



MONASH University

# Cinematic Bricolage:

## A Knowledge-Production Methodology

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Bachelor of Fine Arts (Russia), Graduate Diploma in Education (Monash)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at Monash University in 2017,  
Faculty of Education



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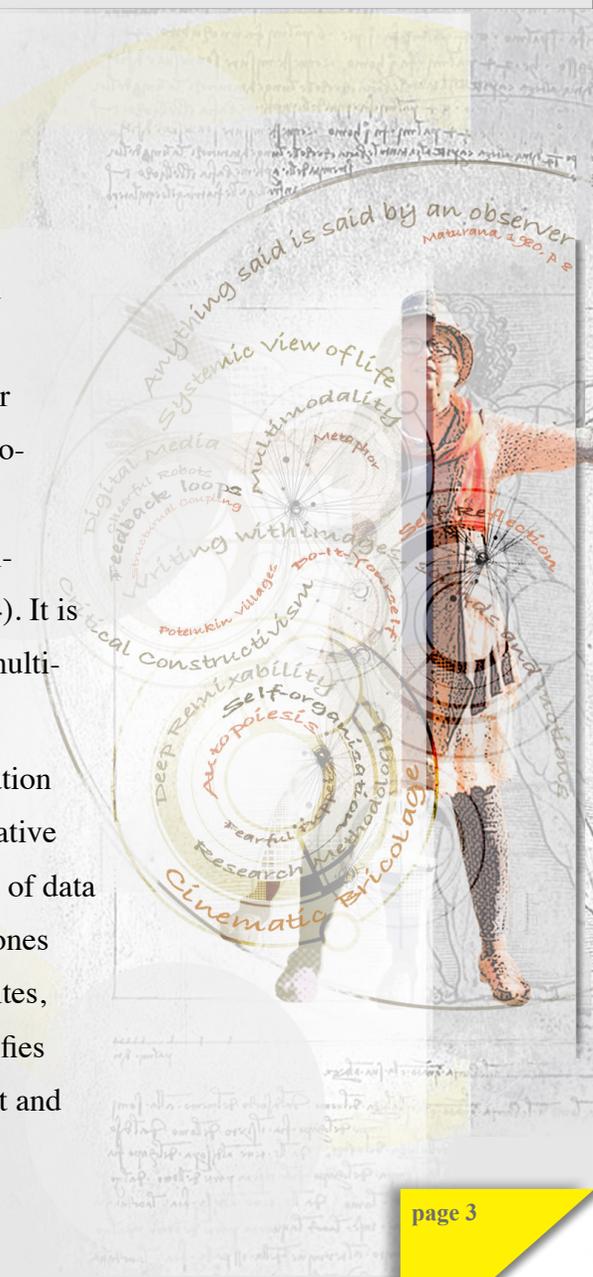
# Cinematic Bricolage as a Research Methodology:

## Making Meaning by Writing with Images, Sound and Movement

### Abstract

In recent years, catalysed by the rise of digital technology, the practice of communication has seen significant restructuring. One cultural form of representation that has gained rapid acclaim is the phenomenon of remix. In the domain of individual expression, remix has granted the opportunity for privatisation of norms and values and for crafting representations according to personal need in a 'do-it-yourself' manner. This eclectic approach of modifying and reconstructing things and concepts to accommodate individual need, was suggested as a qualitative research methodology by Claude Levi-Strauss (1962) and further developed by Denzin and Lincoln (1999) and Kincheloe and Berry (2004). It is understood as bricolage and conceptualised as 'a critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry' (Rodgers, 2012, p. 1).

This study focuses on using digital media as a means of generating knowledge through the application of bricolage. It proposes a remix of digital media as a means of production and bricolage as a qualitative research methodology, terming it 'cinematic bricolage'. Thus, cinematic bricolage is a methodology of data collection from heterogeneous resources such as mobile recordings, using such devices as smart phones and tablets, as well as diverse internet resources, such as Kindle, YouTube, social media sites, websites, blogs and so on. This data is analysed through the representational method of, what this study identifies as, cinematic writing. This is a method in which alphabetic writing is used as a foundational element and



remixed with other semiotic modes such as, images, sound and motion. The informational weight between these modes of expression is distributed according to individual tendencies and skills. Consequently, cinematic bricolage is a methodology conducive to endless hybridisation, accommodating the specifics of the tasks and dispositions of the producer.

In this study cinematic bricolage is explored in two probes and is framed within a critical-constructivist self-reflective practice. Choosing metaphoric logic as a mechanism for representing and comprehending objects and issues, in the first probe, the self-reflective bricoleur enters the realm of her imagination where she invents a meeting with the leaders of the Russian Communist regime. In the second probe, the bricoleur revisits some childhood events that take place in a social reality that reflects the theoretical construct depicted in probe one. By collecting bricoles – historical facts, quotes from historical figures, fragments from YouTube videos, old personal and new photographs, internet images and songs and sounds – the bricoleur reconstructs the fragments taken from the collected data into a new assemblage that corresponds with her perception of this historical period. Through analysing the probes, this study finds that sampling, deconstructing and remixing the fragments into new assemblages by means of digital media, the bricoleur involves herself in an act of autopoiesis – self-creation (Maturana & Varela, 1998).

For educational purposes, this study demonstrates the possibilities of cinematic bricolage becoming a rigorous knowledge-production methodology, with the accent placed on the knower's enhanced ability to integrate herself into a larger social context through improved self-awareness and realisation of her individual tendencies and skills.



## Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



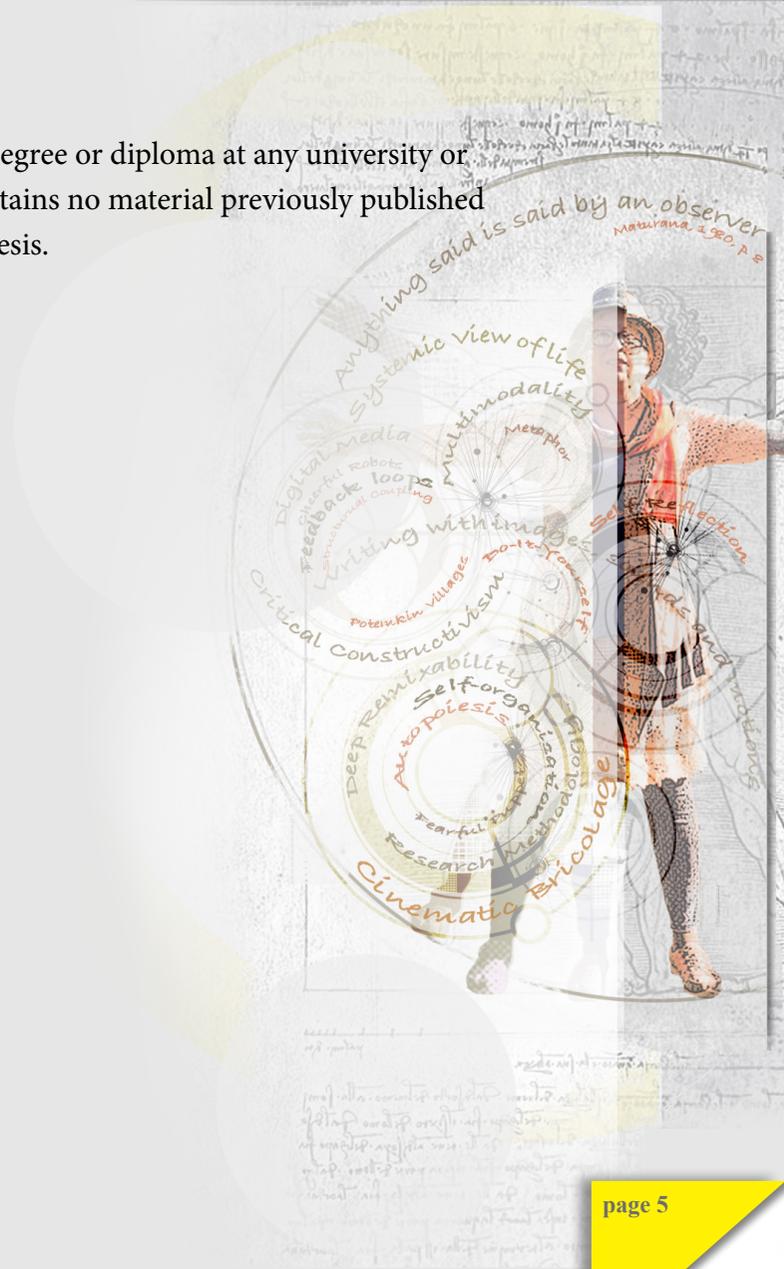
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Date: .....



## Acknowledgement

Firstly, I wish to thank Dr. Jill Brown who, by becoming a supervisor at a late stage of my Doctoral study, went an extra mile to support the completion of this thesis. She contributed her time and expertise towards its submission with a conscientious and genuine commitment. Likewise, I wish to thank Associate Prof. Jane Southcott for being a valuable member of the panels in my three milestone seminars and for her intellectual guidance and support during the final stages of the study. I could not have imagined having better mentors, advisors and counsellors than Jill and Jane have been to me.

My gratitude goes to my family – to my husband George; my son Anton and especially my daughter Sasha, for their patient encouragement, unflagging support, numerous reading and proof-reading. Completion of this PhD is truly an achievement that belongs to the whole family.



# Cinematic Bricolage:

## A Knowledge-Production Methodology

Note: Please see the USB provided for the EPUB complete multimodal version of the thesis.



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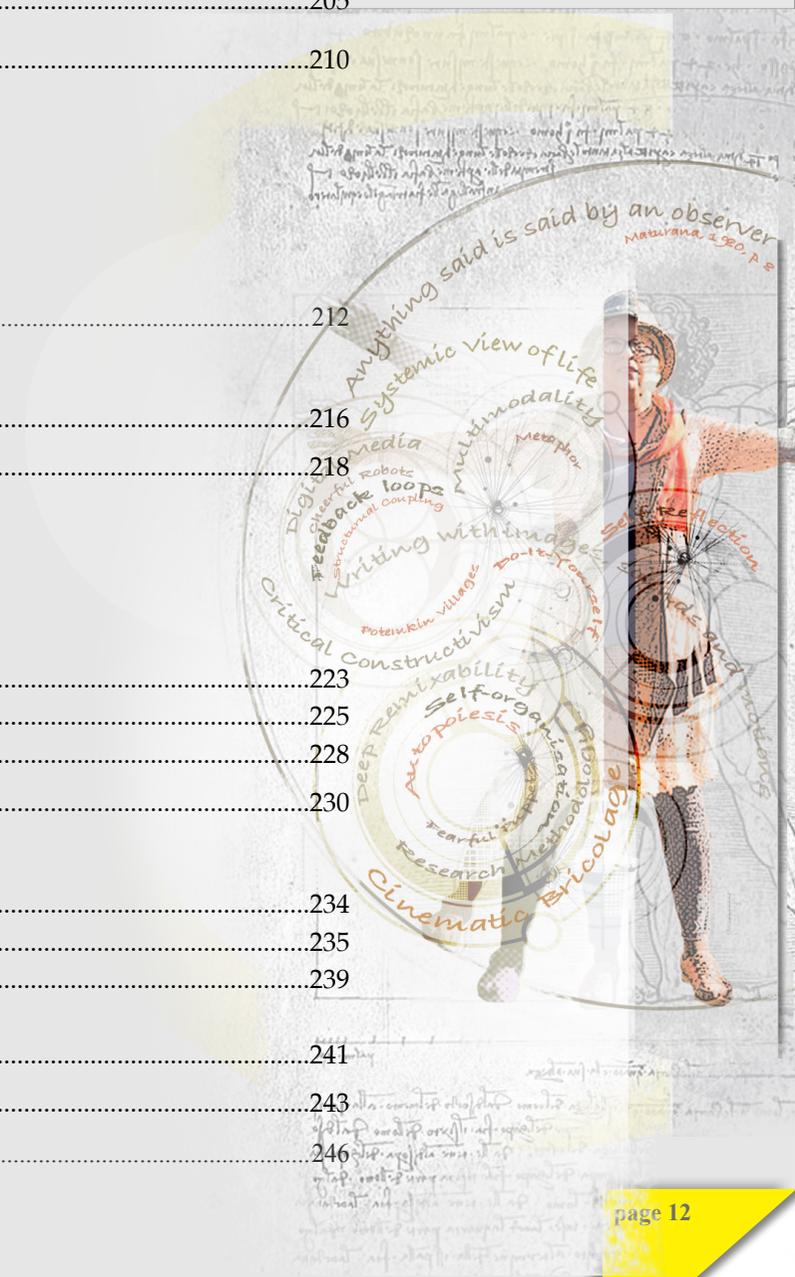


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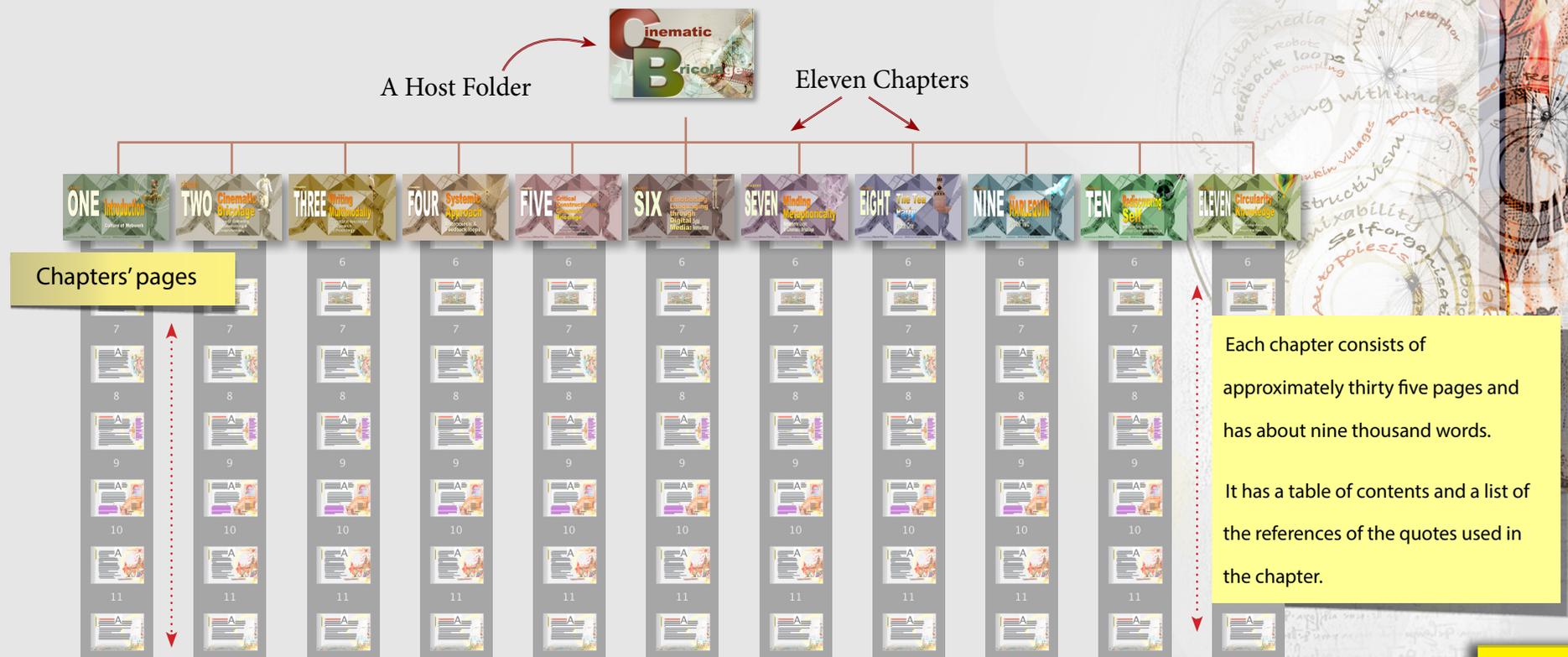


# PREAMBLE

## a. Thesis and Chapter Organisation

This thesis is organised in an EPUB format as the goal of this study is to explore digital media capacity for knowledge-production tasks. Due to the large document size, it is saved in eleven separate chapters.

Eleven chapters of the thesis are stored inside the host folder, Cinematic Bricolage (CB). Each chapter works as a separate EPUB book. It has its own table of contents and a reference list of the literature, visual, audio and video resources used in the chapter.



## b. Structure of the Pages

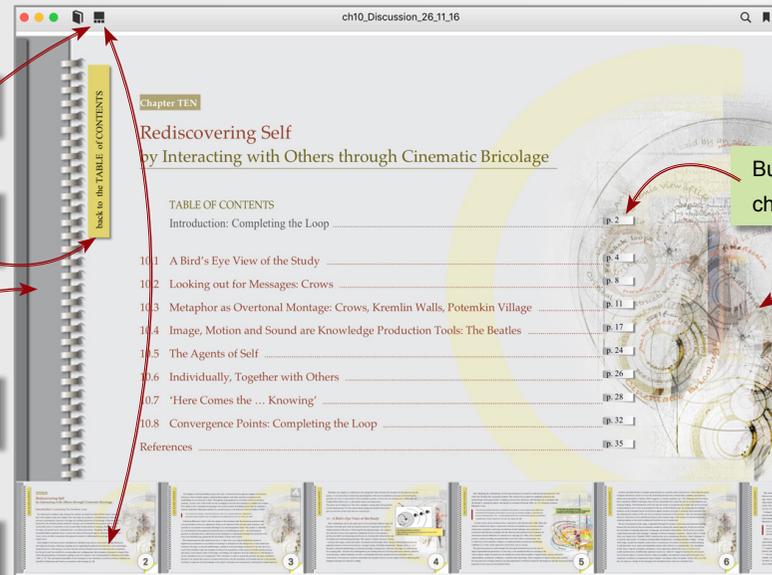
### Content of Chapters

Button used to display all the pages of the document

Button used to return to the page of the table of contents

Upon rolling over this area, an arrow appears to take you to the previous page

Dragging from the corner away or toward the centre, changes the display size of the document.



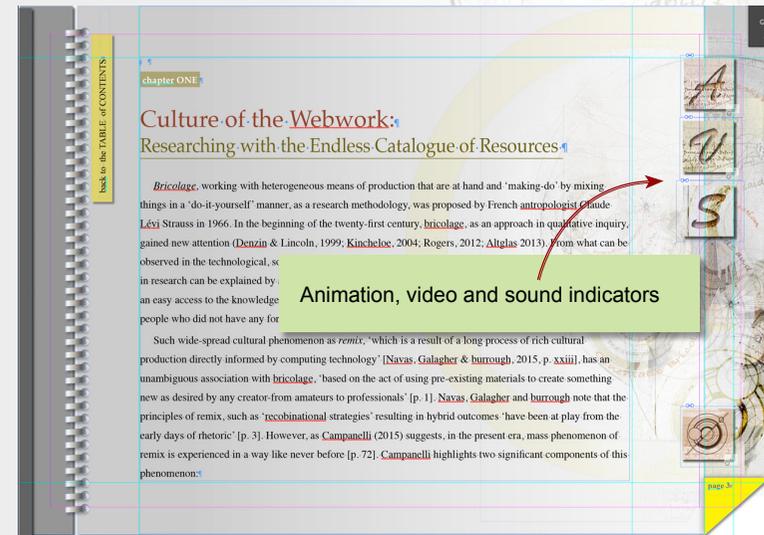
Buttons used to go to the sections of the chapter

Upon rolling over this area, an arrow appears to take you to the next page

### Interactive Elements



- The signs indicating that there is an animation, video or sound that will start playing on the page.
- If there are two or three modalities present, only one indicator is used.
- For example, for animation that includes video and sound, only the Animation indicator is used.



Animation, video and sound indicators



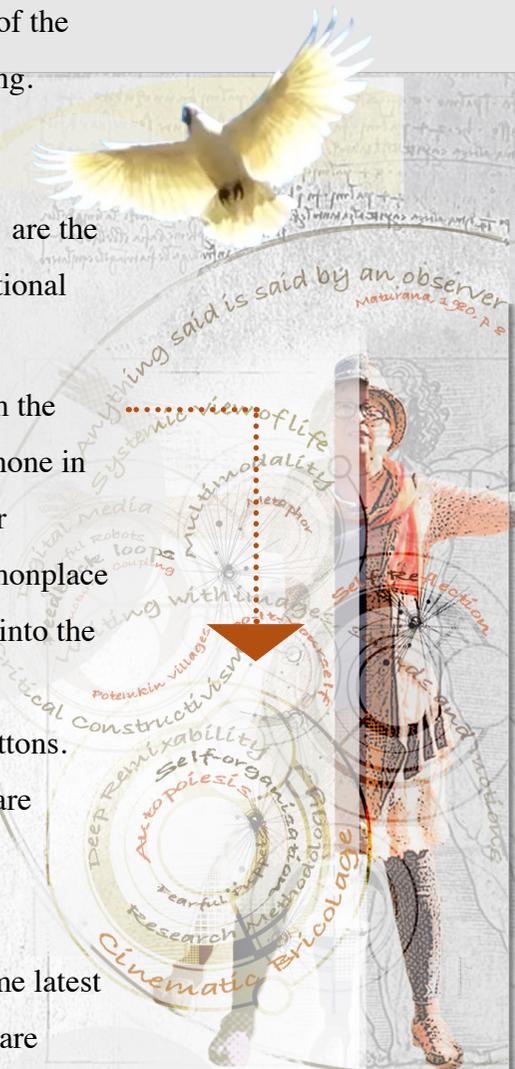
– The button indicating the end of the animation, video or sound playing.

- ‘Sticky notes’ are the interactive buttons to click on for additional notes or elements.
- The video segments are recorded from the internet or YouTube with a personal iPhone in a *do-it-yourself* (DIY) manner to mirror interactions with the internet as a commonplace

of the everyday environment. Following are explanations of the approaches and elements incorporated into the argument of this thesis.

- Most animations and videos start playing at their programmed time rather than being activated by buttons. This is to reflect typical non-linear interactions of a modern individual with a screen and ‘the Net’ that are constantly ‘communicating’ with their user by sending notifications, advertising pieces, news messages (Carr, 2010, audiobook).
- Square parenthesis [loc. x] signify quotes from the literature obtained from Kindle, Amazon.com. Some latest versions of Kindle books come with page numbers instead of locations. The citing from those versions are marked as [p. x].

↻ – this sign is used to indicate a circular interdependence between two categories, for example, process of representation and process of meaning-making.



### c. Cinematic Bricolage Trial

This study develops and trials cinematic bricolage as a multimodal knowledge-production methodology. I suggest that cinematic bricolage can become a rigorous research practice for provoking ‘epistemological curiosity’, constructing alternative ways of investigation and looking at the issues under question from a unique perspective. Cinematic bricolage can be an innovative approach for enhancing self-awareness and achieving self-realisation.

Cinematic bricolage is a multimodal methodology made possible by availability and affordances of digital media. For its development, I used mobile tools such as iPhone and iPad as well as software: *InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Edge Animate* and *Media Encoder*. These applications are downloaded from *Adobe Creative Cloud* (ACC), a collection of software graphic, web design and video editing

programs delivered over the internet. As I discovered, however, the utilisation of this platform is not ready for widespread use in investigative learning tasks and articulation of meaning. Those to whom ACC appears an efficient platform for conducting their study have to also be prepared for numerous technological setbacks and routine struggles. Having said this I am not advising others to stay away from ACC; rather I am promoting it as a robust and exciting system which, in order to become a comprehensive software collection for generating knowledge, requires some tailoring.

At the moment, ‘the market-leading software’ for writing, as identified in Turvey, Potter, Burton, Allen and Sharp (2016) is *Microsoft Word*. This software ‘now contains a great many of the features of DTP [desktop publishing] within its screen space with ‘Design’ and ‘Layout’ available as menu pathways, blurring the distinction still further’ [p. 200]. Although the distinctions between word processing and desktop-publishing might be blurring, the main one that remains

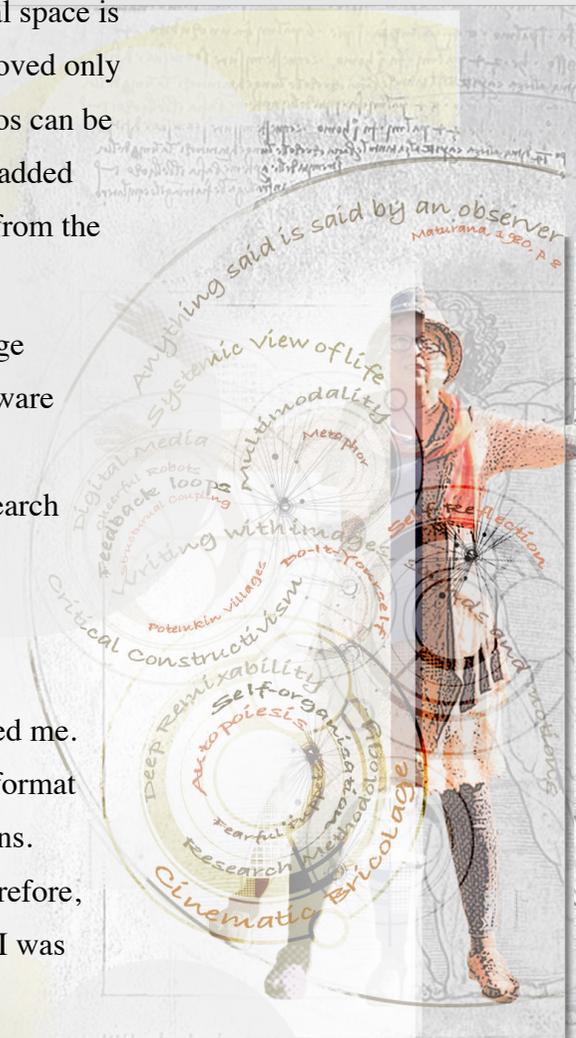


reflects the very logic of bricolage, that is the organisation of the elements inside the software working area. In comparing *Microsoft Word* (MW) and *InDesign* (Id, as it identified in ACC), the MW's compositional space is confined within the text-box, while the Id assembling area is flexible. In MW, the elements can be moved only in accordance to the grid set up within a text-box. In Id, the elements, including animations and videos can be moved around, re-sized, modified independently from each other, distributed on different layers and added to various effects. The letters can be converted into shapes and manipulated as objects in separation from the main written text.

This makes Id together with other software in ACC a valuable foundation for the cinematic bricolage approach in research oriented learning tasks. Currently, however, Id is a professional publishing software and therefore heavily equipped with the features and operations essential to skilful publishers. For cinematic bricolage purposes, this orientation should be de-emphasised in favour of far-reaching research praxis, allowing digitally amateur practitioners to develop their skills in a manner conducive to their interests and abilities.

Before proceeding with the thesis presentation, I would like to underscore that implementation of cinematic bricolage strategy was a challenging task because of a number of limitations that confronted me. For example, due to the absence of a comments-writing function in the EPUB format, I needed to reformat the written text for *Microsoft Word* every time I had to send my chapters for comments and corrections. This was time consuming, but more importantly, MW did not support any multimodal elements. Therefore, the comments were written in the file that did not have any of the multimodal expressions for which I was arguing.

Another disadvantage was that Id was not supported by a referencing and bibliography management system, which has resulted in a tedious and prolonged 'manual' control of the citations, attachments and annotations.

