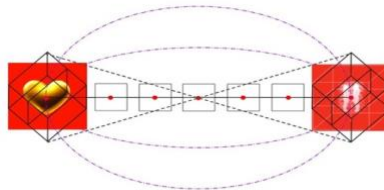




Unveiling the Cup

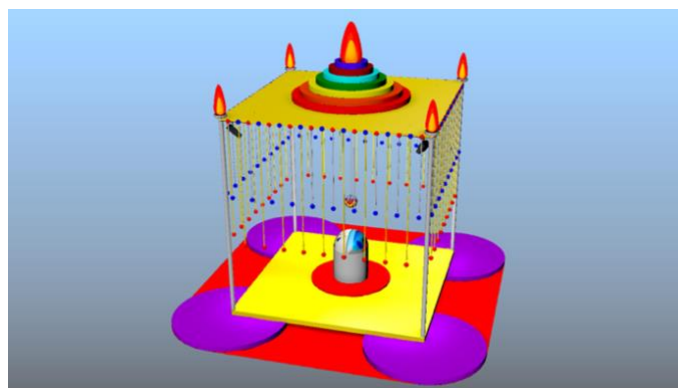
3. The *Nodal Partners* & the *Virtual Matrix*

The *Meeting in the Cave* artwork does not necessarily display a doctrinal system; its contents, processes, and phenomena are drawn from direct experience taking stock of knowledge and empirical wisdom. It is an opera, an *opus*, a work, a production, a future-oriented artwork designed to amplify awareness of the global shift underway, to enact the transition of the collective intelligence of the community and forge the emerging creative consciousness to a higher order within a specific operational area, whether local or nonlocal, imaginary, aesthetical, or topographical as in the case in point, on the territory. The selected urban area displays the sevenfold paradigm in seven nodes, the *Nodal Partners*, on a straight line across the city, with the Royal Couple, namely, the *Eye* and the *Cave* split polarities, synchronic yet displaced respectively at the centre and at the periphery. That is to say, the input and output endpoints of a downward and an upward toroidal spiral flow converging and meeting on the *meso* plane of manifestation between the *eso* and the *exo*, aligning in the process the intervening nodal points and shaping up the neural system of the work.



