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## Editorial comment

### Boundaries of the heart, transcended in the mind: Reflections on *Td*'s first decade

As *Td* approaches its second decade of publication in 2014 there is a need to reflect on the journey of exploration into what, in 2004, was considered to be the unknown and unfamiliar ecology of a transdisciplinary research platform. The emergence of an ever-increasing output of academic material by researchers active in South Africa and other parts of the world suggests that we have begun to integrate our understanding of what goes on in creative disciplinary minds.

Perhaps the most heartening development has been the growing confidence of researchers to acknowledge that they have moved beyond their familiar disciplines of specialisation in an effort to come to a better understanding of how to untangle the complexity of problems people grapple with in their daily lives. For many the journey continues to be mapped – as is the case with the exploration of an unknown territory – a project under construction. Others tend to note the on-going uncertainty experienced in opening up creative avenues for understanding the sense of wonderment that pops up at the end of a project.

There does tend to be an increasing acceptance amongst practitioners of a multi-, inter- and/or transdisciplinary approach to research that the rigidity of singular disciplines no longer tend to act as an obstruction. Instead, there is a growing sense of negotiating the emotional experience of shifting from the defined boundaries and transcending them to come to gain a better understanding of what new frontiers need to be explored. In a recent article Montuori uses autobiographical narrative as part of a discourse to create awareness of the rapid and on-going changes taking place in transdisciplinary research that shape cross-cultural experiences and the arts in a thought provoking manner.<sup>1</sup> It is worth taking note of the need for creative thinking and the role transdisciplinary research can play.

Scientific disciplines are the product of processes of focussed and dedicated social learning in communities of rigorous high-level intellectual thinking that become the foundations of large bodies of knowledge. More than often these disciplines, as they make headway in the absorption of relevant factually constructed knowledge, are responsible for ground-breaking innovations in contemporary society. What is less apparent for the practitioners of these fields is the fact that the driving forces of the collective learning intellectual spaces are the processes of the emotive human mind. Dedication and commitment to a disciplinary form of thinking is a matter of passion. Therefore, only with the greatest of respect and appreciation, can we ponder and come to a better understanding of what has been accomplished.

In transcending those boundaries, by means of the careful exploration of lines drawn in the sand, should we progress to logically comprehend what goes on, on the other side. There is

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<sup>1</sup>. A Montuori, "Complexity and transdisciplinarity: Reflections on theory and practice" in *World Future*, 69, 2013, pp. 200-230.

also increasing respect for the novel ways in which transdisciplinary research contributes to resolving complex problems.<sup>2</sup>

Anthropologist, Tim Ingold, in his use of the concept of wayfaring, sheds light on the manner in which ideas tend to expand and turn into cultural insight and become a way of life.<sup>3</sup> In much the same way frontiers in transdisciplinarity should remain open for laying down on-going lines and clusters of formations and creations of the human mind in the process of the lived life. Understanding the workings of the tactile senses in the process of unravelling matter creates a sense of beauty when we try to grasp how harsh reality unfolds in the mind and speaks to the edges to soften our comprehension in contexts of meaning and signification.

Why do we think about space as being distant? It is right next door and in fact on the inside whenever we care to think about space that seems so distant. We are living space and it shapes itself around us in an effort to embroil us in the matter of the universe in a manner we still have to learn to comprehend. Space, as a whole, is incomprehensible. At the same time space is immediate and an extension of our beingness. To discard the objective of understanding the space beyond which we find ourselves in, we wilfully embark on descriptions that are distant and aloof. The difficulty of imagining things close by and the inability to see detail make for difficult conceptions of what constitutes reality. Yet, when time progresses and there is reflection on what transpired space reduces in size and the reduction becomes almost a caricature of remembrance as it sinks into memory. There is then the assumption that the spatial awareness and self-description of space is universal and ensconced in reality. That is not the case. In fact, it is an illuminated mind picture that is neither real, nor always truthful and perhaps merely a shadow encapsulated in the visual realisation of the dynamics of light and dark. Dimensional silhouettes can present truthful images for negotiation by the non-material mind. At the centre is the idea of what is represented in ideational modes of conception over time and a variety of spaces.<sup>4</sup>

In transdisciplinary research the objective is to explore problems we experience in society, based on the knowledge and insights gained from conventional disciplines, but with an awareness that it would be possible to come to novel conclusions when a variety of disciplines are integrated in the quest to understand better than before. As we collectively learn from disciplines and the existent sources of cultural knowledge around us, it is possible to locate knowledge in a different manner.

We thank the scholars who have published in *Td* the last decade for their contributions. It is hoped our endeavour would go from strength to strength in transdisciplinary fields of exploration.

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<sup>2</sup>. R Pippin, "Transdisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, reductive disciplinarity and deep disciplinarity" Keynote address Interdisciplinary Futures Symposium, Emory University, 24 October 2013 at <http://goo.gl/lalfqV> (Accessed 2014.08.07).

<sup>3</sup>. T Ingold, "Against space: place movement, knowledge" in PW Kirby (ed.), *Boundless worlds: an anthropological approach to movement* (Berghahn Books, n.p. 2009), pp. 29-44.

<sup>4</sup>. T Ingold, "Ways of mind-walking: reading, writing, painting" in *Visual Studies*, 25(1), March 2010, pp. 15-23; T Ingold, "Culture on the ground: the perceived world through the feet," in *Journal of Material Culture*, 9(3), 2004, pp. 325-340; T Ingold, *Being alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description* (Routledge ebook, 2011).