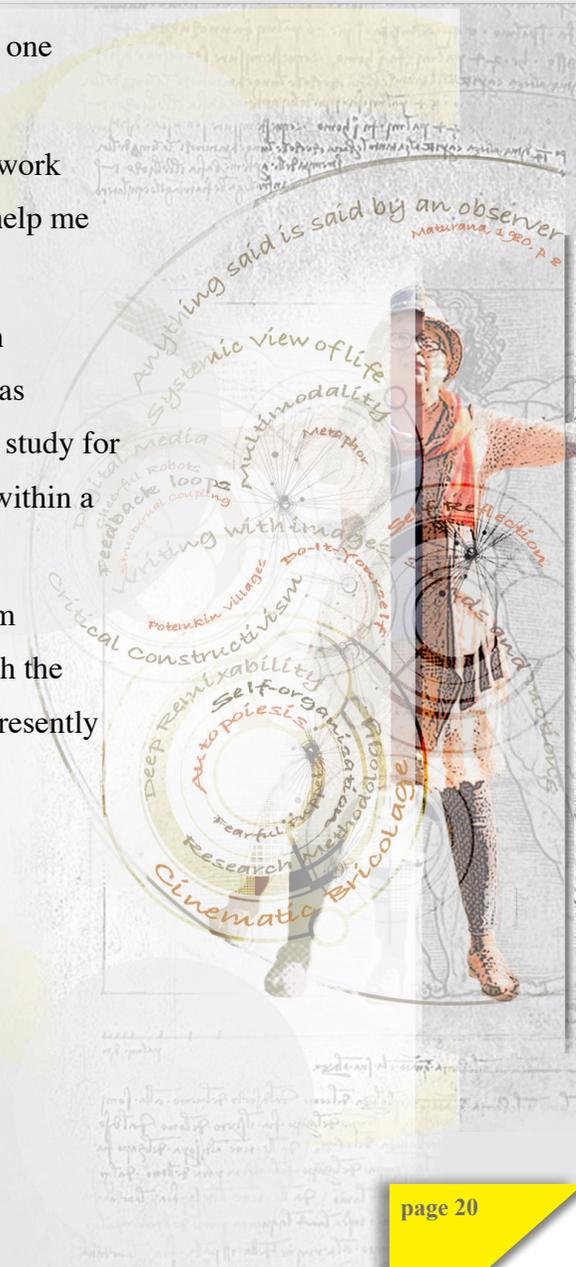


Saving the thesis was another problem to be solved. Due to its large volume, it could not be saved in one document but only as a collection of separate chapters.

Some cinematic elements in Id, for example hypertext, buttons and controls on the videos, did not work in the EPUB format and the technical support operators from ACC, although trying hard, could not help me solve these problems. This considerably reduced the spectrum of desirable cinematic applications.

*Adobe EdgeAnimate* (Ea) was supportive software for creating animation elements that I have been importing into Id. However, although Ea was excellent in principle, it had some shortcomings and was eventually replaced in ACC by other software. Unfortunately, this happened at too a late stage of the study for me to start learning that new software. For this reason I continued using Ea utilising its affordances within a significantly limited range.

Another thing that was often tedious and slowed down the progress was conversion of the files from mobiles into appropriate formats for the *Adobe* applications. The limitations described combined with the advice received, suggested that I should look at cinematic bricolage as the valuable core of what is presently only a rough blueprint.



# Culture of the Webwork

## Researching with an Endless Catalogue of Resources

### 1.1 Because it's there ...

This project started as an investigation of new media's impact on the creative process applied to an execution of visual communication. During the progression of the study, however, I could not help realising that my integration of an array of meaning-mediation modes was taking an essential role in the development of the argument. With discovering the signs of multimodal functionality in the process of my thought-expression, I gradually changed the focus of my study from digital visual creativity to the re-combinational creativity or creative remix in the context of a scholarly paper.

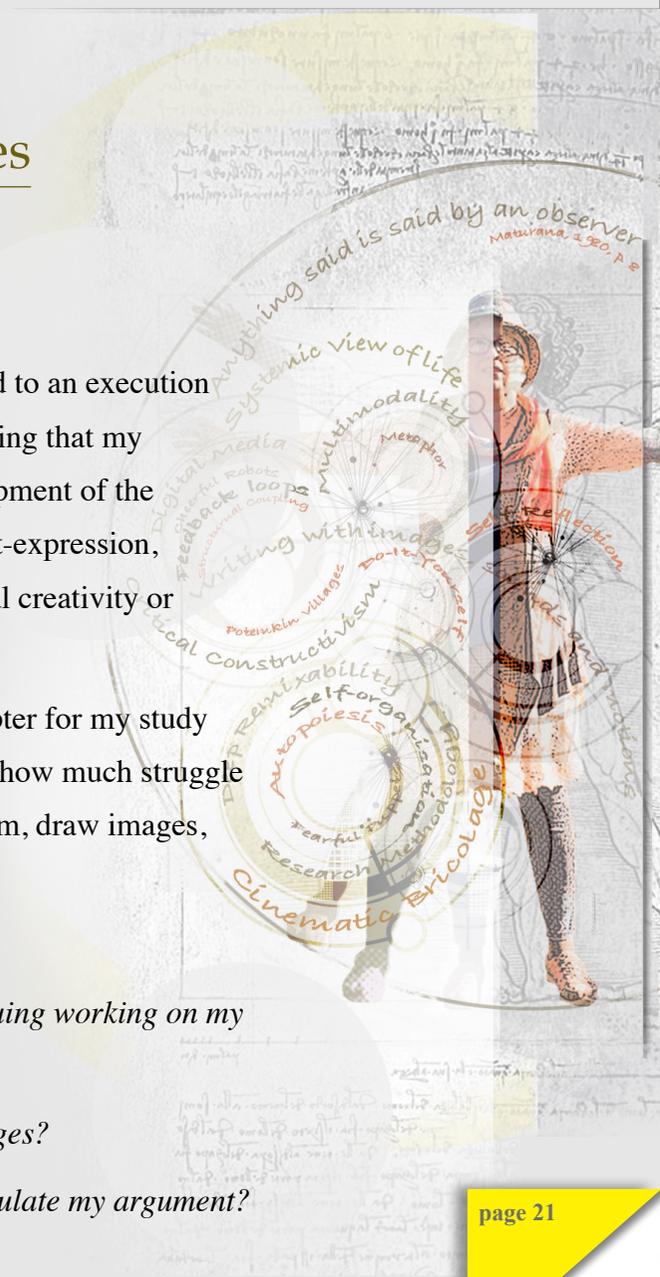
The critical point for this shift was when my supervisors asked me to write a theoretical chapter for my study without inclusion of any other modes of expressions as only alphabetic text. I was struck with how much struggle this simple task presented me. I often needed to stop, wrestling with a desire to create a diagram, draw images, take photos, or thinking about adding sounds that would support what I was trying to say.

*Why was I doing that?*

*Was that a sign of a short attention span and did I need to seek medical help instead of continuing working on my doctoral study?*

*Was it just an extension of a life-long bad habit of drawing on the sides of school notebook pages?*

*What was the point of writing a doctoral thesis if I felt that the words were not enough to articulate my argument?*



Sometimes, it felt that I wanted to use multimodal features because they teased me by their mere availability. The famous words spoken by mountaineer George Mallory to a New York Times' reporter in 1923 to justify his ambition to climb Mt Everest, come to mind:

*'Because it's there ...'* (theClymb, July, 2014)

The question that eventually crystallised was, how appropriate is the strategy of using tools for scholarly writing only on the premise that 'they are there'?

Watching the video with artist Theo Jansen harnessing the power of wind for his inventions inspired me to look at the issue from a different perspective.

The wind 'was always there' and people utilised its power in many different ways. Seeing Jansen's 'moving creatures', *Strandbeests*, we recognise that the surrounding world is full of things, natural or man-made, of a capacity which if noticed, can be utilised in a completely novel fashion. Jansen 'creates new forms of life', as he puts it. He generates ideas by remixing existing natural elements and materials with the use of new, surprising methods and creates aesthetically/engineeringly valuable artefacts.

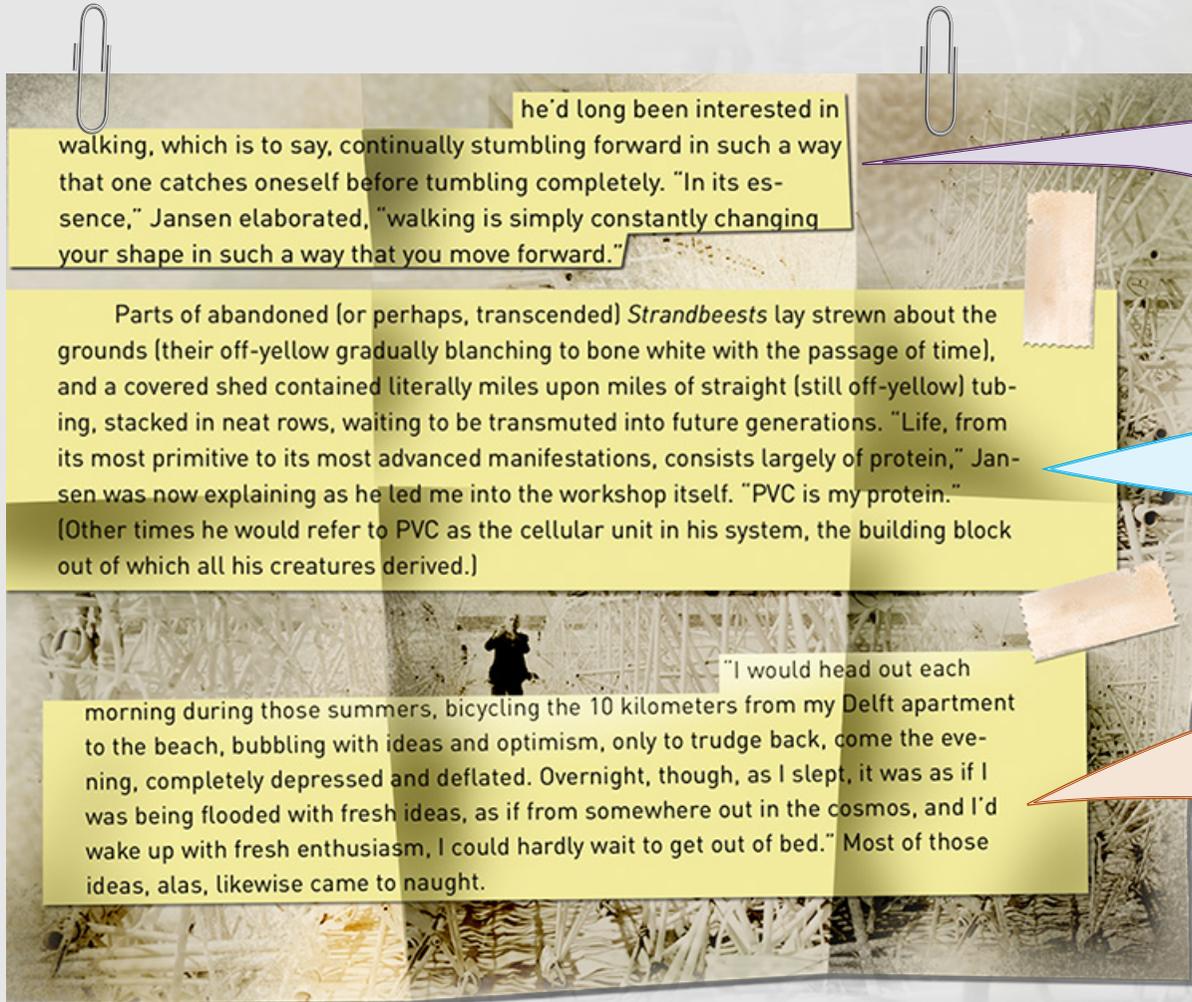
Through a recombination of components and techniques, Jansen builds an imitation of nature, for example, by modelling an animal walking. At the same time, he is not engaged in direct imitation but relies on his imagination, which makes him disrupt the pattern of commonly known forms and mechanisms and invent his own. Imitation, in Jansen's case, adapting from Church (2015), 'is an inventive practice because it yielded variation rather than exact reproduction' [loc. 1995]. The power of the wind was used for ages to make objects move, but Jansen harnesses it to 'teach' his 'hybrid' objects to walk.



Arnaud Gaugain,  
*Tribute to Theo Jansen's kinetic sculptures,*

Fascinated with Jansen's work, I learned more about his process. Three things grabbed my attention and I cut the corresponding quotes from an eBook I was reading and made a little collage to reflect on how they might be linked to my own study (please click the yellow *in* sticky note)

From reflecting on the quotes presented below, I formed the assumptions presented on the right.



1. The interest for creation is based on self-observed life experiences

2. The building blocks for the constructions, PVC tubes, are a by-product of modern technology

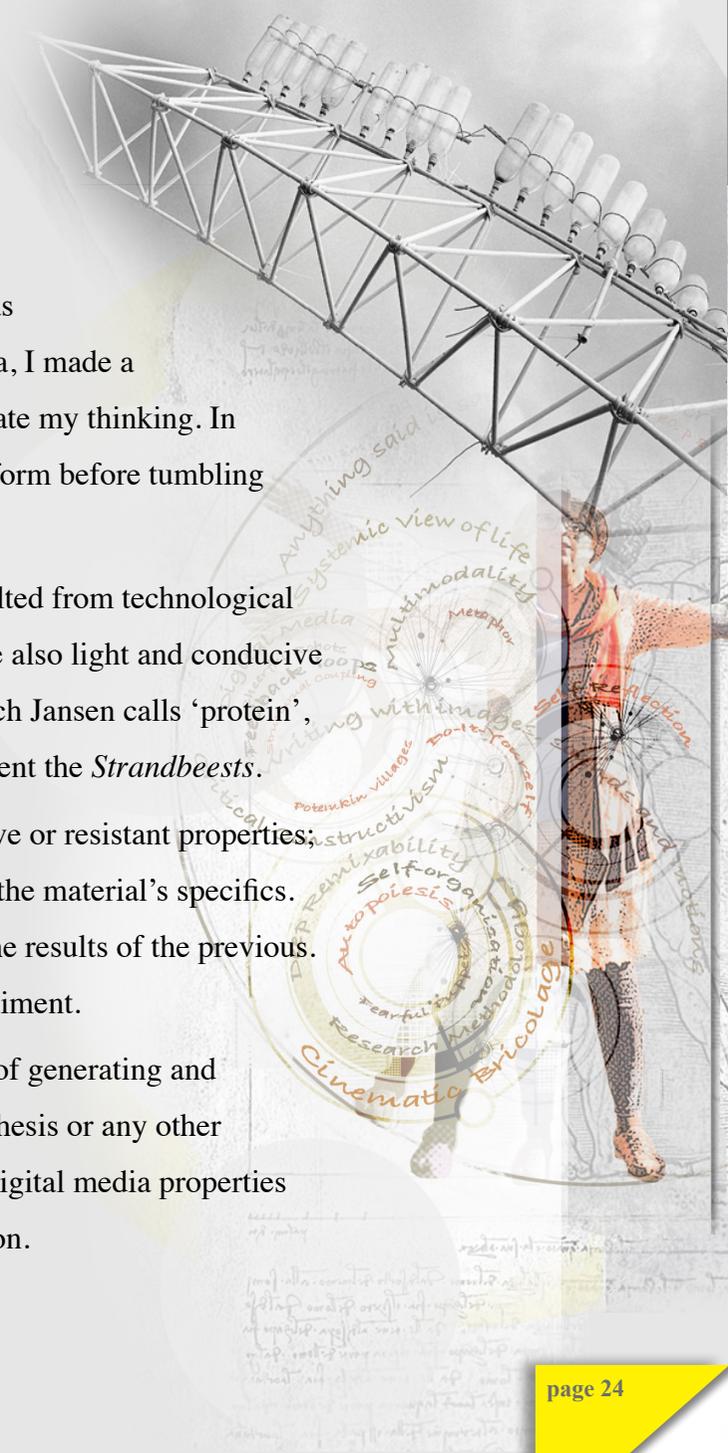
3. Interactions with means of production facilitate the evolution of new ideas

The fascination with walking inspired Jansen to create walking creatures based on the idea that leaning forward they catch themselves before tumbling over. In other words, walking can be described as a self-regulation or self-re-organisation. Jansen describes it as changing the shape in order to move forward. In relation to my utilisation of digital media, I made a parallel seeing myself as a visual person and having natural tendencies to visually articulate my thinking. In embodying the meaning I was searching for, I was naturally seeking ways to change the form before tumbling over.

Another aspect is the availability of suitable means of production. PVC tubes have resulted from technological advances of relatively recent times. They are easy to bend, cut and join together. They are also light and conducive to being moved by wind. The availability and affordances of this particular material, which Jansen calls 'protein', 'cellular unit' and 'building blocks', makes it possible for him to realise his ideas and invent the *Strandbeests*.

When engaging in his creative activities, Jansen tests his ideas through either cooperative or resistant properties; he learns more about its characteristics and modifies his initial blueprints by adjusting to the material's specifics. In other words, the process of self-expression is achieved by each stage being based on the results of the previous. Each outcome is a consequence of the abstract idea and the process of its physical embodiment.

Bridging this with the current study, I frame a premise that reaching out for new forms of generating and articulating knowledge, I trial an alternative to the traditional concept of how a doctoral thesis or any other research-oriented tasks can be developed and presented. I am doing this through testing digital media properties and adjusting my initial ideas to the affordances and limitations of the means of production.



## 1.2 Bricolage and Deep Remixability

*Bricolage*, working with the heterogeneous means of production at hand and ‘making-do’ by mixing things in a ‘do-it-yourself’ manner, is a research methodology proposed by French anthropologist Lévi Strauss in 1966. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, bricolage as an approach in qualitative inquiry, gained new attention (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; Rogers, 2012; Altglas 2013). Observations in the technological, social and cultural spheres of contemporary life kindled my interest in using bricolage research methodology, which has been catalysed by advances in digital technology, its ubiquity and affordances. These allowed easy access to the knowledge resources, construction, representation and publishing of compiled knowledge by people without any formal training in these areas of production.

Such a wide-spread cultural phenomenon as remix, ‘which is a result of a long process of rich cultural production directly informed by computing technology’ [Navas, Galagher & burrough, 2015, p. xxiii], has an unambiguous association with bricolage, ‘based on the act of using pre-existing materials to create something new as desired by any creator-from amateurs to professionals’ [p. 1]. Navas, Galagher and burrough note that the principles of remix, such as ‘recombinational strategies’ resulting in hybrid outcomes ‘have been at play from the early days of rhetoric’ [p. 3]. However, as Campanelli (2015) suggests, in the present era, the mass phenomenon of remix is experienced in a way like never before [p. 72]. Campanelli highlights two significant components of this phenomenon:

[...] the far-reaching spread of post-production tools (available to almost anyone who has at least a computer) that allow for sampling and the overlapping of sources at a rate that would be simply unthinkable just 30 years ago [p. 72].



The digitalisation of culture (the tendency to bring all analogically produced human culture into the digital domain) is one of the dynamics that has most encouraged the emergence of remix culture, to the extent that it is today possible to say that 'humans have never had so many materials in their hands' which is to say: so many materials to remix. [p. 73]

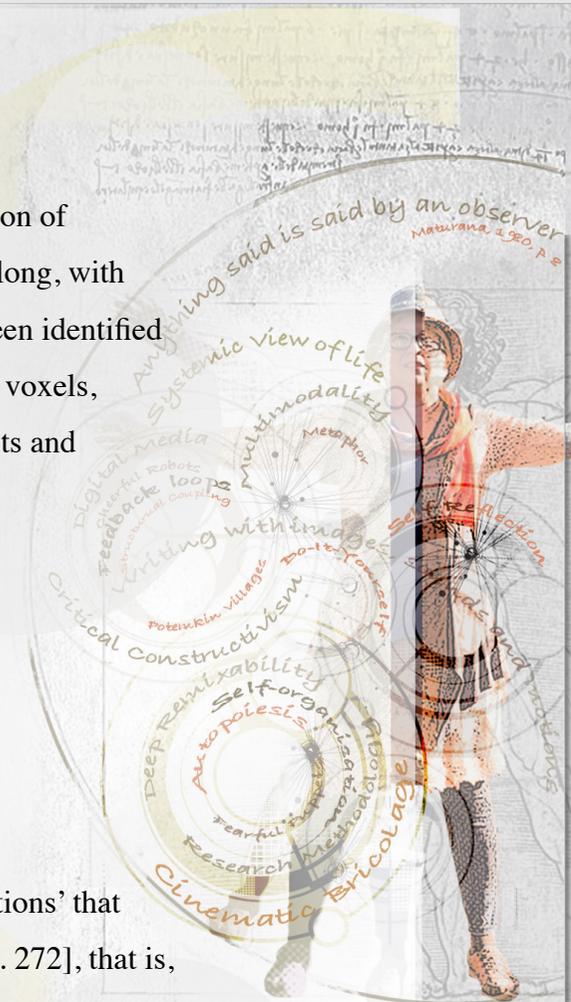
In other words, a pervasive remix, as 'we are now encountering,' became possible by the introduction of digital technologies [p. 71]. One of the fundamental characteristics that new digital media operates along, with numerical representation and automation, is modularity – 'fractal structure of new media' as it has been identified by Manovich [2001, p. 30]. Manifested through primary discrete elements such as 'pixels, polygons, voxels, characters, scripts' [p. 30], modularity allows structural independence of the parts in the digital objects and assemblages, construction of numerous variables and transcoding of digital compositions.

Campanelli (2015) observes:

[...] the simplicity of remix operations, the movement toward digital media, and, above all, media modularity, as noted by Manovich, prelude a progressive hybridization of visual languages and, therefore, a state of 'deep remixability' (or total remixability), a condition in which everything (not just the content of different media but also languages, techniques, metaphors, interfaces, etc.) can be remixed with everything. [p. 73]

Deep remixability is the term Manovich (2013) introduces to emphasise 'complex forms of interactions' that include remixes between techniques within a specific media content as well as a 'crossover effect' [p. 272], that is, remix between various types of media. Deep remixability shows that 'new media follows, or actually runs ahead of, a quite different logic of post-industrial society – that of individual customisation' [Manovich, 2001, p. 29].

In a nutshell, ubiquitous availability and affordances of post-production tools and techniques as well as 'an



incredible amount of cultural material that the so called digital revolution has put, literally, in everyone's hands' [Campanelli, 2015, p. 71], gave rise to deep remixability, which in its turn enticed individual customisation. This can be observed through social media pages, blogs, websites, YouTube etc. With deep remixability capacitating individual customisation, it has also inspired self-assertion through eclectic constructions of representations of self-developed norms and values built on personal subjective experiences.

One of the rules of enduring in 'the networked global capitalism' [Manovich, 2013, loc. 4725], as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) maintain, is that:

[...] in order to survive the rat race, one has to become active, inventive and resourceful, to develop ideas of one's own, to be faster, nimbler and more creative – not just on one occasion, but constantly, day after day. Individuals become actors, builders, jugglers, stage managers of their own biographies and identities and also of their social links and networks [...] Living a life of one's own therefore means that standard biographies become elective biographies, 'do-it-yourself biographies' ... [loc. 748]

Individualisation [...] means de-traditionalisation, but also the opposite: a life lived in conflict between different cultures, the invention of hybrid traditions. [loc. 787]



Jameson, F., 2014

*If Frederic Jameson once referred to post-modernism as 'the cultural logic of late capitalism', we can perhaps call remix 'the cultural logic of networked global capitalism'.*



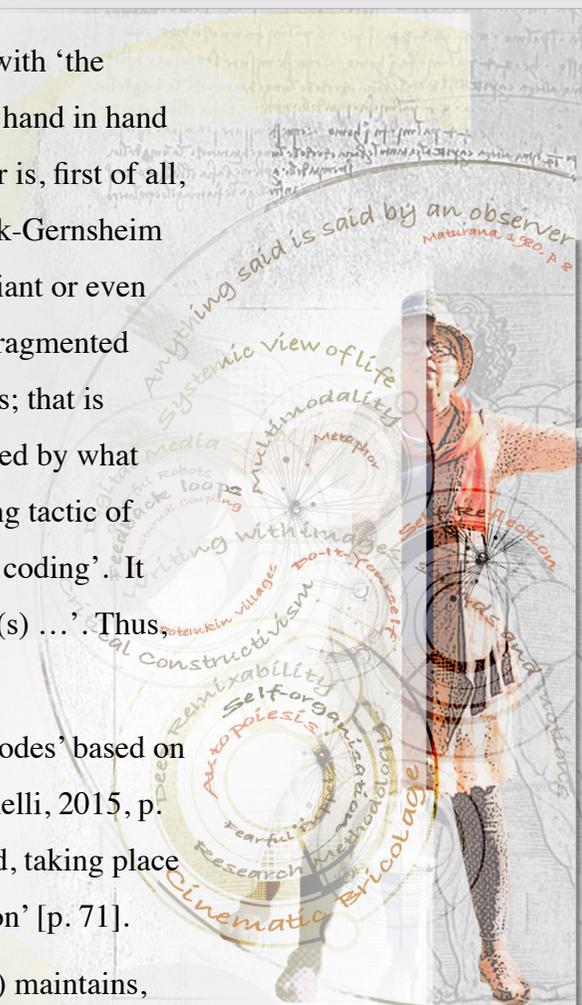
Manovich, L., 2015

### 1.3 Emergence of the Bricoleur

Here, I have arrived at the place of my personal bricoleur's emergence. Her materialisation starts with 'the compulsion of self-realisation, this departure for the foreign continent of the life of one's own, goes hand in hand with integration into worldwide contexts' [Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, loc. 803]. My bricoleur is, first of all, an individual who seeks meaning through a holistic dimension of self-representation. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim write that 'all through the history, individualist behaviour has been equated with conduct that is deviant or even idiotic' [loc. 811]. Now, however, living in a globalised digital webwork that has a new logic of 'a fragmented "taste culture", which offers an almost endless variety of styles' [Grenz, 1996], I embrace new ethics; that is of eclecticism, proclaiming my own multi-faceted diverse universe as it is, without being embarrassed by what was given to me by nature or shaped in me by society. Related to such a performance is a juxtaposing tactic of 'bricolage, the configuration of various traditional objects' [loc. 445]. This method displays 'double coding'. It speaks 'a language and use elements that are accessible to non-professionals as well as professional(s) ...'. Thus, the 'expressions bring the professional and the popular realms together' [loc. 642].

Adopting the role of a digital bricoleur, I make this study consonant with an era in which 'technocodes' based on 'technoimages' have replaced the linear code (written texts) as the main model of thought' [Campanelli, 2015, p. 71]. In his discussion about remix, Campanelli compares it with a game that flavours the surface and, taking place only at a surface level, is allergic to depth, such as specificity, truth, authenticity, definitivity, and so on' [p. 71].

At this point, the bricoleur departs its historical and cultural sibling, the remixer. As Rogers (2012) maintains, 'the theories that underlie bricolage make it far more complex than a simple eclectic approach' (p. 1). Advocates of bricolage, like Kincheloe and Berry (2004), see bricolage as 'a path to a new rigour in research' that 'deploys multiple research approaches and theoretical constructs' (p. x), thus forming a solid framework for reflecting the



complexity of the lived world. Rogers (2012) describes Berry's (2004) view of bricolage as 'an approach that enables researchers to embrace a multiplicity of epistemological and political dimensions through their inquiry' (p. 1).

