

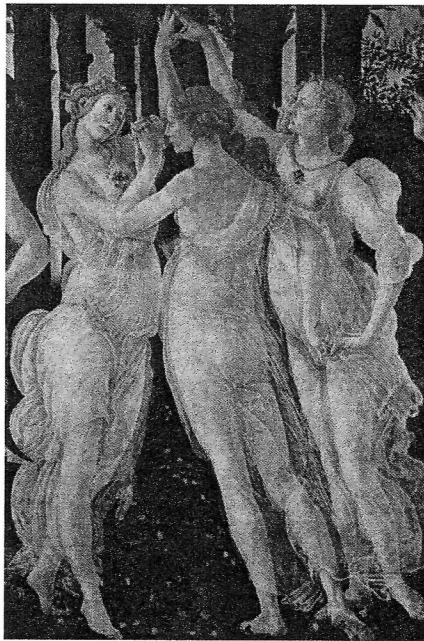
# DuVersity - Newsletter No. 9

Creating new unities from diversity

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This issue has a more artistic frame of reference than ever before: from the art of conversation to the worldless game of meaning devised by Leslie Schwing and friends, and from the feathered art of Virgil Walker to the application of Edith Wallace's collage method by Karen Stefano. In the DuVersity, science and art go together, as do technology and spirituality. The kind of learning we foster is one in which the different aspects of our nature are cultured into being able to communicate with each other. Head should speak with heart and mind with body. Similarly, we need to be able to pass easily from work alone to working in groups and then into work in the communities and worlds in which we live.

Our members are of crucial importance, because without them we could not continue to create programs and publish our ideas. The DuVersity is a vehicle for exploration and inquiry, especially in relation to how we people can really talk to each other, develop new insights together and survive as a planetary community. We live in a world of bewildering complexity and there is a widespread tendency to *mentally retreat* into simplistic answers and frames of mind, not least as a way of self-preservation. To 'think outside the box' is easier to say than do.



The DuVersity is a means of helping people to suspend identification and take the risk of exploration. Its fabric is composed of information (in books, websites, videos, etc.) and participation in events (working group, seminar-dialogues, tours, etc.) in a mosaic of meaning. The DuVersity explores and uses a wide range of methodologies. Some appear abstract – such as 'systematics' – while others appear more concrete and experiential – such as 'movements' – but they all serve the unfolding of our nature and the world we find ourselves in. We need to be able to maintain and improve the infrastructure of the DuVersity.

Through your support, we have been able to: develop the remarkable and unique process known as 'working group'; to produce and now distribute a wide range of video-conversations with such outstanding people as Joseph Rael, the Amerindian medicine man, Edith Wallace the Jungian analyst and Patrick de Mare, the originator of the Median group; to bring out a newsletter that contains more originality and breadth than most academic journals, and reconcile much of the fourth way with contemporary research.

## TRIALOGUE

### a method of creative conversation

Anthony Blake

One of the main concerns of the DuVersity has been with the potential of conversation. Talking is something that we all engage in, though many feel that these days the 'art of conversation' has been almost entirely lost. We are in too much of a hurry to get things done to give it the time and 'space' it needs. The word 'conversation' literally means 'turning together' and might be well represented in an image of a flock of birds, wheeling this way and that across the sky, but remaining together. Such an image gives a sense of freedom and spontaneity combined with coherence and meaning. But most conversations we have are very far from that.

One of our strong contentions is that the power of speech represents both in fact and symbolically our core of creativity. This may seem an extreme view in the light (or darkness) of our usual experience of speech as a means of persuasion, argument and coercion. But the dark side should not blind us to the light. Let us imagine that any act of speech is, in its essential nature, a creative act. Very rapidly, however, the act is followed by consequences that arise from the situation of engaging with other people who also want to speak. As is well-known, speech in the public domain is dominated by an adversarial stance, based on an assumption of competition and conflict, which the legal system well exemplifies.

A sense of competition arises because we tend to assume that only the person speaking has power. Our culture is permeated by thought forms in which it is assumed that only the 'active' role has importance and the 'receptive' is inferior. Hence we feel that a listener is in an inferior position and we want to be the one who exercises speech rather than the one who is silent. We impatiently wait until there is an opportunity for us to 'make our point'. In such a context, we are in effect competing for 'speaking-space' just as various peoples compete for living space (as in the Middle East). The roots of much ethnic violence and conflict are strengthened in just about every 'conversation' we have.

Conflict and competition determine a dyadic kind of conversation. Everywhere, we see issues reduced to two sides only; and it is no accident that most

parliamentary systems are aligned to a two party mechanism. This is an important clue to how meaningful conversation might be possible: such a conversation should involve more than two sides. We will return to this in more depth later.

In dyadic conversation, we are not only waiting to make our point but very much occupied with 'making sure we are understood'. This means that, after we have made a point and heard a reply we want to 'correct' the other's interpretation of what we have said. Such corrections lead to yet further stages of competition and correction. Reflecting on this common experience we might begin to see that there is another underlying thought form in which we are assuming that what is happening is that we are transferring information *from us into the other*. It is not too extreme to call this an act of violence! Incidentally, it is more than interesting that some evolutionary biologists and neurophysiologists believe that the 'circuits' involved in speech came from those developed for such functions as throwing spears! Some people have even associated the act of speech with the thrust of the penis. There are deep gender issues here we have not the space to even begin to explore.

Violence is associated with anxiety and fear and we should not neglect the idea that the kind of stress we can experience in so-called conversation may be a matter of survival needs. If we are identified with what we say as an expression of ourselves, then any refutation or ignoring of it will seem to us like a threat of death. Such ideas may seem extreme but we should keep in mind that most of what we do in speaking with others leaves us unsatisfied because *nothing really new comes out of it*. Indeed, the attitude that dominates is aligned to producing nothing new. The prospect of anything new may even be felt as a threat – because if anything new arises this would mean that we have to change our thinking. We only have to think of the talking of politicians to realize that this is the last thing that is desired!

What emerges is that any meaningful conversation must change the minds of those involved, so that they begin to think new thoughts. If this is not in view then any attempt to change the nature of conversation will be resisted and denied. Some feeling for the 'inevitability' of change must be present for a person to be willing to invest in learning how to converse. Such a person needs to



feel that speech is a process that can unfold as it goes and should not be controlled by set agendas and points of view.

Some years ago, reflecting on this problem, we came to the conclusion that a method was needed by which people could learn how to converse in a distinctively different way from the ordinary practice. Realizing this, we also saw that this must involve a two-fold approach. On the one hand, what drives the ordinary practice and determines what it is should be somehow *suspended*. On the other, there needed to be a *new form* of conversation in which creativity would be possible and encouraged.

The first thing, then, was to have a method in which the usual dyadic interaction was inhibited. Clearly it would be insufficient just to *tell* people *not* to do what they tend to do as a matter of course. Instead, we needed to give people a framework in which this happened anyway. We then turned to Bennett's *systematics* for help and guidance. Systematics is the study of multi-term systems, in which a clear distinction is made between situations according to the number of independent but mutually relevant elements they contained. It struck us that we should look at the properties of conversation *according to the number of people involved*. The simplest thought was to look at what might happen in a conversation between *three* people instead of *two*. If we wanted to get beyond dyadic conversation, this seemed an obvious step.

Systematics also guides people to look for how the independent elements in a situation manage to act in a mutually relevant way. In the case of a triadic conversation, this would entail that each person had equal status and that all contributed in a balanced way to the whole process. The scene was set for a breakthrough, since it then became obvious that in order for these requirements to be met, each person of the three should speak *in turn*. If they spoke in turn A-B-C etc. then we would remove at one stroke the usual pattern of dyadic interchange, but we had to make sure that 'back and forth' interaction between any two of the three people involved was prohibited and so it became one of the *rules* of this method.

We then turned to systematics again to see whether we could glean any additional information about the properties of a triadic process. In Bennett's descriptions of the systems, he follows Gurdjieff in ascribing roles to the three independent elements, relative to each other. These were called

'affirmative', 'receptive' and 'reconciling'. What could these mean in the context of conversation? Our answer was as follows:

Receptive – asking a question

Affirmative – making a statement (or 'answer')

Reconciling – commenting on the mutual relevance of the first two (or adding further information)

We placed them in this order because it seemed to us the easiest sequence for people to adopt. This had very interesting implications that we were able to understand through the systematics of the triad. It is important to point out that by 'starting' (there is actually a cycle involved so that strictly speaking every role is a beginning and an end) with a question we have already moved away from the usual course of everyday conversation, since such conversation is based on assertion. Starting with a question is an act of 'opening' or *initiative of a receptive kind*.

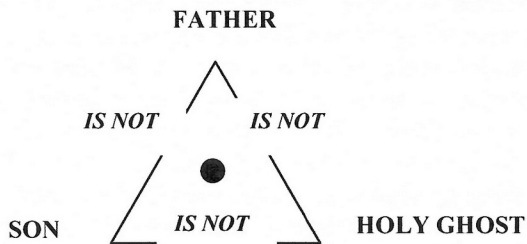
Having grasped a suitable form for our needs, we then had to consider how we would introduce *content*. For those familiar with Gurdjieff's ideas, there is a strong parallel between our form of conversation with its three roles and his system of 'hydrogens': 'carbon' representing the active role; 'oxygen' the receptive role, and 'nitrogen' the reconciling role, while each being a 'hydrogen'. 'Hydrogen' would then be the *theme* of the conversation, underlying what is said by the three participants in their roles.

We left it so that the three people would converse as they desired to agree on what theme they would adopt. This is the first interface they would experience between the world of ordinary conversation and the structured form - to which we gave the name, for obvious reasons, *dialogue*. By this initial conversation they would get to know something about each other. It would be a 'warm up'.

We must add, however, that although we can think of the theme as the underlying 'matter' of the process, in another sense this is more like a *field of information* from which the participants would draw. In our writings we often refer to Bohm's idea of the 'active information field', which is precisely this concept of what underlies an information exchange process. Such an idea is quite different from the usual thought form we mentioned above in which we believe what we have to do is transmit

and insert *our* information *into* the other person. With Bohm's idea of *active* information we can see that there can be an act *from the information field itself*, an idea that has been expressed in certain circles of the psychoanalytic tradition as 'there are thoughts waiting to be thought'. This expression is couched very well, since it would be a big mistake to suppose that the information field can act as if it were a person. Thoughts that do not assert themselves correspond very well to the third or reconciling term of the triad and, usually, people do not understand how such a thing can take initiative.

Such considerations lead us to make a detour into the early Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in which we find that many of the ideas we have



touched upon were grappled with almost two thousand years ago.