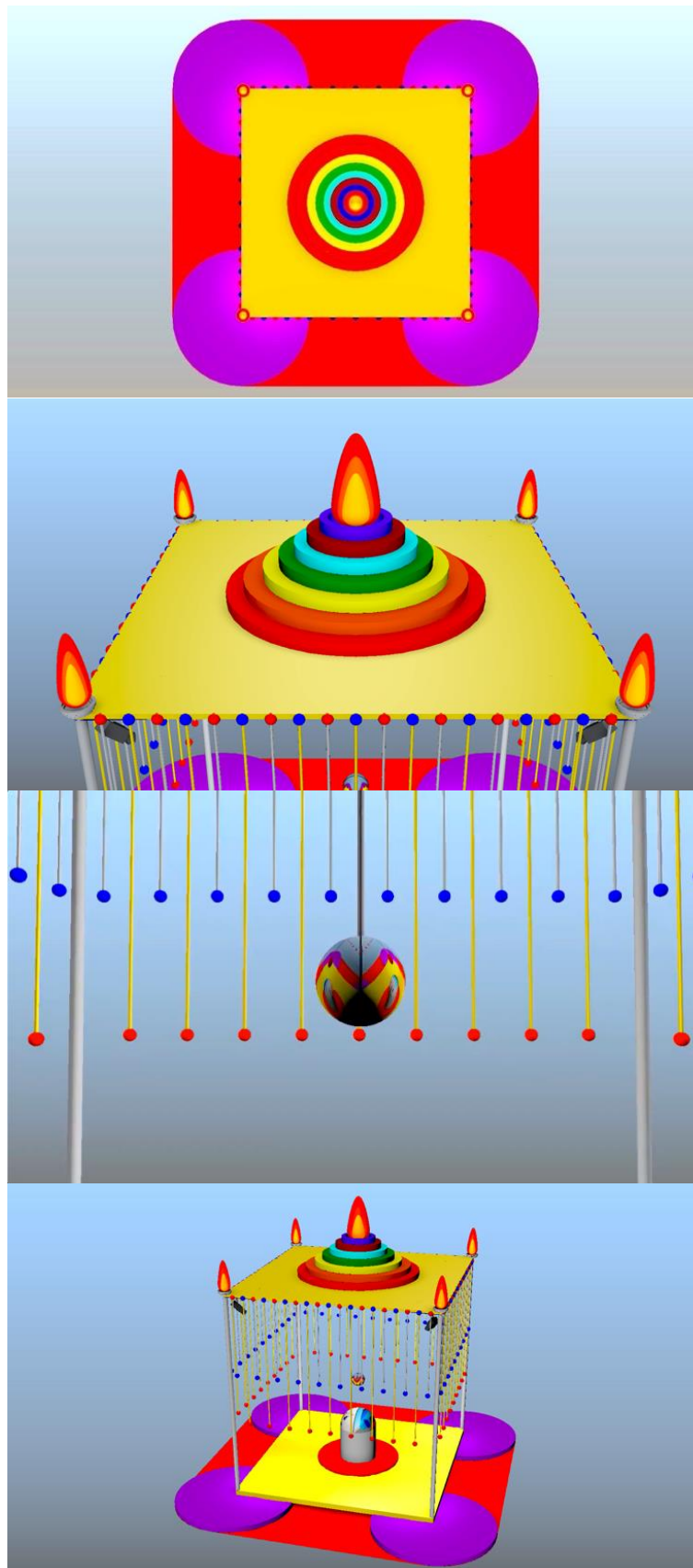
The Nodal Partners are data transceivers, seven specific cultural bodies within the chosen area actively involved with their constituents in the work. Each Nodal Partner flags an insignia related to a dimension of consciousness, to a musical note, chakra, etc. On a different plane of reference and of consciousness, their interaction ignites the collective intelligence of the *Meeting in the Cave* equation embracing duality in unity, sharing awareness into the tangible and the intangible, the visible and the invisible foresight of the *Eye* metaspace in a wave bending the spacetime continuum to a higher, finer world. Metaphysical, or post-metaphysical flight? Beyond the meta?