As a bricoleur, I position myself inside a critical constructivist paradigm and adjust the focus of my research on my individual activity. In this research, I become 'an actor, builder, juggler, stage manager of my own biography and identity' (see p. 3). My epistemological endeavour is to collect from the things that are at hand, interwoven into the web of the systems within which my own being is mingled and, using the fragments of what is collected, through constructing new presentations, try to understand my position in life as an individual, critical thinker, teacher and visual

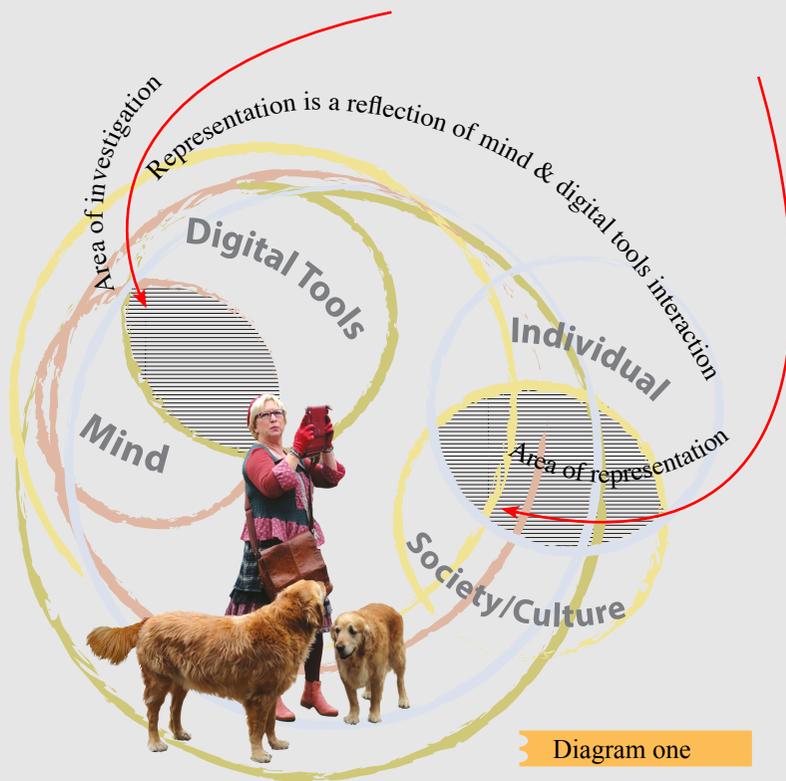
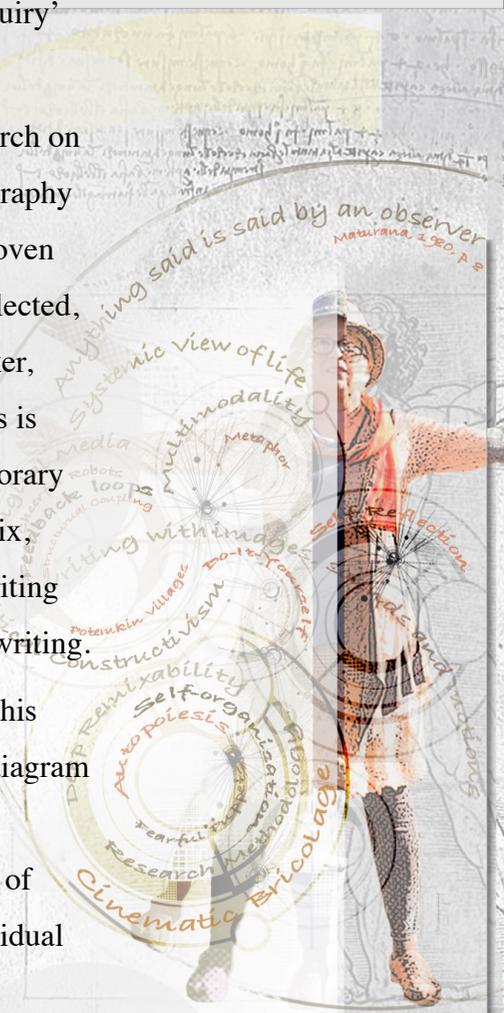


Diagram one

communicator. My investigation in this process is oriented to how my mind responds to contemporary cultural tools of digital media and logic of remix, which in this study develops into a genre of writing with images, sounds and motions – cinematic writing.

The relational complexity in the domains of this study can be represented as it is shown in the diagram to the left. The interactions between mind and digital media are observed through the process of representation of interactions between an individual and society.

The mind that does the observation is shaped by society and culture. Similarly digital tools are developed within society and culture. The digital



tools, in their turn, model society and culture. The mind also constructs a particular vision of the society and culture according to its individual structure and peculiarities as well as the availability and affordances of representational means. In this particular model of investigation, understanding of dynamic interactions between mind and digital media emerges from observation through the progressive act of representing the interactions between an individual and society/culture. At the centre of the investigation is a bricoleur, a conscious observer, who observes her own mind processes through being engaged in self-reflective activity (see diagrams one & two).

Four domains of the abstracted investigative field: mind, digital media, individual and society/culture, exist within the systemic webwork of recurrent interactions, in which systems are changing together continuously and congruently [Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2012]. This is a concept of the constructivist systemic view that is the theoretical underpinning for this study. The things, the bricoles, that is – theoretical concepts, methods, digital tools and techniques, memory traces, digital artefacts, physical objects and past or imagined events – that are ‘collected’ by the bricoleur from the webwork of interacting systems, become the fragments with which she constructs new meanings. The processes of collecting can be described by borrowing from Benjamin (1982):

And for a true collector, every single thing in this system becomes an encyclopedia of all knowledge of the epoch, the landscape, the industry, and the owner from which it comes. It is the deepest enchantment of the collector to enclose the particular item within a magic circle [...]

Collecting is a form of practical memory and of all the profane manifestation of ‘nearness’ it is the

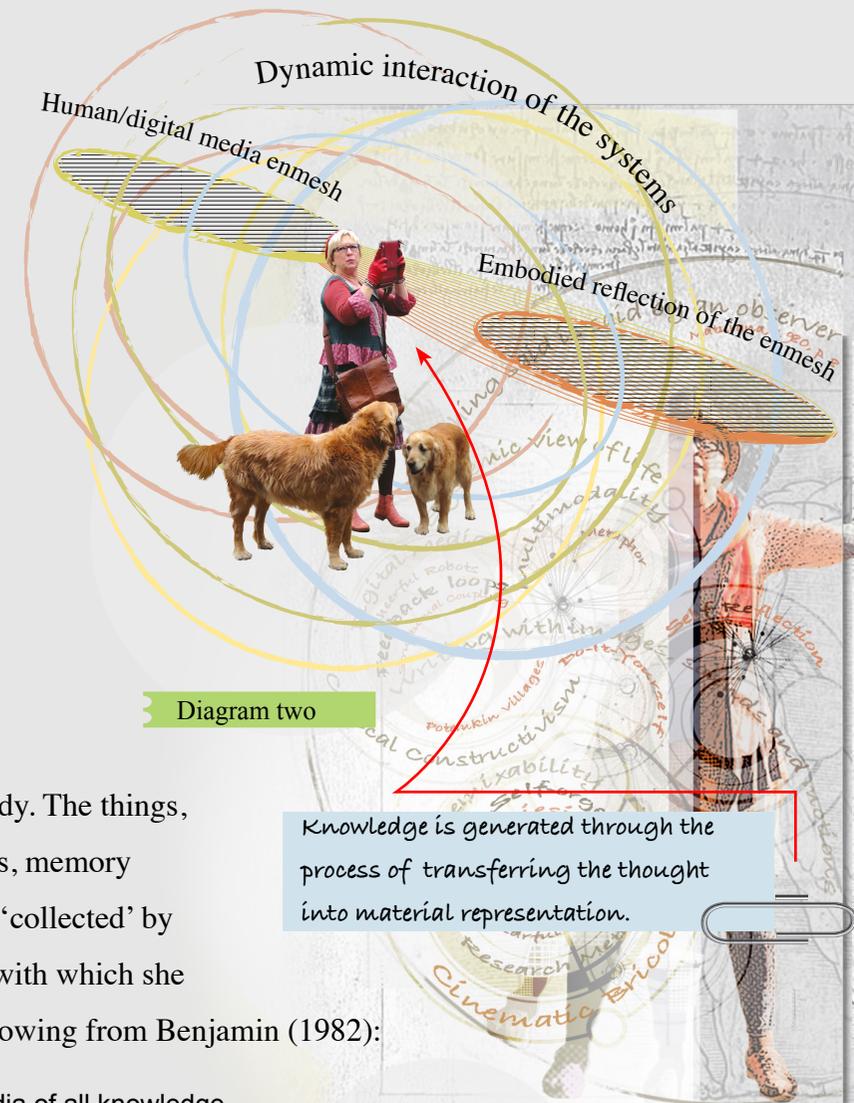


Diagram two

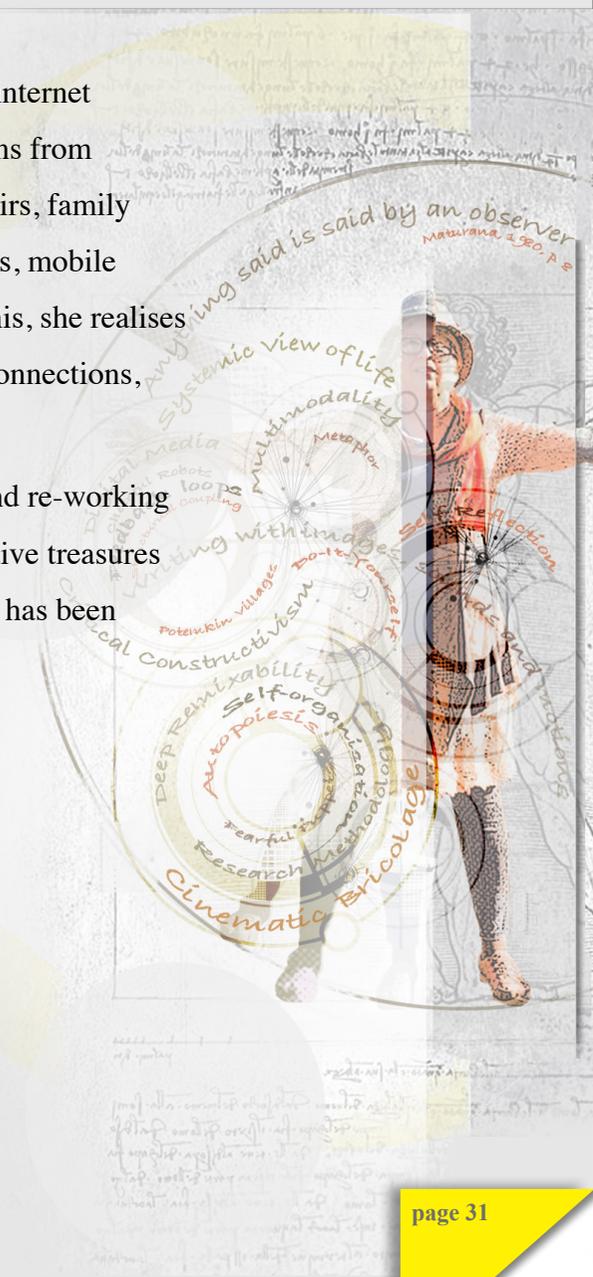
most binding [...] We construct here an alarm clock that rouses the kitsch of the previous century to 'assembly'. [p. 205]

The bricoleur collects objects from the systems' webwork – pieces of historical information from internet webpages, old family photos that she scans into a digital library, chunks of philosophical assumptions from Kindle books and academic articles, her parents' war decorations, quotes from other people's memoirs, family documents, YouTube snippets, a hand-embroidered table cloth, Facebook comments, internet images, mobile snapshots and screenshots – she begins to weave her pattern with the collected items. As she does this, she realises how tightly her own story is interlaced with the story of the world she lives in and she makes new connections, creates new links, consciously stitching herself into the fabric of the universe.

No matter how selective in its reflectivity of contemporary conditions, in collecting the bricoles and re-working them into compositions of new meaning, the bricoleur benefits by drawing upon the timeless collective treasures of the previous epochs that the internet so graciously places straight into our hands. And, from what has been collected, she samples and re-structures according to her present time into the future.

As Flusser (1985) envisages:

And with the appropriate keys, I can also project everything present, whether event or theory, into the future and so make it, too, present [...] All these possibilities are available to me in the present on my screen. And I myself can, just by pressing the appropriate buttons, affect this future by adding my own bits of information. For when everything has become present, there is no more future. What once was the future is now a set of possibilities for play in the present. [loc. 1530]

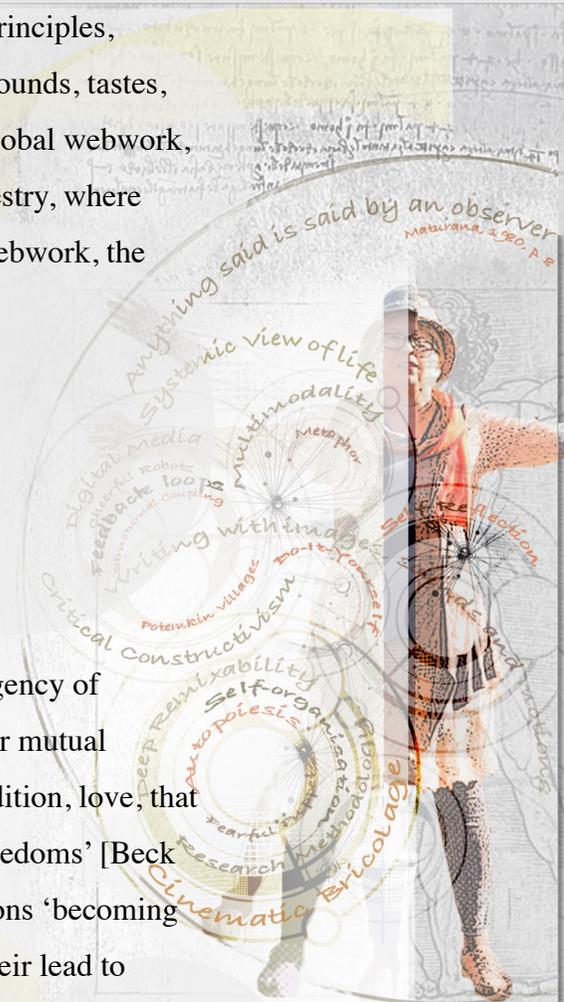


This immediate universe, for Flusser, is removed from the constraints of time and space, ‘a point of creative coexistence with all others’ [loc. 1544]. In such a universe, people formulate their ideas, forge their principles, discover, innovate by drawing from the vast webwork of the world’s generated knowledge, images, sounds, tastes, movements. People restructure things in their own way, constantly weaving individual bits into the global webwork, becoming part of that webwork – strings interwoven in the dynamic multi-dimensional universal tapestry, where people can assert their presence across the globe continuously and in no time. The metaphor of the webwork, the dynamic multidimensional social tapestry, brings about a new vision of the self.

As Bauman (2002) observes:

‘Individualisation’ now means something very different from what it meant 100 years ago and what it conveyed in the early times of the modern era – the time of extolled human ‘emancipation’ from the tightly knit web of communal dependency, surveillance and enforcement. [loc. 145]

The individual-string inside the social tapestry no longer feels so tightly kept. It exists by its own agency of ‘individualising’ and by doing so becomes an agent for ‘that daily reshaping and renegotiating of their mutual engagements which is called ‘society’ [loc. 139]. Whatever it was before – God, nature, morality, tradition, love, that wrapped the individual so securely inside its mantle – in modern life, releases her into ‘precarious freedoms’ [Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, loc. 356]. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim see the individuals in modern conditions ‘becoming high-wire dancers in the circus tent’ [loc. 356]. Elaborating on these authors’ vision, and following their lead to metaphoric logic, in the contemporary social environment, I cannot imagine the individuals on the high-wire without their mobile phones, taking ‘selfies’ between moves. In the digital webwork society, a good catch of a balance is ‘selfied’ and posted on Facebook. The ‘likes’ from ‘supportive’ friends are counted. The body of ‘likes’ is a new



safety-net, a webwork 'support group'. Within a chosen social context, people have never perceived themselves as important as their personal mobile digital devices make them believe they are. And they have never depended so much on a wide global community for validation of this belief.

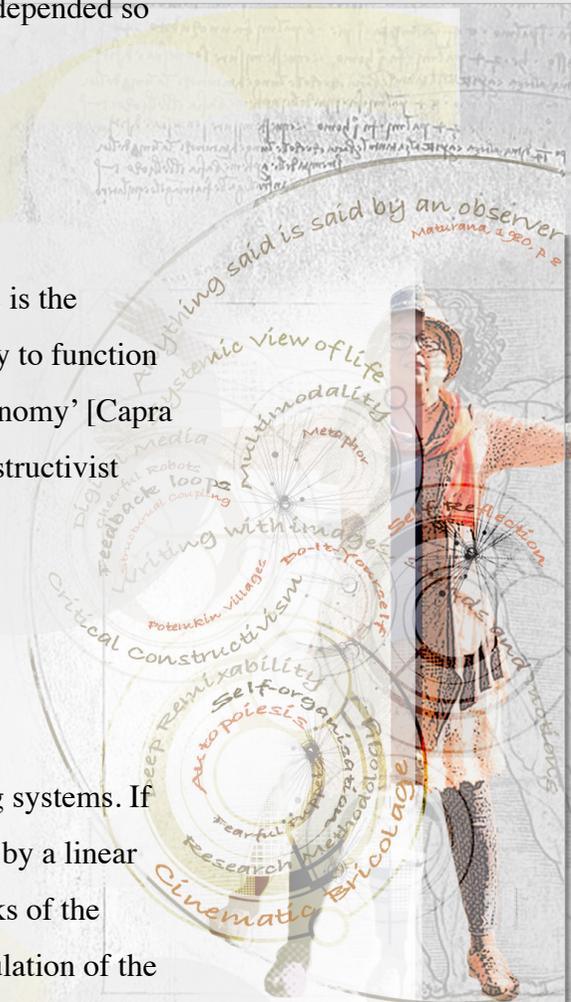
## 1.4 Systemic Thinking and Feedback Loops

Technology exposes vividly the dual double-sided position of the individuals living in society. This is the interplay of two opposite, but at the same time necessary for life, 'tendencies: an integrative tendency to function as part of a larger whole, and a self-assertive, or self-organising tendency to preserve individual autonomy' [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p.64]. In this is encapsulated a central, theoretical position of this study. This is a constructivist perspective of a systemic view of the world.

Systemic thinking is contextual, which is the opposite of analytical thinking. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole. [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 66]

A systems view of life is epitomised by non-linear dynamic interconnectedness between interacting systems. If knowledge-generation is modelled within a systemic view, its development will be characterised not by a linear progression, but by multiple recursive feedback loops. As 'an initial cause propagates around the links of the loop', it affects all other elements in the loop until it reaches the initial motion, 'resulting in self-regulation of the entire system' [p. 89].

This study is undertaken by a bricolage strategy of feedback loops developed by Berry (2004). Using this technique the bricoleur starts her journey from a pivot, a central idea of a study which, in this case, is the



development and trial of cinematic bricolage. The bricoleur then threads through the discourses and practices of relevant topics to generate findings. She comes back to her initial point to reflect on the findings, make adjustments and then threads into a new loop guided by the results of the previous.

The cinematic bricolage methodology, as framed in this study, is governed by five key principles:

- Using the tools and materials at hand;
- Collecting information from eclectic resources;
- Generating knowledge by threading with feedback loops;
- Reconstructing the generated data in a do-it-yourself manner and according to individual needs, interests and abilities;
- Articulating meaning by means of cinematic writing, that is, writing with images, sounds and movements.

I propose that cinematic bricolage as a knowledge-generation methodology can facilitate reconnected learning, which I see being achieved through research-oriented tasks with the focus placed on the learner's individual tendencies and personal experience integrated within wider social structures.



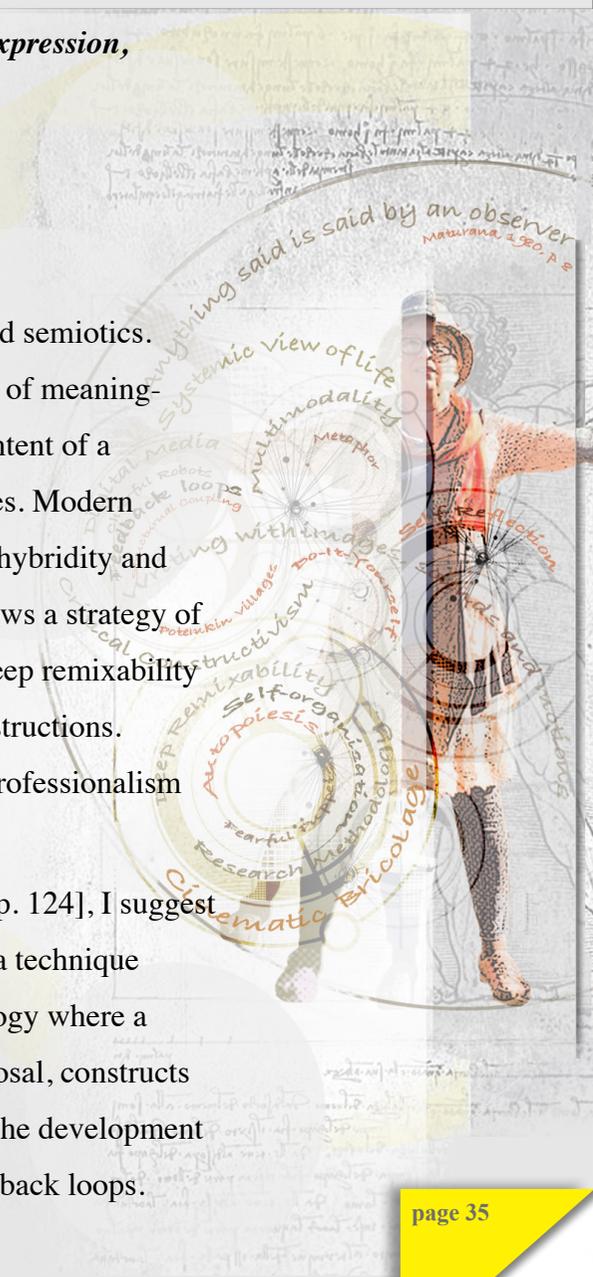
Therefore, the research question posed in this study is:

*To what extent can cinematic bricolage, as a research methodology and multimodal system of expression, contribute to constructions of knowledge-production?*

## 1.5 Overview of Chapters

**Chapter two** offers a brief account of some key concepts on the subject of meaning-making and semiotics. It discusses the relationship between language and multimodality, as well as digital texts and modes of meaning-making in relation to the specifics of the current study. As established, text(s) present the unified content of a digital page where meaning is constructed by a unified organisation (gestalt) of various digital modes. Modern technological advancements activate the development of such phenomena as multimodality, remix, hybridity and do-it-yourself (DIY). Bricolage as a research methodology uses tools and methods at hand and follows a strategy of eclecticism. It is established on the principles of multimodal embodiment of meaning resulting in deep remixability and continuous hybridity. Aesthetics is an important component in guiding cinematic bricolage constructions. However, the emphasis of aesthetics is placed not on being a channel for demonstration of artistic professionalism but as a mechanism for creative hermeneutics.

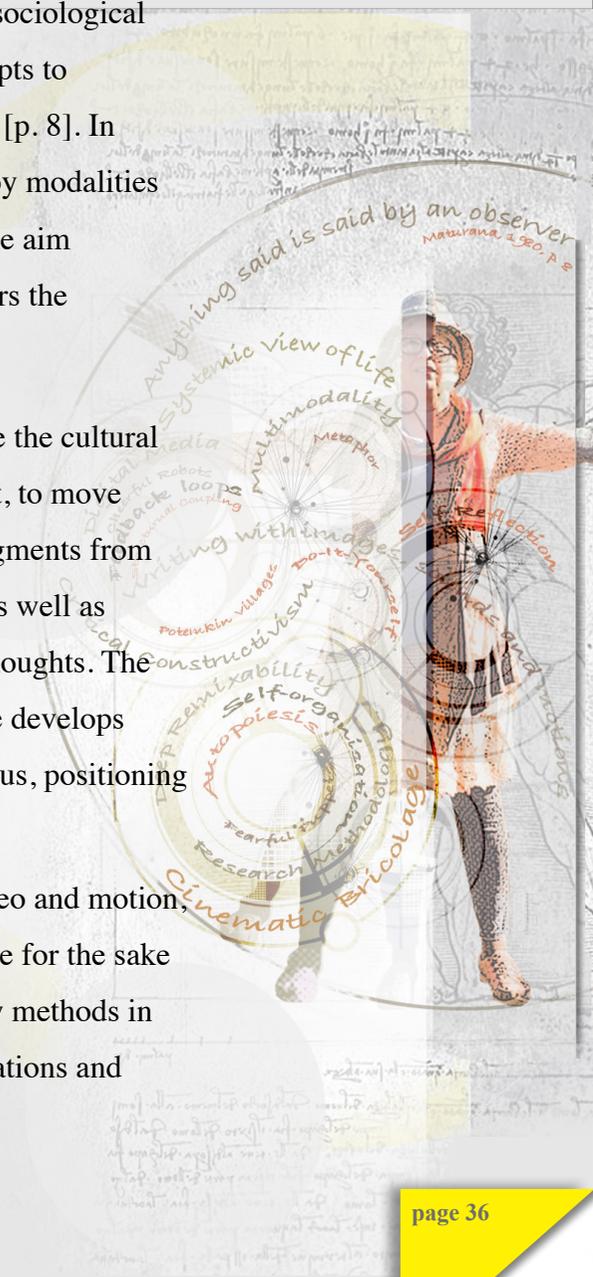
Drawing on McLuhan's (1962) concept of typography resembling cinema and a movie projector [p. 124], I suggest cinematic writing as a method for multimodal embodiment of meaning in cinematic bricolage; it is a technique of writing with images, sounds and motions. Cinematic bricolage, therefore, is a research methodology where a bricoleur collects existing data from the multiple resources at hand, works with the tools at her disposal, constructs new assemblages in a do-it-yourself manner and employs cinematic writing to construct meaning. The development of the argument in cinematic bricolage is not a linear process, but carried out through recursive feedback loops.



The validity of cinematic bricolage for research-oriented projects is trialled in the probes: chapter eight, *The Tea Party* and chapter nine, *The Harlequin*. These chapters are based on Mills (1959) notion of the sociological imagination. This entails ‘the most fruitful form of self-consciousness’ [p. 7] evolved through attempts to understand ‘the personal troubles of milieu’ in intersection with ‘public issues and social structures’ [p. 8]. In preparation for the construction of these probes, I consider examples of research projects that employ modalities other than writing, such as non-digital or visual, to explore private matters within social settings. The aim of testing cinematic bricolage through the probes is to examine the ways in which digital media alters the knowledge-generation process.