The above is a schematic of many Medieval diagrams representing the Trinity. The 'is not' of the lines of the triangle correspond to our inhibition of dyadic exchange. In the full diagram, there are lines from the corners to the center labeled *IS*, which says that all three roles (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) share in the same nature. This is the highest level of the active information field, if we can regard the Three Persons of the Trinity as engaged in conversation! For a mystic such as Meister Eckhart, the unity of all three is the Godhead, the source from which the Three arise. It is quite extraordinary to recognize something deeply spiritual of this nature in what has evolved as a practical method, but we might remember the overwhelming significance of the Trinity for western thought over more than a thousand years, and how it eventually arrived in our recent past as the dialectical materialism that came through Marx from Hegel.

There are different acts associated with the three Persons. From the Father comes Creation, from the Son Redemption and from the Holy Ghost Perfection.

To revert to dialogue per se, the stage was set to define its rules and produce its guidelines. The main rules are:

1. The three people speak *only* in turn, in the sequence A-B-C-A-B etc.
2. There are three roles: A asks questions, B gives answers, C makes comments.
3. They agree a theme before they begin

The last rule is flexible. First of all, they also need to agree on who takes what role and also to have some means whereby they can stop the process and change roles. Ideally, each of the three should experience all three roles. Secondly, it is perfectly possible to start without defining a theme, and allow a theme to emerge as it will. Finally, the third rule also sets the parameters of the exchange in terms of time. For the most part, it is helpful to have precisely defined time intervals.

Needless to say, there are also guidelines as to the conduct of the conversation. Three of the most important are:

1. Be concise. Rambling is not encouraged. If people have to listen to lengthy statements they are liable to lose track.
2. Do not hesitate and produce long pauses. As with (1) this aids the *flow* of the conversation.
3. This deals with requirements specific to the three roles
  - a. Asking questions. Do not give a speech ending with an inflexion as if it were a question but be to the point. Do not ask 'personal' questions directed to the person who has to answer. The reason for this is that such questions then exclude the third person in the conversation. Also, do not ask questions for which the natural kind of answer is 'yes' or 'no'.
  - b. Giving answers. Even though the person may not 'know' what to say or 'have' any answer, he or she still has to come up with something. The point is not the knowledge the person has but his or her *willingness* to participate in the process and cooperate in keeping it going.
  - c. Making comments. This is the most fluid role and is most easily fulfilled by thinking of the requirement of simply *adding* something to the

conversation. Person C is free to couch what he or she says like a question, or further answer, or any other mode. As with the person who gives answers, he or she has to come up with something to keep the ball rolling. Ideally, person C should 'enrich' what has been said before.

Of course, some people find some roles easier than others.. The recommendation to change roles after a certain time is important for increasing the feeling for the whole amongst the participants. They should feel that they are sharing in a process common to them all. Finding out which is favored and which not might give some insight into the person, but we have not followed up such a line of inquiry.

Earlier, we mentioned that the order of sequence of the roles had some significance beyond that of relative user-friendliness. The reason for this takes us back to the theory of systematics of the triad. In its pure form, the three terms of the triad co-exist simultaneously. When there is a sequence, a 'bias' enters in so that much depends on which of the three takes the initiative. Clearly, in the case of trialogue, it is the 'receptive' one that does this. In systematic theory, the sequences starting with the receptive has very different tendencies from the sequences starting the affirmative. The first kind are related to evolution, while the second are related to the opposite or involution. What can such abstract ideas mean for trialogue?

To answer this we can start from the case where someone makes a statement that is followed by someone else asking a question about what has been said. This is a familiar situation. We suggest that what *tends* to happen is that the response of the questioner is aligned with the generic form known as *yes-but*. In other words, the second person acknowledges that they have heard what has been said but then argues with it! The second person turns receptivity into 'denial' at least to some degree. This would leave the third person in a quandary about what to do. Does he or she anticipate what the first person might go on to say, or do they echo the questioner? The third person is somewhat constrained.

In the other situation of starting with a question, the second person can hardly question the question but

has to *give* something. He or she is in a position of having to be positive! This in its turn releases the third person in a way that corresponds to the generic form of *yes-and*. The two types of sequence turn out to be intrinsically different in orientation and feel. Later on we will take up the ideas of 'yes-but' and 'yes-and' when we briefly deal with what we call 'dyalogue'.

What then would happen if we had sequences beginning with role C? The C person could only 'muse aloud', which most people would find difficult to do. However, let us imagine that this can be done at least by some people (later on we will speak of this again in terms of what we call 'monologue'). Then we would have the curious factor that the questioner in role A, who must be responding in some way to C is to be then answered by B and not by C! This would be experienced as most unusual. However, it is not impossible and is even implicit in the prescribed sequence A-B-(C-A-B)-C-A etc. as we show by the brackets. This sequence C-A-B works when C is able to truly enrich the sequence A-B leading A 'better equipped' we could say to ask meaningful questions. In this guide, role C represents an opportunity for creative input.

The subtleties of the interchange can be profound and we have simply sketched what some of them might be like in practice. What is most important about them is the distinction we made between the 'evolutionary' and the 'involutionary' tendencies. In its standard form, trialogue takes the form of evolution, which means that the substance of the conversation should refine, evolve, deepen, etc. In a word, trialogue in this form *is creative*.

The extraordinary thing about the creativity of trialogue is that the participants have only to maintain their proper roles. It is *not* the case that they as individuals have to 'be creative' at all. It is the *whole system of conversation* that is creative. Individuals feel that there are being taken along by the process, not that they are controlling it. At the same time, there is a considerable discipline and demand on attention in fulfilling the roles. Participants have to be alert and adept if the trialogue is to work well. They have to be consciously responsible for their own roles, while it is only the three together that performs creatively.





Following John Bennett in this regard, we say that creativity is 'beyond consciousness'.

This raises some questions, especially about how the 'fruits' of trialogue can be 'harvested'. We have not done sufficient work on this to be sure, but at present it seems to us that there needs to be a further stage, mirroring the preparatory one in which the theme and roles are decided, when the participants can 'de-brief' on the experience and gather any insights that can be fixed for further use. Here we need to consider the similar problem with 'dialogue' in the sense of the *median group*.

### Dialogue Group

The Median group size is recommended at 15-25 members. There are empirical reasons for this range of numbers. Firstly, all the participants need to be able to see and hear each other easily. Secondly, every one of them needs to be able to say something within a time span of an hour or so (at 5 minutes a person, fifteen people would take an hour and a quarter). Thirdly, such numbers discourage simplistic polarizations within the group. This is an elusive point, consisting of the probability that with such numbers any adversarial situation will sooner or later get broken up and that there will always be enough different points of view for change to be inevitable.

In a dialogue median group there is no set theme and there are no specified roles (there will be a special role of 'convenor' or such but that is not significant in this context). Thus far, it seems very different from the conduct of trialogue. However, appearances can be deceptive. The critical thing is that dialogue in the median group seems to be alive and well when there is a shift out of polarity into more than two points of view. It is possible to see the form of trialogue emerge and then submerge again into the background of interaction. Thus, trialogue can arise in such situations of itself without any instructions or specification of roles.

We believe however that it is very difficult for participants in a dialogue process to see what is going on – or, to put it crudely, what makes it work – without being specially trained to do so. As is fairly well known, we can only see what we know to look for. We might then suppose that it would be possible to gain some understanding of the intrinsic dialogue process through some such experience as of trialogue, where we mean by 'understanding' the

complex of perception and will that amounts to a readiness to act as needed. It is supposed that the convenor might have some special role of this kind but there is not existing any specification of what this role should entail. Instead, there is a general reliance on 'experience' and rejection of any specialized knowledge of method.

Besides the option that trialogue might provide insight into the dialogue process as such, there is the fact that both face a problem in terms of assimilation and results. For instance, how can it be possible for a group having undergone a dialogue to then work at finding out what they have learned or gained or whatever? Do they then have another dialogue, this time a directed one? Do they all go away and reflect for themselves in isolation? Should the dialogue have been recorded and transcribed so that people's memories and perspectives are supplemented? Similarly with trialogue. In the latter case, some transcriptions were made of conversations held through the Internet that proved of great interest for the study of the method.

The option in trialogue of taking up a particular theme lends it to inquiry rather than dialogue per se. In inquiry there is a direction of work, however widely the process may range; so that we want *results* at least in the form of new thoughts or questions. Having a debriefing session then makes sense.

However, it is important to consider that we might not know what is important in what emerges from either dialogue or trialogue and that if we sat down and made notes afterwards these might actually take away from the experience. In a way, we are left on our own, as separate individuals, to make of it what we will. In this regard, we should acknowledge the importance of *assimilation*. We can have all sorts of experiences but these may not amount to anything because they quickly fade in time and lack an active relevance to the rest of our lives. One way in which this can be addressed is by *writing*. It is not so much that this writing will contain the experience or define the learning but that it can *enable us to learn what we have experienced*.

### N-logue

Our development of trialogue led us to consider the general case of N-logue and other options. N-logue means 'structured conversation between N



participants'. We happened to have started with  $N = 3$  and then afterwards worked backwards to  $N = 2$  and  $N = 1$ . This may have been serendipitous.

2-logue or *dyalogue* (not to be confused with dialogue) may seem a surprising option after we have introduced trialogue as a way of overcoming dyadic conversation. But the dyad can take many guises and does not have to be considered as irreducibly 'bad'. We also have to remember that we are simply considering what is possible with two people, when the self-same roles as in trialogue might still apply but in a less obvious way. We keep in mind that 2- and 1-logue can be seen as 'compressions' of trialogue itself.

We have already mentioned the generic forms of yes-but and yes-and. AND and BUT signify dyadic characters. For dyalogue this means we might have two main options:

1. We work entirely in the mode of yes-but, denying and continuing to deny or contrast with what the other person says – but *not repeating*.
2. We work entirely in the mode of yes-and, agreeing with and amplifying what the other person says – but *not repeating*.

The main point here is that in ordinary conversation the two are *muddled up* together. Systematic theory says that when we practice or exercise a strong dyad we hold both poles apart against the force that wants them to move together. In the most intense form of dyalogue, the two people switch from AND to BUT and back again at intervals but always keep them distinct and separate. In this method, the two people have to agree together to adopt one or other of the two rules of conversation – AND or BUT.

This can lead to some very subtle but difficult possibilities such as having one of the two people obey the rule AND while the other follows the rule BUT. In fact, we allowed for something like this when it came to tetralogue ( $N = 4$ ). In general we find that dyalogue is more difficult for people to sustain since there is a greater demand on each individual (they are responsible for  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the process instead of  $\frac{1}{3}$ ).

