

# Editoriale

Cesare Fregola\*

## Transitions: towards what future?...

The focus of this issue is *transitions*, a theme selected within the Annual meeting of the Scientific Committee dedicated to «Moving from one condition or situation to a new and different one»<sup>1</sup>.

Following to the tradition initiated with the very first issue of the IAT Journal, the Scientific Committee selects a theme for discussion at its annual meeting and a call for contributions follows.

Professional contributions and research both by authors from TA fields of application and by scholars from the fields of Psychology, Social and Human Sciences and other interrelated fields, are then examined with double-blind refereeing and, once confirmed, they are examined by the members of the Editorial Board and/or by Scientific Committee members.

This process generates additional insights which are then integrated into the editorial, guided by the leading theme of each issue, and related as well to exchanges with the authors and editors of the different sections of the Journal.

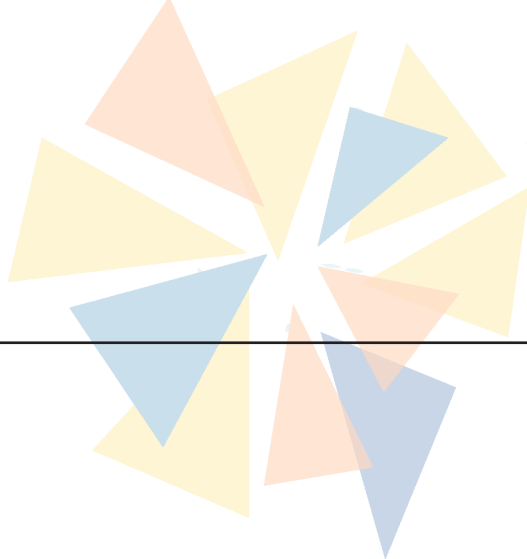
The editorial usually begins with a description of the frame of reference rooted in, and emerging from our *intercultural and interdisciplinary circle cutting across all fields* of TA application.

The aim is to define, within clear boundaries, an overall vision, connected with shared values and networks. The selection of methodological approaches enabling us to explore similarities and differences with other theories and professional approaches showing validity and evidenced-based results is an important part of this process.

We are aware that there are many steps in the management of a process that is not always smooth between intention, design, and proof reading. It is also exciting to feel the responsibility of an endeavour that often entails professional organizational and methodological approaches included within a meta-inclusive

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1 See the Section: "From the Scientific Committee 2018" by Eva Sylvie Rossi, p. 5.



perspective. In the background, however, there is a clear awareness of dealing with complexity which, as such, cannot pursue the aim of simplification. Of course, efforts can be made to achieve greater clarity in order to support the description and understanding of the transformative phenomena which involve us as professionals, scholars and researchers belonging to the TA world. Complexity, by its very nature, cannot be reduced, one learns to explain it, searching in its folds – as the etymology of the term states – for clues, meanings and, above all, relationships among parts. We are aware of incompleteness and of what cannot always be foreseen with phenomena that occur or unfold; our minds are to be constantly open to research which may lead each of us, as individuals, to distinguish and integrate, wherever possible, uncertainty and insecurity (Ceruti, 2018; Fregola, 2018).

The focus on *Transitions* is aimed at underlining what is involved in changes of status in the social, cultural, economic, political and educational systems in order to be able to reflect on, and study, the impact of this on everyday life. A starting point for this reflection is both the disorientation caused by innovations, that means not just technological innovations, but also the ones caused by the environmental crisis (United Nations, 2017). On the one hand, we need to consider the impact that this has on our interpersonal relations, on intersubjectivity and on our intrapsychic world, and on the other we need to acknowledge how interdependence of biology-nature-culture affects society (Morin, 2014; Prigogine, 2014; UN, 2015).

Usually, our editorial presents a frame of reference entailing the different contributions. In this issue I thought it appropriate to include two papers from the section *Lexicon and TA culture... through words and beyond* to restate once more the decision taken by the founding group of the IAT Journal to dedicate this space to keep alive Berne's legacy in his teaching (1963) of explicitly stating the intended meaning of the main terms he used or introduced. In doing this, his aim, in our interpretation, appears to have been that of creating a space where the *Integrating Adult* could support the communication process within which some terms commonly used in everyday language could generate misleading or ambiguous interpretations towards understanding ideas presented or discussed.

