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Editorial

Which Bridges and which Borders.
Elements from the Eurotas Debate in Oxford
(Rossana Strambaci) 10

Contributions

Fall and Rise: The Original Separation and
Reconnection to the Cosmos
(Steve Taylor) 14

The Nature of Consciousness: Discovering the Bridge
Connecting Neuroscience and Mystical Experience
(Marjorie Woollacott) 33

Exploring Consciousness Through the Monroe Institute:
Out-of-Body Experiences, Brainwave Entrainment,
and the Expansion of Self
(Luigi Sciambarella) 51

Quantitative analysis of Spiritual and Awakening
Experiences on Behaviors and Ego-Development
(Pier Luigi Lattuada - Xavier Bronlet) 74

Syncretisms between Latvian and Brazilian
Shamanic Archetypes
(Ingrida Indane) 105

Ideas and contributions from Eurotas

Creative Bridges - Oxford 2024
(Jessica Bockler) 122

Authors' Instructions Text Format	127
Information about ITI	130
Notice to subscribers	131

Which Bridges and which Borders

Elements from the Eurotas Debate in Oxford

Rossana Strambaci, Ph.D.

ITJ Editor Director

The 24th International Eurotas Conference, entitled **Creative Bridges**, was held in Oxford, UK, on 4-8 September 2024.

Among the introductory speeches, which were held after the welcome speech by the President of Eurotas, **Pier Luigi Lattuada**, we report here the Opening Ceremony Invocation by **Jessica Bockler**, which still conveys the flavor of this magical University town.

Bockler's contribution evokes the atmosphere of a small town "*that has many stories to tell*", '*of brilliance and superiority, privilege and inequality. Fuelled by incomprehension, in taverns and churches*' and tells of the dialogue between Thomas Huxley, "Darwin's bulldog", and Sam Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, the evolutionist thinker and the creationist theologian. A bridge between the two positions seemed impossible at the time.

But human consciousness, we know, has a thousand facets and a thousand resources, especially if we allow it to expand.

This issue of ITJ is dedicated to those creative bridges that seem necessary for human evolution at this point.

The integration of non-ordinary states of consciousness, not only in everyday life but also in epistemology, is the focus of the contribution by **Luigi Sciambarella**.

This work originated in the Monroe Institute's studies on out-of-body experiences (OBEs) and altered states of consciousness.

Whatever source OBEs have, and whatever nature *peak experiences* have – as Luigi Sciambarella argues - they all allude to something that may be closer and

more domestic than it appears. Above all, they can also be considered **vectors of knowledge**.

This statement introduces a strong change of perspective, which may prove **crucial from an epistemological point of view**. It widens the boundaries of what is considered an element of knowledge and also of its possibilities of validation.

There is another interesting point: the frequent mention, in Sciambarella's text, of the concept of fluidity [*This reconfiguration of brain function allows for a greater sense of fluidity, openness to change*]. This resonates with **Marjorie Woollacott's** idea of **permeability**. Thus, the fluidity of consciousness seems to be the key requirement for its expansion.

Woollacott's work has a strong philosophical connotation, and within it, a crucial shift in the understanding of the nature of self-consciousness occurs. In this paper, the possibilities of self-consciousness are investigated. This text explores the concept of **trans-rational consciousness** and its possibilities. It is interesting to point out that the prefix *trans* evokes the idea of permeability or **something that crosses boundaries**. What if this possibility and ability to cross boundaries were the founding characteristics of consciousness? It would be important then, I believe, to remember that crossing boundaries is fruitful and vital if, and only if, one is fully aware of those boundaries. That is if one also has **cognitive awareness** of boundaries and where they are located.

The analysis of Xavier Bronlet and Pier Luigi Lattuada significantly contributes to this point. This work investigates the role of **cognitive representations** as a mediating element between spiritual experiences and behavior. The study is particularly relevant because it's a rigorous quantitative examination using multivariate statistical analyses and is based on Grounded Theory, in which observation and theoretical elaboration go hand in hand.

An interesting theoretical outcome of the study is to emphasize the distinction between spirituality and awakening and, more specifically, that cognitive restructuring concerning peak experiences is essential to integrating that experience into behavior.

Ingrida Indane's contribution focuses on the 'essential' meaning (in the literal sense of relating to the essence) of the **Archetypes**, on their characteristic as a universal 'form' of thought, and from this to their possibilities of use in

psychotherapy, with particular regard to the comparison between Latvian archetypes and Brazilian archetypes.

Significant, in my opinion, are the reflections on the archetypes dedicated to Mother Earth. In this regard, Indane points out how the reflection of many currents of spiritual practice has polarised on the 'high' chakras, forgetting the need to cleanse and transform, typical of Mother Earth. This choice puts one in the position of making a sort of "leap" (what Lattuada often calls a "*spiritual bypass*"), somehow avoiding the necessary hard work of transformation.

In **Steve Taylor's** exploration of historical and mythological themes, he examines the hypothesis that humans experienced a significant decline over the past 6,000 years. This decline **represents a fall from a state of harmony** and cooperation to one characterized by ongoing conflict and oppression. Taylor identifies a real historical shift that began around 6,000 years ago, leading to increased separation and discord among people. He suggests that we may enter the final phase of this "fall era." According to his hypothesis, we are currently in the midst of a **trans-fall era** (once again the prefix trans), during which we may observe signs of recovery and renewal.

In his historical excursus, the analysis - so from the other side and so from afar - has panoramic effects and takes on somewhat prophetic tones.

If, as it would seem, **we are on the ridge**, at the culminating point of the experience of disharmony on a social, ecological, political, and individual level, and if we agree that **it is precisely on the ridge that changes occur** and perspectives turn upside down, then we can consider that even symbols can change meaning, sign, and value intensity with time.

For example, the great and glorious warrior archetype of the hero may now, in a new perspective, be obsolete and less charged with evolutionary value. Of course, we are talking about transitions so gradual as to be imperceptible.

But what if we stopped placing so much value on battles? It has often been noted that even about illnesses we are invited to enter the archetypal dimension of combat, and perhaps this is not always beneficial.

What if we could instead **enhance the unifying and integrating aspects** of all human experience, as in the human cultures of the origins?

Such a journey and intent would come to life from extensive and individual **work with the shadow**, a work of integration of what is not in the open dimension and is not “*on the stage*” as the saying goes, in Biotransenergetics training. The horizon could then be widened.

Being able to recognize **the other within oneself** is the first step to being able to recognize the other from oneself, which is different and somehow stranger.

It is no coincidence that “the other” within oneself, and above all the courageous contact with it, constitutes the crucial phase of Pierluigi Lattuada’s recent theoretical elaboration of Biotransenergetics. In fact, in **Triunity**, identified as a cognitive, epistemological as well as experiential model, it is verified that **the passage to unity** goes from the individuated dimension of the Ego to the third dimension of integration, **by passing through the relationship with the other in oneself**.

This could well be an interesting passage, also with a view to **future scenarios** that for the moment can only be imagined. It could be.

Rossana Strambaci,

DECEMBER 2024