We devised a third possibility for  $N = 2$ . In this third option the two people speak as if of one voice. This means that one person speaks and, when he or she pauses, the other takes over as if they

were the same 'person'. The aim is to have as continuous a flow of speaking as possible. In this option, we actually move towards *monalogue* (not to be confused with monologue).

### Monalogue and the field of listening

When we come to the option of 'conversation of one person' it may seem an oxymoron. How can there be any conversation at all? We need to think in terms of *speaking*. It is perfectly possible for one person to speak aloud even when they are by themselves (though it may be frowned upon!). What makes it a version of N-logue is the context of listening.

In monalogue, one person speaks while there are others who serve as a 'field of listening'. To introduce people to this practice, we have at times suggested that they can make gestures or words of assent as if to encourage the speaker – nodding approval, sitting at attention, smiling, saying such things as 'wow', 'go on please', etc. but the essence of it is to create an atmosphere of non-rejective listening. The feeling of it is similar to that reported by people who have had near death experiences in which beings appeared to them who *accepted them completely as they are*. The aim in monalogue is to have an audience or context of pure receptivity. The people who listen do so in an impersonal way, rather as objective witnesses to what is being said. A member of the audience need not 'understand' anything of what is said.

Such listening is barely understood, especially when, as we said at the beginning, power or will is ascribed to the speaker and weakness and emptiness is ascribed to the listener. It is brought into play in another method developed by us (from work of Ted Matchett) that we call ILM (Immediate Learning Method) in which the source material is provided by music or natural sounds. In another aspect, it may be the best candidate to represent the *field of active information*. Active information does not mean words uttered by a dominant personality or with a loud voice.

We said that it is the field of listening that constitutes the necessary condition for N-logue. We have found that it helps if a dyalogue has an audience, even if only of one person. When it comes to trialogue, an audience is built in, in the form of the person who is two turns away from speaking (when A is speaking, the 'audience' will

be C because B will be engaged in getting ready to say something).

The person speaking the monologue is subject to the same rule as always in N-logue – do not hesitate. He or she has to be assured that everything they say will be acknowledged and accepted. Most people can respond to this prospect, in that they can find themselves speaking in a way or of things that would not ordinarily be the case. Many discover something new for themselves. The situation is very different from someone giving a lecture or preaching, even though it looks from the outside much the same kind of set-up.

The person who is speaking and the audience who are listening are not different persons. There is only one person. What is offered to the individual in monologue is something like a perfect mirror whereby to *hear* him or herself. This is not narcissistic. It is what takes place when speaking and listening are fused into one.

### Tetralogue and Beyond

In speaking of dyalogue we mentioned the subtle option of one person operating according to AND while the other operates according to BUT. This option is taken up in a version of 4-logue we developed though have hardly had opportunity to explore very much in practice. Put simply we have an alternation of AND and BUT in a fourfold sequence A-B-C-D. The role of A, B, C and D is defined in relation to those who speak before them.

A says something  
 B acts as AND in relation to A  
 C acts as BUT in relation to B  
 D acts as AND in relation to C  
 A acts as BUT in relation to D and so on

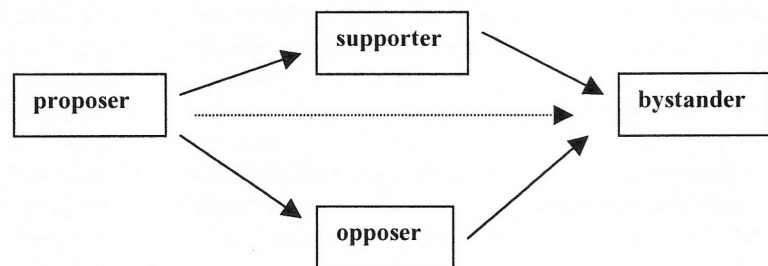
The effect of this structure is to produce a series of perspectives on the given theme that is rather like viewing a sculpture from different angles. Immersed in the process, participants have reported that they lose track of where they are in the conversation. This appears to be because, as far as we can ascertain, the roles somehow begin to slide around the people.

Tetralogue of another kind has been recognized by David Kaplan but not as a part of a systematic taxonomy. In Kaplan's scheme there are these roles:

1. proposer – the one who starts a line of thought, or makes a statement
2. supporter – the one who goes along with the proposer and supports or adds to what he says  
AND
3. opposer – the one who speaks against the thought of the proposer  
BUT
4. bystander – actually the one capable of commenting on and summarizing the exchange between the other three

These four roles need not act out in a set sequence and the person playing a role may change from moment to moment.

The diagram here is not a flow diagram showing



sequence but more a graph showing connections. As we see, little is indicated about what happens next, after the bystander (the one who sees more of the whole) has spoken. We could imagine a sequence, similar to our form of tetralogue, as: proposer-supporter-opposer-bystander-proposer etc. In this sequence, the *steps* would run: And, But, And-Or, But-Or where the last two are new forms of the former two.

From systematic theory we learn that the tetrad contains *two kinds* of duality and, in any sequence, the fourth or last term should integrate or be the culmination of all that has gone before. In our sequential structure, employing the simplistic AND/BUT alternation, it seems to us that there is still a provision for a kind of accumulation so that D does inherit the whole conversation rather as Kaplan's bystander, but it is A starting again who truly reaps the harvest (to mix metaphors) because he or she stands in the place created by the complete alternation AND/BUT/AND/BUT.

We have the impression that tetralogue represents some kind of limit for structured sequential conversation. The requirement of a set sequence must be dropped for  $N > 4$ . What faces us then are many options, but we will speak of only one kind here. This is the option in which we

1. Allow more than one person to play the same role
2. Allow anyone to speak at any time, or after a set interval (for example, one cannot speak again after one has spoken until n other people have spoken first)

The second part of (2) allows us to maintain the 'delayed response' feature that we began with in devising triologue. (1) allows us to introduce chance into the process. Imagine we have six people and two of them can ask questions, two of them answer, and two comment. They have to stay in their roles as long as possible. No one can speak once spoken until two others have spoken. Even supposing that the sequence question-answer-comment is followed, the variations are complex. If we have A-B-C the next speaker could be either A or D, and so on. We might impose a further rule that a person must say something by the time, say, ten speeches have been made.

Following through this format we can speculate that we can make approximations to what actually happens in real life conversations. This implies that meaningful processes may underlie our apparent conversations, which we might be quite unaware of. These *meaningful processes* are taking place by themselves as it were and the 'players' in them are not 'us' as supposed agents of action but the *impersonal roles* that form into structures.

### Reflections

We have the capacity for meaningful conversation so to speak 'buried' underneath the way we actually tend to talk to each other. The personalities, social roles, posturings, conflicts, etc. that accumulate in us veil from sight the *natural processes* that are intrinsic to spoken language. A revelation appears once the lie entailed in the thought form 'I speak' is given up. It is most important to grasp that in N-logue there is nothing that is hard or demanding special effort or attention. All a participant has to do is speak when it is his or her turn and say something relevant to what has been said before. Of course, there are defined roles to play, but the main essence of the method is simply in taking turns. Once the form is clear, content comes of itself. The requirement of relevance will lead people into variations of relevance – similar to our AND and BUT - simply by chance.

Triologue represents an encapsulation of what is essential in N-logue. It gives set roles and prescribes a set sequence. It includes its own audience or 'field of listening'. It creates a dynamic whole of conversation that can be more intelligent than the separate participants. It carries with it the sense and implication of the 'persons' of language – primarily: I, thou, he – in a detached way.

Triologue should serve to bring us back to the art of conversation without the need for any set rules or roles. The 'art' of conversation for us is the *act of conversation*. By this we mean conversation without regard to any other purpose than itself and with no attachments relating to relationships between the people involved. It is neither 'task-oriented' nor 'people-oriented'. What then is left but the act of conversing? There is nothing to explain, nothing to 'act upon' the other person or persons, no set idea of what the conversation means and no reference-body of information and terminology to support the function.

For someone who is not familiar with this kind of pure conversation, it may appear that it is forced to be of no consequence and empty of content. We would say that it is in fact a type of 'conscious operation' because it is in what we call 'consciousness' that we have *intrinsically* a playing of roles and a play of *as-if*. Consciousness is not content-bound, and is free to explore forms of operation.

The nearest type of N-logue to pure conversation is the monologue, but now considered without regard to any set number of speakers. It is speech in which the identity of the speakers is no longer significant. This description should bring to mind the image of a 'conversation of mind' in which what is being said is what matters and not who says it. If we are speaking with someone in this way we no longer dwell on what *we want* to say; indeed, we lose much of the common desire to speak, which often takes the form of self-expression or assertion. When speech is no longer a 'tool' or 'weapon' of the speaker there is a natural creative flow. We can be likened to a priest who conducts the mass without 'knowing' what it means and without any sense that he is 'doing' it, but with the faith that the conduct of the ceremony is in and of itself the highest meaning.

By suspending or taking away the usual content that we ordinarily refer to as 'mind' – personality, self-image, thoughts, feelings, motives, etc. – we are left



with a kind of pure mind that is not a personal property. Patrick de Mare speaks of mind in general as 'between brains' rather than 'in' them. This seems to us as on the right track, but we believe that the realization of this insight requires us to undergo some transformation particularly in the realm of making conversation. This is not a transformation of making us 'better' – more open-minded, kind, patient, etc. – but of allowing underlying natural process to proceed through us untrammelled.

The sense is of 'not-doing'. What is most required of us is to speak or not to speak without regard for anticipated consequences. It leads to a condition in which we do not have to 'think' before we speak but we *discover* thinking in what is said. It is likely that something of this was touched upon in the history of development of psychoanalysis but then hidden from view by the dominance of two-person analyst-client procedures. The psychoanalytic concept of 'free association' is of foremost importance. It may seem that our structural disciplines of N-logue are far removed from free association but, in essence, N-logue is firmly based on it.

This leads us to a final consideration. Does there have to be at least one person in any N-person conversation who *understands* the pure act of conversation? Or, someone who has been 'initiated' in some way into this essential form of operation? We believe that this is likely to be so. It is the necessary condition. Of course, the forms of N-logue, as with essential dialogue in general, can elicit or help to bring to recognition the underlying process in someone who may not have 'known' of it before. For all that, in some way or other, for some person or other, there needs to be a *conscious recognition* and 'taste' of pure conversation in them at *some time*.

