

Eulogy

Bruno G. Bara February 28, 1949 to November 7, 2023: A eulogy to a brilliant mind

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Bruno G. Bara, a longtime member of the editorial board of this journal, passed away suddenly on November 7, 2023 at the age of 74. Although retired, he continued to devote energy and enthusiasm to his scientific, clinical, and educational work in psychotherapy.

Bruno earned a degree in medicine from the University of Milan in 1973 and a postgraduate specialist degree in medical psychology in 1976. During his academic career he held the post of Assistant Professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Medical School, University of Milan, where he was Director of the Unit of Artificial Intelligence between 1980 and 1983. He was Associate Professor at the University of Trieste, then Full Professor of General Psychology at the University of Florence, and finally Full Professor of Psychology of Communication at the University of Turin, where he ended his career as Professor Emeritus.

At the University of Turin, he founded and directed the Center for Cognitive Science (CSC), inter-university research center involving the University of Turin, the Polytechnic of Turin, and the University of Eastern Piedmont. He created and coordinated the PhD program in Cognitive Science. For more than two decades, the CSC and the PhD program have provided training to young scientists who have gone on to take up academic positions in Italy and abroad. Always at the University of Turin he was founding member of the Interdepartmental Center for Advanced Neuroscience Studies (NIT) and Director of the Center for Neuroimaging School of Medicine. Finally, he founded and was president of the Mind and Brain, a cultural association for the dissemination of cognitive science.

Bruno was likewise active on the international scene, where his research was appreciated and recognized as fundamental in several domains of the Cognitive Psychology. He was visiting scientist at the University of Sussex and at the University of Cambridge, initially as a student of Philip Johnson-Laird, with whom he published pioneering studies on reasoning and simulation models with artificial intelligence techniques. He was also visiting scientist at the University of California at Berkeley.

His work garnered him the Award in Brain and Behavior Research from the European Science Foundation and the Award in Human Factors from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He was Full Member of the Cognitive Science Society; he organized and chaired the XXVII Conference of the Cognitive Science Society in 2005 and the EuroAsianPacific Joint Conference on Cognitive Science in 2015.

He was editor of Italian and international journals, including *Emotion & Cognition*, *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *Journal of Cognitive Science*, and editor of the *Cognitive Science Series* published by Bollati Boringhieri. He was invited speaker at numerous national and international conferences, the most recent of which was the International Conference of Experimental Pragmatic Italy (XPRAG.it) held in Turin in 2022.

The area on which his scientific activity was most focused was pragmatics, with the development of the “Cognitive Pragmatic” theory, that, after the initial collaboration with his colleagues Gabriella Airenti and Marco Colombetti, he developed independently, and which led to three main lines of experimental research - Developmental Pragmatics, Neuropragmatics and Clinical Pragmatics. In these areas of study several of his articles are seminal contributions and he provided novel empirical evidence for the development of his theoretical constructs. Several of his studies investigated how pragmatic ability develops, matures, and declines across the human lifespan, and how this ability is affected in psychiatric disorders such as autism and schizophrenia, or in acquired brain lesions conditions such as head trauma and right or left hemisphere lesions. His research on the cognitive processes underlying communicative ability extended beyond the theoretical and experimental level to include the development of clinical assessment tools such as the Assessment Battery for Communication, which has been translated and adapted into different languages, and rehabilitation programs, as the Cognitive Pragmatic Treatment.

Among the various experimental methods he used throughout his career to empirically support his theoretical hypotheses, he particularly loved the functional magnetic resonance imaging, which he used to study both the neural basis of pragmatic abilities, i.e. the cognitive basis of the mental processes involved in communication, especially communicative intention, and the effects of cognitive rehabilitation on the increase of connectivity in the human brain.

In the cognitivist domain he also carried out his clinical activity as a psychotherapist and researcher, in particular declining it in the constructivist and relational field. In his model, the shared knowledge between therapist and patient is the main factor of care, within a solid therapeutic relationship in which the patient can freely express his discomfort and experiences a non-judgmental attitude. More in detail, he proposed a cognitive approach to dreams interpretation and analyzed the relationship between mental disorders and somatic symptoms.

His work is collected in dozens of articles published in prestigious journals and books, the best known of which are: *Cognitive Science: A Developmental Approach to the Simulation of the Mind* (Routledge) and *Cognitive Pragmatics: The Mental Processes of Communication* (MIT Press).

Bruno was a brilliant scientist, a far-sighted academic, an intense, witty, ironic person, a charismatic and respected teacher. He leaves behind two beloved daughters, his life's pride, and three grandchildren, as well a multitude of friends, students and colleagues who will always remember him with sincere esteem and immense affection.