**Chapter three** discusses how the affordances and ubiquitousness of digital media that originate the cultural logic of remix, also propels practices of individually customised research approaches. I propose that, to move in unison with digital culture, research should reflect the culture of remix through a synthesis of fragments from existing theoretical assumptions, methodologies and data collected from libraries and the internet, as well as that generated by the researcher, to assemble new configurations of the embodiment of individual thoughts. The bricoleur remixes the elements by application of previously acquired skills along with those that she develops through her ‘tinkering’ with bricoles – bits of informational, factual, visual, audio and video data, thus, positioning herself within the circularity of ‘knowing’  ‘doing’.

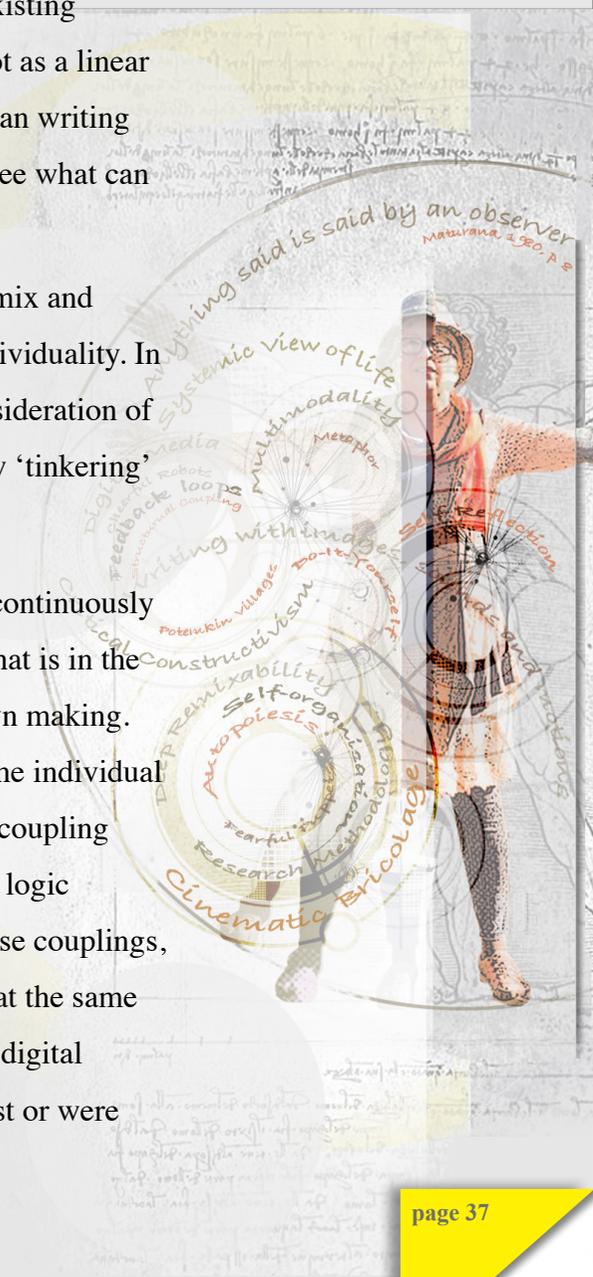
I advocate the implementation of cinematic bricolage as a gradual integration of visual, audio, video and motion, representational forms into a familiar mode of meaning articulation, such as writing. This is not done for the sake of pursuing novelty as such, but in search of new ways of generating knowledge. In looking for new methods in constructing meaning, I remind the reader of the ‘forgotten’ aspects of atmospheric, contextual narrations and encourage consideration of the possibility of their ‘recovery’ through cinematic writing.



Multimodality in academic writing is an emerging genre and this thesis should be considered as existing provisionally within this field. I see researching and writing with images, sounds and movements not as a linear process of making meaning through alphabetic constructions, where the inclusion of modes other than writing appear as an interference to the flow of thought, but as an invitation to 'step behind the thought' to see what can be concealed there and what can be revealed by applying other semiotic resources.

As a cultural product, cinematic bricolage has similar properties to the cultural phenomenon of remix and therefore, a capacity for endless hybridisation that responds to personal interest, thus cultivating individuality. In this chapter, I present examples of projects in which students construct meaning multimodally. Consideration of affordances and limitations of the modes of meaning-embodiment leads to further discussion of how 'tinkering' with generated bricoles can activate discovery of new pathways to learn from personal experience.

**Chapter four** explains the systems vision of the world through the metaphor of a webwork of continuously interacting systems. Autopoiesis is self-making nested in a larger network, an individual organism that is in the process of endlessly recreating itself according to its environment and within the boundary of its own making. The existing configuration determines the alterations in the process of structural coupling between the individual organism and its environment, or an individual and the social/cultural establishment. The structural coupling investigated in this study is embodied in the interaction between human cognition and digital media logic (human/computer cognition enmesh) on one hand and the individual and society on the other. In these couplings, on the human cognition side, is a bricoleur who is a producer of self-reflective representations and, at the same time, an observer and meaning-maker of the self-reflective representations. On the computer side is digital media, that by its ubiquity and affordances activates certain ways of representations that did not exist or were not easily realised before.



On the human cognition side, this chapter considers such modes of thinking as local/linear and systematic/analytical. While both modes of thinking are necessary in the meaning-making process, I propose that metaphoric cognition can be considered an effective mechanism for cinematic writing. For example, in research tasks, students, teachers and scholars can generate knowledge by applying systemic thinking, starting with the existing competency and skills and building upon them and forging new knowledge by recursive 'threading' with 'self-amplifying loops'. With 'the pilot-bricole pinned down' at the centre of the envisioned experimental field, the bricoleur develops the study by gathering the appropriate bricoles (theoretical concepts, methods, techniques, images, sounds and so forth) from the relevant interacting systems and uses the collected bricoles to continue weaving a pattern until it elucidates the pilot-bricole. The development of the study in this case cannot be explained by a metaphor of a path going from the point of departure to the point of arrival in a straight line (or 'as the crow flies'), but by a metaphor of multiple feedback loops and the pattern of the traces that they leave behind.

**Chapter five** maps out a theoretical framework for the study. 'Threading through' and 'stitching together' fragments from critical constructivism learning theory and cinematic bricolage by applying the method of structural coupling. The generation of knowledge results from the interaction within the webwork of systems. The experimental field of this study is delineated around structural coupling between the observer ↔ re-representor – the cinematic bricoleur - and a webwork of historical, social and cultural systems, in which the bricoleur's personal biography is embedded. One of the main postulates of the constructivist perspective is the centrality of the observer (bricoleur). The circularity of observing, representing and collecting, remixing and reconstructing meaning in a new, do-it-yourself, individualised manner (bricolaging) leads to the notion of autonomous knowledge production and communication that includes personalisation of semiotic resources through the process of emotioning ↔ languaging.



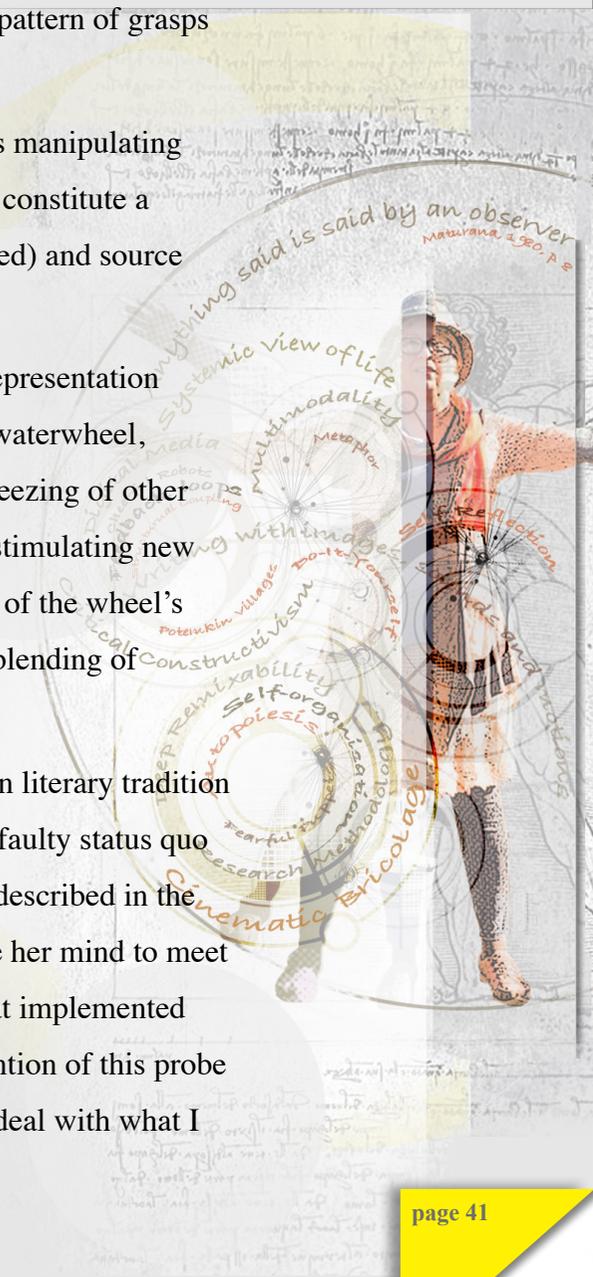


process of conceptual blending in which primary metaphors blend together into larger conglomerations by means of associations. As conceptual blending never stops, it forms larger conglomerations of the perceptual pattern of grasps schemata, which is the conceptual framework of a personal worldview.

Perceptual data, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), is gathered by daily experiences, such as manipulating objects, experiencing yourself in space, social interactions and empathic projections. Together, they constitute a mechanism for constructing primary metaphors by cross-mapping between target (what is represented) and source (the symbol by which the representation is made) domains.

In my metaphor, the waterwheel is a symbol for the process of meaning-making. The process of representation  meaning-making can be envisioned through running rivulets (memory streams) that touch the waterwheel, (the process of meaning production) and set it in motion. The turning of the waterwheel causes unfreezing of other memory grasps turning them into rivulets. New streams change the direction of the moving wheel, stimulating new memory flashes through associations that, in turn, cause new alterations in the rhythm and direction of the wheel's motion. The iceberg metaphor represents constructions of what I have termed 'grasp schemata' – a blending of primary mental grasps.

**Chapter eight** is the first probe, *The Tea Party*. It is an allegoric narrative written in the Russian literary tradition of parody. Satire in Russia is a 'an aesthetic phenomenon,' 'the artist's balancing improvement of a faulty status quo in life' (Ryan-Hayes, 2006). The iceberg metaphor is a stage for this probe, implying that the event described in the chapter is imagined, originating inside the bricoleur's mind, not in reality. The bricoleur steps inside her mind to meet the 'fathers' of communism – Marx and Engels – and the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party that implemented the idea into real life – Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and others who have gathered for a tea party. The intention of this probe is to observe the processes of representation and meaning-making in gaining self-awareness and to deal with what I



find a difficult aspect of my life: a profound negativity towards my Russian heritage. By juxtaposing metaphoric expressions with real life events – the tea party inside the garden with apples and strawberries and the people who established the merciless communist regime and destroyed millions of lives – I try to achieve contrast and expose the rawness of my feelings.

The conversation at the tea party gives rise to the question of the individual's role in society. Growing up in an ideological construct where the significance of classes overrode the manifestation of individual expression, unless it was used to glorify the communist party, I developed an antipathy not only towards Soviet ideology but also the culture that accepted this severe form of conformity, and still does.

The purpose of this chapter is to see how digital media facilitates the exploration of my own identity and individuality within certain social conditions. This is done by gathering data, constructing metaphoric patterns and image schemata, as well as decoding cultural symbols and images, songs, sounds and application of movements that emerge from the recesses of my mind during the process of representation.

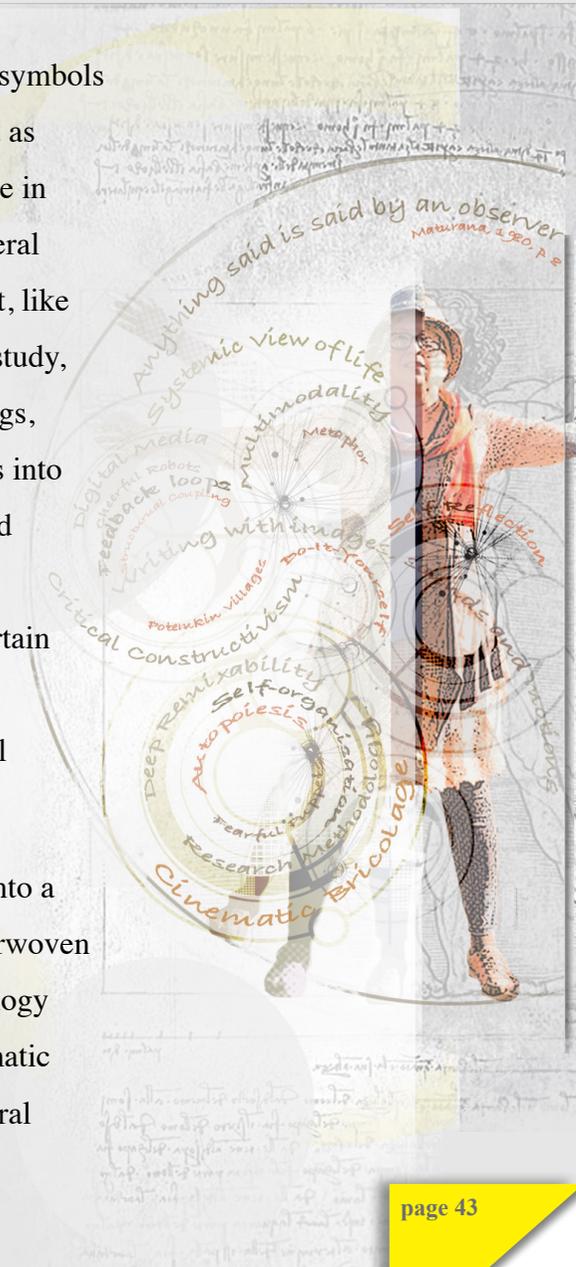
**Chapter nine, *The Harlequin***, is the second probe. It is built out of fragments of my childhood experiences that reflect life inside late Soviet communist society. These fragments address Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of primary metaphoric logic that comes from everyday experience: manipulating objects, being in spaces, interacting with people and empathic projections. In this chapter, I look more closely at how metaphoric logic facilitates production of meaning-making with cinematic bricolage. I try to understand symbolic representations that come to the surface as a result of elaborating on my mental image schemata. I listen to childhood songs that stir up strong feelings, try to read their emotional coding and connect them to the conceptual constructs that I have developed throughout my childhood. Two colours – grey, like Russian crows or quilted jackets worn in Soviet labour camps and red, like the Soviet banner, Kremlin star, the pioneer scarf or the



blood of millions who died in honour of the Communist Revolution – are especially strong, symbolising a contrast to a different world, a world that lived in a full-colour spectrum.

**Chapter ten** analyses the two probes. Here, I am looking at narrative, visual, sound and motion symbols trying to decode their original meaning and trace the ways in which larger grasp schemata developed as a result of conceptual blending. In doing so, I adopt Eisenstein's (1949) concept of overtonal montage in which he uses heterogeneous stimuli to create one unified emotional response. I suggest that a collateral vibration of the experience helps identify a symbol-anchor for a primary, sensory grasp of events that, like a rhizome, shoots its roots through the new mental structures. In the two probes constructed for this study, I represented strong sensory-motor responses with such symbols as strawberries, crows, Beatles' songs, the movements of Stalin's pipe smoke, and many others. They resulted in deeply-rooted progressions into underlying conceptual mental constructions. Upon further investigation, the symbols were not limited to only personal associations but to culturally related formulations to more common, social events. Through this discovery, the act of autopoiesis in coupling with an environment and responding to certain circumstances in analogous ways to other individuals became evident. The act of knowing presented itself through individually constructed meaning and realisation that such a construction had a cultural underpinning.

**Chapter eleven** is the concluding chapter that 'picks up' the looping threads and ties them up into a final conceptual pattern. It completes the refinement of cinematic bricolage key threads that are 'interwoven into a ball of yarn' representing a circularity of the process of knowledge generation. Making an analogy of Marx's (1844) concept of alienated labour with traditional learning, I argue that multimodal cinematic bricolage can facilitate reconnected learning, which I see as learning with the learner occupying central position in generation of knowledge based on the learner's natural interest, innate abilities, personal



experiences or those related to the learner. In this chapter, I acknowledge the present constraints and limitations on the use of cinematic bricolage, including the lack of appropriate software and technical support, and insufficient multimodal literacy among students, teachers and scholars alike. These disadvantages, however, do not lessen the valuable educational properties of cinematic bricolage but rather map out directions for this knowledge-production methodology to be developed and refined.



# Cinematic Bricolage: Ways of Gathering, Reconstructing and Comprehending

## Introduction: TINKERING WITH CULTURAL SIGNS AND TOOLS

This chapter can be seen as the researcher – a bricoleur, in this study – ‘taking the load off’ after a long walk, sitting down and saying: ‘Here, finally, is my ‘knowledge space’. I have a bricoleur’s bag with me – a spacious pouch with a multitude of pockets filled with my life experiences, my feelings, my thoughts, as well as a number of objects and tools for revealing and retrieving these fragments from the pockets, mixing them with other fragments generated from various resources and by various means. These are my bricoles. I will make do by ‘adapting the bricoles of the world’ [Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 7]. My ‘life story’, my ‘biography’ will be my bricolage [p. 7]. I will organise ‘a network of relations’ by ‘poetic ways of making do’ [de Certeau, 1984, loc. 98]. I will practise ‘mixtures of rituals and makeshifts, manipulation of spaces ...’ [loc. 98], ‘the artisan-like inventiveness’ [loc. 134]. I will tinker with my bricoles in my own way, making meaning of myself interwoven into the historical and cultural nets of my existence. I will do this by combining my ‘imagination with whatever knowledge tools’ I have ‘at hand in’ my repertoire and ‘with whatever artefacts are available in the given context’ to meet my complex knowledge production task (Rogers, 2012, p. 3).

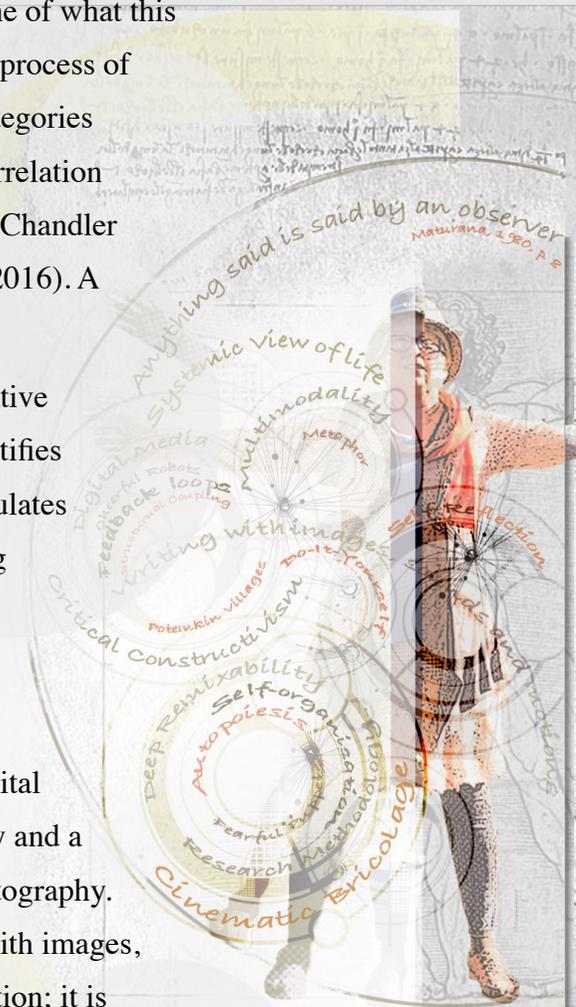
In a nutshell, I will be using a research method that is ‘a critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 3), a method called bricolage. When bricolage ‘is used within the domain of qualitative research it denotes methodological practices explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality’ (p. 1).



This chapter is the preparation for a bricolage journey. The first section gives an introductory outline of what this bricolage journey is about and the questions it attempts to answer. Namely it gives an account of the process of self-reflective knowledge generation by means of multimodal writing. The section discusses such categories of communicating as language and how this relates to semiotics and multimodality, as well as the correlation between writing, speech, texts and modes. This section draws from the work of a social semiologist, Chandler (2002), and the work of Kress (2010, 2012), Gibbons (2012), and Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran (2016). A mini-animation on page thirteen illustrates the described interrelations as adapted to this study.

The next section discusses, deep remixability, which has become a widespread cultural communicative practice with the introduction of personal computers and growing connectivity to the internet. It identifies the remix correspondence with a contemporary do-it-yourself (DIY) tradition and, by so doing, articulates the ontological quality of bricolage as a research methodology. That is, the bricoleur remixes existing and culturally familiar material components, as well as abstract concepts, in a way where creativity is manifested not in a skillful artistic production but in finding unique and novel pathways to make meaning.

One of these pathways is cinematic writing. This chapter focuses attention on the correlation of digital multimodal writing with cinematographic traditions. It starts from McLuhan's analogy of typography and a movie projector and then proceeds with defining multimodal writing from the perspective of cinematography. I suggest that writing in multimodal bricolage can be considered cinematic writing, that is, writing with images, movements and sounds. Production of cinematic writing can be compared to amateur artistic production; it is not about pulling off a high level of creative accomplishment but utilising aesthetics as a special quality of mind that allows access to cultural sensibilities. Such access is achieved, as Mills (1959) sees it, through the application of sociological imagination.



The notion of sociological imagination is adopted as an interpretive cognitive tool for the development of this study, especially for the assemblage of the probes in chapters eight and nine. The current chapter also explains that the interpretive device for this bricolage is forged together from such concepts as sociological imagination and critical hermeneutics. This means that sociological aspects are embodied by means of writing with images, movements and sounds, which is cinematic writing with the application of metaphor, allegory and exegesis. Critical hermeneutics, as conceptualised by Kincheloe and Steinberg (2003), is here directed to the self-reflective dimension of this study and is concerned with the ideological forces that shaped my consciousness growing up in Soviet Russia. The interpretive device, that is, cinematic writing, therefore helps me to complete my intellectual journey of exploration of the representational capacities of digital media. It consists of revisiting my childhood memories as well as interweaving them with both metaphoric and allegoric extensions and factual data.

As an example, I discuss the study done by de Beer (2009). In her self-reflection, de Beer examines and attempts to make meaning of her childhood experiences through production of a sculpture series. The aesthetic dimension allows her to explore the cultural sensibilities through her own sensual involvement in moulding forms and working with the medium of her choosing and by doing so 'reconstruct a fragmented personal and cultural identity' (p. 77). Her study informs and inspires me to see my own culturally fragmented and uprooted identity and through embodying it by means of cinematic writing, make meaning of the selfhood embedded into a social matrix.



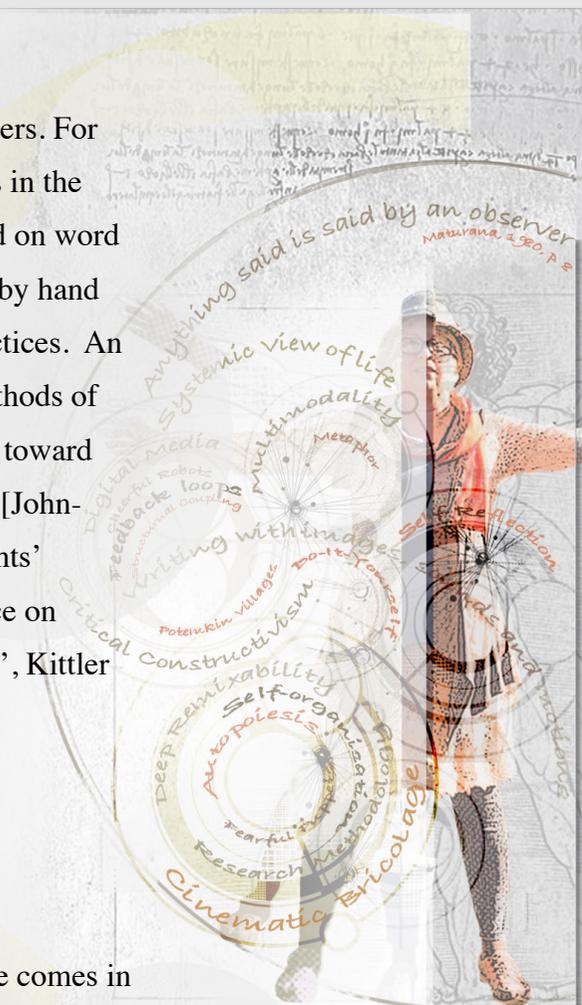
## 2.1 Ways of Meaning-Making in the Digital Age

### 2.1.1 The Act of Knowing

Equipped with personal computers, contemporary scholarly writers are word processing practitioners. For example, in relation to postgraduate research, Andrews and England (2012) argue: ‘All dissertations in the twenty-first century are digital in one sense, in that even the conventional ones are mostly composed on word processors’ [p. 38]. From this point of view, it can be said that the transition from academic writing by hand or on a typewriter has, in general, almost completely given in to the monopoly of computerised practices. An important aspect of transition from one form of writing to another is that it not only changes the methods of thought embodiment, but also works in reverse. It influences ‘inner speech’ that is ‘directed inward, toward the self. It is highly condensed language of thought where each word may stand for manifold ideas’ [John-Steiner, 1997, p. 111]. As Nietzsche (1882) wrote: ‘Our writing tools are also working on our thoughts’ (as cited in Kittler, 1999, p. 200). Kittler (1999), recognised the significance of increased dependence on technology asserting: ‘Media determine our situation’ (p. xxxix). In analysing Nietzsche’s ‘situation’, Kittler argues:

Nietzsche, as proud of the publication of his mechanisation as any philosopher, changed from arguments to aphorisms, from thoughts to puns, from rhetoric to telegram style. That is precisely what is meant by the sentence that our writings tools are also working on our thoughts. (p. 203).

Writing is an expansion of our inner speech. What we tell ourselves about the world we experience comes in types of inner speech, identified by John-Steiner (1997), as ‘jotting to the self’, ‘staccato’ and ‘telegraphic style’ [p. 112]. She also refers to a thinking process, as the title of her book suggests, *Notebooks of the Mind*. In other words, as we observe the world, we take brief ‘staccato’ notes. And when we write, we unpack the staccatos.



We release the saturation condensed in drops into a flood of meaning. Media is a conduit that shapes the unpacking and facilitates an explicit embodiment of meaning. It tints with colour that which is transparent, gives sounds to that which has no voice and shapes and moves that which otherwise would never be seen.