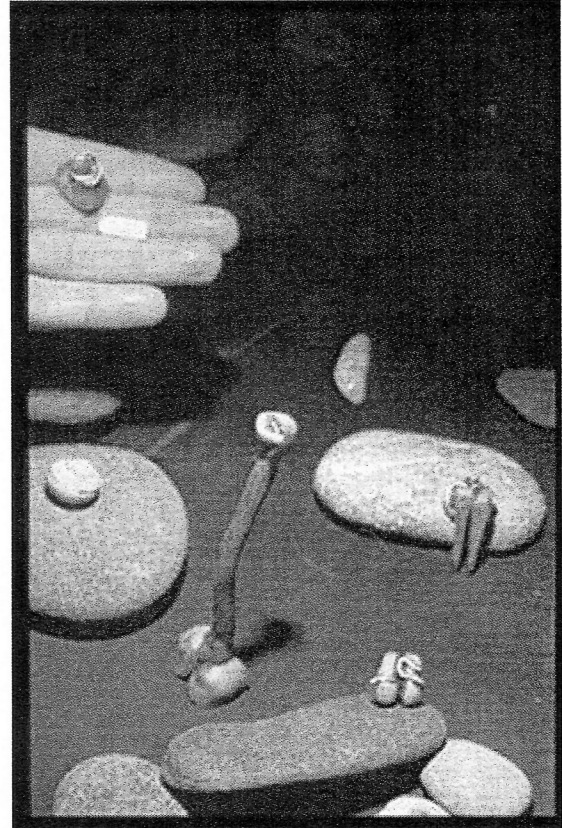
The factor of 'taste' is paramount. In Sufism this is related to both *hal* or 'state' (as in 'consciousness') and also *ilm* or 'knowledge' (being able to name and distinguish). Such a fusion of state and knowledge then serves as a reference point. It is by entering into, reflecting on, experimenting with and sharing our moments of felt deepest conversation that we can find the conscious sense of taste whereby we can build the potential to enter into and realize pure conversation in the future. It is the touch of deepest core meaning and all else is merely description and exploration.

## STONE GAME

A wordless game of meaning devised by Leslie Schwing and Janet Young.

### Introduction

Anthony Blake



The typical game we are used to is played with a *board* – that represents the 'world' of the game – and *pieces* – that represent the 'agents' of the game. The pieces are placed and moved around on the board. So it is in the Stone Game, where we have a board or card of black paper and the pieces are stones. Instead of pieces being assigned to each of the players separately at the beginning, the stones are available as a common resource. Players can number from two to six. Six is an upper limit because people should not wait too long for their turn.

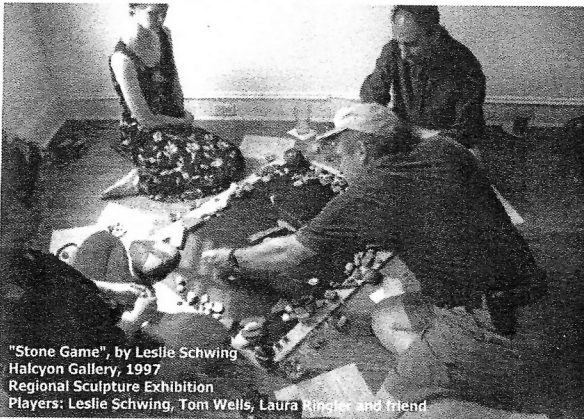
A game needs a purpose. In the case of a competitive game such as chess, the object is for one of the two kings to be defeated. We are so used to competitiveness that it is difficult sometimes to think of co-operative play. In the stone game, the purpose is to make meaningful patterns – largely by



placing the stones onto the card one by one, each person taking their turn. What 'meaningful patterns' consist of is shown by making them; there is usually no discussion or verbal exchange at all. The 'rules' allow for a player to move a stone placed by another, and the pattern builds in time and changes its composition.

Sometimes, the play includes the use of chalks that mark connections and 'flow' between the stones and, in one version of the game, at a certain point the stones are *removed* one by one, leaving only these marks, which are called *glyphs*. The word glyph comes from the Greek *glyphe* meaning 'carving'. Most people are familiar with Egyptian *hieroglyphs*, which actually means 'sacred writing'. In the Stone Game, a glyph is a set of marks that has meaning though they are neither words nor pictures.

We see massive stone patterns in the landscapes of Europe, built in megalithic times 5,000 years ago: circles such as Stonehenge and avenues such as Avebury and Karnak. These were erected according to a vision involving astronomical knowledge. It is quite remarkable that this 'game' of astronomical know-how also involved tracks, pathways, and what are called 'ley lines' connecting the megalithic stones, mounds, woods, springs, etc. and, later, churches. In other words, the whole 'enchanted' landscape – as John Michell calls it – was a glyph.



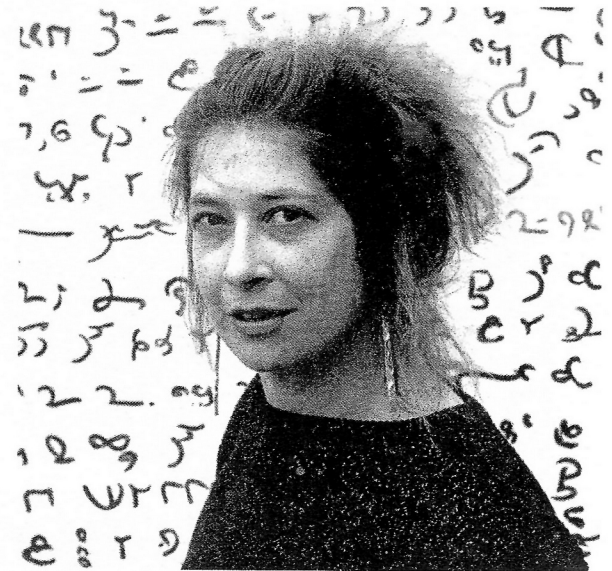
"Stone Game", by Leslie Schwing  
Halcyon Gallery, 1997  
Regional Sculpture Exhibition  
Players: Leslie Schwing, Tom Wells, Laura Rincolet and friend

The archetypal idea here is that the 'stone game' in its widest sense can bring to expression patterns of information, or meanings, that are held between people or are 'in the air' as we say. The placing and build of the stones is not random, even when we have no conscious verbal explanation for placing them as we do.

The extraordinary power of the game comes from very simple features. In a last section, we briefly explore similarities between the Stone Game and other methods such as logovisual technology (LVT) and dialogue. In the next section Leslie Schwing describes the genesis of the Game and how it is played. Bob Gerber provides additional notes.

## Information Field

Leslie Schwing



The principle behind the game is that by intentionally moving objects and making abstract marks within a defined space a field of potential information is formed. This field, when activated, can be used by the players as an energy source or an information source. The Stone Game is not generally a competitive game in which there are winners or losers; however, due to the fact that the players create the rules within the framework given, the players can choose to make it competitive.

Idea can be embodied in many forms. The most universal of these forms is gesture. From gesture we derive "mark". From "mark" we derive "glyph". Further progressions would arrive at "word". Alternatively, gesture implies that movement and marks can be made through the use of objects. Placement and arrangement of objects is one of the earliest forms of information gathering we engage in as children. It is also one of the oldest contemplative art forms known in history.

By eliminating sound, or formal words, and intentionally using only marks and movement of

objects, we can access a quite subtle arena of information. When word or sound is reintroduced they take on a different emphasis and often a different and more intrinsic meaning.

With the aim of reaching this finer level of meaning it is important that the objects and marks themselves have no pre-assigned or associative meaning. For example, if using found objects, the objects must not be identifiable as a particular thing. A "watch face", for example, has too much identity as a "watch face" to be included in allowable findings. A bent rusty nail, if no longer identifiable as "nail", could be appropriate. It is also important to curtail the use of Metaphor, or combining of two known objects to imply a third meaning.

The identifying and naming of objects is almost impossible to put into suspension. In this compulsive "naming" we create a smoke screen in front of the field of pure information we are seeking to access. To easily avoid this pitfall we suggest that players limit their findings to stones.

Similarly, marks made must never impart a specific symbolic meaning. For example, a star, a heart or an eye are inappropriate. A line or circle suggesting a barrier is within game rules. It is easiest to maintain this rule if each player is only permitted one mark at a time rather than a series of marks.

### **Sequence of the Stone Game**

These are the stages most often used

- Identifying the Question
- Collecting the Objects
- Formal Playing of the Game
  - Setting the Table
  - Defining the Rules
  - Playing the Game
  - Closing the Game
  - Divination of the Field

#### **Identifying the Question:**

Players agree upon a question. This can be a specific question or a theme for inquiry.

#### **Collecting the objects:**

The group sets out to collect the stones. You can, depending on the number of players, suggest a number of stones to be collected (say 20 each for 4 players). Or you can leave it up to chance. Again, depending on the size of the playing field, you may want to limit size.

We suggest that the collection process be somewhat of a ritual. In variations of the game developed by Bob Gerber we used a Zen-like "walking" exercise during the collection. Most important, no matter how you structure this part of the game, remember that it is supposed to be fun. Don't do anything that takes the pleasure away.

#### **Setting the table:**

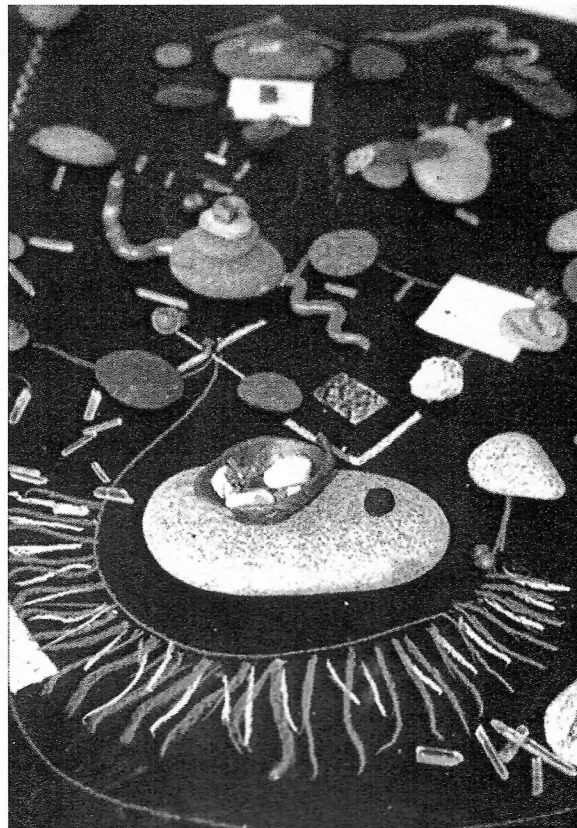
You can play on a table or on the floor. You will need a surface that is defined and that will take a mark. We generally use a black or brown piece of charcoal paper. You can also use a board sprayed with blackboard paint, or a large piece of slate. You can use white paper but we found that darker backgrounds were more pleasing.

#### **The Pieces:**

STONES that have been collected.