**Loredana Paradiso**, editor of this Section, offers two interesting articles:

- in the first one entitled ***Transitions***, she considers this word as a noun and proposes a review of the meanings with which the term is used in different fields of knowledge. A further new introduction in this editorial is the full inclusion of the abstract because it offers a useful background guiding the reading of most of the other contributions.  
“The “season” in history that we are living through seems to be a time of transition, an intermediate stage, a stage of transformation moving from a condition of relative instability towards finding a new balance. Although this evolutionary process began to unfold at the end of the Second World War, it does not seem to have reached a new condition of stability as of yet. Heraclitus affirmed that life in itself is change, a constant shifting from one condition to another: “Pànta Rhei”, the only principle that applies to all things in the world is becoming, that means that, every thing opposing too ther scon-

tains with itself one aspect opposition: “*The road uphill and the road downhill is only one and the same*” (it contains the opposite qualities of ascent and descent). Where will this same road take us to? After the illusion of a new enlightenment arisen from rejecting tradition, from sharing knowledge, from an emphasis on tolerance and freedom, now it seems that there is a need for a new humanism (see p. 163).

- In the second article, entitled ***Transition towards what setting?*** (cit. p. 157), there is a very interesting part where Loredana Paradiso ironically proposes the possibility of a new Enlightenment where «... the great technological, cultural and anthropological revolution that has hit globalized society forces us now to rethink radically the meanings and methods of therapeutic practice, a «re-definition» that is necessary in the light of post-modern culture, which is the subject matter of this contribution». I believe that the quotation marks on the term «re-definition» could be worth an entire conference for TA specialists. We wish to underline the observation that speed, a feature of our time, often does not leave room for reflection, elaboration and reinterpretation all of which would require time that is often incompatible with the time needed for analysis and experimentation. The reference made to the San Francisco seminars is very interesting. It recalls the idea of a thinking tank, a relatively recent approach aimed at giving oneself permission to share, reflect and, today we would say, co-construct meanings and much more. Something similar to what Comenius (1641) proposed with his academy of light.

Lamberto Maffei (2016), in his book *Elogio della Lentezza* (In praise of slowness), explores the mechanisms of the brain guiding the reactions of the human body when the stress coming from the outside world requires promptness, speed, timeliness of execution. *The author highlights the conflicting aspects and the dilemma arising from the demand to go fast* when the time available is less than the time needed to complete a task. He also highlights the conflict that may develop in the absence of the resources which could reduce time by speeding up implementation phases.

A thought-provoking saying states that it takes the same amount of time to play a piece of music by Mozart as it did in Mozart’s time, and speeding up the performance would only distort his music.

We have also the pleasure of hosting an article by **Edoardo Martinelli**, one of Don Milani’s youngest and “naughtiest” pupils, as I was able to ascertain when I met him in person. In the **Witnessing section** (pp. 85-106), Edo reports some of his dialogues with teachers and students which, as he himself writes, «I considered it useful to bring out the many problems, representative of our society in the Age of Technology, using school as a mirror.» The article makes no claim to catalogue commonplaces, or to update definitions referring to the many delicate and complex issues that emerge on schooling today, by looking for cues in the example of Don Milani. This is a significant premise, because the title ‘Letter to a teacher in the age of technology’ could give rise to a reading of ‘grandiosity’ in the Bernian categories of discounting. Instead, right from the first dialogue, the author brings out the social, cultural, economic and even political differences

that characterised that time compared to the present day world. There is no trace of models or techniques to be re-proposed or adapted to our days, but rather a collection of considerations that lead back to the potential and effectiveness of Don Lorenzo's teaching, perhaps, as invariant with respect to time. One of the characteristic aspects of the Barbiana School emerges in this work when we read that one of the choices of political action concerns moving within boundaries in between irreverence and disobedience. Martinelli writes (cf. p. 88). «blind obedience to superiors should be seen as acceptance of their limit, in order to go beyond that limit».

