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Editorial

A way to. Tools for a new method of knowing and living (Rossana Strambaci)	10
Exploring Experience as a Myriad Richness: Micro-phenomenology as a Transformative Approach to Research (Magali Ollagnier-Beldame)	13
Engaging the Transformative Potential of Short Film-making toward Critical Awareness and Transpersonal Growth amongst Post-school Youth (Wendy Smidt)	26
Open Awareness Inquiry. Introducing Applied Open Awareness as an Inquiry Method for Researchers to Engage the Transformative Dimensions of Consciousness (Jevon Dangeli)	54

Virginia Satir's Transformational Systemic Therapy: A Transpersonal Approach to Family Therapy (Kelly Kilrea; Stéphanie Larrue)	64
For a Definition of Gratitude, in Order to Study its Correlation with Well-being and Self Transcendence (Sheena Necole McMahon)	89
Psychedelic Properties of Peganum Harmala: Macro-dose and Micro-dose Reports (Michael Doty)	99
The Listening VOICE: a Journey of Shamanic Initiation (Sven Doehner)	116
Authors' Instructions Text Format	130
Information about ITI	133
Notice to subscribers	134

Editorial

A way to Tools for a new method of knowing and living

Rossana Strambaci, Ph.D.

ITJ Editor Director

We can say that many of the submissions of this issue of the Journal relate to “tools”, instruments to reach awareness and openness “not only about new knowledge, but also about new contexts for knowledge and new ways of knowing”, as expressed by Magali Ollagner-Beldame, citing Vitor J. Rodriguez’s contribution of ITJ n.0 (p.64). What is at stake here is not only the content of knowledge as an object, but also the way to know something. So, the frame of cognitive sciences is the critical issue in the work of Ollagner-Beldame on *Micro-Phenomenology* by an excursus through some of the

main foundations of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl and the concept of *epoché*, among other things.

The “art based inquiry” of Wendy Smidt refers on a pilot study involving young adults and has the aim to examine the connection between creative process and growth of personal and transpersonal awareness. From a methodological point of view, this qualitative data collection requires a targeted and particular approach, different from the one used in quantitative sciences. Furthermore, and most significant, this kind of procedure can originate a form of

collective consciousness, a sort of “awareness of field”.

We are talking about the same collective awareness and creativity that is reached through the way of the *Open Awareness Inquiry*, to which the contribution of **Jevon Dangeli** refers. The kind of inquiry treated in Dangeli’s study is founded on the idea of an extended and inclusive epistemology. Due to this kind of knowledge process, not only people can reach an “holotropic” state of consciousness, but they can also experience a collective state that opens a “field” of common understanding, disclosure and insight. A kind of cognizance that breathes a common atmosphere, in the same way that contributors and co-researchers breath according to a collective, synchronized rhythm.

The work of **Stephanie Larrue** and **Kelly Kilrea** – which is about the Family Therapy of Virginia Satir as a transpersonal therapy applied – gives to us one more tool. This systemic approach to family dynamics (characterised by great attention to the whole of family relationships in their interdependencies) in the model of Satir’s Transformational Systemic Therapy goes further and expands to a transpersonal perspective. The category of congruence changes, and the concept

widens to include not only interpersonal and intrapsychic congruence, but also universal and spiritual congruence.

Then we have the feeling of gratitude, which can be a way to self-transcendence as indicated by **Sheena MacMahon**’s study path. In the work that is presented here, MacMahon gives a review of some studies about measurement scale of gratitude and introduces starting point to future researches and questions on this topic.

The personal account of self-experimentation with *Peganum Harmala*, reported by **Michael Doty**, gives us a glance at what could be an entheogenic applications use of these extracts, as a method to release the transformative potential of human consciousness, an instrument used for millennia in traditional medicine and religious rites.

A very strong medium to “alchemical” transformation, then, is the power of the voice, theme which is developed by **Sven Doehner** in the report of his personal experience, *A Journey of Shamanic initiation*. Doehner connects the element of images, as a structuring factor of our experience, with emotions and sounds, arguing that all these elements have the power of create realities. The work explores this powerful

connection, tracing a method to which the author gave the name of “Sound Imagination”.

We although have to say that an instrument is never just a tool, but it is also a choice, a way, a method. It is interesting to point out that the word *method* has in itself the root of the ancient Greek word οδός [οδός,οῦ] that means *way, path*. The etymological meaning of the Greek term can be literally translated as “the way to”.

A reflection on this theme has been suggested by Pier Luigi Lattuada in a recent lecture with students and colleagues. So, if we stay within a hermeneutical approach to reality – meaning an approach that recognises that reality is based on the interpretation that of it is given – we get some interesting consequences both on the level of knowledge and on the level of practice. In fact one of the clearest consequences of this mode is the awareness that the method we choose to follow a path defines the way itself and draws the horizon.

If we agree that the Hermeneutics, as a philosophical school of thought, has changed the *forma mentis* of the Twentieth Century, we are now faced with a further passage regarding the epistemological paradigm.

Reading the research papers presented in this Issue, what catch the eye, in my opinion, is the fact that the horizon drawn by these tools of knowledge is a unitive, circular one, characterised by the sign of sharing.

This implies a two-way dimension between “the knower” and “the known”, between “the subject” and “the object” of knowledge, a circular dimension which ceaselessly proposes itself in the context of experience. Even more, this includes the possibility of shared knowledge through non-local connections.

It should not be denied that it was decisive, in past centuries, to acquire a critical consciousness. But now it seems necessary to evolve towards a unitive consciousness, grounded on unitive awareness.