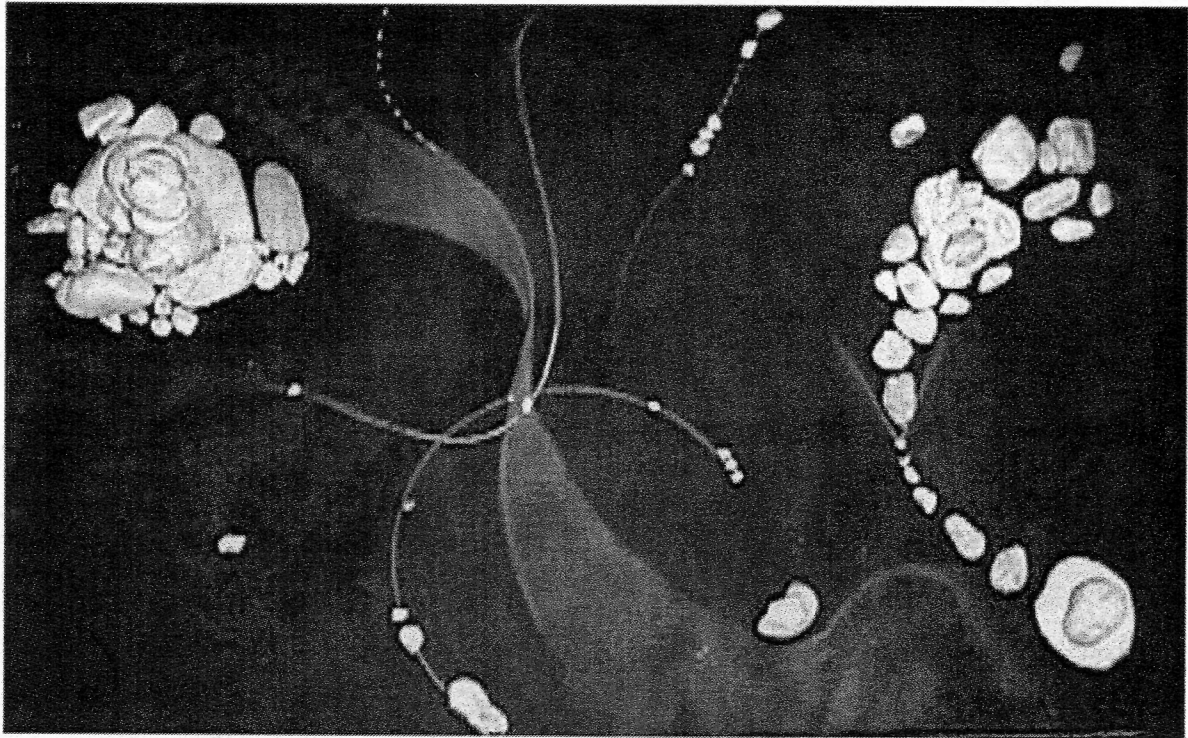
CHALK. We suggest conte crayon in earth tones, black and white. Color is not recommended, as it can have too many associations.

JUICY BITS. Collections of minerals, or other random bits of fun stuff that don't have specific meaning attached. We have used bowls of dry cereal, salt and pepper, miscellaneous mineral specimens, steel shavings etc. The juicy bits provide an element of creative embellishment and surprise. The game can be played without them.



**ADHESIVE:** Either sticky wax or modeling clay is useful as a crutch for building. Do not, however, use this substance for mark making (unless you have officially made that part of your game).

field, the objects and each other. You may notice this point as having a palpable feeling or an increase in energy. There seems to be a reversal of initiative and the game instructs the player's move.



### **Defining the Rules**

Players should determine the format of the game. Most players begin with a clockwise rotation, each player taking a turn. One turn would involve either placing, moving or removing an object or making a mark. You may wish to experiment with non-sequential playing or simultaneous playing as you get more fluent with the game.

Marks and moves are slightly different in nature. A mark is permanent; a move is open to adjustment.

### **Playing the Game**

Then proceed as you have agreed. The players can agree upon talking or silence.

In the beginning of the game players may find frustrations arising. The initial stage of the game can seem dull or too deliberate. Bear with this part. Self-observation skills can be useful here. Eventually there does come a point of coalescence when the players come into relationship with the

The game is complete when you feel it has come to an organic completion.

### **Closing the Game**

After the game is complete by consensus the group should spend some time studying what they have created. When the group feels satisfied with this they can begin removing the pieces, one by one, in the same manner that they played the game. When all objects are removed the paper will stand alone with the marks.

### **Divination of the Field**

The paper should be placed on the wall and the group uses it as a focus for a dialogue. This part of the process is optional to the playing of the game. It can be very rewarding, however, in increasing the depth of understanding.

Theoretically, all of the information acquired during the Game is encoded in the traces left on the paper. This part of the process can include a recapitulation of the entire game and can be done at a later time.



# The History of the Stone Game

Leslie Schwing

“The Stone Game” evolved as a creative method of inquiry by friend, Janet Young and myself. We were on a self-styled retreat from the world, camping in a cottage by a river. Our “theme” for the retreat was ENERGIES. Janet and I were using many methods learned in our years of Gurdjieff Work and as usual, were inventing methods of our own as well. We would test these methods, and then take them back to try with our group.

This day we decided we would take a long walk holding our question, putting attention in our hands, and periodically stopping to read Gurdjieff’s book *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*. We were to collect, arbitrarily, whatever came into our path that captured our attention, as long as we could put it in our pockets. When we returned, several hours later, our pockets were full and we were still not satisfied with any answer to our question about how to understand energies.

We emptied our pockets onto a table outside, overlooking the river, and inspected our finds. We began separating them by categories (Janet is a scientist, and this was a logical place for her to begin). Then we began combining them (as an artist, this was my logical next step). Soon we were totally enveloped in a creative world where these objects had taken on a life of their own and were telling us a story. Our conversation during this accelerated period of the process naturally rekindled the initial inquiry of the day, and by moving the objects and through dialogue between the objects and us, we began to see into the idea of “Energies”.

After the sun set we reluctantly went inside to light the fire, leaving our little world behind us. It occurred to us, later by the fire, recapitulating our day (recapitulation being part of the process we used in these retreats) that our moments of genuine insight occurred as a result of the little game we had played with the sticks and stones. I had used a process of movement of objects earlier in my life, during my thesis days as Fine Arts student. In that time of my life I lived near the ocean, and would take daily collection walks, then arrange my findings in an empty room. The process of creating these ritualistic environments would stimulate the next painting in my thesis series. I used these temporary installations as idea generators.

Suddenly the long thought window opened and I again saw the connection again between creativity and the process of moving objects. It then occurred to us that perhaps we should formulate the process and try it again with the intention of creating a Game/Tool that we could use with others. The development of the finished form of the Stone Game was honed by many trials and experiments with our group and Bob Gerber, fellow experimenter. The addition of the “mark making” as part of the game structure evolved during this process.

This was the birth of the STONE GAME.

## Additional Notes on the Process by Bob Gerber

*This extract from Bob’s full description of the method adds significant information on how to enhance the **state** of those taking part. They expand on the preparatory phase of gathering the stones. Bob’s notes clearly indicate the value of spending time to ‘tune in’ to the information field described by Leslie.*

### 1. Collecting the Objects (Individuals)

#### a. Walking Meditation

- 1 The aim is to have your attention fully present to each part of each movement of lifting your foot and putting your foot down as you walk.
- 2 Say to yourself “Lifting” when raising a foot and “Putting” when placing the foot back down.
- 3 Like meditation on breath, you must continually redirect your attention when it strays away from attending to the lifting and putting.
- 4 You will find you will have to control your rate of walking so that you can be present to every smallest movement and moment. You will have to walk slower and you will have to monitor in each moment that your speed of movement does not take you beyond your capacity to maintain attention on the movement.

#### b. Doing a “Walking”

- 1 I worked this practice out when I had a health condition which made it



impossible for me to stay awake when doing quiet work sitting still. By experimenting, I discovered I could stay awake and do my practices if I walked in a particular way. We ended up calling this "doing a walking" in correspondence to "doing a sitting".

- 2 If I collected myself and contained my presence within a perimeter of a foot or so of my body I could keep contact with my feet and do practices while walking down a quiet street. I had to walk slowly enough to maintain a presence, but it was not as slow as is needed for walking meditation with its total focus on one thing.
- 3 I discovered that while doing this "walking" I could be aware of information and impressions coming in from around me while I kept my presence, energy and attention from flowing out to the environment from my concentrated field.

c. *Doing a Walking to collect objects*

- 1 The walking meditation will have established a collected and concentrated state.
- 2 Now, from that state, practice walking in such a way that you are continually keeping yourself within your own collected field, you are aware of your feet walking and you are receiving impressions from your environment.
- 3 Practice that for a few minutes and then go for a discovery walk.
- 4 Let things in your environment, your perceptual field, attract your attention. Let them find you.
- 5 If they fit the criteria for desired objects collect them.
- 6 Each person should collect between 10 and 15 objects.
- 7 They should generally be no bigger than can fit in a pocket, but exceptions will be made.
- 8 All-natural objects, and stones in particular, are desirable but only things that are too recognizable as man made objects will be excluded.

- 9 If this is not an enjoyable, experientially rich and slightly surprising process you probably aren't doing what is intended.

**2. Pooling the found objects and inspecting them** (going from "mine" to "ours") (teams)

- d. Bring all the found objects and put them, in no particular order, around the perimeter of the field of your team's playing area
- e. Take a few minutes to look at them all

## Logo Visual Technology, the Stone Game and Dialogue

The process of the Stone Game corresponds in its form to the basic stages of LVT. The three stages of LVT are:

*Gathering* – generate, express and collect together items of meaning

*Organizing* – use these items to make clusters or organised groups that emerge as representing new ideas

*Understanding* – construct and reveal the total pattern for reflection and dialogue

The corresponding stages of the Stone Game are:

*Gather* the stones and have them ready for use

*Construct* meanings out of them by assembly, movement and marking

*Eliminate* the stones to reveal the pattern of marks for review and dialogue

Both methods can also use an *initiating question* to start the process. In the case of the Stone Game, this question is kept at the back of the mind while in LVT it is kept to the front. It is more than extraordinary that two independently conceived methods should so coincide, especially when one is based on words and dialogue and the other on the non-verbal and silent.

As both Leslie and Bob describe, the gathering process can be quite extensive and meditative. In the Stone Game it is literally a gathering, picking up stones as one walks. In the standard LVT process, it is a matter of gathering thoughts, memories, etc. and also expressing these in words as discrete statements.

In the Stone Game, people always work together to build their patterns, organizing the array of stones and marks as they go. They work with the whole field of display. In standard LVT, where we are using written statements as the elements, the process is mediated by having to make clusters of elements as separate units. Usually, the only mark to be added is a circle to circumvent each group of elements as a unity.

