this person is in a particular domain of relational behavior, so his or her relational behavior will be of such and such a kind, and I do not want to be there because will be of aggression to me. For example, he's angry with me. So, when we distinguish an emotion, what we distinguish is a particular domain of relational behaviours in which the person or the animal is. And we imply a particular body dynamics in which certain particular relational behavior can arise and not other.

Now, this braiding of the flow of emotions and languaging is what I call conversations. So, conversation is the manner of flowing together in the motioning interlaced with languaging, and languaging interlaced with emotion.

SPEAKER 1: And I just want to take one very, very immediate point from there. You have introduced a new term, languaging. Until that point you have been talking about language. So can you elaborate?

HUMBERTO MATURANA: Yes, I can elaborate. Yes, the word language is a noun, so appears as an object. Languaging is dynamic. It refers to the process. And if we say we exist in language, language appears as a container, it's an object. But we live in languaging, we live as human beings in the process of being in the flow of doing language.

So, I use this expression to connote, to bring to the fore that the phenomenon occurs in the occurring. As walking occurs in the walking, we can talk about walking, but it occurs in the walking. Language occurs in the languaging.

SPEAKER 1: And emotions occur in emotioning. And knowledge occurs in knowing?

HUMBERTO MATURANA: Knowledge occurs in knowing. How do we know if somebody else has knowledge? By looking at the knowing. By looking at the behavior of the other. And if we think is adequate, we say he knows.

SPEAKER 1: So, knowledge is something we grant the other?

HUMBERTO MATURANA: Knowledge is something we grant the other when we consider that the behaviour of the other is adequate according to what we think is adequate behaviour in the particular circumstances. So, when we see knowing behaviour in the other, we say the other knows.

SPEAKER 1: If I can return to conversation there, I think the word conversation comes from the Latin conversare, to turn together, the notion of a dance which captures your image of an organism coupled with the medium in a dance of ongoing dance of structural coupling. I think elsewhere you said that human social systems are constituted through networks of conversation.

HUMBERTO MATURANA: Yes. Yes, what I have said is that conversations, as dancing together in language and emotions, constitute networks of behaviours. And all that we human beings do occurs in conversation. These are the same time indicates us that the language is not an abstract thing. We don't deal with ideas. It's doings. So, a conversation is a network of doings. And that some of these networks doing such close networks of doings.

For example, professions are networks of doing, medicine is a close network of doing in which-- and emotioning is a close network of conversation. You learn when you study medicine the doings and the motioning that constitutes medicining So what I have said is that a culture is a close network of conversations. One could say the medical culture because it is also close network of conversations.

But what I have said about social systems is that they are, of course they are network conversations too, but they have put this particular emphasis in the emotion. I have said that the emotion that constitutes social phenomena is love. Now, in the culture, you have all the emotionings that you can imagine. But it is not necessarily grounded on a particular

preferential emotioning. But what I'm saying is in the case of social phenomena, they are grounding on a particular emotioning which is love.

And love, I would right here what I say that love is. Love is an emotion, you notice that I write with small letters, it's nothing special, is the domain of the relational behaviours through which another arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself. Domain of the relational behaviours through which another arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself.

Indifference would be the domain of the relational behaviours through which no other arises in coexistence with oneself. Aggression would be the domain of those relational behaviours through which another is denied as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself. So, what I'm saying, in relation to this since you asked the question about social systems, is that not all human relations are of the same kind. It depends on the emotion which is the basic guiding element on which the conversations take place. And that social systems arise when the emotion is love. Social systems take place in domains constituted through arising as legitimate other in living together.

A way in which one can see this very clearly is in comparing this with relations of work. Relations of work are relations of commitment to the realization of a task for some sort of retribution. If you do this for me, I pay you this much or I retribute in this way. But the central element is this commitment for performing a particular task for a retribution.

Now, in our present living, our cultural present, there has been for the last 100 years the need to generate a legislation about work. And we have these laws for work, labour laws. Now, what do these labour laws do? They retribute human dimensions that are lost in the work relation.

For example, let us suppose that you have an agreement of work in which you have to be at the working place at 8 o'clock in the morning. And one day you come half an hour late, and the boss tells you are late, and you say, yes, but my wife was ill. I had to take her to the hospital. And the boss says, well, I'm going to reduce your salary in such and such amount because you came late, and our work agreement was that you would come at 8 o'clock. And you say, but my wife-- I'm sorry, the work agreement says this so I can reduce your salary.

That shows that what is central is the fulfilment of this agreement not what happens to the person. Now, the labour law would have to indicate that person have the legitimate permission to come late when their wives become ill in the morning and they have to take them to the hospital. That law will recover some dimension that it is lost.

But suppose that instead of being in a work relation, you are in a friend relation. You said to your friend, let us begin tomorrow at 8 o'clock and you come late. And your friend say, what happened? I mean, first of all, the question will be asked in a different way, what happened? And you say, my wife was ill and I had to take her to the hospital. How is she? Well, blah, blah, blah. OK, let us begin now so that we are not more delayed.

So, the conversation is entirely different because in the friendship relation, what is central is the other and the relation with the other, not the fulfilment of the task for the retribution. So, the friendship relation is a social relation, or a social relation is the friendship relation. Now, one can say more or less is friendship relation according to the dimensionality of the social domain. There may be dimensionality of very few dimensions. Or many dimensions, with friends, there are many dimensions in which we are social, so to say, with our friends.

But in the bus, we are social in a few dimensions, or in the street when you are walking in the street and there is a difficulty there and you wait a little bit so that somebody else that is coming can pass and then you pass. The other is arising as a legitimate other and this person will say, thanks for you. Now, if you just go through and push this person, they will say antisocial, you are not social, because the emotion that found social relations that constitute social systems.