Editorial: Consciousness Reframed

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"*Sentient States: Bio-mind and Techno-nature*. The conference will look at the nature of artificial thought, and forms of intelligence in nature - charted through aspects of transdisciplinary creative practice and theory in our planetary culture. Just as new paradigms of feeling and communication are beginning to form around our interaction with life at all levels of our perception, from plants and trees to fungi and bacteria, we may see matter as inhabited mind, media as necessarily moist, and technology as a tool of the Tao. Thought is spreading through all our systems, places and products. We need cities that are not only smart but sensitive: schools that think, roads that remember, buildings that feel. art that is as much extra-sensory as interpersonal. Our consciousness is both reframing and reforming." (Roy Ascott)

As editors, we call this one a special issue, and it is so in many senses. For one and most, it celebrates the magnificent discussions, discoveries and research challenges we happily embraced last spring in Porto. We decided to open this editorial with Roy Ascott's sentences, the ones that guided us since day one, through call, review, organization and the conference itself. They guided us when editing this issue. We suspect they will stay with us for a long time.

The papers published in this current issue result from communications presented at the 21st International Consciousness Reframed Conference, organized by CITAR - Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts in collaboration with the Planetary Collegium. The conference, held at Universidade Católica Portuguesa, from June 6-8, 2019, gathered 62 talks, 11 artistic installations and 4 posters of participants from 22 countries. Some of them decided to transform their talk into a scientific paper and to submit it to this journal, herein are published the best 6.

Titled "Sentient States: Bio-mind and Techno-nature", the conference proposed to expand the trans-disciplinary inquiries into art, science, technology, and consciousness that previous Consciousness Reframed Conferences, under the direction of Professor Roy Ascott, had already promoted. Aimed at looking at the nature of artificial thought, participants examined how forms of intelligence can be found in nature. Adopting diverse perspectives, multiple creative practices and theories, they explored the ways in which our planetary consciousness is reframing and reforming. The texts selected for this publication seem to confirm that the intersection of practice and theory constitutes a good opportunity to reframe and reform critical thinking in academia as well.

As editors of this issue, we juxtaposed the articles by our own logic, as readers we expect you to create its fabric by intertwining their themes, inquiries and methodologies. This number starts with the conception and statue of digital images as referents of visualization charged with semiotic agency. It then changes focus from humanly centered to interspecies communication, relying on artistic and theoretic approaches. Finally, it returns to the human being, problematizing its civilizational and individual organization.

Dolores and David Steinman brought together visual and sound artists, computer engineers, designers and cognitive scientists to restructure and re-configure our understanding of self. They rely on computer-generated simulations of blood flow patterns, in the pathological situation of a

brain aneurysm to, not only understand the phenomenon, but also to find the optimal way to communicate its complexity.

Camila Mangueira Soares, Fabricio Fava, and Miguel Carvalhais argue that in our present computational and algorithmic context, digital images become semiotic agents. By incorporating cultural agencies, images articulate different forms of mediation, and this includes both humans and nonhumans. Questioning what characterizes these dynamics, the authors place images as actors in processes, and adopting a Peircean semiotic point of view they maintain that digital images are signs in relation and circulation.

Cesar & Lois collective think within and across for a critique of the human mind as separated from other intelligences. They work through a bio-digital hybrid intelligence that crosses human knowledge with prehuman (microorganisms) and post-human artificial intelligence. Their results come in the form of artworks and they explore their "Degenerative Culture" project in this paper.

In "Interspecies Artistic Research Strategies: Biosemiotic Methods and Open-Source Network Technologies", Fabricio Lamoncha addresses the new collective subjectivity of online participation in a creative way. Considering that the present context offers new expressive possibilities for artists, Lamoncha recognizes the creative potential of our daily activities and adopts the images we share collaboratively as the material for new forms of narrative. Aiming at a bioethical critical discourse, the author presents the results of his own artistic research based on open-source network technologies as the material for interspecies examination in a new paradigm.

Roberta Buiani exposes her interdisciplinary pedagogic experiment with the course "Digital Technology and Society" at the U. Toronto. In this course the concept and models adopted for the definition of Smart Cities were systematically questioned. They were broadened to include more-than-human layers of networksand naturecultural relationships, therefore compensating the skewed vision towards digital technologies.

Human enhancement was at the center of Maria Manuela Lopes' inquiries and performances. She explores two artistic projects to address notions of self-identity in the context of neuro-enhancement technologies and their promise for greater cognitive capacities.

For those who get in contact with Consciousness Reframed for the first time, we know we gathered a set of papers that will welcome and engage you with our enquiries and research. For the others, we hope you can revive the discussions that emerged at CR2019 and be inspired for your future research. We are very thankful to our reviewers and all the authors who trusted us the editorial treatment of their papers. Finally, we express our gratitude to the Scientific Committee of the Conference; the keynote speakers Roy Ascott, Marta de Menezes, Victoria Vesna, and Luis Eduardo Luna for their outstanding ideas; André Sier and Roy Ascott, who joined us in the Organizing Committee; Diogo Marques and José Vasco Carvalho, for the organization of a wonderful exhibit.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Cristina Sá is Assistant Professor at the School of Arts - UCP, and she was director of CITAR – Center for Science and Technology of the Arts. Strong experience in working with international multidisciplinary teams, due to an international career which led her to work in the US (2014-16) and in Catalonia (2005). Special interest and experience in practice-based research which involves artistic artwork development. Her main fields of academic work and research are Digital Humanities/Culture, studying New Media Art, and developing Interaction Design. Strong commitment to inter-disciplinary fields such as Art and Technology due to a hybrid formation in Engineering, Art and Communication.

André Baltazar is Assistant Professor and Vice-Director of the School of Arts - UCP, coordinates the Bachelor and Master in Sound and Image and also directs the Digital Creativity Center. Holds a Ph.D. in Science and Technology of the Arts (in which he was an invited researcher at CCRMA in Stanford University) and a Master in Electro-technical and Computer Engineering. Conducts his research in the area of New Media Art with special interest in HCI, gesture analysis and recognition. Recently he has been more dedicated to applied research, working with artists and museums in the development of custom technologic solutions for art pieces and exhibitions. See also his website.

Rui Torres is Professor of Communication Sciences at University Fernando Pessoa. He was a visiting professor in post-graduation programs in Portugal, Brazil, Estonia, Mexico, and Spain. He is the director of the book series Cibertextualidades (UFP Press) and co-editor of the Electronic Literature Series (Bloomsbury), as well as member of several editorial boards of journals in the field of electronic literature. An author of electronic literature, his poems were published in several Anthologies, CD-ROMs and Digital Archives. He is the coordinator of the Digital Archive of Portuguese Experimental Poetry and a Director of the Electronic Literature Organization. See in this link his poems, essays, and critical writings.