It is fascinating that the Stone Game includes a stage of *removing* all the stones from the board, leaving only the marks. This corresponds closely with the step from stage 2 to stage 3 of standard LVT. In this step, we take away the content of the clusters to leave only their names. But, at this point, we are also free to move these new elements about in relation to each other.

The closeness of form between the Stone Game and LVT leads us to suggest that the Stone Game be considered as an example of logovisual technology. It also leads us to appreciate the fundamental nature of the *intrinsic complementarity* inherent in such methods.

They begin by gathering into a space a set of *discrete* units that has *minimum order*. They end with a pattern of *continuity* that has *maximum order*.

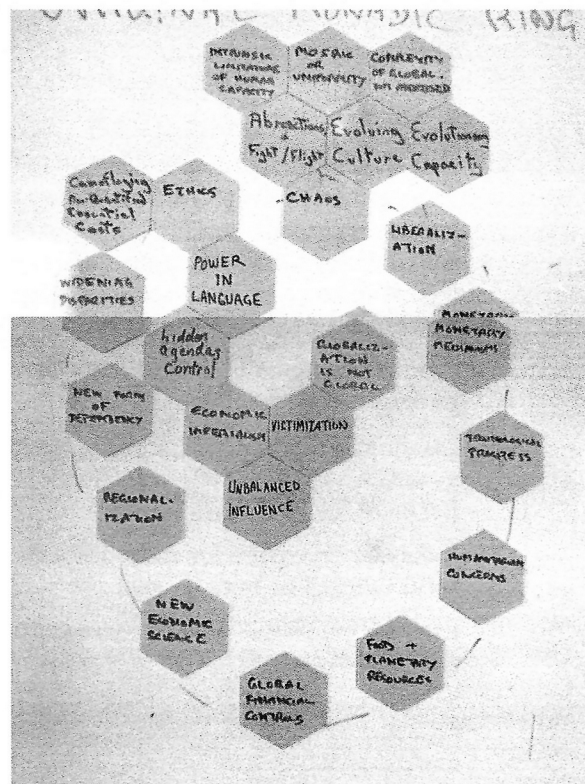
A French mathematician, Françoise Chatelin, has represented these as symbolic of the two great theories of physics – quantum mechanics and relativity. Indeed, we would seriously claim that these methods are cosmological.

In both the Stone Game and LVT, there is a suggestion of *dialogue* in the Bohmian sense of ‘moving through meaning’, but there is one important difference between these methods and dialogue in its raw sense of talking together without agenda or *anything tangible* such as writing or use of objects. In dialogue there is no public display of the items to be used as the ‘currency’ of the exchange and, consequently, there is no restriction of the exchange to use of predetermined ‘pieces’. Interestingly, having a public display of the elements of meaning that are to be used – *and nothing else* – means that everyone is on the same footing. Such ‘leveling’ is taken to be an integral property of a dialogue group and has been emphasised as such by Patrick de Mare. Yet there do not exist any tools to enable this to happen easily

and, in fact, there is an explicit rejection of the use of any such tools.

The restriction of people to using an agreed set of pieces would seem to be essential if they are to be able to participate together in playing a game. It also provides a powerful means of ‘containment’, which means that psychic energy can build.

In the earlier form of LVT known as *structural communication*, students began from a pre-existing set of items, represented in a random array. They then selected from this set a sub-set they would bring together as a group to answer a question posed to them. Between the combinations of items they chose and the meaning the student sees in them is a special kind of ‘gap’. It was in this gap that the understanding of the student grew, partly through a diagnostic exchange with material generated by a ‘tutor’. If we move this into an arena where free exchange between students is possible we begin to approximate to the conditions of not only LVT but also the Stone Game. At any one time, a player will be concentrating on just one aspect of the total design, but the process leads to convergence.



Logovisual Pattern of Ideas



**Being Takes Flight**  
**The Feathered Sculpture of Virgil Walker**  
*Allen Roth*

At first glance, Virgil Walker's sculpture seems to be the offspring of an old tradition, but when we rummage through our memories or our art books, we draw a blank. No term seems to exist for this art form, other than 'feather art', perhaps - which leaves us no wiser. A few unrelated candidates of 'feather art' come to mind: Native American raiment, capes, shields and other such vestments of power, wisdom or royalty; various fetishes; fans, boas, god's eyes and, yes, hippy jewelry. We might recall an odd piece of flatwork we once saw, carried back from some remote island or mountain village.

Surely the creations of this Arizona artist are the culmination of some well-established artistic medium: yet the closer we look, the more their complete originality becomes obvious.

These convincing cross-blends of man and bird confront us, like spirits peering out from the mouths of huge, fantastic flowers. As first-time onlookers

not sure of what we are seeing, we ask ourselves: *Is this painting or sculpture? Those are real feathers? Well, then, what on earth do you suppose is underneath?* Our eyes wandering over the surfaces from different angles are drawn at last into the dark hollows of its gaze: *It is a mask!* - we realize.

The fusion of bird and human is complete in Walker's series of free standing figures, *homo sapiopteryx*, if you will, with winged arms outspread to the sun, or folded in repose and introspection. These creatures, too, are hollow eyed, embodying the visible and invisible - or being and nothingness.

The skills of a jeweler, fabric maker, tapestry weaver, metal smith and/or enamellist are on display in the construction of every piece. Walker has the naturalist's eye for organic asymmetry, the beautiful accidents and flaws of nature. His adroit arrangement of natural materials compares with great naturalist-artists like Andy Goldsworthy. As a designer Walker undoubtedly could stake his claim, in architecture, fashion, even hair styling - if he had the inclination and the time. On the matter of time, he is frequently asked, "How much time does it take you to make one of these?" "Most of it," he replies.

So what exactly *are* we seeing? The artist finally composed a definition that has served him well enough: *Feathered sculpture in a mask motif*. The product in a nutshell, perhaps; but I only began to appreciate how much of a multi-tasked process this is, by seeing this artist at work.

-----  
Here is Walker: in dungaree shirt and cut-offs, glasses perched on the end of his nose, smoke curling from his Marlboro. All around him are sortings from his stores of plumage, to be washed, groomed, pruned, clipped, and individually placed just so. A polished granite work station of his own design, with adjustable steel column and armature for supporting his full figures. At his left, a tall velvet easel on which a mask in progress hangs, flooded by task lights. To his right, a long work bench covered with cutting instruments, dentist's tools, glue guns; paper plates with thumb-nail sized clippings, metallic green scales, wisps of red like pinstriper's brushes, bundles of stripped quills, soft curling plumes; stacks of books, pens and pencils, ash tray, phone messages.

Facing the mask on the easel, Walker is squeezing a pinhead size drop from his glue gun,



onto the stem of a tiny yellow spray, and sets it into the bright aureole forming between the eyes.

"Nature has done most of the work already," he says. "My work mainly is to rearrange nature's designs into human expressions - or rather, to express the forces *behind* those expressions."

Psychologists are often drawn to Walker's creations. A full female figure in glass case greets the clientele of one analyst's waiting room. Masks hang in physicians' offices. They have a soothing, rejuvenating effect on their patients, they say.

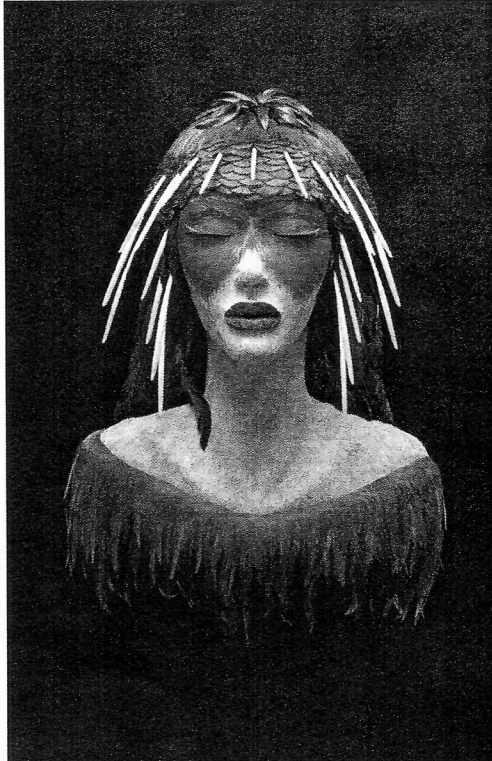
An old friend of the artist, in the last stages of cancer, asked him for a particular mask to be hung at the foot of her bed. It helped her, she said, to confront the dying process as she would want - not in defeat, but with determination.

His patrons often see something of themselves, perhaps their best part, or some virtue which their secret self aspires to. Sometimes they see their devils. A one-time customer who came to Walker's studio, reputedly a shady character, was struck as if by lightning when his eyes fell on a mask which, he later admitted, reflected back to him his own doubtful self. He left the room and stood outside alone for some time, smoking incessantly. To Walker's surprise he returned, and paid him for the mask.

The end of this story is pure *Dorian Gray*: the buyer took his mask to a remote ranch house he owned, and hung it outside on a porch post, letting the merciless Arizona summers gradually leach the life out of it.

The masks on the wall are slightly larger than human scale, conferring on the viewer the perspective of a child looking up at an adult. The overall dimensions of a Walker mask varies considerably: the more consolidated, medallion-like faces are two feet or more in diameter; others which fan out in kaleidoscopic starbursts can measure as much as four or five feet across their long axis.

At the far corner stands a waist high pedestal, usually surmounted by a new bust or full figure, but presently piled with open books, and graphed notepads covered with cryptic journal entries, to-do lists, and stray thoughts and aphorisms joined together by deft ink sketches and diagrams.



job protection doesn't,  
insurance isn't, wanting  
won't  
only doing does  
ignorance is the shadow of  
concentration  
Value based on rock only  
survives in a context of  
liquid-solid flux  
(there aren't many fat  
bellied rockers though)  
I remember when I was  
young enough to wonder  
what paradox meant.

Walker's journal seems to be a record of provocative musings on life in general: existence, choice, fate - all the big questions. "Debris," he calls them. His own profession as artist is a daily concern and cause for much reflection. A warrior-like discipline shows up in a number of entries, as it does in a number of pieces.

What is an artist?

Someone who stands in one place a long time.

I rise from the dirt daily, blink and stare.

Still here. What'll I wear?

What'll I do? What'll I be?

What'll be food for me?

Will I do what I do the way I did?

As a business I'm little, marginal, and therefore timid.

I've had less success in chasing success than gluing feathers and answering the phone.