**The Professions** section, presents an essay on Philosophical Hermeneutics by **Fabiola Falappa** entitled: **Beyond the deformations of life**. The author writes: «... I will try to show what possibilities of life and meaning emerge, once we take leave from the forms of disintegration of our humaneness. Instead of adopting the deformation of individualism as the basic attitude towards life for example, we can choose, once we recognize the paths of regression, the path of conscious and generous presence in all of our relationships. This is a true transformation of existence where the withdrawn individual is replaced by a person who is set free from selfishness thus creating an open community (p. 108). This contribution can be read in continuity with the theme of issue 6 of the IAT Journal, dedicated to Collective Intelligence, and seems to introduce another perspective in looking at the concept of Transition when one develops the awareness of inhabiting a world and, at the same time, perceives a kind of abandonment of a familiar status. Deformation in an evolutionary perspective as well? In any case, *the entry into new places and modes of communication in everyday life* may lead us to assume new or renewed conditions to be explored in an unpredictable variety and variability of behaviors that may require a generative confrontation between changes and permanence. One of the hypotheses discussed and shared in its definition, during the meeting of the Scientific Committee, concerned precisely the contribution that transition processes can make to generating new or renewed forms of complexity and change in the world of work and social relations, often confronting consolidated models and schemes of action that sometimes draw on tradition, sometimes on innovation, and sometimes are compelled by the willingness and motivation to search for, and experiment, with 'hybridisations' between old and new.

At this point, the editorial resumes its linear form and offers a review of each of the contributions.

Three contributions are proposed in the section **FROM THE TA WORLD**:

The first article is by **Eva Sylvie Rossi**: **Il mobbing come attacco alle "famiglie ai bisogni relazionali Mobbing as an attack against basic hungers and relational needs**. In times of continuous transformation and, and therefore in relation to the theme of transitions, the author proposes a description of organisational behaviour related to mobbing and its disruptive psychological effects on mental health. We believe this is quite relevant a theme especially because the hypothesis presented and argued brings mobbing back to the issue of protection of the individual not only from an ethical point of view but rather ba-

sed on the evidence of the consequences of mobbing as an attack against human basic needs according to Berne's theory describing the hunger for stimuli, structure and recognition and also according to Erskine's further contribution to TA theory about the relational needs he describes.

The second contribution of this section is the one of **Raffaele Mastromarino and Mara I. Scoliere: Il lavoro con i gruppi: una proposta integrata / Working with groups: an integrated proposal**. The authors present their work with groups within IFREP (Institute of Training and Research for Educators and Psychotherapists), founded by Pio Scilligo. The model they present, is very interesting, as it integrates TA with the model of Socio-Cognitive Transactional Analysis (ATSC) developed by Scilligo himself and carried out by his students, among whom are the two authors of this essay.

The third contribution is by **Gaetano Sisalli: Sicily in the therapy room**. In this article, the author, of Sicilian origins, posits that the cultural factors of the places and family one belongs to, as well as their personal development, are constituent elements of the stories of the patients seen in the therapy room and of the therapist's story as well. While the work does not explicitly bring out the theme of the Cultural Parent, the analysis in support of his arguments points to it quite clearly. In this contribution, the author describes two aspects that characterize Sicilian culture by drawing on his reflections and on his own experience of patients, in his clinical practice. The first aspect concerns a rule present in the phylogenetic "imago" of Sicilians, connected with the relationship they have with Authority, in particular with the Authority that represents the community or that is the bearer of a social advantage. The pluralistic dimension of culture derives from the many groups which, if considered in a diachronic perspective, are rooted in the many civilizations that have followed one another over the centuries and that can be acknowledged as part of a single social body. In his words: "there are also many "Sicilies", and many cultural groups that do not recognize themselves as such, this plurality is held together by individual interests and by *duties* between individuals, excluding however any kind of social and public interest. This plural dimension has been maintained through the use of a code that in other social situations could be considered in terms of confidentiality, while in the Sicilian reality it is silence» (see p. 45).

The author identifies the way in which this code emerges in the therapy room and interferes in the therapeutic relationship. The other aspect concerns the relationship of Sicilians with the Sicilian landscape and in particular with the Etna volcano. A relationship which, for Sicilians and especially for the inhabitants of Eastern Sicily, implies a sensory participation, is full of affect, symbolism and mythology and becomes an element of identity that shows itself in the therapy room through dreams. *Can Transitions be Conservative?* This is a hypothesis. On the other hand, to keep a system in balance if its environment is transformed, it is still necessary to introduce transformative energy (Emery, 1985) and in the collective imagination the quote from the "Leopard" by Tommasi di Lampedusa still seems to be quite relevant!