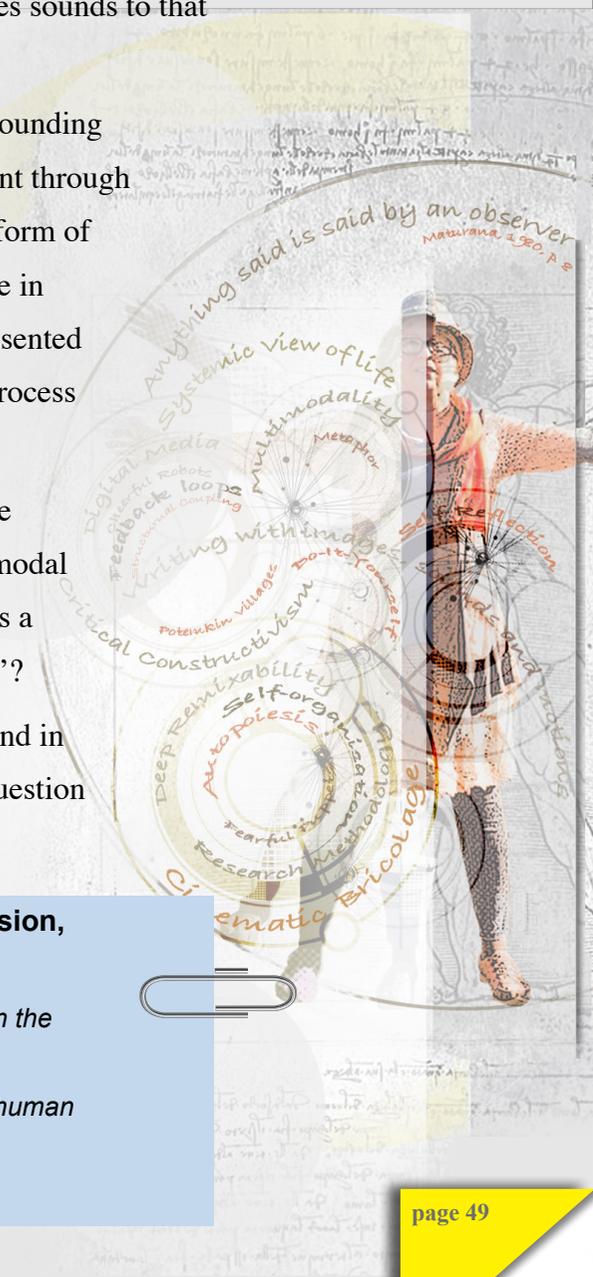
To observe experience is to understand something beyond 'what occurs only in relation to the surrounding world on a purely 'physical level' (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 26). The description becomes evident through a cognitive operation of transforming the essence of experience, derived from reflection, into some form of symbolic representation. Maturana and Varela argue that 'every reflection [...] invariably takes place in language, which is our distinctive way of being human and being humanly active' (p. 26). The represented essence of the experience is an embodied meaning that we have made out of that experience. This process is an 'act of knowing' that 'brings forth a world' (p. 26).

If it is accepted that 'every reflection takes place in language', what can we say about reflecting the lived experience in writing music, singing a song, dancing, or expressing this in painting or a multimodal composition? Can the expressions of experience through these creative modalities, individually or as a composition, be considered languages and constitute 'acts of knowing' which 'bring forth the world'?

This study is concerned with the acts of knowing that take place in multimodal scholarly writing and in understanding how this can 'bring forth a world'. Following this, the study is guided by one main question and two sub-questions:

**To what extent can digital media, as a research methodology and system of expression, contribute to constructions of knowledge-production?**

- 1) *How does availability and accessibility of the digital tools of production shape cultural approaches in the compilation of knowledge?*
- 2) *In what ways does cinematic bricolage, as a research methodology, facilitate understanding of the human computer logic intermesh and influence the development of multimodal learning tasks?*



## 2.1.2 Semiotics, Multimodality and Language

In this section, I clarify what I understand semiotic resource, language, and multimodality to be for the purposes of this study.

### a) Semiotics

In relation to meaning-making, this study is concerned with culturally constructed systems of representation. They are known as semiotic systems.

According to Chandler (2002), semiotics 'is the study of signs' [p. 1].

In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. Contemporary semioticians study signs not in isolation but as part of semiotic 'sign-systems' (such as a medium or genre). They study how meanings are made and how reality is represented. [p. 2]

In this study, I understood acts of knowing as taking place through the observation of events and unpacking of inner speech – 'staccatos of words', 'telegrams of thoughts' and 'notebooks of the mind' – into physically evident signs systems. To simplify the identification of the mental categories listed in the previous sentence, I propose to see them as 'mental notebooks entries' or mental grasps of the observed or remembered experience. The unpacking or meaning-making of the mental grasps is understood through the process of representation of the mental grasps by means of digital multimodal semiotic systems. According to Chandler (2002), semiotic systems consist of symbols, icons and indexes.

**Symbols** are the signs that refer to their objects by virtue of an agreed rule (words, sentences, mathematical system of representation, music symbols, Morse code, and so on) [Chandler, 2002, p. 38];

**Iconics** are the signs that represent their object 'mainly by its similarity' (no smoking, hotel, stop signs, and so on) [p. 39];



**Indexes** are the signs that indicate something which does not share similarity with the objects of its representation but has a 'genuine relation' between the objects and their visual appeal (sundial, finger-print, a cupid, and so on) [p. 41].

These three groups of signs are often referred to as modes, but to avoid terminology overlaps, I refer to them as signs in this study; and what signs create together is referred to as a mode. A visual composition is a mode that is created by application of symbols, icons or indexes, together or in isolation; audio is a mode that can be used to portray a meaningful assemblage of sounds and to be part of visual expression. Symbolic signs organised in words and sentences are representations of the mode of written word. Video and animation are combinations of several different modes: images, speech and written word, audio and motion elements; and these are, in turn, constructed of signs: symbols, icons and indexes. In digital representations, signs are empowered with a series of behavioural properties which by themselves constitute modes, such as animations or hyperlinking. Ensembles of several representational modes are called multimodal.

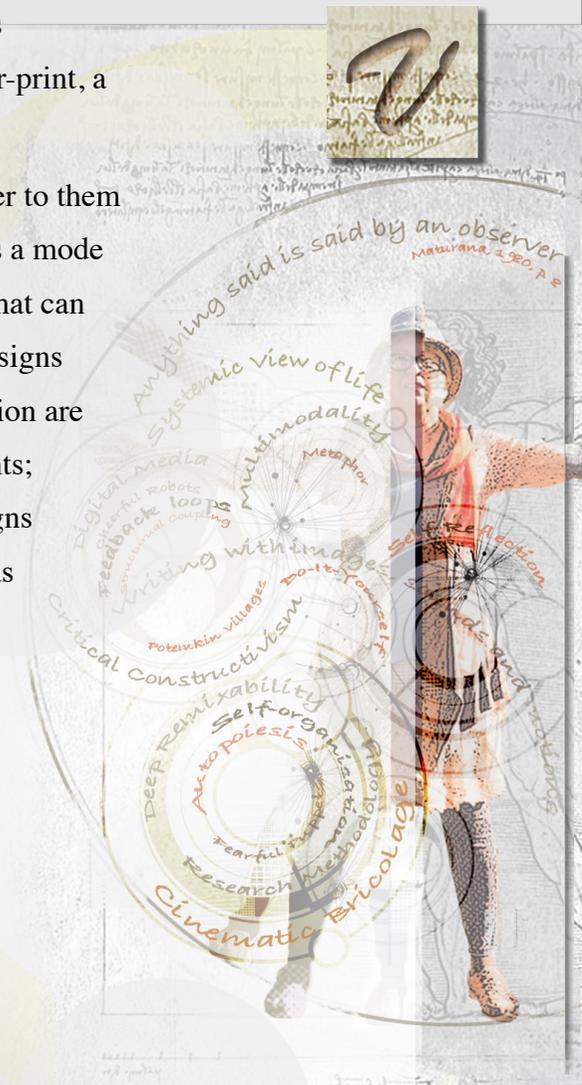
### b) Multimodality

In the video, Gunther Kress (2012), one of the founders of social semiotics and multimodality, provides a metaphor of language to make sense of the term mode. He explains that if there is a socially/culturally constructed system of signs that facilitates production and expression of meaning, then they can create a mode. I adopt this articulation as a terminological description for a mode. In this study, I employ alphabetic writing, images, sounds and motions to construct and represent meaning.

Because I use a several modes of expression, I develop my personal *multimodal*

*Berit Hendriksen and  
Gunther Kress discuss the  
notions of 'mode'.*

March, 2012



system of representation. *Multimodality* refers to the type of communication realised through application of various semiotic resources, systems of signs to embody meaning within a particular artefact or event [Gibbons, 2012, p. 6]. Reading this document, however, it should be noted that to be recognised as a doctoral thesis, its production must comply with certain traditions. Along with demonstrating skill in constructing an argument based on epistemological and ontological considerations, the ‘length’ of the text remains ‘a reliable signifier of (academic) significance’ [Kress, 2012, p. 249]. For this reason, a written word articulation of ideas prevails over other semiotic modes.

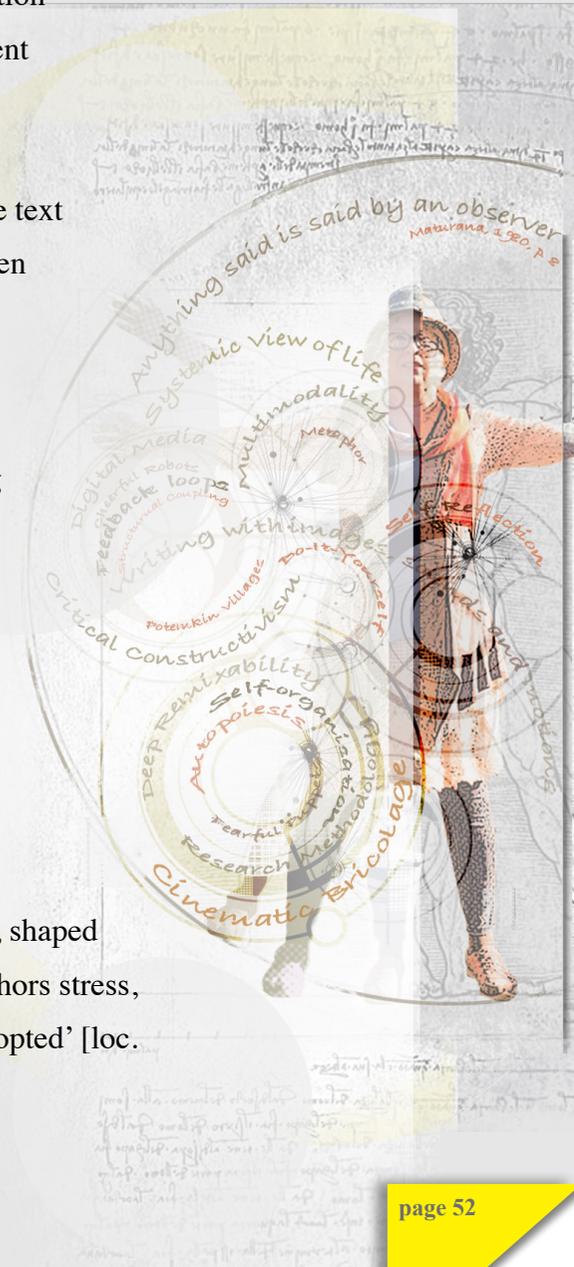
### c) Language

Jewitt, Bezemer and O’Halloran (2016) make a distinction between language as speech and writing and other modes as semiotic resources. They note, ‘that we break with the practice of naming all means of making meaning ‘language’, prefixed with such terms as ‘body’ or ‘sign’ or ‘non-verbal’ or ‘visual’ [loc. 406].

These authors take this position on the grounds of ‘a dominant viewpoint’ in which language, as speech and writing:

- a) is the most resourceful, important and widely used of all modes; and
- b) can be studied in isolation. [loc. 406]

Mode, they propose, should not be confused with language but be considered as ‘a set of resources, shaped over time by socially and culturally organised communities, for making meaning’ [loc. 406]. The authors stress, however, that such terminology is used only ‘for the moment’ as ‘it has not (yet) been universally adopted’ [loc. 416].



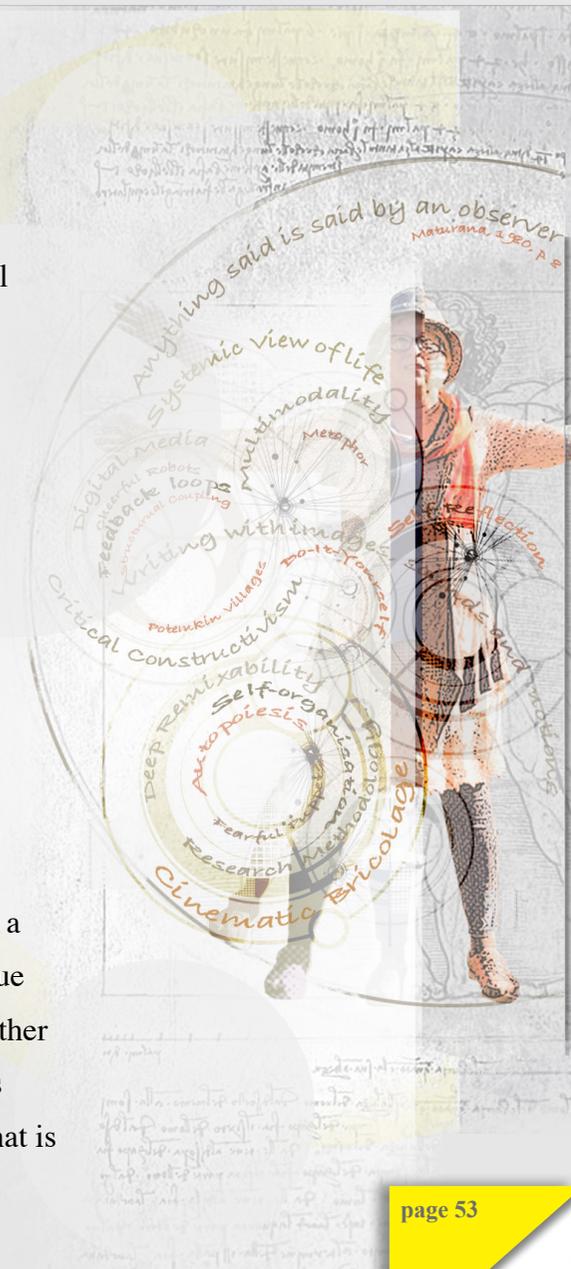
Given that the landscape of multimodality is still in the process of being mapped and that there is 'a certain conception of language as being somehow more important to other modes' [loc. 434], it is important to make clear the position this study taken in this regard.

### 2.1.3 Correlation Between Language, Text and Modes

In arguing language (textual media) has a privileged position within the network of representational systems, Katherine Hayles (2013) states that:

Textual media constitute a crucial aspect of this media landscape. Arguably even more powerful as historical resources than visual and aural media, they provide primary access to the thoughts, beliefs, discoveries, arguments, developments, and events that have preceded us: they hold the key to understand the past, analysing the present, and preparing for the future. It is no accident, then, that textual media are central to many humanities disciplines, including history, philosophy, religion, languages, and literatures among others. [loc. 165]

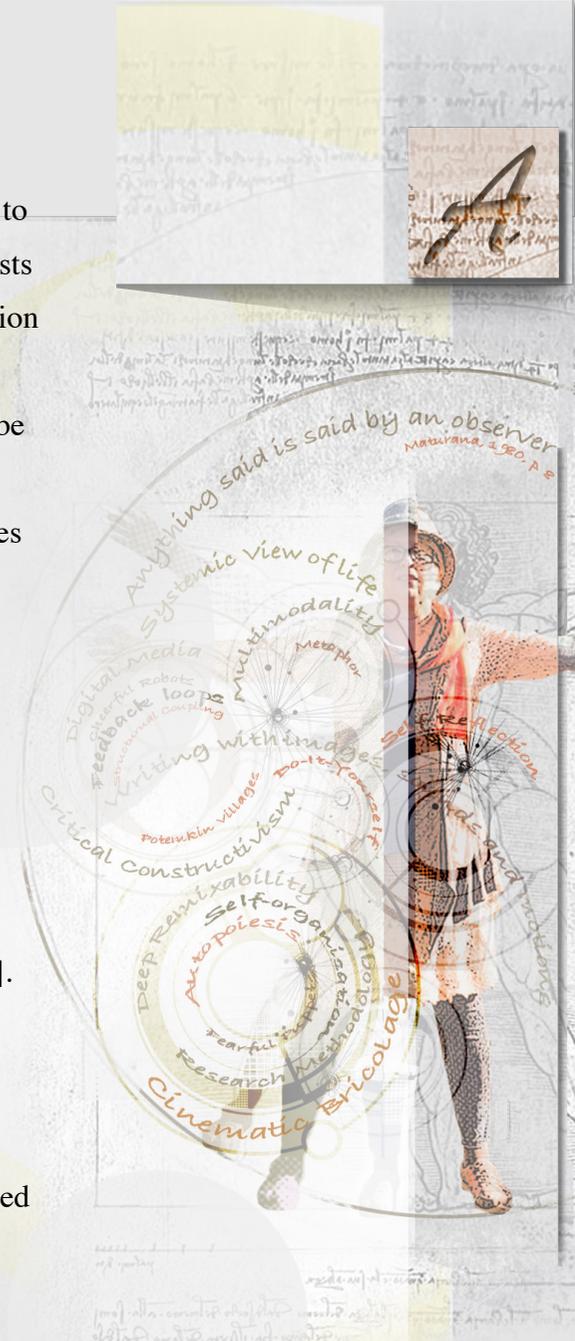
While I agree that language as written text is 'the most powerful communication system by far' [Chandler, 2002, p. 9], I would like to look at it from a different perspective. This is that of contemporary ways of communication in which the internet occupies the position of centre stage. 'The point is that language is almost always part of a bigger whole, namely a 'text' that is made with a number of different modes', write Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran [2016, loc. 598]. The authors argue that it is simply impossible to analyse language in isolation but that it must always be in relation to other components used in the composition within a text. Writing specifically about the internet, the authors state that the texts found there are 'almost always multimodal – in fact, the challenge is to find one that is not!' [loc. 605].



New digital technologies make it possible for everyone to operate within textual multimodality and to do so as an everyday practice. Scrolling down the Facebook News Feed, I noticed that none of the posts consisted only of language as words; every one had as a central element either a photo, video, animation or drawing, some with interactive elements included. In other words, every post is a composition of multimodal elements with new opportunities continually presenting themselves for multimodality to be used in a more extended and improved manner. Emails can, perhaps, be considered as a more formal way of communicating but they also often carry a number of attachments and hyperlinks, which makes the language used in them intertwined with what is attached or linked to them. That is to say that the language used in emails is part of a larger text.

To converge, although Kress' explanation (see video on page 8) of the semiotic modes in terms of language assists in understanding of modes' functionality, the definition of the terms language and text in this study is adopted from Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran (2016). Namely, language means speech or writing [loc. 414]. The language is part of such categories as a social media post, message, newsletter, website, email or written document. The content of these writing spaces altogether is defined as text. Inclusion of various modes of representation is characterised as multimodal [loc. 605]. Text is a composition of representational modes, in which language is one. Therefore, in this study, language is considered to be a mode.

The term 'texts' is assigned to the digital pages of the thesis that are multimodal compositions of representational modes. Language as a mode is embodied mainly in written word, sometimes expressed as speech.



Screen-shots taken from the News Feed on my personal Facebook page and patched together in Adobe Photoshop

The modes are:

- Layout – that consists of images, shapes, colour, letterform with applied type-faces, screenshots taken from the internet, and specific organisation of design elements into one textual representation;
- Images – that can be expressed as graphics, photographs, drawings, components of video recordings and screenshots;
- Audio – elements that can be presented as separate sounds, music or songs, extracts from audio books, and recorded speech;
- Animations – as movements applied to the visual components and synchronised with audio and video segments;
- Video – as fragments from YouTube videos and recorded videos that can also be part of animated pieces.

The term text can also be applied to the whole thesis when it is referred to as a multimodal artefact.

However, in this case, I would prefer to use the term bricolage.

In this example, the text is a multimodal composition consisting of the following modes:

- layout of the page;
- language presented as dummy writing: *sed ut perspiciatis unde;*
- image
- animations (text and image)
- audio; and
- video.



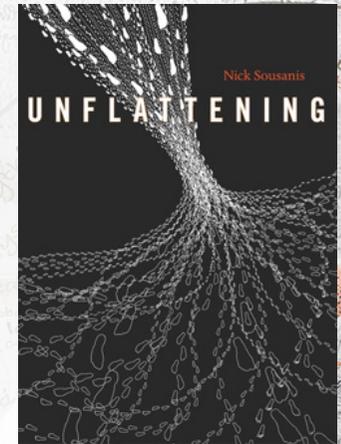
an observer  
naturana, 190, p. 5



## 2.1.4 Emergence of Hybrid Writing Genres

Based on the view that language is either speech or written word, I would like to consider another aspect of multimodality, that of hybridisation. Digital media allows for the interpretation of 'the world or our experience in a new way' by 'combining and possibly reconfiguring already familiar media representations (photos, video, maps, 3D objects, web pages, panoramic photos, and so on)' [Manovich, 2001, loc. 3421]. Such a recombination, Manovich writes, 'represents the meeting of various techniques that previously belonged to different mediums' and the origination 'of new hybrid media species' [loc. 3368]. Considering the technique with which these hybrid media species are achieved, they can be termed as recombinational hybrids.

Since language can be considered as a binary mode that includes speech and writing, it can facilitate or be incorporated into recombinational hybridisation with other modes. For example, comics as a genre implies telling a story by means of writing and imaging. In this genre, words and images collaborate with each other without a defined domination of one over another. Nick Sousanis (2015) from Columbia University is the first person to have completed a doctoral study by writing and drawing it entirely in a comic book format. Sousanis' graphic text, *Unflattening*, signifies an important step in the progression of doctoral studies. This PhD format, as well as the Columbia University's support for its production, is an encouraging sign that the rigidity of academic tradition is being reassessed.



UNFLATTENING  
Doctoral Dissertation  
by Nick Sousanis  
April, 2015

... these enclosures  
become internalised

it all takes place in boxes

within boxes

Sousanis, 2015, p. 10-11

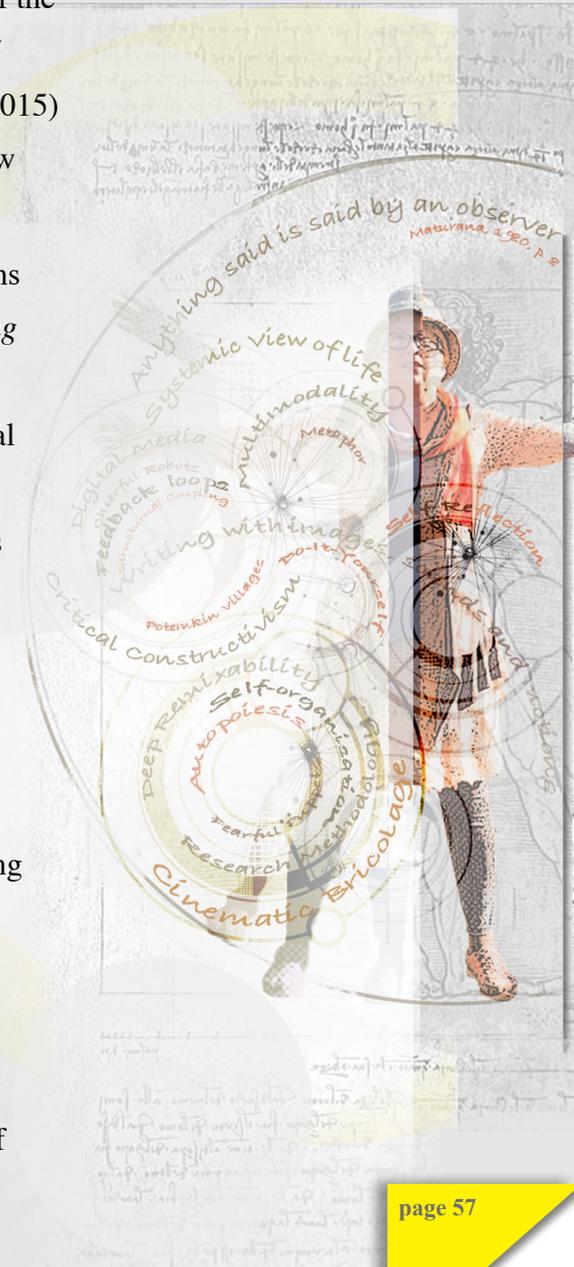
not only space but time  
and experiences too, have  
been put in boxes

divided up and neatly  
packaged into discrete units

Sousanis' dissertation is a message against 'flatness' of thinking, and a call for the deconstruction of the mental frames and boxes into which space, time and experience has been pressed flat for centuries of comatose continuation. In his graphic text of *Unflattening*, Sousanis, as Amazon's editorial review (2015) reads, 'defies conventional forms of scholarly discourse [...] fusing words and images to produce new forms of knowledge'.

*Unflattening*, as well as my 'unpacking' of meaning through application of diverse modalities, seems to be emerging as a new trend in scholarly writing. For example, *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres* edited by Bowen and Whithaus (2013), is a collection of scholarly essays about students 'experimenting with different ways to make meaning, they are drawing on the stuff of everyday social interaction to rethink the shape of written academic knowledge' [p. 9] and 'thinking outside the text box' [p. 120]. Writing is acquiring a form of 'new verbal/sensory rhetoric that supports hybrid genres of multimodal writing' [Bump, 2013, p. 111]. The chapters in the book examine new cross-fertilising practices that the computer has enabled: email, messaging, web and social networking pages, as well as film, video games, speeches, photographs and visual graphics. Bowen and Whithaus (2013) observe: 'we are in the midst of a shift that is affecting how we write, why we write, and where we write ...' [p. 12]. This shift is characterised by 'conscious manipulation of the interaction among various sensory experiences – visual, textual, verbal, tactile, and aural – used in producing and reading text' [p. 16].

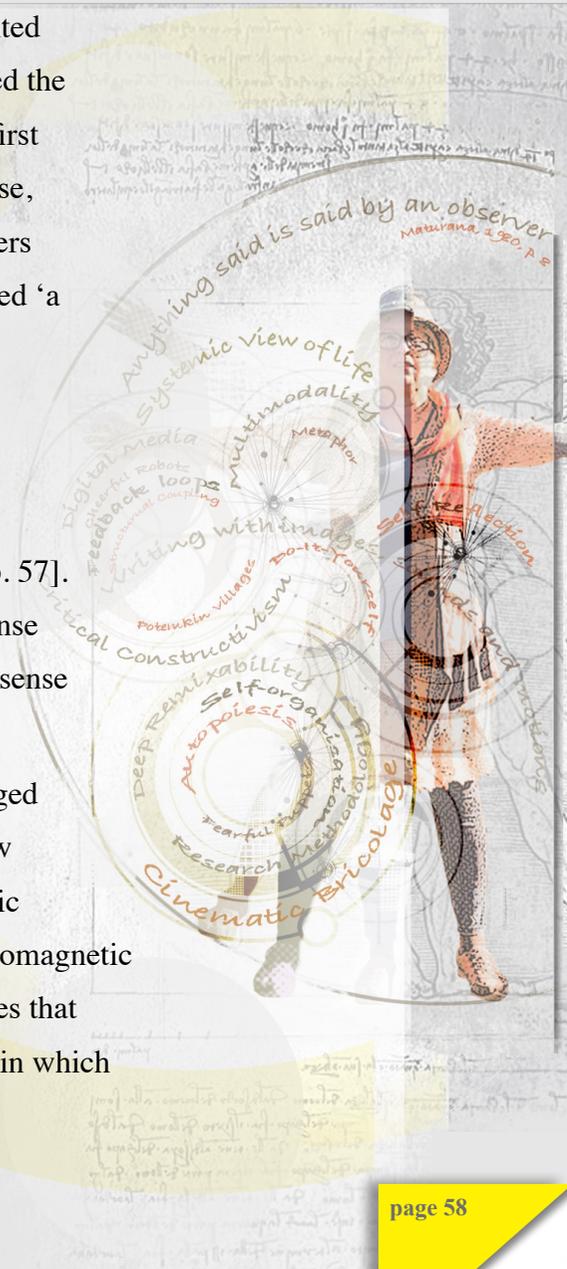
The tendency to re-sensify the production of meaning appears to be a reverse process to what happened when the meaning made of multi-sensory experience was framed within a static system of alphabetic cryptograms. According to McLuhan (1962), 'from the invention of the alphabet there has been a continuous drive in the Western world toward the separation of the senses, of functions, of



operations, of states emotional and political as well as of tasks' [p. 42]. Alphabetic writing turned printed sentences into linear strings of customary codes. 'The invention of typography confirmed and extended the new visual stress of applied knowledge, providing the first uniformly repeatable COMMODITY, the first assembly-line, and the first mass-production' [p. 124]. Typography reduced experience to a single sense, visual, [p. 125] substituting other-sensory experience through the faculty of imagination 'to the powers of visualisation' [p. 124]. By establishing an alphabetic symbolic system of expression, people conjured 'a visual enclosure of non-visual spaces and senses' [p. 43].