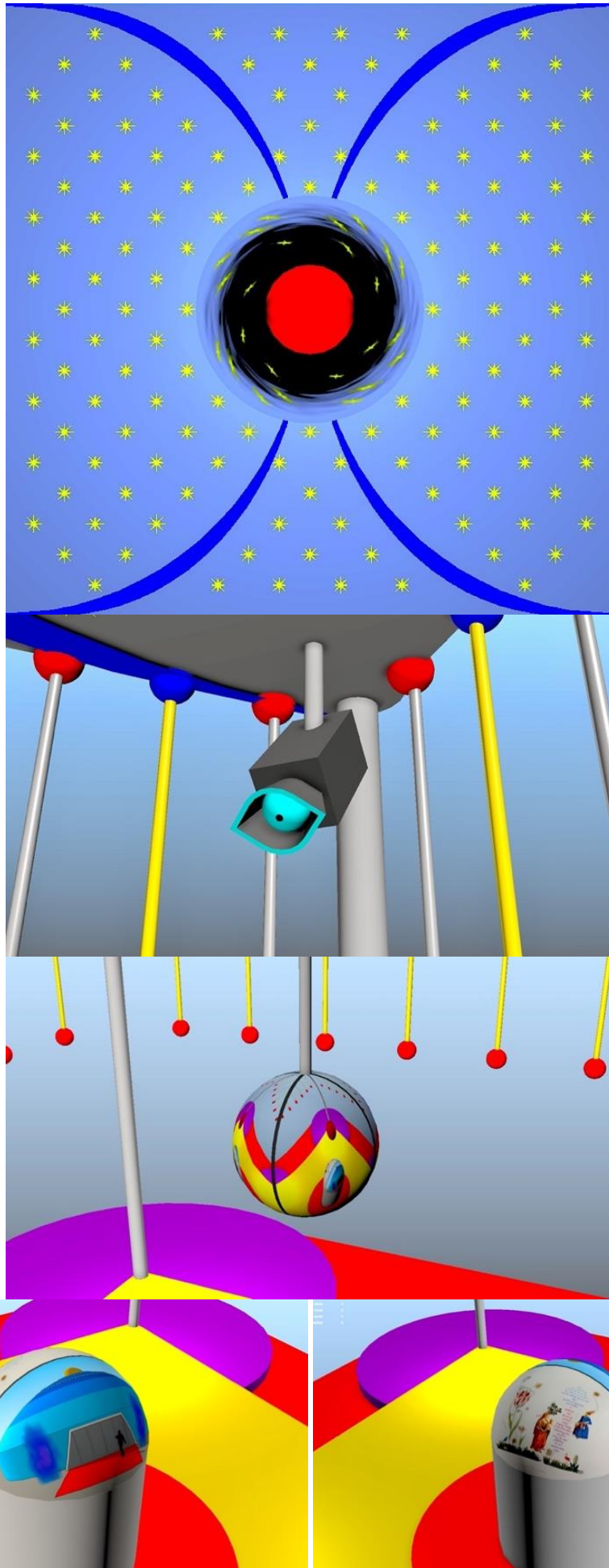
Within each Nodal Partner's operational field there is a *Virtual Matrix*, a metaspace transcending the ordinary physical realm, attuned to the threshold rate between the 4th and the 5th degree of the sevenfold paradigm. It includes the mono-dimensional, the bi-, and the three-dimensional domains, the time-space continuum, cyberspace and hyperspace, and the fifth-multidimensional multiverses. Similarly the exoskeleton manifesting the *Meetings with Remarkable Women* artist's book, the *Red Book*, on its medial plane in the *Eye*, and the three-layered stage in the *Cave* venue, the Virtual Matrix rests on the triadic *Matrix*, marrying the higher and the lower into one single sensory middle outcome on the liminal self-reflexive consciousness. A teleportal to another plane of reality, another dimension, with a far-sighted outlook onto the unknown.



[The Virtual Matrix - Watch video.](#)

On the territory, the Virtual Matrix is a customised 6 x 6 x 6 m self-contained stage set, with a fourfold red carpet defining its thresholds at the four cardinal points, enclosing the area within four violet dishes, violet as with the carpet at the *Eye's* omega-shaped entrance, squaring a golden ground with four pillars at the corners rising the cubic virtual space. At the centre of the golden land, the *exo* masculine face of the matrix is a phallus, a lingam, a pillar half-split at the top: on one half, it screens clips from the *Cave 3.0* narrative; on the other, it displays the *Lectori benevolo* first page of the *Red Book* depicting the bidimensional Royal Couple in their colourful garments.





The area is equipped with an eye-shaped video camera at each upper end of the perimetral columns. Atop the columns, the *eso* feminine face, the cosmic yoni is a silver starred ceiling with a faux-vault fixed in the middle by a black hole wrapping in itself a red pearl twinning the unstable pearl beneath the *Red Book* in the *Eye*. Released from the inflamed gem at the intersection of the *mundis* and *eventis* axes, a spheric monitor reveals the squint angular takes of the eye-shaped cameras mixed with imageries fed by the other virtual metaspaces, randomly elaborated in real-time by a self-asserting algorithm. From the four upper sides of the ceiling, silver and golden alternate threads with blue and red marble endings drape a four-folded threshold between the inner and the outer metaspaces. The blue marbles mark the middle plane of reflection of the matrix; the reds, wind up at the golden section's longest segment (3,70 m).