*Less success in chasing success*: true, perhaps. Nevertheless, Virgil Walker has earned accolades during his former career from a number of public officials, including the Dean of Education at Arizona State University, who in the early 1980s



described Walker to his graduate students as the most effective teacher of youths he ever met.

This began in the early 70s, when he and a psychologist friend from his college days transformed the local school district's opportunity hall program into an educational facility for juvenile offenders. As director of studies, Walker devised a program emphasizing self-reliance and self-initiation, based on another, year-long experiment in adult education in which he took part, in England, 1971-1972. The school was founded by author-philosopher J. G. Bennett, who compressed a mix of psychological ideas and methods of self-study, group dynamics and practical work, with considerable attention paid to dancing and movement. It, too, was a round-the-clock training program, lasting ten months with but one break over Christmas, inspiring much of Walker's own innovative program for getting teen offenders, girls and boys, to stand on their own feet. Special training for staff councilors included exercises for sustaining attention, notably by executing series of physical movements, in time with their own signature piano accompaniment. The corpus of these movements, or dances, if you will, came from far flung vestiges of ancient esoteric traditions across central Asia, Tibet, the Near East and Africa.

Eventually Walker introduced these routines to the young residents. A number of them took the movements very seriously and practiced them daily under his tutelage for years. Having youth's boundless energy and single-minded drive, they eventually held annual public demonstrations of these exacting, complex routines, attended by the press and dignitaries, including the aforementioned ASU Dean of Education, who brought along his inner circle of graduate students. Later on, two or three of these students themselves attended several weeks of movements practices. "And after *Number Eleven - Lord Have Mercy*," says Walker, "there wasn't a dry eye in the house."

Some of his students from back in the 70s and early 80s stay in touch. One big, lanky kid who has since become a successful insurance salesman, recently called him to ask, "Where did those things *come* from, Virgil! There is nothing I've found outside of those sessions that has made such an impact on my life!" A few of Walker's full figures duplicate postures from these dances.

The notebook continues:

Where do you get your feathers?  
Does their origin raise conflicts in your mind?  
Good. Art should.  
Birds grew them right out of their skin, like the hair on your arms.  
The personal histories of individual birds and their families I don't know. I don't know how or why particular types of bird are assigned the status of poultry. But as an artist I decided to use the feathers of this group because of its connection with my 'audience,' human beings.

"The feathers come exclusively," says Walker, "from that class of birds raised or hunted for human consumption." This limited selection of species provides him an infinite palette of color, shape and texture. One face may be sheathed skin tight, or embossed like hammered metal; another bursts upon the surrounding space like fireworks; the next, a moon-enraptured face of combed down, taken from the shackles of a ring-necked pheasant.

When asked if he or his work is Native American, Virgil gets that mischievous glint and says, "I'm pretty confident of it: my dad's people come down from the original Jamestown settlers." Born and raised in Flagstaff by his Mormon mother, and an outdoorsman father who held the golden gloves titles in six Midwestern states, Virgil himself evolved from a bespectacled nerd into a street-tough youth who early on showed remarkable artistic promise. As a policeman in his early twenties, he often parked his patrol car on lookout points above Flagstaff to paint the dawn breaking over the mountains, - occasionally checking with his partner what color was on the end of his brush (as, to the amazement of everyone who meets him, Virgil is partly color-blind). His years as a law enforcement officer coincided with the civil and psychological upheaval of the 1960s. "When you're called Pig and get spit on a few times, it leaves a bad taste in the mouth."

This self-driven, self taught young man eventually quit the force to pursue an education degree. He became drawn into a circle of hard-working disciples of a grizzly genius professor named Goyette, Doctor of Mathematics and Philosophy, who plunged his students headlong into German metaphysics and esoteric psychologies East and West. Goyette's classes were notoriously demanding, often with an enrollment of seventy

whittled down to twenty survivors after just two weeks. "Now this is about the right size," he would say, delving into the first of fifteen or so books required for his class. Between his class load, Virgil worked two jobs to support a growing family, discovering he could subsist on two or three hours of sleep a day for months at a time.

He was young then: now he sleeps in stints, between two eight-hour work sessions per day. No time off. He has an all-or-nothing regard for what he does with his time: which is fortunate, as the art form he has developed takes most of his waking hours and all his patience. There are too many exacting little techniques to master, for any forgeries of his work to appear on the market. He sometimes wishes for an apprentice, to carry this full-blown art form forward.

The subject of his art has always been the human interior; and his search for the right name for each work is often grueling. What is your hidden virtue? he asks of his mask. What ageless state of being animates you?

"This coexistence of bird nature and human nature," says Virgil while he continues feathering, "is my method for depicting the nature of mind.

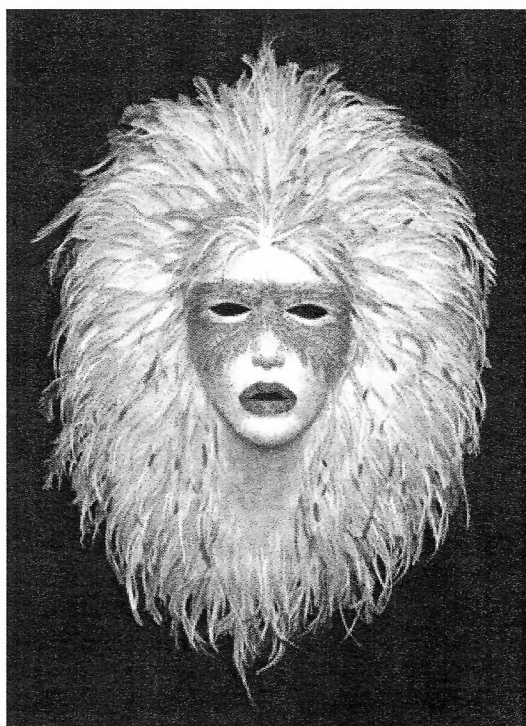
"I saw how easy it was for me to leave therapy, with years of looking out exclusively for the good and welfare and nourishment of my patients, and then turning to selling real estate - and quite successfully, I should add. I now saw myself sizing up everyone I met, according to their potential net worth. With both of these modes of will side by side in my mind, I came to see in the bird's anatomy not just an image of evolutionary freedom, but of the more predatory and single-purposed aspects of our nature, so well represented by the beak and talon."

His early blends of man and bird were more ornithomorphic, with beaked nose, carapaced brow, hawk-like glare. Later he found himself able to move more toward the humanoid, without losing

the birdlike qualities he was after. An equal balance is struck between the two natures in his new piece, *Stands Between* (see insert), where the head and wings of a falcon fold around a rugged male face, converting seamlessly into a hooded cloak. A guardian of the hearth.

Virgil motions me over to the other side of the room, his living space. He unstraps his knee brace (an old motorcycle injury) and hoists his leg onto the recliner. I sink myself into a cushy leather coach. "One more mask to name," he says, then points. The brow and cheeks of the mask are gold spangles edged in black; her smooth pallid face surrounded in a curly froth of snow-white emu. "Wu Chi," he offers, after a suitable pause.

"That sounds about right," I confirm. "Now what does it mean?" Virgil remembers studying under a master of Tai Chi, who once told his students that he did not teach, nor were they learning, Tai Chi. "Tai Chi," the teacher explained, "simply means the teaching, or the path, of Tai; that is, of a man who lived and taught many years before any of you were born. It is Wu Chi I teach: the path that emerges from the center of one's being."



The idea seems to fit all right. Her expression manages to express both self possession and open-mouthed awe, as if to show that self awareness renews the sense of wonder. (Please to add, by the way, that Wu Chi is drop-dead beautiful.)

Gallery patrons circle around Walker at his work station, while he draws the neck feathering toward the upstretched chin of his new full figure, a ruby and grey changeling, wings arching in nubile, compound curves. In finding a name for her, he tells one of them, he has been reading up on the Greek furies, the *Erinyes* or goddesses of vengeance, who in their benevolent aspect symbolize the light of conscience. The customer nods his head meditatively, then asks him how much time it takes. "Most of it," says Walker.

## A PLAYSHOP FAIRY TALE

This story, a kind of personal fairy story, with the collages that suggest and support the tale, illustrate the work done on a 'playshop' with Dr. Edith Wallace that took place in August of 2002. It was written to be read out loud to the group. These 'playshops' usually run for 5 days, during which time we use simple art materials to "build channels to the depths of the psyche, to what Jung calls the Self." As part of the program there is daily meditation, movement, creating images and group processing of the images created by the participants. This kind of work draws upon Jung's idea of active imagination and Dr. Wallace's involvement with J.G. Bennett and other great teachers. Dr. Wallace, who is 93, and still practicing Jungian analysis, lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is an active supporter of The DuVersity, which sponsors her playshops and recently published her new book, "How It All Began and How It Continued: No End!" This is available on our website via the publications section. The story and collages were created by Karen Stefano. *Please note that the collages have had to be reduced and turned into gray for purposes of this newsletter, so much of the detail of visual information is lost.*

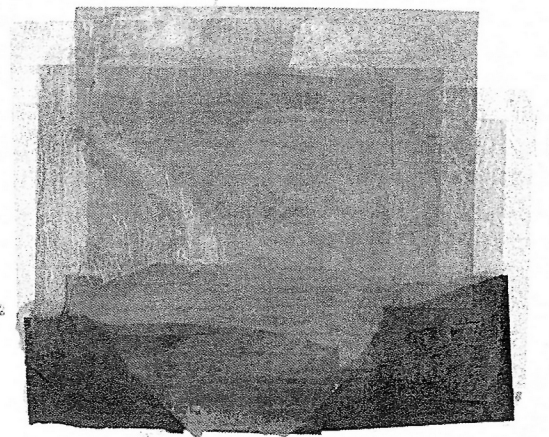
### The Story

Looking out my window I watch the hummingbird drinking nectar from the orange-golden blossoms of the trumpet vine. This ethereal delicate creature turns from the flower and flies over to the window where I watch....it flies directly to where I stand and hovers at my eye level. We gaze into each other's eyes. I become immersed in hummingbird consciousness.