For McLuhan (1964), new electromagnetic technology has provided people with a different type of 'spelling-out of forms of knowing' [p. 56]. What he believes 'we call "mechanisation" is a translation of nature, and our own natures, into amplified and specialised forms' [p. 56]. In McLuhan's view, all 'previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electromagnetic is total and inclusive' [p. 57]. He sees people constructing their knowledge of the world via perceiving it 'through more than one sense at a time' [p. 60]. The search is for multi-sensory means of 'translating one kind of experience of one sense into all the senses, and presenting the result continuously as a unified image of the mind' [p. 60].

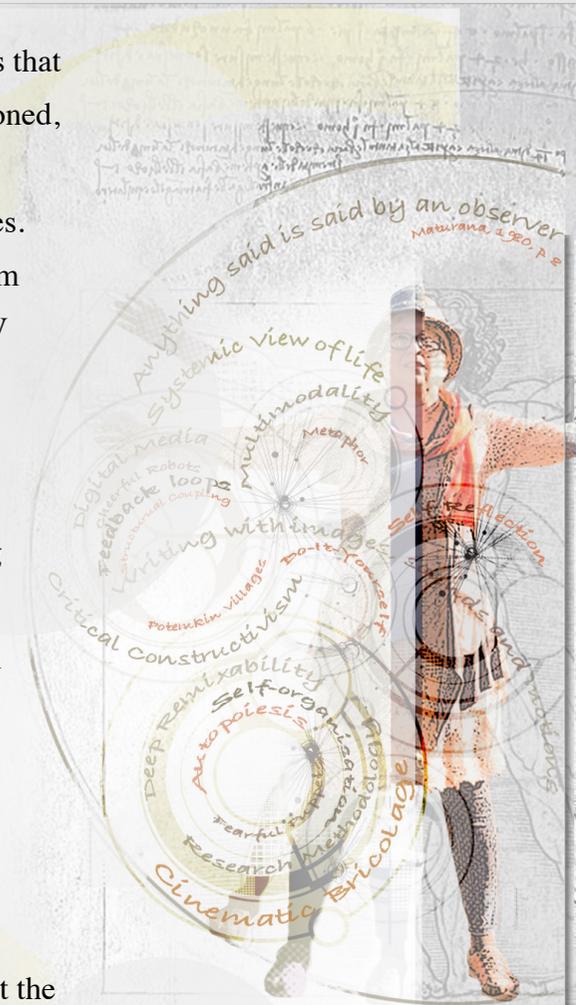
It appears that by historically privileging primary alphabetic literacies, humans went along a prolonged segment within the spiral of meaning-articulating development of technologies. They first learned how to extract the meaning out of its context and embody the abstraction into artificially originated semiotic symbolic systems, such as, for example, writing. Becoming more and more skilled in the use of electromagnetic technology, humans started looking for ways to return to the expressed meaning of sensory experiences that had become hidden behind the codes. Now it seems digital media can offer embodiments of meaning in which expression of the 'unified image of the mind' is amplified by technology.



This is comparable to the situation when humans extracted themselves from mastering distance on foot and embodied themselves inside automobiles. Now, as the vital human function of moving has been reduced to a potentially dangerous level, people have invented treadmills and other sorts of machines that allow for amplified experiences while exercising. Technologically equipped and accordingly conditioned, modern culture responds to the need for physical exercise by a recombination of mechanical, environmental and entertainment fragments, resulting in hybrids that facilitate whole new experiences. Moving roads in the form of treadmills can now be easily available at people's homes, providing them with kilometres of walking or running distances while not moving their eyes away from favourite TV sitcoms.

This appears to be another parallel to how new technologies alter operational conditions in various spheres of human activities. In meaning-making digital technologies, such a phenomenon can be observed through the origination of new symbols, icons and indexes, as well as through restructuring representational spaces. Websites, social sites and digital document pages are not just clean surfaces on which to make marks, as it was with sheets of writing paper. New writing spaces are programmed for active participation in the process of message construction and delivery. Various digital screens communicate their affordances through the apps' interfaces where new symbols, icons and indexes inform the user about available functional options. The availability of screens with a wide range of options responsive for making expression, stimulate the users' inclination to add new dimensions to interpretations of their experiences, revealing non-direct, non-obvious meaning.

In my individual self-reflective activity with digital media, I observe a growing aspiration to project the mental grasps that are playing continuously at the back of my memory screen onto the screen that I see in front of me. I want to juxtapose the flashes of various experience and understand their significance through a new proximity, to interpret their meaning and thus to see myself as if from the outside.



## 2.1.5 Deep Remixability of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and Bricolage

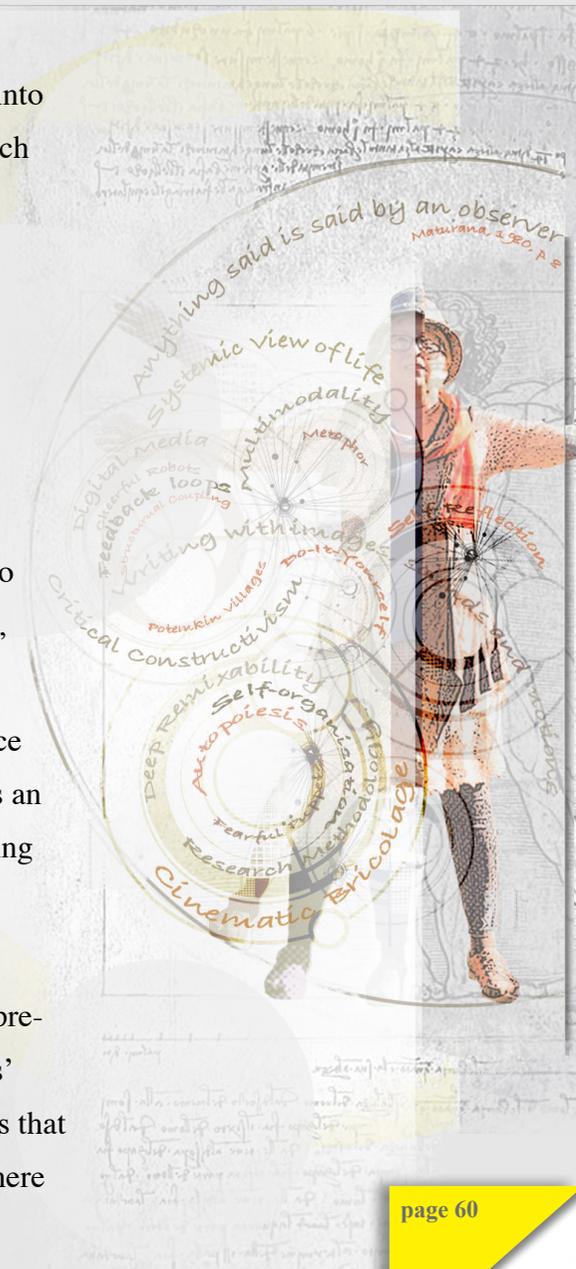
McLuhan (1964) saw the emergence of hybrids as a ‘fruitful meeting of senses, of sight translated into sound and sound into movement ...’ (p. 60). To continue McLuhan’s thought, I borrow from Manovich (2013):

The new hybrid aesthetics exist in endless variations but its basic principle is the same: juxtaposing previously distinct visual aesthetics of different media within the same image. This is an example of how the logic of media hybridity restructures a large part of culture as a whole. (loc. 4416)

Manovich links these new hybrid aesthetics to a new cultural logic of remix. He observes that as a collective rationality, remix influences culture on a much deeper level than that of just remixing the content of different modalities. ‘Today designers remix not only content from different media but also their fundamental techniques, working methods, and ways of representation and expression’ [p. 268], Manovich says, referring to this type of practice as ‘deep remixability’.

Recombinational strategies, as reported by Navas, Gallagher & burrough (2015), ‘have been in place well before the concept of remix was being used to discuss hybrid works’ [loc. 688]. Hybridisation is an outcome of recombinational activity that spread globally, affecting both content and form of circulating information and establishing a new cultural movement that has been termed ‘remix culture’ (Navas, 2012, p.14).

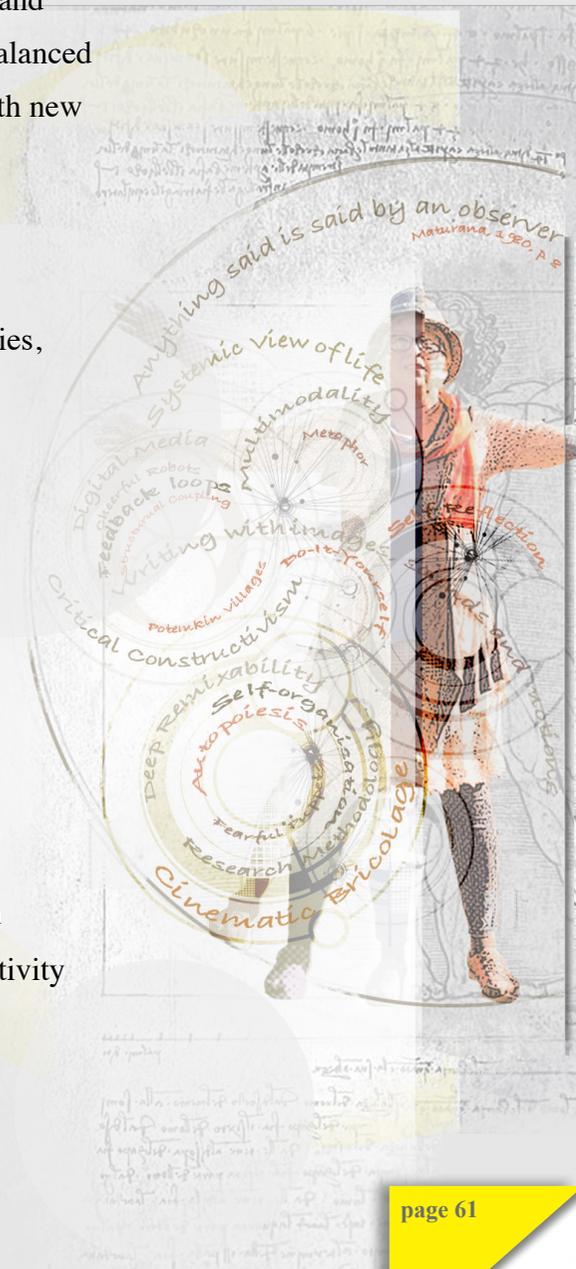
Remix culture, in keeping with Navas, Gallagher & burrough (2015), is ‘based on the act of using pre-existing materials to create something new as desired by the creator – from amateurs to professionals’ [loc. 630]. I suggest that such a perspective, that is to say, appropriation of existing materials by ways that are more often amateur in nature than professional, has brought into the digital landscape an atmosphere



of casualness and sketch-like performance. In images, such examples can be often observed in rusty and paint-splattered backgrounds, sponge and spray effects and eroded texts, misaligned objects and unbalanced compositions, as if they are in transition, in ‘renovational’ exploration – a disintegration achieved with new media tools before a new balance can be found.

Although artists have always, as McLeod (2015) puts it, ‘borrowed from each other and have been directly inspired by the world that surrounds them’ [p. 84], the wide spread in the use of digital technologies and prevalence of the internet as a social medium of communication from the late nineties, opened a new era for creative practices often identified with the term remix. Navas, Gallagher and burrough (2015) write that the idea of remix is closely linked to do-it-yourself (DIY) [p.1]. The concept of wide-spread DIY is important to this study in the sense that it is considered ‘as a mass phenomenon; that is, the masses participate rather than only artists’, when people perform ‘a series of activities’ [...] without the aid of professionals, and often without any specialist knowledge’ [Campanelli, 2015, p. 74]. That is where the specifics of DIY are deeply remixed with the ontology of bricolage, ‘which denotes a way of thinking and working halfway between the concrete and the abstract’ [p. 74].

In other words, I see the bricolage-research method as a collection of material and abstract data, its de-construction and re-construction into new compositions of meaning where: a) a remix between material and abstract components constitutes a strategy for generating knowledge; and b) where creativity is manifested not in artistic presentation but in how meaning is constructed.



## 2.2 Cinematic Bricolage – a Research Methodology

### 2.2.1 Typography as a Movie Projector

McLuhan (1962) drew an analogy between translating the movements in the production of scribal art into typography with taking a series of static shots and seeing them placed within the frames [p. 124]. He wrote that: ‘typography bears much resemblance to cinema, just as the reading of print puts the reader in the role of the movie projector’ [p. 124].

McLuhan saw the lines of print as a running ribbon of a film with the words fixed statically inside the frames. The reader moves the film ‘at a speed consistent with apprehending the motions of the author’s mind’ [p. 124]. As I converted McLuhan’s thoughts into an animated picture illustrating his envisioning, I understood the meaning. I put every word of the sentence into a separate frame and moved it at a speed conducive for my process of thinking. The words inside the frame move simultaneously with the corresponding images. If I increase the speed of the film and crop a visible area of the image to one frame, we can see McLuhan’s images ‘flicking’ in different positions as if animated. In other words, the speed causes a spatial transformation in our perception of the moving film. The faster it moves, the more we would get the impression that it moves not from the bottom up, but from the depth toward us as though the film is not a ribbon but a stack of frame layers appearing one by one in the cropped area.

The layers-matter is an essential aspect in understanding how a digital representational artefact is generated and therefore will be given detailed discussion in the context of its relationship with other digital categories of digital communication production. Here, I would like to underscore McLuhan’s notion of the digital culture translating itself or – if we also link this thought to McLuhan’s quote on the previous page – back to



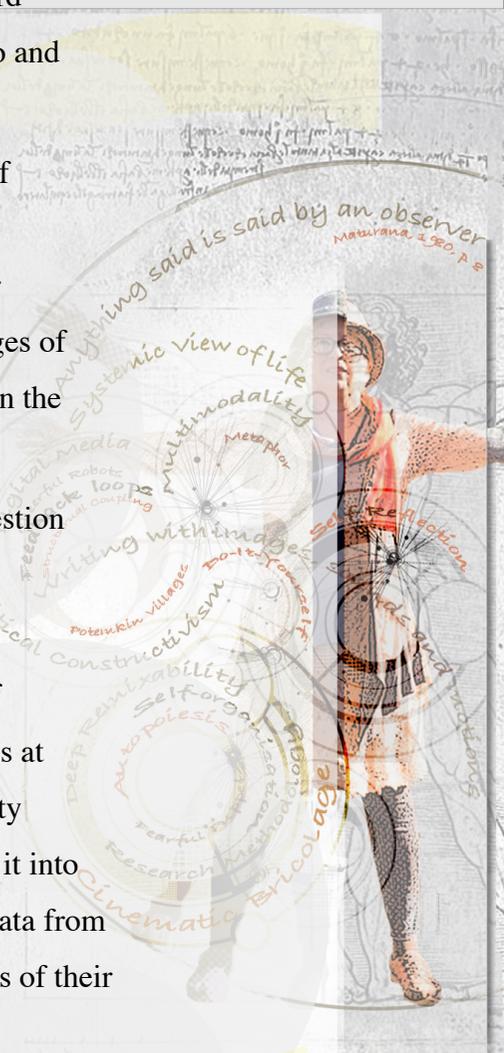
oral, auditory and moving modes in ‘a fruitful meeting of senses’. The layered organisation of pages in word processing documents allows us by virtue of the stacking assemblages to experience words, pictorial, audio and video elements simultaneously.

The utilisation of McLuhan’s analogy between typography and a movie projector leads us to the sphere of cinematic production. In order for a novel to be made into a movie, a playwright needs to translate it into a product suitable for a movie director to interpret into her version of the novel and then to the actors in their personification of it. Thus, the original author of the novel and her language aesthetics undergo several stages of creative re-making by a team of other people and become embodied in other people’s speech and actions. In the final outcome, in most cases, writing exists only in the form of opening and closing credits.

What McLuhan’s idea about typography being likened to a movie projector brought about here is a suggestion that word processing and publishing software such as EPUB can be looked on as a potential platform for cinematic writing.

I suggest that this format is an especially viable strategy for carrying out research projects on all levels of scholarly involvement. It can facilitate a deep remixability application for researchers. With the digital tools at hand – mobile phones, iPads and computers – the researchers, whether they are school students or university academics, can audio and video record data straight from the environment and easily convert and integrate it into their cinematic writing. Working with their digital tools, the researchers can have instantaneous access to data from academic sites, online book stores, social sites and blogs, and synthesise this with their writing on the pages of their own documents.

On the pages of this thesis, I engage with the development of an argument for the utilisation of cinematic writing in research as an advantageous methodology architected on a contemporary cultural logic of deep remixability.



## 2.2.2 Writing with Movements and Sounds

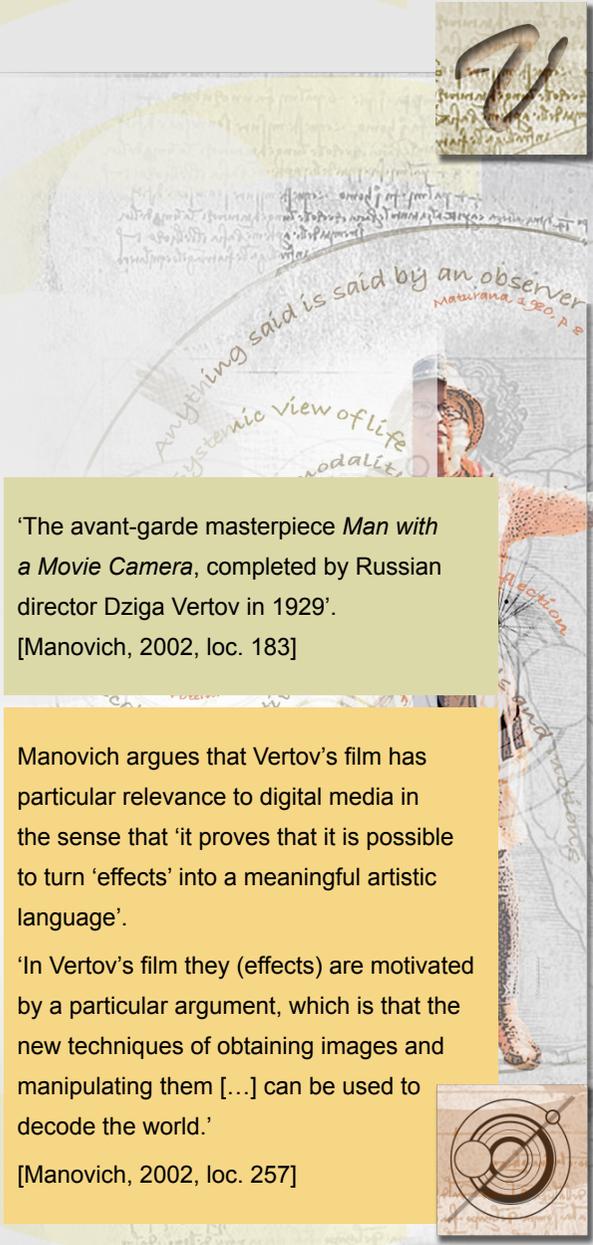
The word *cinematography* comes from two Greek roots: *kinesis* (the root of *cinema*), meaning movement, and *grapho*, which means to write or record. (*Photography* is derived from *phos*, meaning light, and *grapho*.) *Writing with movement and light* – it's a great way to begin to think about the cinematographic content of motion pictures.

[Sikov, 2010, loc. 953]

Linking the above definitions to the notion of cinematic writing, we can see parallels between cinematography and digitally written texts. These links can be useful for cinematic writing as it takes the first steps in its emergence into the world and needs to find a purchase for its theoretical grounding.

Cinematography can be conceptualised as writing with movement and light. Based on this premise, cinematic writing can be defined as writing with movement and sound. The above quote is integrated here with the ways in which Manovich (quotes on the right hand-side) sees Vertov's avant-garde film being relevant to digital media. Digital media affordances provide new techniques for obtaining data by means of written, photographic, graphic, audio and video recording, and manipulating the data to 'decode the world', turning digital 'effects' into 'meaningful artistic language'.

Writing with movements and sounds also implies writing with images because for a movement to be actualised, the presence of an object – a sign, symbol, icon, photograph, drawing and so on – is needed to cause it to move. Therefore, it can be concluded that cinematic writing



'The avant-garde masterpiece *Man with a Movie Camera*, completed by Russian director Dziga Vertov in 1929'.  
[Manovich, 2002, loc. 183]

Manovich argues that Vertov's film has particular relevance to digital media in the sense that 'it proves that it is possible to turn 'effects' into a meaningful artistic language'.

'In Vertov's film they (effects) are motivated by a particular argument, which is that the new techniques of obtaining images and manipulating them [...] can be used to decode the world.'

[Manovich, 2002, loc. 257]

is writing with images, movements and sounds. The data gathered through the process of cinematic writing by recording the world around us and gathering pre-existing concepts, is manipulated by digital techniques and application of digital effects which result in the origination of new creative language in meaning production. Again, the remix of the concepts of DIY and bricolage is important here, as the creative language does not mean a professional artistic level of text presentation. Creative language here refers to the use of different tools (whatever is at hand) rather ‘than those used by professionals’ and interrogation of ‘all the heterogeneous objects of which his (the bricoleur’s) treasury is composed to discover what each of them could signify’ [Campanelli, 2015, p. 74].

The ‘heterogeneous objects’ can be interpreted here as content from different media, their fundamental techniques, working methods, and ways of representation and expression (see p. 15). In bricolage, theoretical concepts and methodological approaches are added to the above categories.

In cinematography, the existence of a term *mise-en-scene* denotes literally everything that has been put into scene.

Sikov (2010) describes:

*Mise-en-scene* consists of all of the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed: settings, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, and figure behaviour (meaning actors, their gestures, and their facial expressions). In addition, *mise-en-scene* includes the camera’s actions and angles and cinematography, which simply means photograph for motion pictures. [loc. 308]

In incorporating the description above, I draw a parallel between the cinematographic term *mise-en-scene* and the term that will be used in this thesis signifying a bricole in cinematic writing in a multimodal bricolage.



**Bricole(s)** in this thesis indicates any theoretical concept, methodological approach, data fragment (conceptual or material), such as existing ideas, scholarly quotes, screenshots from social media or websites, as well as images, audio or video recordings. In other words, bricoles are the material or conceptual fragments with which the deep remixability is completed in order to make meaning out of experience.

### 2.2.3 Bricolage and Amateur Representations

The term bricolage is borrowed from the French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss in 1968 [Maxwell, 2013, loc. 971]. Referring to Lévi-Strauss, Maxwell portrays a bricoleur ‘as someone who uses whatever tools and materials are at hand to complete a project’ [loc. 971].

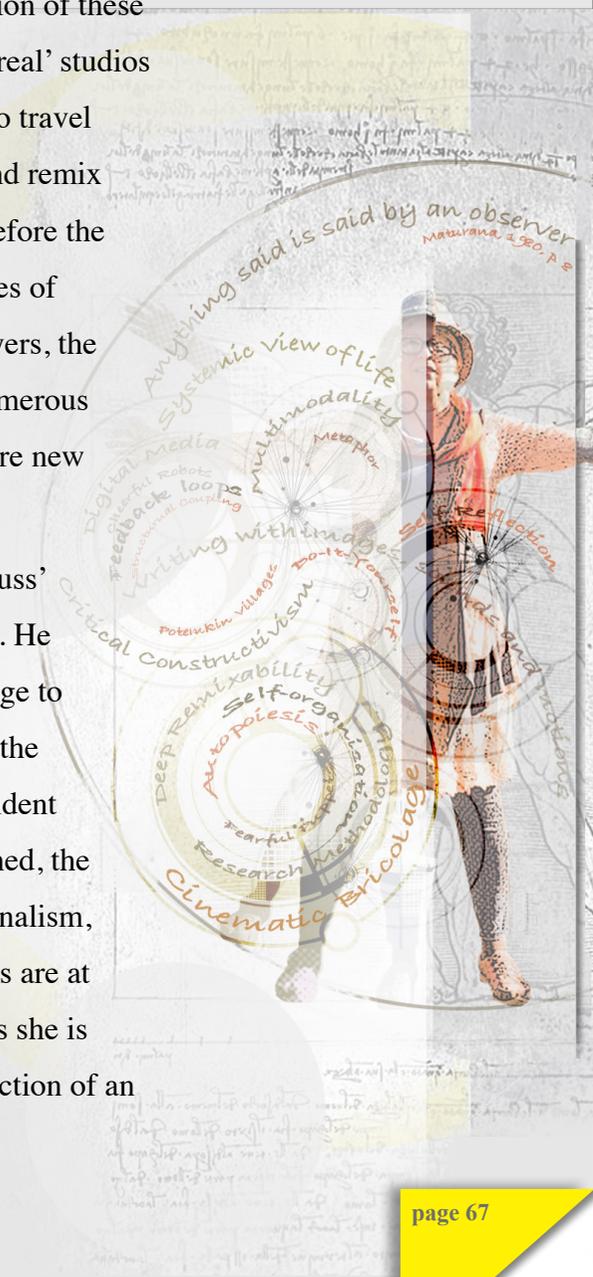
Barbatsis (2005) describes bricolage as a cognitive style of organising work ‘where the sense-making activity is patterned by working with bits and pieces ... building them up, sculpturing a whole’ [loc. 8253]. In elaborating on the bricolage principle of insight generation, Barbatsis refers to holistic sense-making logic and draws an analogy with the principle of mosaic construction that results in ‘complex seeing’, ‘collision of fragments and layers’ [loc. 8265]. According to Barbatsis, bricolage is conceptualised as a ‘new media’ method of digital assemblages of ‘video, film, and computer screens, as well as multidimensional imaging’ [loc. 8253]. From this point of view, Barbatis interprets bricolage as a methodology that supports multimodal digital assemblages.