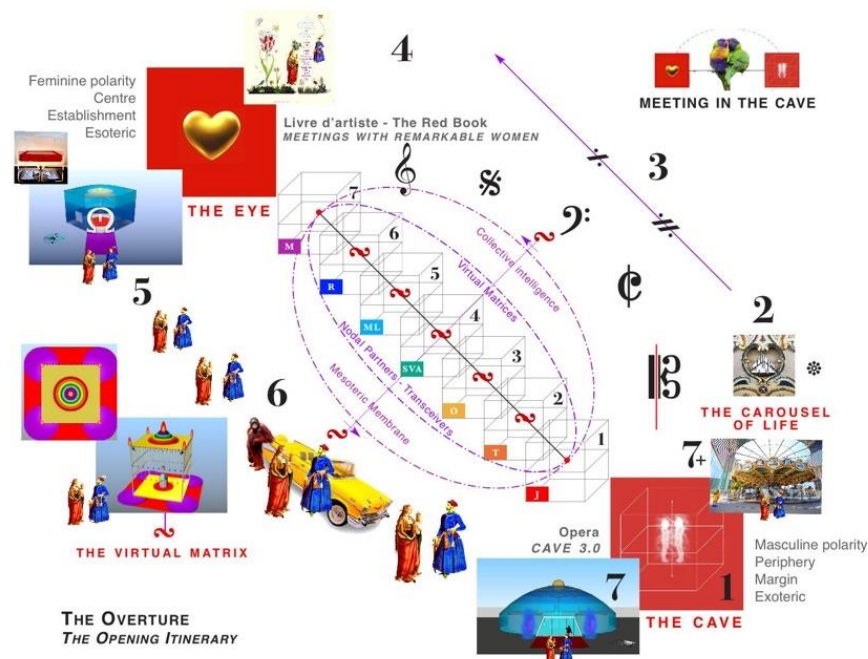
Above the ceiling, at each corner of the roof, a glowing flare. In the middle, opposite the black hole beneath, the concave *cavea* in the *Cave* venue and the flat one on the *Eye*'s ceiling, is here convex with seven coloured dishes piled in decreasing breadth crowned by a flame burning the highest register of the metaspaces into infinity. All mental and emotional constructs.

There are seven Virtual Matrix altogether: five located at the Nodal Partners between the *Eye* and the *Cave* outlining the *axis mundi* on the territory; and two *extra muros*, at the ubiquitous endpoints of the biographic orthogonal *axis eventis*.

* * *

THE STRUCTURAL LAYOUT

OVERTURE – “*The Eye & the Cave*”. The overture/opening itinerary is performed at the inauguration and each of the subsequent weekends of the 21-day long performance. The city is the set. The severed Royal Couple, the two polarities of the narrative, perform the Overture within the selected urban area, enacting their explorative journey of awareness on the ladder of consciousness from the *Eye* at the city centre to the *Cave* at the periphery.



On the Spring Equinox, when day and night are balanced over the world and the Sun peaks at the equator to mark the beginning of a new season, on the planet Earth spinning around the Sun at the edge of the Orion Arm of the Milky Way, a new cycle is kicking in. A time of change, of healing, of letting go of individual and collective ashes of past burnings, and of rejoicing the end of a global illness making way for a higher awareness sequencing time to a fresh beat of consciousness.

The work begins in the *Cave* metaspaces: from the *Cave* venue, the sound equipment sends the initial reverberation of the 7 *Variation on a theme* score to the MIDI controller of the barrel-organ automaton at the core of the nearby merry-go-round *Carousel of Life*, informing its punched cards to blow the pipes, execute the theme and take the lead.