In the section **FOR DEEPER REFLEXION**, two articles are proposed:

The first is by **Elonora Addonizio**: *“Script on one’s skin”*. By reversing the order in which it is articulated, this contribution can open up an interesting research topic within our TA community in the different fields of application. The relevant hypothesis is that tattoos may represent, in some cases, a narrative through images of the script protocol as an expression of a creative drive and ability that projects the individual into the future. Furthermore, it seems possible to consider the proposed theme through an interdisciplinary approach as the tattoo is viewed in specific historical contexts and cultures in its social and, in part, medical and therapeutic values. In the words of the author: «Through the experience of a writing workshop organized for some patients in the Residential program of a Therapeutic Community, I developed some ideas about the deep connections and the importance that tattoos sometimes have for people who decide to tell some significant contents of their existence through those indelible images” (see p. 63). This work may also be included within the «ecological transitions» framework according to Bronfenbrenner’s, stages of development (1986).

In the second contribution, *The «real» Transactional Analyst: thoughts on teaching and learning in clinical TA*, **Mario Augusto Procacci and Daniela Alamandri**, offer some thoughts that draw on their direct experience (cf.pp. 73-84). An aspect that is worth pointing out is that the work is both a testimony guided by the rigor of TA theory as well as a frame of reference and a proposed study of a possible scheme supporting training in the four fields. The structure and articulation of their thoughts lead to a reflection about the rigorous experiential model described in the contribution and indicate, the possibility of a developmental perspective. This perspective could be developed through examining the theories mentioned and also through experimenting in training, in considering transitions, based on teaching. focused on generational and intergenerational learning processes.

For the **WITNESSING section**, in addition to Edoardo Martinelli’s contribution, **Armando Favaro Lanotte** in *“A space to get to know yourself and others”*, describes the workshops for empowerment developed and implemented with junior high school students (21 and 24 pupils per class) between the ages of eleven and thirteen. The tools describe the process of the experiences developed in Italy and abroad focused on TA theory in the educational field bordering with counselling. The contribution presents also best practice tools (see p. 107).

**In the PROFESSIONS section**, in addition to Fabiola Falappa’s contribution, the article authored by **Antonio Gentile and Flavia Melchiorre** entitled: *“Being there in a helping relationship moving inbetween Motivation and Professionalism”* is presented . The authors consider complexity and speed as two qualities of our social era seen as characteristics determining needs, which are partly to be discovered, and in part to be protected from the risk that in helping relationship: too many professionals from different fields could shift attention away from core issues for which supervision is most needed and has increasing value. (see p. 127) There is much more in this essay, especially given the utmost importance of the issue of boundaries among helping professions.

Orlando Granati editor of the **DISCUSSANT'S CORNER**, has chosen the essay authored by **Amaia Mauriz-Extabe, Rosa Perona, Olatz Iza, Andrea Vergnory** published in the 2017 volume: **Proyecto de intervention psychotherapy and psychosocial interventions a pie de calle: «no pases de largo: historias del botellòn»** (Psychotherapy and psychosocial intervention in the streets project: “ don't turn away: stories about the bottle ”). Street psychotherapy and psychosocial intervention project: «Don't turn away: bottle stories»). The concluding sentence of the author is an eloquent synthesis of this work's originality: ... «the authors show how important it is for those who work in the field of health to move out and away from their usual setting by going into the streets and meeting places, moving away from their psychotherapy rooms and in doing so acting like the itinerant monk who leaves the comfort of the abbey to descend among the people. A powerful metaphor indeed.

Taking care of transitions is inherent to the section **IN CANTIERE/ WORK IN PROGRESS**, edited by Luca Ansini. It features the contributions of two researches conducted as part of the traineeship of two students from the University department of the course for Primary Education Sciences degree at the Roma Tre University, which were the subject of their dissertation.

The first research is by **Marta Pierantoni: Ambienti di apprendimento per lo sviluppo di comportamenti prosociali e Analisi Transazionale. Learning environments for the development of prosocial behaviour and Transactional Analysis** / Luca Ansini writes: The results of the research highlight two main aspects clearly indicated by the author: transactional analysis represents an effective tool for focusing on reality. It allows to grasp the problems as well as presenting the possibility of developing hypothesis aimed at identifying new paths oriented towards the full expression of the individual free from an unencumbered useless repetitiveness. Educational intervention is described as oriented towards building learning environments free from rigidity and organised around a 'positive climate of sharing, support, exchange and care'.

The second research authored by **Pamela Giovannetti**, is related to: **The design of educational spaces and learning environments / La progettazione degli spazi educativi e degli ambienti di apprendimento** where TA is presented as a resource not explicitly used in analyzing results but based on *mastery interacting* in the classroom (Fregola, 2016). Architecture, Pedagogy, Didactics and the Psychology of Learning are in the background of this qualitative research involving children in a classroom.

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## Links

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