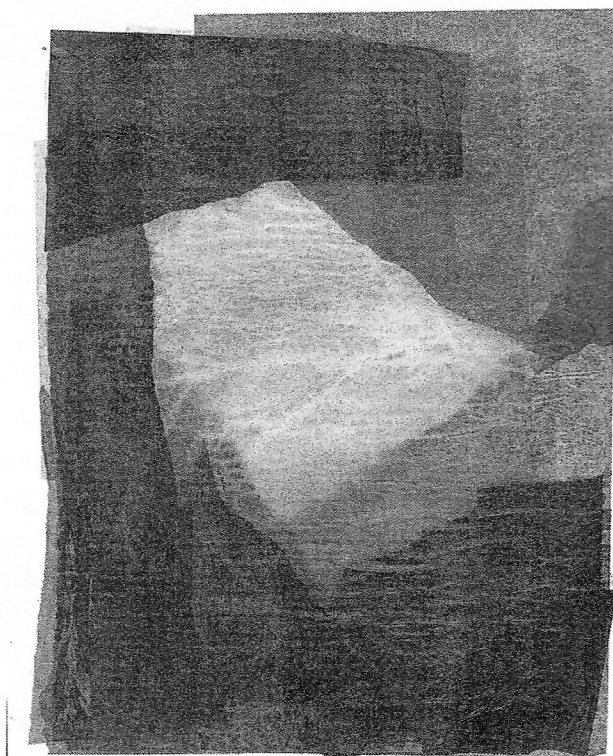
The Worlds shifts, scene change: August 2, 2002...1002...1000BC...2000BC...3500BC. I have been sleeping for 5000 years. I lay in my tomb. My body is frozen. Yet, consciousness comes in and out. I wait patiently for resurrection. I am alone dreaming my life. It is a good life fraught with turbulence, uncertainty, creativity and love. I notice a beam of light has entered my tomb. The golden beam hits me. A bolt of lightning bursts forth. I am up and running. I feel exhilaration, excitement, soon I will see the sun, moon, stars, breath air, see flowers, eat delicious foods, see my children, friends, make love.



**Dr. Edith Wallace in a collage viewing session**



**A golden beam hits me in my tomb**



**A bolt of lightning bursts forth**



Horus, son of Ra, manifestation of God on earth, sits at the entrance way to my life or maybe some other world. I approach him. I am not afraid. He devours me; I surrender and am eaten, knowing soon to be reborn.

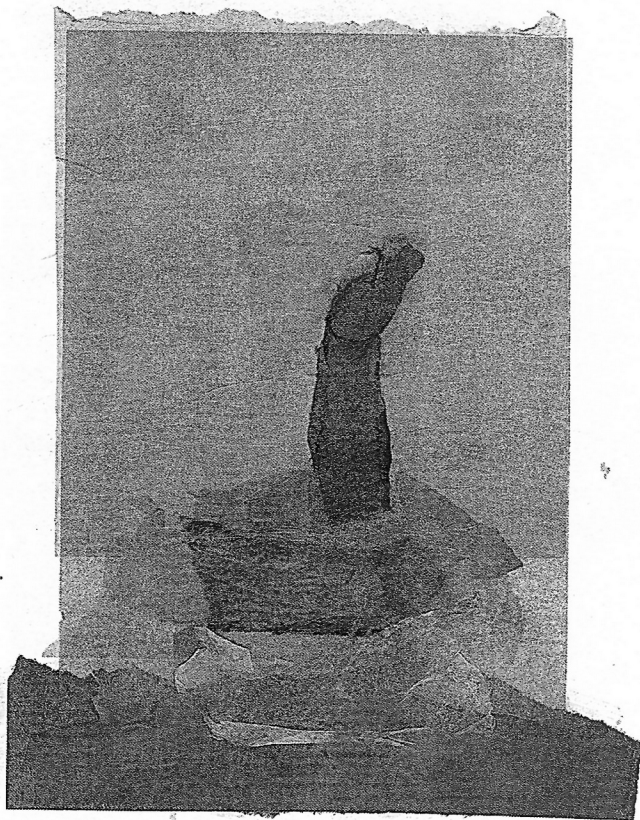
I live in Horus's belly yearning to be released praying to Ra. I wonder when the time comes what will happen. Time passes, 3500BC, 2000BC, 1000BC, 1000AD, August 3, 2002. Horus vomits me out through a crack in the worlds, escorted by a hummingbird. I return aglow thankful for sensate life, feeling my heart beat, breathing in and out, seeing my beloved world, earth. I walk through the landscape ready to join with my friends. I am not what I was before my encounter with the hummingbird. Something has been brought together, cooked in the belly of Horus. I join with friends to work towards a more meaningful and peaceful time. I pray for the future and to the Creator.



**Horus sits at the entrance to some other world**



**He devours me!**



**I pray for the future and to the Creator**



**Horus vomits me out through a crack in the worlds**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

*Some of these days are provisional, so please check with the registrar for confirmation and location.*

### 2003

**Video-conversations** UK March 1-12

**DuVersity Board Retreat** March 28-30

**Working Group** Italy April 30-May 4

**Gathering IV** Systematics, West Virginia, May 16-18

**Solstice Expedition** Peru with William Sullivan June 14-26

**Playshop** with Edith Wallace in Santa Fe, July 11-16

**Working Group** in Lynchburg, Virginia, August 4-10

**Working Group** in Mexico City, early September

**Working Group** in Seattle, September

**Working Group** UK October

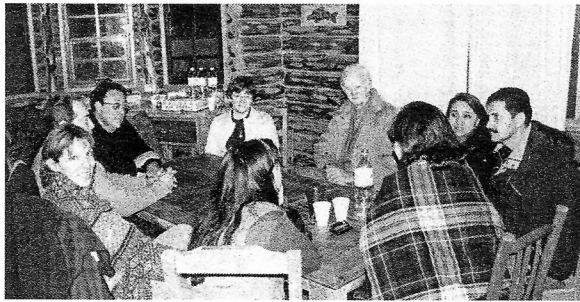
**Working Group** West Virginia, December 3-7

### 2004

**Anatomy of Peace** Seminar-dialogue March 19-21

## SOME RECENT EVENTS

**Working Group** Monterey, Mexico, Nov. 22-24



**Dialogue group in Mexico (cold conditions!)**

We met in a retreat center in the mountains, doing movements and collage in a chapel. The dialogue sessions were striking in how rapidly people engaged with passion and yet were able to hold themselves together. The group spontaneously articulated the all-important insight that we now do not need to be taught through any ideology or system but to learn how to learn together with each other.

**Working Group** West Virginia, December 4-8

Most of this group had had considerable experience over some years with the Working Group Process and the experience was of a maturing realization of the interconnections of the various methods. We are now beginning to address the issue of how the Process affects us in ordinary life.

**Playshop** Santa Fe, December 19-23

During this time, participants continued their quest for a deeper knowing of themselves and the world around them. Dr. Wallace continues to be a source of inspiration and facilitation of creativity and change.

## PUBLICATIONS

**How It All Began and How It Continued: No End!** By Edith Wallace

This delightful book shows results of Edith's long-term work on Tissue Paper Collage

*At the printers and in the pipeline are a number of titles recently written or revised.*

**An Index to 'In Search of the Miraculous'** by Anthony Blake

This revised edition is the best available guide to Ouspensky's enormously influential book

**Globalization and Higher Systems** by Anthony Blake

This is the extensive report on the Systematics Gathering III and includes new material on the higher systems as well as incorporating principles of TRIZ and other creative methodologies

**The Monad, The Dyad, The Triad** by Anthony Blake

These are revised editions of the essays first published some years ago, representing the 'worldviews' of these systems and adding material on their application.

*In preparation*

**Structures of Meaning** by Anthony Blake

A new and revised edition with two new chapters on the ways by which we can 'think together', including both open-ended dialogue and structured processes.

**Working Group**

A short compendium on the septenary method used in this unique approach to learning.

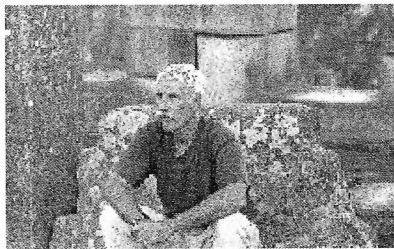
# JUNE 2003 SOLSTICE EXPEDITION

## Archaeoastronomical Mysteries in South America

WITH WILLIAM SULLIVAN

*The ancient Hindus called the Milky Way 'The Bed of the Ganges', and the Egyptian Pharaohs sailed in golden barques down the Nile, in anticipation of the after-life journey across the Milky Way. The Andean peoples participated in the ancient geomantic tradition of rendering terrestrial space sacred by conceiving it as a template of the sky.*

*Beginning with a visit to Lake Titicaca, the spiritual center of Andean civilization, on to Cuzco the capital of the Inca Empire and through the Sacred Valley from PISAQ to the fabled site of Macchu Picchu and the stunning June solstice sunrise over the Pyramid of Ollantaytambo, we will travel a trajectory through time and sacred space that is the equivalent of a symbolic sojourn along the Milky Way.*



Dr. William Sullivan, author of *Secret of the Incas: Myth Astronomy, and the War Against Time,*

has agreed to guide a DuVersity tour in Peru. He was featured in a Channel 4 documentary seen in the UK and Europe. Bill has researched the astronomical knowledge of early South America and made new discoveries. He was greatly influenced by the book *Hamlet's Mill* written by de Santillana and von Dechend in the 1960s, which claimed that all early cultures across the planet shared in an understanding of cosmic cycles linked to human history. Such knowledge may date back 10,000 years and came to include astronomical knowledge, particularly as regards the precession of the equinoxes, a cycle of almost 26,000 years, whose discovery brought about a revolution in human thinking, since it revealed that even the heavens were not unchanging. Bill was able to show that the same tradition of knowledge was known in South America.

Amongst the sites to be explored is the so-called *Sacred Valley of the Incas* that seems to have been worked to depict astronomical objects and knowledge on a very large scale. Among these objects is a pyramid of a form previously unknown. A sixty kilometer stretch of the Urubamba was in effect sculpted to resemble the celestial river in the

sky, the Milky Way. As in recent archaeological research in Africa, it is beginning to be realized that there may well be massive remains of ancient knowledge that have simply not been noticed until now.

**JUNE 2003 SOLSTICE EXPEDITION - Archaeoastronomical Mysteries in South America** is sponsored and organized by the DuVersity. Cultural Immersion Travel will be acting as our facilitator.

The cost of the trip is estimated at \$ 4,200 including airfare

If you wish to book your own airline reservations the cost of the trip as listed above will be \$3200.



**Saturday, 14th US / Bolivia**

**Sunday, 15th La Paz**

**Monday, 16th: La Paz / Lake Titicaca/  
Tihuanaco / Copacabana**

**Tuesday, 17th Copacabana/Islands of  
the Sun and Moon / Puno**

**Wednesday, 18th Puno / Raqchi / Cuzco**

**Thursday, 19th Cuzco**

**Friday, 20th Cuzco/Sacred Valley**

**Saturday, 21st Ollantaytambo/ Solstice**

**Sunday, 22nd Ollantaytambo / Machu  
Picchu**

**Monday, 23rd Machu Picchu**

**Tuesday, 24th Machu Picchu / Cuzco**

**Wednesday, 25th Cuzco/Lima/US**

**Thursday, 26th Miami / Personal  
Destinations**