While two nebular Guardians of the Threshold holograms, with two drones each hovering above emerge slowly from thin-air at the venue entrance, the theme is aired in a loop to each Virtual Matrix and, upon reaching the end-point of the sevenfold paradigm at the city centre, it signals the formal opening of the *Eye* omega-shaped doorway, facing West, heralding the beginning of the vernissage. On the violet carpet, functioning as Guardians of the Threshold, the Royal Couple, embodied by two actors in the same attire of their *Lectori benevolo* bidimensional fellows, are offering to the convened guests access to spontaneous fluctuations and self-discovery within the *Eye*... the eye, the I, and the third eye...



Inside, on the looped sustained musical theme, the upper eyelid live-streams the two holograms with their hovering drones at the *Cave* entrance next to the Carousel of Life. On the lower eyelid, the Magic Square unfolds the same scene individually in each of its nine monitors in a delayed retrograde order, moulding up a regressing vortex, flattening the time continuum. At the centre of the silver floor, the red iris holds in its black pupil the white four-faced plinth with the enlightened exoskeleton revealing on its plane of reflection the first copy of the *Red Book*, closed.

From the corners of the *Eye*, the Guardians of the Commissure look at each other, melting their gaze above the Matrix. Out of the flat coloured *cavea* at the centre of the golden ceiling, the red *axis mundi* laser runs through the golden heart on the *Red Book*'s cover, ripples down along the four sides of the plinth to plunge into the black pupil in the red iris below. While the convened guests take in and become part of the scene, the Royal Couple approaches the Guardian at the left corner, circles it once, then turns it thrice and slowly heads to the other Guardian and repeats the routine. Next, they head to the shelf on the lower eyelid displaying a copy of the *Red Book* opened at *Lectori benevolo* page with their own flat image, now also screened on the upper eyelid. Bearing witness from a place of neutrality, holding space for the guests to allow their shadows and deep feelings to surface without fearing hidden remains, they are catalysing open doors into fresh awareness and, unveiling the cup structuring the unsaid, begin reading aloud a cappella the text on the page. Once finished, the flat Royal Couple on the upper eyelid cross-fades with the image of the physical couple standing in the *Eye* while the feed is streamed in each Virtual Matrix and on the vault of the empty *Cave* venue in the penumbra, echoed back *en abyme* into the self-reflecting *Eye*.

Momentarily, the Royal Couple transit the omega threshold and step out of the *Eye* to walk the violet carpet and reach the yellow convertible Chevy '57 Bel Air awaiting them at the end of the rug, and take a sit in the back. At the wheel, an orangutan who is at once an actor in costume, a high primate, an endangered species in extinction, and a previous state of consciousness. A smartphone on the boot of the car captures the journey and streams the scene to each Virtual Matrix monitoring the Royal Couple's relative position in the itinerary. The vehicle typifies the physical, mechanical body; the engine, the instinct and the sensitive faculties; the steering wheel, the thinking mind driving the engine; the driver, the orangutang, the intellect guiding the mind; the Royal Couple on the backseat, the polarised self instructing the intellect; and the smartphone, the higher Self witnessing and recording the action yet not involved in it. All elements purposely aligned to accomplish their regenerative outing across the city.

After the couple greets the bystanders, the orangutan fires the engine and drives them to the next Nodal Partner where the pair unfold their *meso*dramaturgy in the Virtual Matrix. They perform a page of the *Red Book*, sing the first aria of *Death & Rebirth*, and entertain visitors with a *canovaccio* run of improvised sketches on the musical theme played in the area. The onlookers familiarize themselves with the metaspaces, watch the streams on the spheric monitor, observe the observer being observed, look at the black hole with the red pearl in the starred yoni and at the split pillar; interact with the *Royal Couple* who invite them to download an app to partake in a questionnaire, leaving observations, impressions, thoughts, feelings, and remarks stimulated by the overall experience for a socio-cultural data-driven survey research study. Having completed their short visit, the Royal Couple exit the metaspaces to board again the real world and resume their journey on the yellow vehicle with the orangutan at the wheel, driving them to the next portal on the path. A new stopover and a new visit. And so forth, with wayfarers, seekers, and seers during all the following virtual dimensions in a blend of contemporary street theatre and the traditional journey of the Thespian wagon. A fluid flow of awareness is pervading the city throughout their mesoteric excursion from the *Eye* to the *Cave*. Metaphors of the real.