For the purposes of this study, bricolage is considered a suitable methodology for a number of reasons. One is that, according to Manovich (2002), the avant-garde aesthetic strategies of the beginning of the twentieth century have been materialised into computer logic [loc. 283]. Artistic styles like collage and photo or movie



montage have been crafted with cut and paste, layered elements and remix techniques. The digitisation of these techniques from manual to computer is a demonstration of ‘transporting’ creative experience from ‘real’ studios into virtual studios. The screen in this case is an interface – a portal through which the mind needs to travel back and forth to construct and embody meaning. On top of the cut and paste, layered production and remix techniques, there are many new others added as affordances of new media that were not available before the digital age. For example, ‘the new ability to combine multiple levels of imagery with varying degrees of transparency via digital compositing’ [Manovich, 2013, loc. 4868]. With the transparency of these layers, the objects positioned on them can be easily moved in relation to each other and blended together in numerous variations. This kind of object manipulation presents new representational opportunities and therefore new ways of looking at the process and comprehending the message under construction.

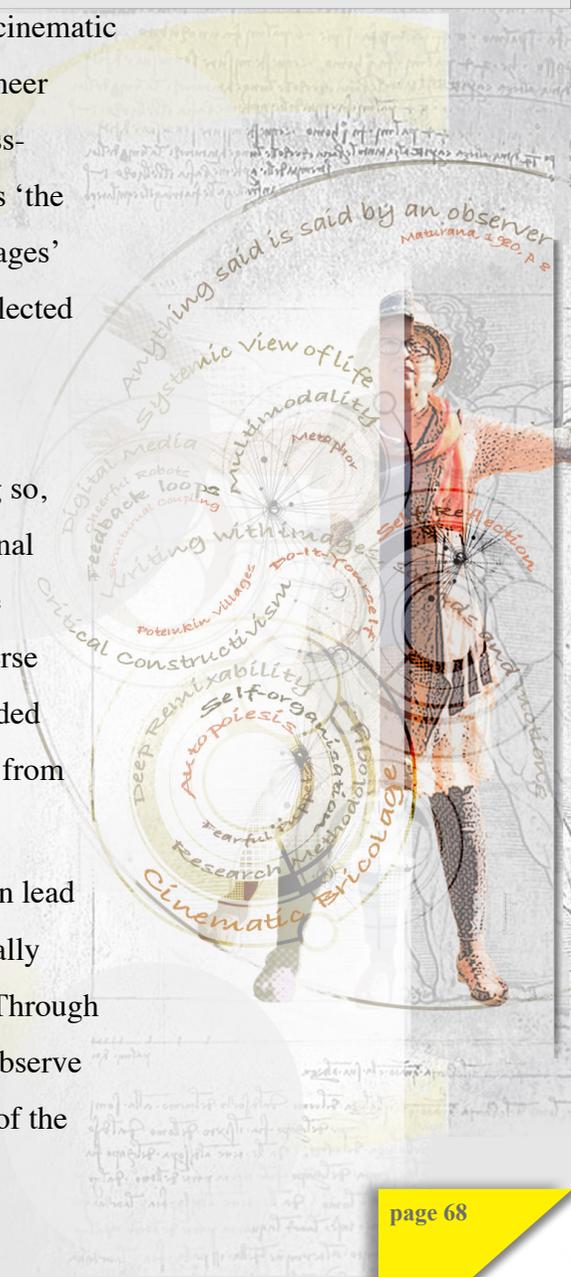
Another important factor in choosing bricolage for this study is the notion epitomised in Lévi Strauss’ understanding of the technical plane of research which he calls ‘prior’ rather than ‘primitive’ (p. 11). He sees it as a space where ‘mystical thought’ meets with ‘intellectual reasoning’. The nature of bricolage to Lévi-Strauss is mytho-poetical like ‘raw’ or ‘naive art’, ‘originally inspired by observation’. This is the ontological essence of bricolage where aesthetics is a channel for an intuitive thought to become evident and to be intellectually refined for its fitness to the emergent pattern of meaning. As already mentioned, the aesthetics and creativity in bricolage are not manifestations of individual artistic talents or professionalism, but rather a reflection of the DIY nature of amateurism. As with the principle of using whatever tools are at hand, the bricoleur allows the materialisation of her tacit knowledge through whatever digital modes she is naturally inclined to employ. Hence, the bricoleur is a dilettante scholar, dabbling in aesthetic production of an intellectual body of work.



I am much drawn to Lévi Strauss' comparative analogy between the character of the work of a bricoleur and an engineer. This inspired and guided me to develop my own version of bricolage which I refer to as cinematic bricolage. Lévi Strauss' discussion led me to see the difference in the work of a bricoluer and an engineer in such a way that the engineer first 'questions the universe' and then, in order to find a solution, 'cross-examines his resources' (p. 12). While the bricoleur's first 'practical step is retrospective', she collects 'the oddments left over from the previous endeavours' and examines her resources as if looking 'for messages' 'which have been transmitted in advance' (p. 13). By assembling and re-assembling the motley of collected bricoles, the bricoleur begins to recognise and finally interpret the message.

Another compelling articulation of bricolage is made by Altglas (2014), who writes that 'it is about repairing what is already here (as such, bricolage is not pure invention but is organised) and, by doing so, it creates new meaning' [p. 2]. Altglas distinguishes bricolage as a platform for making eclectic personal choices which results in 'individuals' liberation from collective norms and values' [p. 4]. With the use of bricolage as a research methodology, people can 'pursue the realisation of themselves through diverse means chosen on the basis of unique, subjective experiences' [p.4]. Bricolage allows people to be guided in 'an increasingly important quest for self-fulfilment' through self-reflective approaches that are free from 'the dictates of various institutions' [p. 4].

This relation to a strategy is not a traditional way of developing an argument. In this study I am often lead by my natural desire to start constructing meaning by creating a simulated space, filling it with culturally developed shapes, signs, symbols and sounds that represent the components of the issue in question. Through positioning the elements in spatial relation to each other according to my logical way of thinking, I 'observe my resources' and changing objects' physical properties, such as the scale, colour, shape and volume of the sound. I am alert to 'the messages' that are 'already there' and that eventually become evident to me.



## 2.2.4 Cinematic Bricolage as Self-Reflection

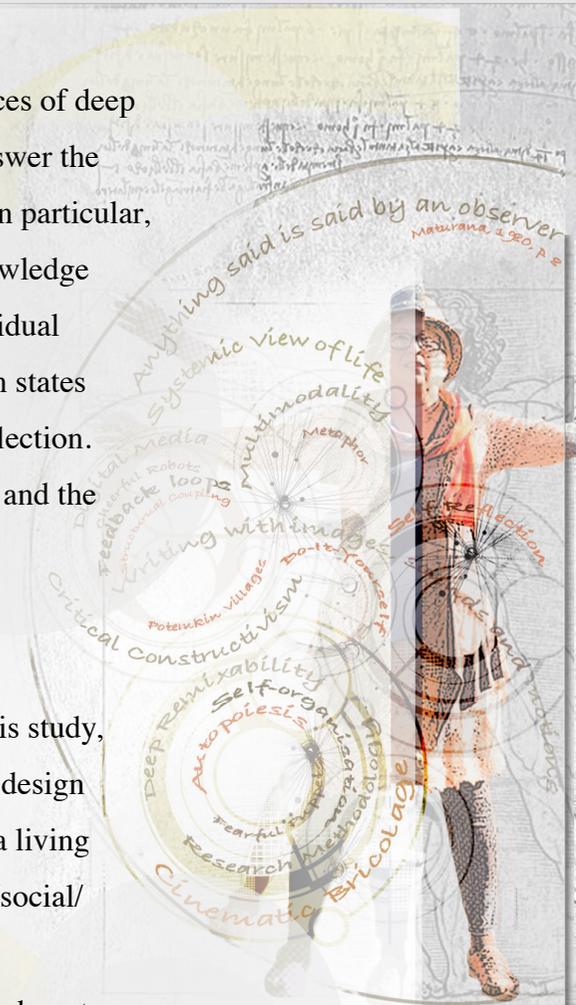
I see cinematic bricolage as a research methodology that reverberates contemporary cultural practices of deep remixability in generating, manipulating and communicating meaning. Driven by the intention to answer the research question of how the modern logic of deep remixability in general, and cinematic bricolage in particular, can inform production of knowledge, I have been led by the constructivist perspective in which ‘knowledge is strictly tied to the individual knower’ [Poerksen, 2004, loc.83] to the point of focusing on an individual knowledge producer. ‘The observer is the point of fixation for all the divergent interests,’ as Poerksen states [loc. 83]. Therefore, I carry out exploration of the cinematic bricolage through the process of self-reflection. Based on the premise that the quality of the generated knowledge is a looking-glass vision of myself and the web reality of life [loc. 83], I follow two aphorisms:

*Anything said is said by an observer* (Maturana, 1980, p. 8); and

*There is no knowledge without a knower* [Kincheloe, 2003, p. 48].

The person who constructs the knowledge – the observer, knower, researcher or, as is the case in this study, a bricoleur – ‘must be granted the same seriousness of attention as is typically accorded the research design and the research method in the traditional form of inquiry’ [Kincheloe, 2003, p. 48]. The knower is ‘a living human being’ who is, as is the knowledge she constructs, a by-product of her biographical/historical/social/cultural matrix.

This notion of the inseparability of producer ↔ production, that is, bricoleur ↔ bricolage, guided me to consider incorporating a self-reflective approach to this study. Given this, the probing of cinematic writing is situated within the context of the country where I grew up, Soviet Russia. The focus of this probing is adjusted to



how the cinematic writing influenced the process of gaining both self-awareness and awareness of the ideological forces which shaped my ways of thinking and understanding the world.

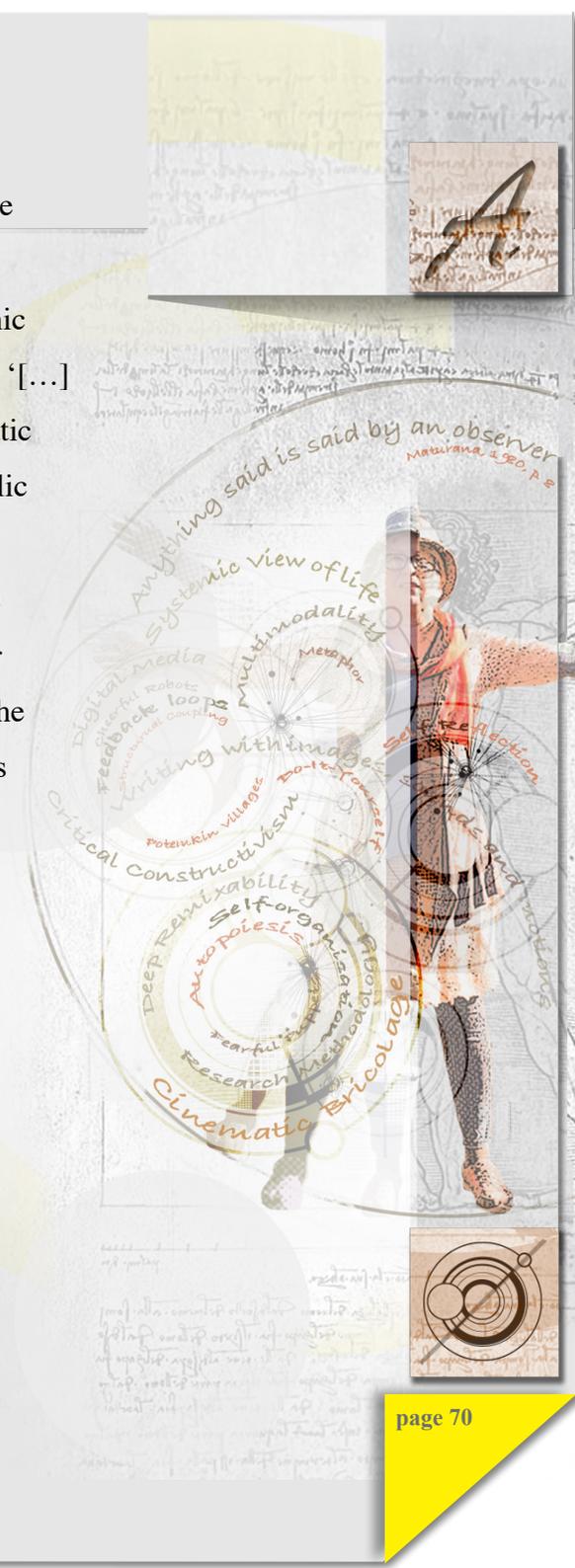
Significant in this light, is the study of Burn and Parker (2003) and the term they propose 'kineikonic mode' or 'kineikonic text' referring to a multimodal ensemble of moving-images. The authors argue: '[...] any representation of human beings in documentary style is likely to encounter other forms of dramatic performance, those which Goffman (1959) identifies as the processes by which we construct the public selves through which we live our lives' [p. 27].

Kincheloe (2003) asserts the knowledge of self is a prerequisite for more efficient research practice in the sense of choosing methodology and constructing a theoretical framework. It helps a researcher to apply her own mind as an indispensable device in drawing from tacit knowledge and bringing to the surface aspects of the self and relation of the self with others that were hidden before. Self-awareness allows the perception of the world in a more holistic way and construction of clearer links between disparate aspects of her social life [p. 51].

Kineikonic mode, as conceptualised by Burn and Parker promotes representation:

[...] through the disjunctive narrative of the moving image, through the importation of musical rhythm and style, and through a witty and stylish combination of dramatic event, text, speech and location [...]. It shows something of how the material bodies and movements of the actors oscillate between the real-time drama of everyday life and performance for the camera; and how the filmmakers themselves are caught up in this social drama, as partial observers, and as improvisatory re-makers, carving out a new version of the event.

[Burn & Parker, 2003, p. 26]



With the incorporation of the self-study component, in this research a cinematic bricoleur becomes an observer and ‘improvisatory re-maker’ who analyses and ‘carving out a new version of the even’ and herself. Cinematic bricolage acquires a further level of investigation, which is another example of reflecting on the contemporary cultural logic of remixability and digital layered production. It can be conceptualised as a double-layered study: one a contextual layer of self-reflection and another layer of cinematic writing. This process is one of splitting the two layers into sub-layers and remixing them with each other. The process of splitting, meshing up in new assemblages, blending and repositioning the components within the layers of cinematic writing and the layers of self-reflection, is the exact niche in which this investigation is located. It aims to understand how digital media facilitates and informs the process of self-representation  self-reflection.

Mitchell and Weber (2005) identified ‘some of the gaps in the existing professional literature, where the focus has been more ‘about’ self-study and less about the range of possibilities for ‘doing’ self-study or about determining a critical framework within which to examine self’ [p. 1]. These authors also observed ‘a growing awareness of the need to explore a range of visual and arts-based methodologies’ for the self-study [p. 2]. Kincheloe (2003) argues that the knowledge of self is a prerequisite for more efficient research practice in the sense of choosing methodology and constructing a theoretical framework. It helps a researcher to apply her own mind as an indispensable device in drawing from tacit knowledge and bringing to the surface aspects of the self and relation of the self with others that were hidden before. Such self-awareness allows the researcher to perceive the world more holistically and make clearer links between disparate aspects of her social life [p. 51].



For example, Derry (2005) writes that it was not her intention to include an art-based component in the self-study about the bullying which was part of her childhood. ‘You could not have paid me to do it,’ she writes [p. 36]. But as she progressed, she felt that she needed something to support her emotional responses to her analysis, as well as to invent some device to help her retrieve and face unpleasant memories. ‘Drawing helped me access memories, write in a more embodied way and gave the readers that multi-layered intellectual/emotional connection to my experience,’ she writes [p. 34]. Derry observes that the mono-levelled traditional intellectual analysis was not enough to grasp the experiential conditions of which she was trying to make meaning [p. 35]. Drawings helped her to incorporate a new dimension into her exploration:

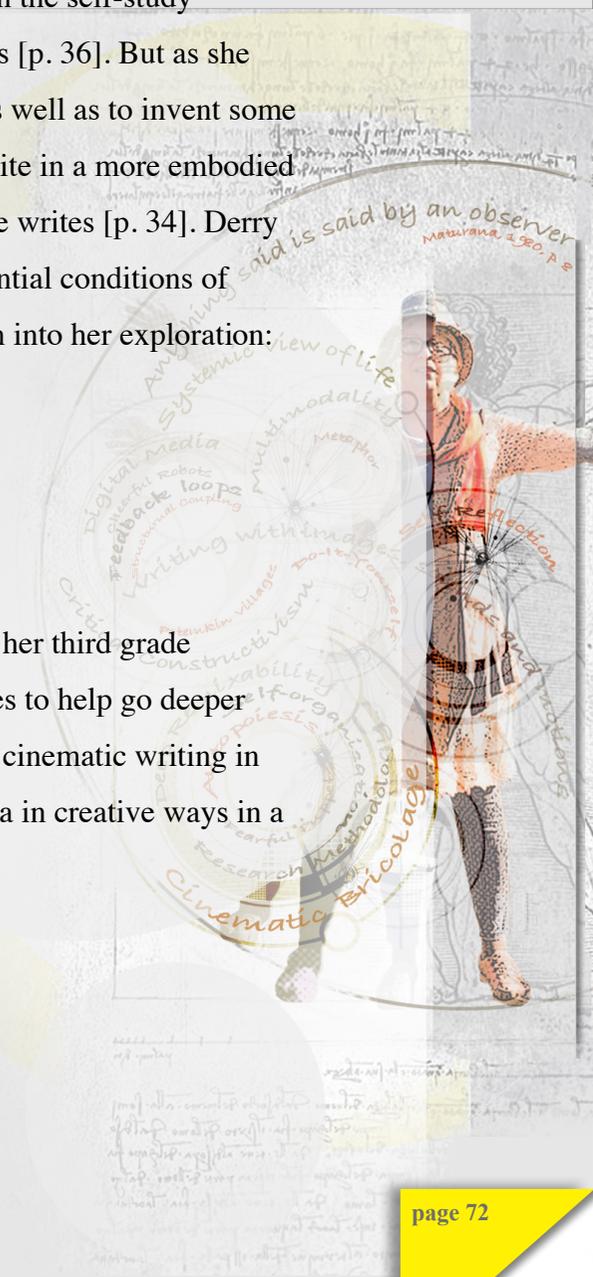
Drawings became more than just a tool to elicit data. I decided to include them to help represent the findings of my research. When drawings and text combine, they have the potential to give the audience a multi-layered look at a phenomenon and may help foster an embodied understanding.

[Derry, 2005, p. 40]

While not having a special natural ability for visual representations and also being discouraged by her third grade teacher who criticised her artwork, Derry overcame her fear of drawing and started producing images to help go deeper in understanding the difficult experiences of her childhood. Here, I again emphasise the ontology of cinematic writing in bricolage associated with the Remix DIY philosophy. When utilising the affordances of digital media in creative ways in a research paper, it is not to display individual talents but to enable sub-levels of self-perception.

As McNiff (1998) asserts:

Art-based research and advanced scientific thinking share a fundamental commitment to allowing the phenomena being studied to speak for themselves. If we stay closely attuned to the images and processes of creative expression, they will suggest new frontiers of understanding. [p. 47]



## 2.2.5 Remix of Critical Hermeneutics and Sociological Imagination

According to Kincheloe (2004), the interpretive dimension in bricolage is grounded in critical hermeneutics (p. 11). 'Hermeneutics can be defined as the art of interpretation, a discipline which depends upon the personal perspective of the interpreter,' [McNiff, 1998, p.53]. The term critical juxtaposes the personal situatedness of the bricoleur with the historical and social forces that affect the shaping of her mind.

'Meaning is imposed on the world and if researchers are not aware of such dynamics they will unconsciously join in this imposition' (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 12). The knowledge constructed by a researcher is 'always socially negotiated in a power-saturated context' (p. 12). Therefore, it is important to develop criticality that allows the researcher to see things from multiple perspectives. In my view, the cinematic approach to construction of the texts in bricolage enables me to achieve such a goal, as it allows the bricoleur to place her own biography at the intersection of history and within certain social dynamics; to identify herself with certain ideologies, people, movements and cultural trends, and to resist others.

Campanelli (2015) observes:

The *bricolage* of the present era uses leftovers of the "already seen", that which are openly transmitted and displayed in the media universe'. They are then reused, reassembled, and put back into circulation as messages (signs) and, in doing so, determining new uses and new trajectories, and possibly altering meaning.

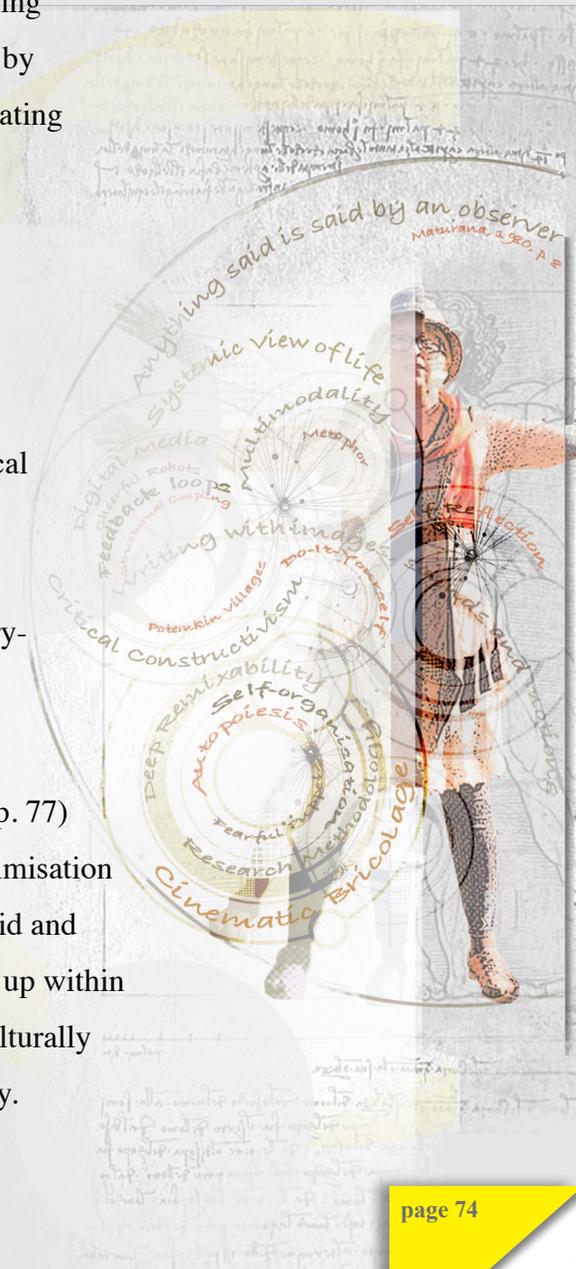
But – this is the aspect that I want to emphasize most – the act of the *bricoleur* is functional to a system, such as the present one, in which social rooting presupposes the repetition of signs. The contemporary *bricoleur* (the *remixer*) is part of the flow and thus promotes its unstoppable flowing. [p. 74]



With the use of digital technology, the materiality of digital objects becomes information flow. Mixing his/her own images, thoughts, sounds and fragments with those already produced and widely known by the community, the bricoleur is 'entering a remixing relationship with the Other' [p. 75]. By manipulating images on the layers, changing their size and transparency or adding movements, as a researcher, the bricoleur asks herself questions about what she is doing. Through this process 'the imagination is released in a way that allows' the bricoleur 'to imagine new possibilities' for herself and new interpretations of these possibilities [Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2003, loc. 5106].

One of the central concerns for self-reflection, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (2003) assert, is for a researcher to be able to critically evaluate the formation of her own consciousness and how ideological and cultural conditioning influence such a formation [loc. 5061]. The authors claim that such self-reflection is a prerequisite for a researcher to become a critical civic agent and a better citizen. Undertaking a self-reflective approach, this study takes the lead and focuses its attention on a memory-based representation of the self, expressed through cinematic writing.

One example of self-study is that by Marlene de Beer (2009) who engaged with self-exploration in striving to understand her identity 'uniquely embedded within our social and personal experiences' (p. 77) through the production of sculptures. I became attracted to de Beer's study due to her deliberate minimisation 'of contact with other people from my (her) cultural group for nearly thirty years, because of apartheid and feeling of alienation and shame that I had been experiencing from a very early age' (p. 78). Growing up within 'a dysfunctional Afrikaner community' in South Africa, de Beer describes her personal identity as culturally fragmented, which she believes she was '(un)consciously denying' until she proceeded with her study.

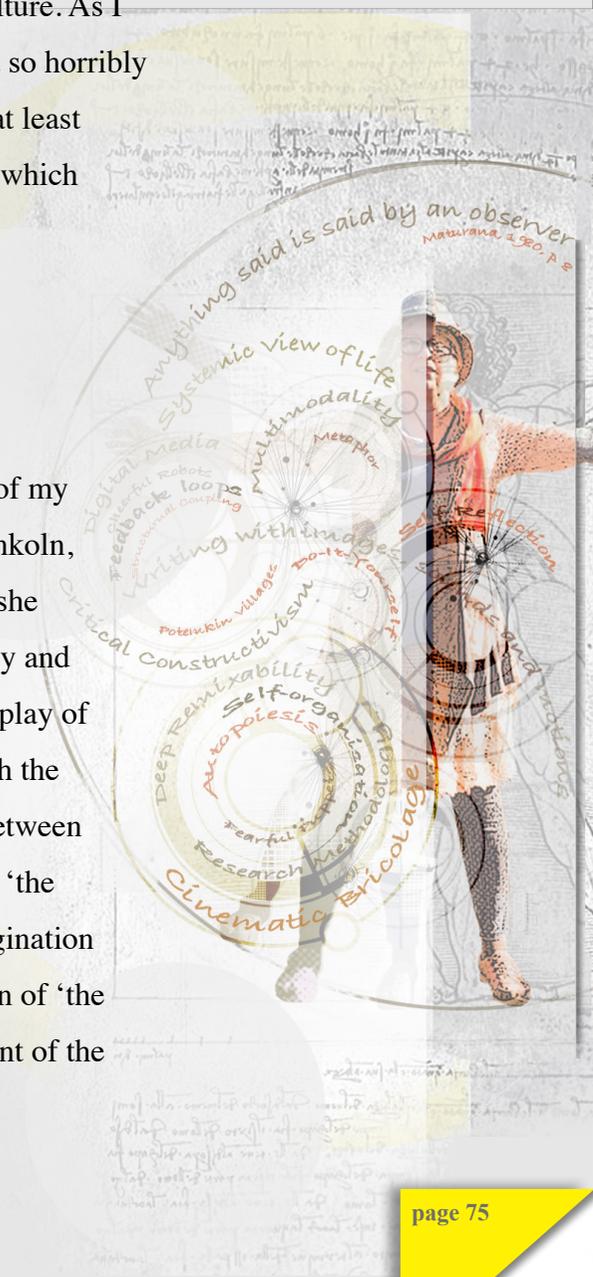


I grew up across the universe from de Beer, in Soviet Russia, but like her I feel ashamed of my culture. As I typed these words, a process which took quite a while, like breaking through an invisible wall, I felt so horribly ashamed not only of my culture but of myself. Socially, I believe people are conditioned to love or at least have some sort of attachment to their place of birth, the people of their childhood and the culture to which they belong. Does it make me a bad person that I do not possess any of these feelings?

