

Lloyd Fell, David Russell & Alan Stewart (eds)  
[Seized by Agreement, Swamped by Understanding](#)

## Prologue

I don't want your agreement!  
I think I would prefer your understanding.  
Your agreement would be useful in a workplace to achieve a task. But that is not a social system.  
We want to live together in mutual respect.  
Your agreement would take hold of me and threaten to devour my own being - just as my agreement would do to you.  
For we each bring forth our own world in our every present moment.  
No matter how convenient it may seem to be, I cannot truly stand still - with you or anyone.

But there are times when I can empathise with you so strongly!  
At such times we dance to one another's music - swirl in the flow of the other's emotional stream.  
And then, for a moment, I will disappear.  
I don't think I want your total understanding either.  
My real desire is to be with you in loving conversation.  
Then, we both may grow as living things.

## About the Contributors

(at the time of publication - 1994)

### **Vladimir Dimitrov**

is a cybernetician whose DSc degree in mathematics is from the Russian Academy of Sciences. His research encompasses the study of fuzzy and chaotic systems and the complexity of socio-ecological modelling and human decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. Currently he works as a research scientist in the Centre for the Social Ecology of Water and Waste Management at the University of Western Sydney - Hawkesbury, at Richmond, where he is creating computer-assisted support systems for multistakeholder consensus seeking.

### **Judith Bihl Dimitrov**

is a lecturer in communication studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Western Sydney - Nepean, at Penrith. She is one of the "new style" academics integrating a broad interdisciplinary base with active practical involvement in business, industry and all levels of

government. Her major interest is the dynamic integration of human systems and interactive communication processes in the creation of local knowledge. Her current focus is on collaborative practices within organisations, amongst organisations and between the organisation and the community.

### **Lloyd Fell**

is a research scientist specialising in farm animal physiology and behaviour at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute at Camden. His PhD research was in the field of neuroendocrinology. He is the author of numerous scientific papers and the composer of many unpublished songs and tries to practice some of the ideas outlined in this book in his research on the effects of stress in animals and humans and in his conversations, workshops and presentations with other people.

### **John Graham**

is a physician in clinical practice in Adelaide who has become entranced by curiosity to enquire more about how we know what we know. This has led him to explore and value linguistics, metaphors, stories, myths, legends and jokes. He also loves growing things and is interested in the ecology of everything! With Alan Stewart, he co-convenes the Cybernetics Group in Adelaide.

### **Joy Murray**

is a senior policy officer with the NSW Department of School Education. Her work is concerned with teacher professional development in the areas of Literacy, English, Early Childhood Education and Teaching and Learning. She became interested in Maturana's work because it seemed to lend some biological clout to (and a way of organising) her intuitive feelings that education was primarily about relationships, that it had an inescapable moral dimension, that our histories were an integral part of the classroom and that creating a context for learning should be a major concern of teachers.

### **David Russell**

is an associate professor in the School of Social Ecology at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, at Richmond. David gained a PhD in psychology from the University of Sydney after which he worked in private clinical practice and in the commercial consulting world as a facilitator of organisational development. His fascination with the understanding of Humberto Maturana began in the mid 1980's when he found that Maturana provided a very satisfying explanation of the aphorism - how we know determines what we know and what we do!

## **Alan Stewart**

has a passion for languaging in qualitative research; a fascination for the way the spoken word engenders liveliness. With a PhD from London University, he worked in the field of human nutrition. He recently left an academic position in a medical school to develop a new career as a professional conversationalist, speaker and writer. Through his business, Fresh Map of Life Conversationalists, he promotes health and wellbeing, especially of older people. He is a visiting scholar, School of Medicine, Flinders University, Adelaide.