Upon reaching the *Cave* metaspaces at the city periphery, the orangutan parks the car in front of the Rose & the Cypress arched entrance, steps on the red carpet, undresses its costume and sets it on fire in a nearby urn brazier. Then, he picks up a handful of ashes and invites the Royal Couple to cross the threshold and meet the two guardian-holograms who warmly cherish them on the red carpet. With the ex-orangutan opening the way by spreading the ashes at either side of the red trail between two wings of the crowd, the quintet finally accesses the *Cave* venue. Soon afterward, the convened guests assemble in the sloped *cavea* sunk in deep darkness closing the coda of the Overture, followed by the Prelude of the *Cave 3.0*. A *laic initiation* section starting with the dissolution of the anthropomorphic holograms in sparkling fragments twirling inside the venue. From there on, the Royal Couple with their respected guests initiate their non-linear wandering through the seven stages of the evolution of consciousness in two acts and seven scenes each cast in a different temporal-geo-cultural area.

ACT I,1 – “*The Myste & the Dakini*”. South Asia, Tibet, indefinite time before creation. *Rinpoche & Yeshe*, alias the Royal Couple, with Haah the Hologram, are sharing visions and perspectives on their possible embodiment; on the vault, *Yama & the Shrink* are busy solving a post-metaphysical rebus. Sub-narrative: Spirituality. Music: 1st Variation; overtone choir, bansuri, shruti, and gong, respectively on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 6th tier of the *cavea*.

I,2 – “*The Hermaphrodite & the Robot. Getting Closer*”. Eastern Asia, Kyoto, 2032. *Haah the Hologram & Rooh the Robot*, the Waki & the Shite, a recursive pattern of the Royal Couple, are challenging gender constructs while playing *go* in a zen garden at the outskirts of the city; on the vault, *Amatarsu & Uzume* enjoy intimacy in shibari. Sub-narrative: Gender & Artificial Intelligence. Music: 2nd Variation; overtone choir, voices, shakuhachi, koto, and kindo, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th tier of the *cavea*.

I,3 – “*El Duende & La Quintina: The Polarities*”. South & Southeast Europe. Spatially and temporally displaced, El Duende & La Quintina are in two different continua: the former, a jester at the court of Frederick II in Palermo, Italy, in the 13th century; the latter, a courtesan at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, in the 15th century, experiencing communication problems, and not only for their two different continua...; on the vault, *Isis & Lucios* are in brain disorder. Sub-narrative: Polarization. Music: 3rd Variation; voices, mandolin, accordion, and claquette, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th tier.

I, 4 – *Andola’h & Dandalo’h*. West Africa, Timbuktu, 1701. *Andala’h & Dandalo’h*, a couple of seekers in the old library, set in the Virtual Matrix, are exploring manuscripts and uncharted maps with Haah running amok in the wilderness; on the vault, *Orummila & Obatah* are throwing divinatory dices into a virtual game beyond the Rose & the Cypress arched gate to crack the threshold code. Sub-narrative: Poverty. Music: 4th Variation; overtone choir, chora, balophon, gangan, and electronics, 1st, 4th, 6th, and 7th tier.

ENTRACTE – Intermission. The liminal threshold between act I and II is enacted betwixt the 4th and the 5th scene, outside the *Cave*, next to the fully lighted yet motionless Carousel of Life. The audience exits the *Cave* and hangs out with Booh & Dooh, the drones, the fallen guardian angels. The continuum is synchronic. Running time: 20 minutes, flexible. Music: the theme only, played by the barrel-organ automaton at the heart of the Carousel of Life.

ACT II, 5 – “*Von & Van*”. North Europe, Berlin, 1980. *Von & Van*, the composer Ribbing von Achterhoff and the viola da gamba player Julia van Eden at an open-air rock concert in no man’s land, are swapping intimate courtesies while rehashing a score with the Guardians of the Threshold in disguise; on the vault, J.S. Bach and Frida, disputing a seat at an opera matinee at sunset on a hill in Walhalla. Sub-narrative: Inequality. Music: 5th Variation: voices, sax, electric guitar, bass, drum, and live electronics; 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th tier of the *cavea*.

II, 6 – “*Siti Radana & Pak Semar*”. Southeast Asia, Cipanas, West Java, 1634. *Siti Radana & Pak Semar*, with Haah, Booh & Dooh, at the shrine of a venerable master, making vows and bestowing fruits on the grave; on the vault, the Loro Blonyo indivisible couple are attempting to break free. With the Villains of Love. Sub-narrative: Ecosystem. Music: 6th Variation: overtone choir, voices, suling, and gambang, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 6th tier.

II, 7 – “*The Royal Couple*”. Northeast Africa & Middle East, old Jerusalem, indefinite time. The action is performed on the vault only, no action on the staged Matrix. The Royal Couple on a flying carpet are gliding over the Temple Mount/Nobel Sanctuary and the Palestine land with Haah at the yoke, and Carpe Kairos in disguise. Sub-narrative: Spirituality Music: 7th Variation; Tutti, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th tiers, enacting the full acoustic spectrum of the *cavea*.

Total running time Act I and II: 180 minutes.

FINALE – “*The Carousel of Life*”. At the end of the 7th scene on the vault, the Finale is acted outside the *Cave* venue. The Royal Couple, the *Cave Quantum Company*, the *Eye Cyber Ensemble*, and the convened guests exit the *Cave*. The nearby *Carousel of Life* is glowing, the Royal Couple sit down in the chariot; in turns, the guests bestride the carved horses and spin three rides around the carousel’s *axis mundi* at the solo theme performed by the automaton, the voice of the community. Three rides only, no more. Then, slowly dismounting a dream, it is already time to turn home or go for a pizza in the neighbourhood. Incoherently coherent.

GRAND FINALE – Performed only once after the matinee on the last 21st day of the performance. Spacetime stamp: the given circumstances. Music: theme only, Tutti.

Completed the last spin on the Carousel of Life, clad in their colourful garments, the Royal Couple, namely *She & He*, alight from the chariot and ahead to the venue entrance where the producer of the show, hovered by Booh & Dooh, offer them the urn with the ashes of the burned-out orangutan scattered over the flashcard with the footage of the premiere of the work. Then, *She & He*, accompanied by the solo musical theme performed by the automaton, walk-backwards on the red carpet to the Rose & the Cypress gate. They turn around, cross the threshold and leave the *Cave exo* masculine polarity to board the yellow Bel Air waiting with open doors... *She* lays the cinerary urn on the backseat; *He* takes the wheel for the first leg of the inverse itinerary through the city to uphold the last traces of the *Red Book* earthly narrative in the *Eye*. Taking turns at the wheel along the way, they stop-over at each Nodal Partner. Full-immersion in the Virtual Matrix, sing an aria, perform a page of the *Red Book*, greet the host and the bystanders, and exit the virtual metaspaces to regain the ordinary reality aboard the Bel Air, off and go to the thereafter.

Upon reaching the *Eye*, *She* parks the car, *He* picks up the urn from the backbench and, together, depart the yellow vehicle to parade the violet carpet with Booh & Dooh swiftly flying to guard the omega entrance into the finissage. Inside the *Eye*, the Magic Square is screening the Interlude to the Act I in reverse. They first greet the host of the metaspaces, then the Guardians of the Commissure; then turn to the shelf on the lower eyelid and close the displayed *Red Book*. *She* lays the urn down over the golden heart on the cover and removes the flash memory from the ashes. Together they walk to the Fountain of Love in the iris, unearth the closed first copy of the *Red Book* from the exoskeleton whilst the red *axis mundi* laser turns off, and start singing the two-part duet of the 12th aria of *Death & Rebirth*. In the end, *He* opens up the *Meetings with Remarkable Women Red Book* and rests the memory card with the premiere on the last page as the imprint of their legacy, he closes it and, with sympathy to the atmosphere, the people and their environment, lays it atop the exoskeleton, out of the matrix. Then, they both salute the host, the convened guests, slowly remove their colourful garments and, bare naked, cross the omega threshold to exit the *Eye eso* feminine polarity sprinkling, from a golden cup, red rose petals on the violet carpet. All the while the Magic Square is reversing the time winding up the finissage into subtle shades of elated joy. The ethos of a journey.

In theatrical terms, the work breaks new grounds in the formal operatic language. Performed away from the opera-house of the Establishment, it challenges the central paradigm, shifting the centre of gravity of the action right into the city. By uniting centre and periphery, establishment and margin, feminine and masculine, esoteric and exoteric, and cross-pollinating the intervening cultural bodies, visitors, audience and bystanders, the work reformulates the syntax of human inclusiveness collectively reshaping reality. The Overture, the Entr'acte, the Finale, and the Grand Finale performed outside the venue outdate the building-based theatre practice. By blending the traditional operatic practice with the street performance, it retrieves its original ritual dimension in *medias res*, in *medias omnes*. The audience moves physically in the open system of the work, with performers and random visitors creating a trans-cultural bond among people, citizen, audience, and performers crosswise the setting, the text and the technology, the demographics, the architectures, the site history, the human stories, the languages, the idioms, the soundscapes and the musics of the city, enhancing the production of cultural and social space and the collective intelligence of the community to a finer synthesis. It tests both the dramaturgic code and the audience/performer relationship, advancing the theory and praxis of both the stage aesthetics and its fruition to an inclusive experience merging past and future into a shared holistic present. It generates an immersive, fluid environment also accessible to otherwise non-art goers and excluded audience, uplifting participants, performers, and the performance itself to a higher order of embodied presence, to a subtler frequency overturning the overall flow of the city from polarisation to inclusion, from duality to singularity. The end of a 21-day long-lasting dream. Smart-material for an unbearable world. A total fiasco.

[To be continued].

* * *

Source. Excerpted from Sahlan Momo, *Meeting in the Cave. From Polarisation to Inclusion - An Outline*. (Semar: The Hague, 2020); project's [website](#), *et varia*. References & Glossary omitted. The Eye and the Virtual Matrix visualisations are by Kristian Cardiello.

Planned Spanda Monitor issues on the *Meeting in the Cave* project: **0. Shifting the Paradigm** - Introduction - The Royal Couple. The Polarities. **1. Leaping out of Retreat** - The *Eye* metaspace. The feminine polarity - The artists' book *Meetings with Remarkable Women - The Red Book*. **2. Humans are Multidimensional Beings** - The *Cave* metaspace. The masculine polarity - The opera *Cave 3.0. A Laic Initiation - The Cave Quantum Company & The Eye Cyber Ensemble*. **3. Unveiling the Cup** - The *Nodal Partners* and the *Virtual Matrix* metaspace - Structural Layout - Overture - The *Cave 3.0's* seven scenes, Entr'acte, Epilogue, and Grand Finale. **4. Being & History** - The Place & the Environment. **5. Unmapping the Territory** - The Flow - The Survey & the Research study - *The White Book* findings. **6. Streaming Consciousness** in the virtual realm. A virtual action. **7. The Lila's Game**. **8. Awareness, Culture & Development in the Digital Age**, the UNGA side-event. **9. The Black Book**. Documentation of the process, of which this *Monitor* is a particle. — **Back issues**.

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No global development without individual development.

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