What I can say with certainty is that, like de Beer, culturally I feel fragmented, alienated ...

Maybe even broken; a neither hither-nor-thither sort of a person.

These issues are ingrained into a meta-cognitive layer of my mind that informs my desire for self-reflection. My focus in this self-reflection is to see how cinematic writing helps to elicit the quality of my 'lived experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture' [Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 6]. What attracts me to de Beer's study is that, along with the historical and cultural ethos, she underscores a uniqueness of immediate personal circumstances within a close community and family and explores the issue through the process of an aesthetic production. Such an approach, that is the interplay of an individual cell and its social fabric investigated by an art-based device, can be considered through the concept of sociological imagination. According to Mills (1959), 'sociological imagination works' between "the personal troubles of milieu" and "the public issues of social structure" [p. 8]. Mills argues that 'the sociological imagination' is 'the most fruitful form' of 'self-consciousness' [p. 7]. Sociological imagination is achieved through shifts between political and psychological perspectives and from an examination of 'the individual as biographical entity within the scope of his immediate milieu' to comparative assessment of the larger historical and social structures [p. 7-8].



In keeping with Mills, the use of social imagination is ‘regularly demanded’ in intellectual endeavours, literary works and social or political analysis. The categories within which writers and social researchers operate acquire aesthetic qualities through this process.

Mills writes that:

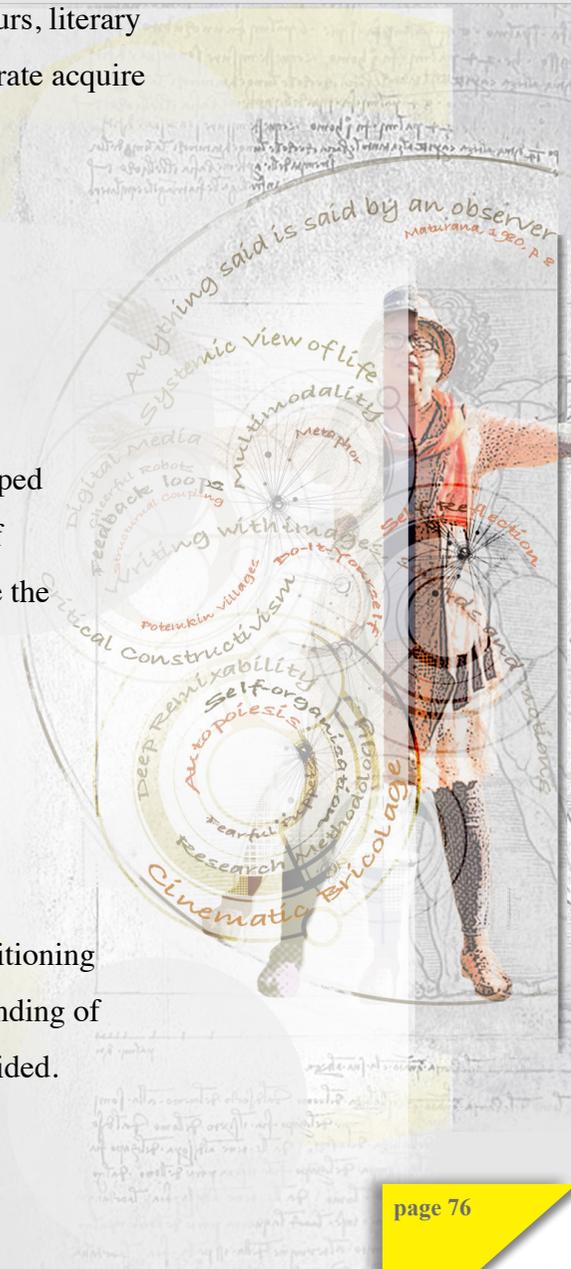
As images of human nature become more problematic, an increasing need is felt to pay closer yet more imaginative attention to the social routines and catastrophes which reveal (and which shape) man’s nature in this time of civil unrest and ideological conflict. [p. 14]

The sociological imagination is a quality of mind that allows a realisation of the complex interplay between ‘the intimate realities of ourselves and larger social realities’ through an aesthetically developed methodology. The incorporation of an aesthetic dimension into the investigation offers the promise of the embodiment of a wide range of ‘cultural sensibilities’ into the texts of the bricolage, and therefore the development of a more adroit interpretation of human reason and human affairs [Mills, 1959, p. 15].

Through her observation of making sculptures, de Beer notices that:

Not only could I sense that the products emerged from sensory and sensual experiences, but also that, in so doing, they triggered feelings and emotions, and the further transformation of feelings and emotions into artefact. (p. 81)

With this bricolage, I claim that digital modalities facilitate easier access to, and a better spatial positioning within, the texts for the family photos, images, movies or melodies that might give a deeper understanding of where the observer is coming from and with what kind of ideological forces her development was guided.

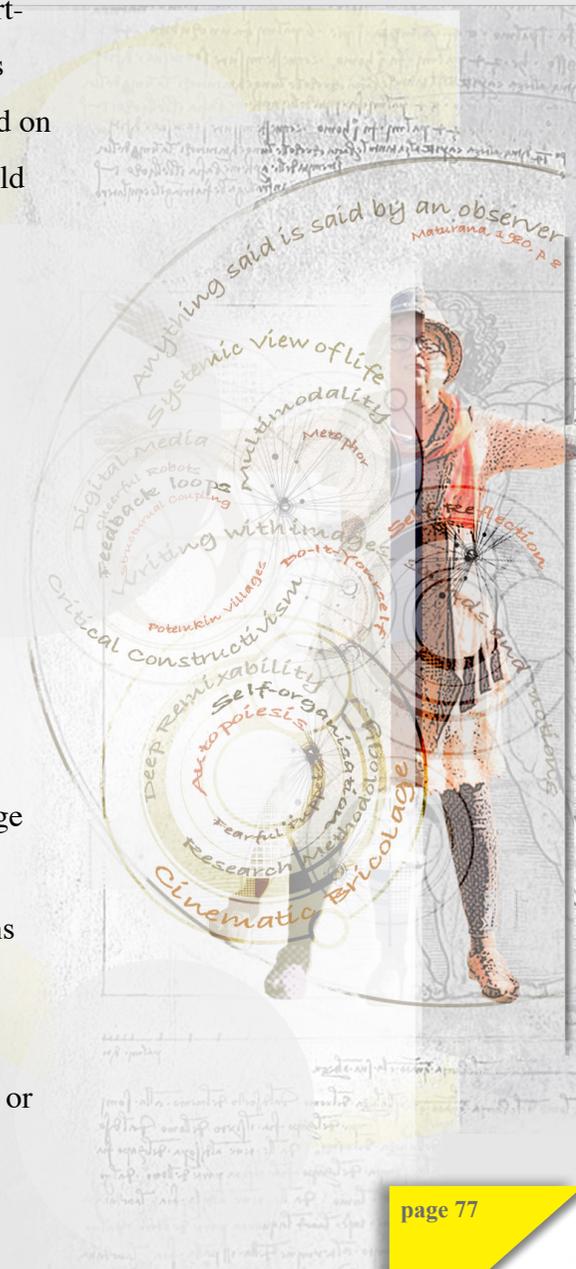


One of the advantages I have with employing cinematic writing, as opposed to undertaking other art-based research forms, is that the aesthetic dimension is an integral part of the texts in the body of this thesis. In contrast, de Beer writes of the limitations she faces in relation to the objects that she created on her ‘journey to awareness’ that could not be included in the pages of her essay in a way that they could ‘speak for themselves’ (p. 78). From this point of view, cinematic writing can be considered a means of filling in such gaps, thus enabling aesthetic interpretation through the immediacy of the textual composition.

Therefore, the interpretive device for this bricolage is assembled from a composition of critical hermeneutics and sociological imagination. In other words, a critical approach is realised through incorporating metaphorical, allegorical, graphic and exegetic qualities into embodiments of sociological aspects.

## 2.3 Convergence Points

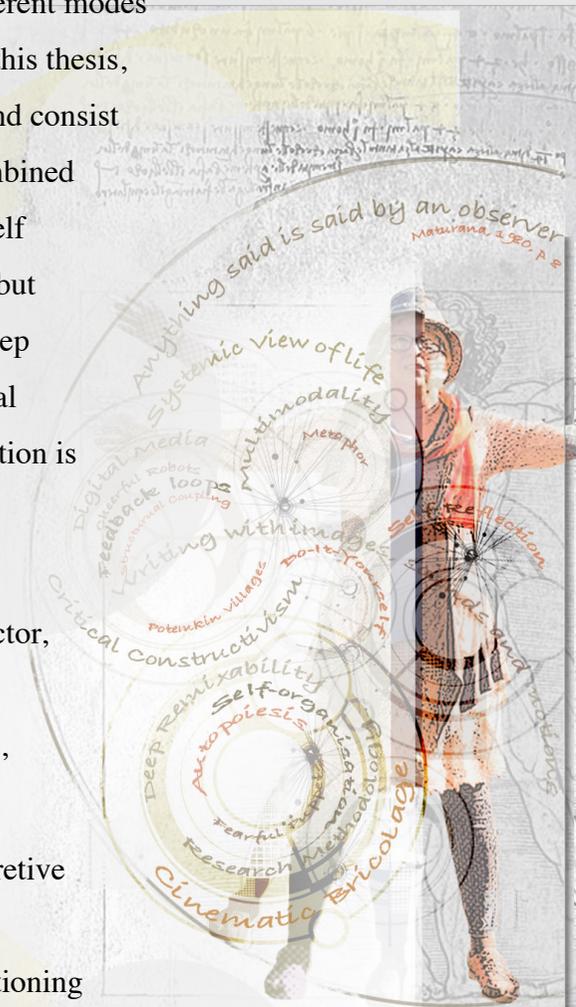
In this chapter, I have discussed such symbolic categories of meaning-making as semiotics, language and multimodality. Semiotics is the study of sign systems and how, through the manipulation of signs, meaning is embodied in material symbols, icons and indexes. Therefore, signs – symbols, icons and indexes – are the vehicles for meaning to be constructed and conveyed to others. The systems of meaning generation and delivery are semiotic modes. Language is one of the semiotic modes. It can be represented through written or spoken word: writing and speech. Other systems of representation, or modes, can be images, sounds and movements.



In contemporary culture, the widespread use of digital technologies makes it possible to remix different modes of representation and form meaning-bearing compositions with the application of several modes. In this thesis, such compositions are referred to as texts. These texts are located on digital pages in an EPUB file and consist of a variety of modes. In most pages this is written, and sometimes spoken, word. The writing is combined with a layout of texts, images, animations or videos. This technique is realised through a do-it-yourself tradition. This means that the act of remixing is focused not on demonstration of professional skills, but on a search for deeper insight by means of multi-dimensional explorations and deep remixability. Deep remixability is an amalgamation of not only the modes of representation, but a synthesis of theoretical concepts and methodological approaches. In relation to research, such a framework – where imagination is combined with cultural knowledge tools and objects – is identified as bricolage.

Language as written word is taken as a main mode in making and expressing meaning. Following McLuhan's (1962) notion of typography as a form of written word being compared to a movie projector, I suggest that the reader look at texts within these bricolage pages as cinematic writing. Taking the definition for cinematography as a starting point, I describe cinematic writing as writing with images, sounds and movements.

In this study, cinematic writing is utilised for an assemblage of self-reflective bricolage. The interpretive device formed for this type of representation is a remix of critical hermeneutics and sociological imagination. Criticality in this approach is a radar for detecting ideological forces and cultural conditioning that shaped the researcher's consciousness during her childhood. It works by means of a remix of factual data with aesthetic application which allows the reader to distinguish a range of cultural sensibilities, thus opening the door for understanding the researcher's personal story and its interplay within the social matrix.



# STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS WRITING MULTIMODALLY:

## Adaptation of Cinematic Bricolage to Research Methodology

### Introduction: From Page to Screen

In the previous chapter I began developing the notion of cinematic writing as one of the emerging genres of meaning-making catalysed by digital media and a contemporary culture trend – that of deep remixability. I defined cinematic writing as writing with images, sounds and motions. In this study I integrate cinematic writing with bricolage, a research methodology of reconstructing with the elements collected from eclectic sources and materials using the tools at hand via a do-it-yourself approach . The emergent methodology implemented in this study as a result of hybridisation within digital modes and research methods is cinematic bricolage.

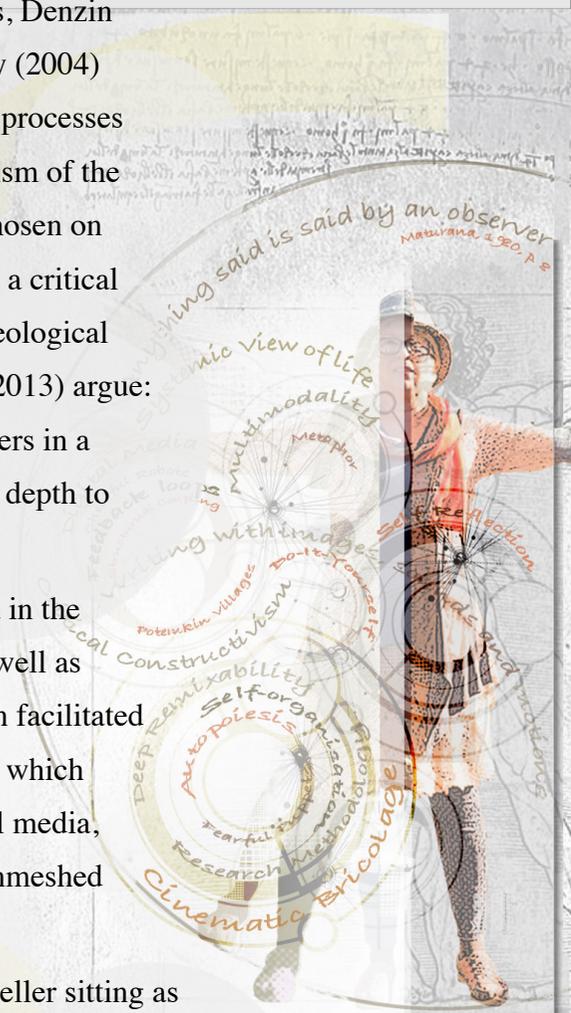
As explained in the previous chapter, the progression of the argument in this thesis is carried out by the implementation of feedback loops. According to the results of self-feedback gained from the previous loop, each chapter is not an advance that covers a linear distance from point A to point B and so forth, but a new loop that addresses the need for an augmentation of the previous chapter/loop. This chapter expands the notion of cinematic bricolage as a research methodology, focusing primarily on scholarly writing. It presents cinematic bricolage as an individual elaboration in constructing research methodology to meet the complexity of the interplay between personal experiences and social structures



by means of digital representational modes. Rogers (2012) denotes bricolage as ‘methodological practice(s) explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality’ (p. 1). According to Rogers, Denzin and Lincoln (1999) see bricolage as an eclectic and political approach to inquiry. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) articulate it as a critical constructivist praxis (p. 2). In respecting ‘the complexity of meaning-making processes and contradictions of the lived world’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 4), cinematic bricolage embraces the eclecticism of the individual, reflexive approach ‘to pursue the realisation of themselves (self) through diverse means chosen on the basis of unique, subjective experiences’ [Altglas, 2014, p. 4]. Cinematic bricolage also undertakes a critical constructivism orientation, in which, the relationship between personal biography and identity and ideological political forces is examined by means of digital representational modalities. As Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue: ‘The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any enquiry’ [p. 10].

The complexity and rigour of this inquiry comes from its goal to explore the effects of digital media in the process of meaning-making. This condition made necessary the insertion of a contextual platform as well as isolation of a particular environment within this platform in which a researcher-dependent observation facilitated meaning-production processes. Therefore, digital media in this study is a mediational vehicle through which a represented reality is observed, conceptualised and made evident. In representing reality with digital media, thinking takes the form of extended cognition, in which human agency and computer logic become enmeshed through the processes of ideation.

This chapter argues that language is inherently multimodal. I invite you to imagine an ancient storyteller sitting as part of a circle around the camp fire and how the gestures and facial expressions, sounds, movements and the whole atmospheric presence become as much part of the story as the spoken word. The imagination of the storyteller and the listeners embodies itself into the physicality of the environment. In this section, I suggest that, with the implementation of



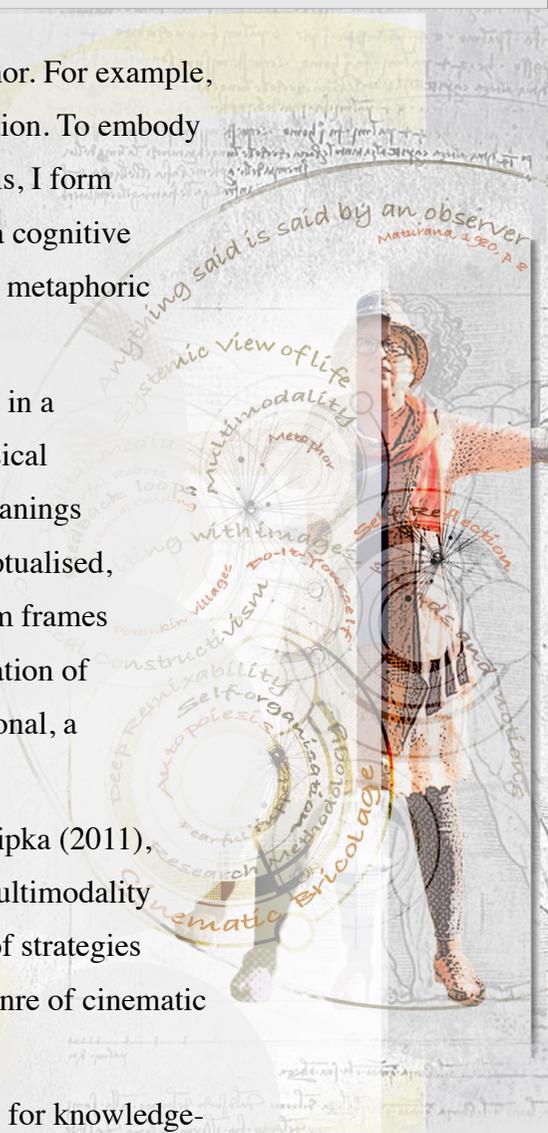
cinematic writing, that is writing with images, sound and movements, it is possible to embody the atmospheric presence of the story or argument into the pages of the written document.

The strategy that I employ to embody an abstract idea into a physical representational body, is metaphor. For example, to say about someone that he/she is a bubbly person means that she is cheerful. 'Cheerful' is an abstraction. To embody this abstraction into a 'bubbly' figure makes sense of what this abstraction means. Throughout this thesis, I form primary, working metaphors that are later conflated into more complex metaphoric schemata to reflect a cognitive device with which people make sense of things. It is one of the propositions of the study to see whether metaphoric strategy is operational when applied to cross-modal-dimensionality.

The first primary metaphor formulated here is: the pages of this electronic document are open spreads in a pop-up book. This means that the meaning-making representational elements on the pages acquire physical properties such as dimension, space, speed, sound waves and so on, which means that the conveyed meanings are embodied into material forms. As the study progresses and the idea of cinematic bricolage is conceptualised, the metaphor of a pop-up book is changed into that of film frames. Namely, the digital pages are the film frames within which texts are developed. The flexibility and conduciveness of cinematic bricolage in the formation of personal envisioning of the content of each page-frame, leads to the idea of making research more personal, a process where abstract thoughts can be embodied into diverse material representations.

Joining the discourse initiated by such scholars of multimodality as Wysocki (2004), Selfe (2009), Shipka (2011), and Hayles (2012, 2013), I integrate my own thinking on how the transition from print text to digital multimodality can be done 'actively with care' [Wysocki, 2004]. Given there is limited development to date in terms of strategies and approaches to multimodal expression and argumentation, I aim to draw attention to an emerging genre of cinematic bricolage and attempt to develop some primal strategies for its implementation.

Cinematic bricolage can offer a 'user-friendly' approach to the utilisation of digital media affordances for knowledge-production tasks. I think this is so because cinematic bricolage: a) offers the opportunity to utilise ideas, objects and techniques

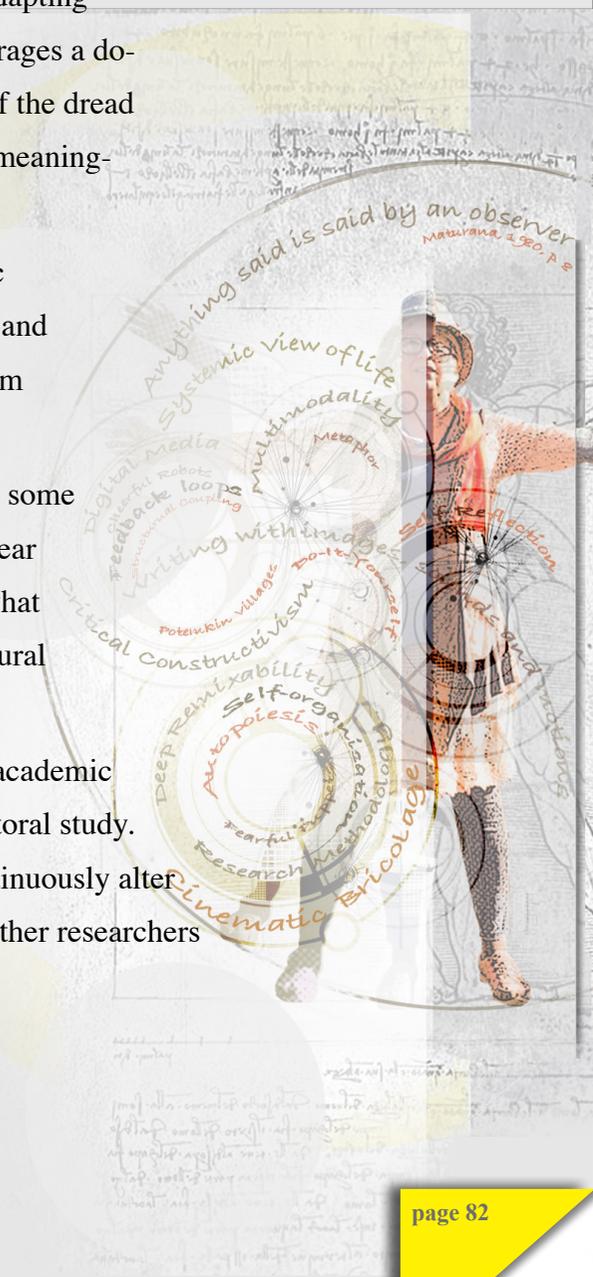


that are ‘at hand’, as well as culturally and socially familiar and appealing; b) implies elasticity in adapting theoretical concepts, methods and modes of representation to personal needs and interests; c) encourages a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach which, in terms of the integration of new modes, implies an avoidance of the dread of being judged on a professional artistic level; d) suggests writing as a basic semiotic resource for meaning-making where integration of other modalities is done gradually at the individual’s discretion.

Inclusion of other modalities into writing helps embody the aesthetic qualities of the ‘atmospheric presence’ of experiences and concepts that are in the process of being conveyed. The series of trials and alterations leads to a shift of positioning and makes a researcher look at the issue under question from different angles, hence seeing it differently.

There is a broad range of multimodal variations used in scholarly writing. In this chapter, I outline some of them underscoring existing and possible diversity by describing the work of Shipka (2011), Kinnear (2013), Ellis (2013) and Zak (2014). Within such a motley of multimodal possibilities, I delineate what cinematic bricolage is in reference to the utilisation of modes and the relationship between its structural components.

Reviewing Kress’ (2012) article about writing a digital doctoral thesis helps me acknowledge the academic standards and conventions necessary in order to comply with the international requirements for doctoral study. Advances in technology – ‘have been astonishingly – nearly frighteningly – rapid’ [p. 247] and continuously alter the direction of doctoral studies. Hence development and cinematic writing has not been tested by other researchers suggesting that the current work should be considered under the status of provisionality.



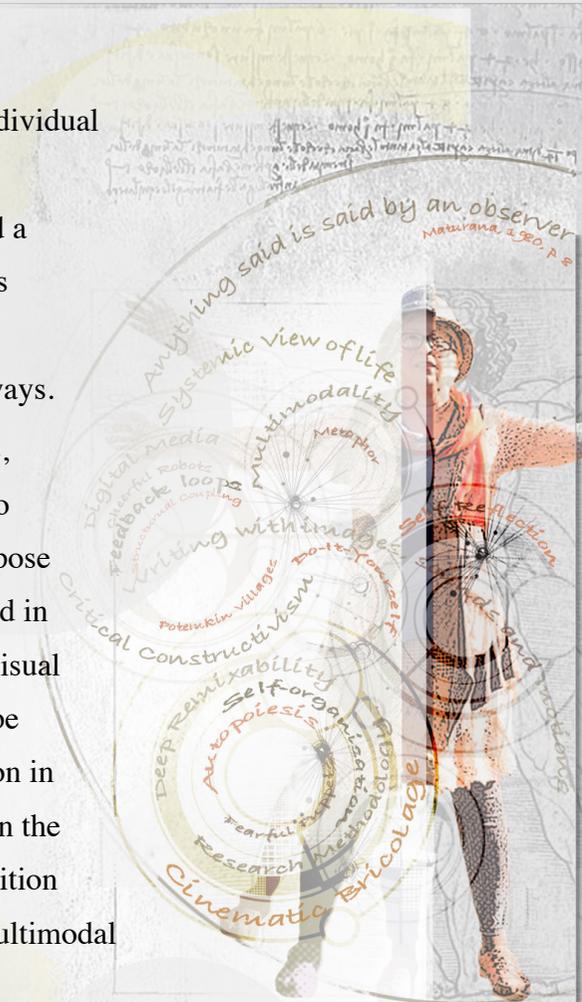
## 3.1 Researching with Cinematic Bricolage

### 3.1.1 Making Research Personal

The relevance of the study, as I see it, is encapsulated in the notion that digital media grants the individual researcher a unique and rich opportunity to make personal choices in designing and undergoing the intellectual journey. Personal experience and personal autobiography, in this case, can be considered a starting point-paradigm through which the researcher perceives the rest of the world. The personal is inseparable from the world by virtue of being saturated with it and, at the same time, the personal is determined by its individual structures and contributes to the surrounding world in its own unique ways.

The method of this research is a reflection of this notion. Cinematic writing or cinematic bricolage, as it is identified in this study, is a way of exploring and celebrating ‘the capacity of the individual to elaborate how his own universe of norms and values from his own singular experiences tends to impose itself beyond the regulatory endeavours of institutions’ [Herviey-Legger 1999, as translated and cited in Altglas, 2014]. My personal intellectual journey in this study shifted from looking at how creative visual communication has been affected by the implementation of digital media to how digital media can be conducive to the study of self-reflection with a potential broader application to knowledge production in general. This shift happened as a result of my own critical response to my desire to express myself in the more personal ways digital media seemed to be offering. Such a critical observation led me to reposition myself from being a curious visual communicator namely, a digital illustrator, to an investigative multimodal communicator.

The effect of digital media on the process of meaning-making solidified in the concept of human-computer interaction where, using Hayles’ (2012) words, ‘the human and non-human actors are involved in a medial relation to each other’ and the result is ‘a human and machine cognition intermesh’ [p. 13]. This ‘cognition intermesh’

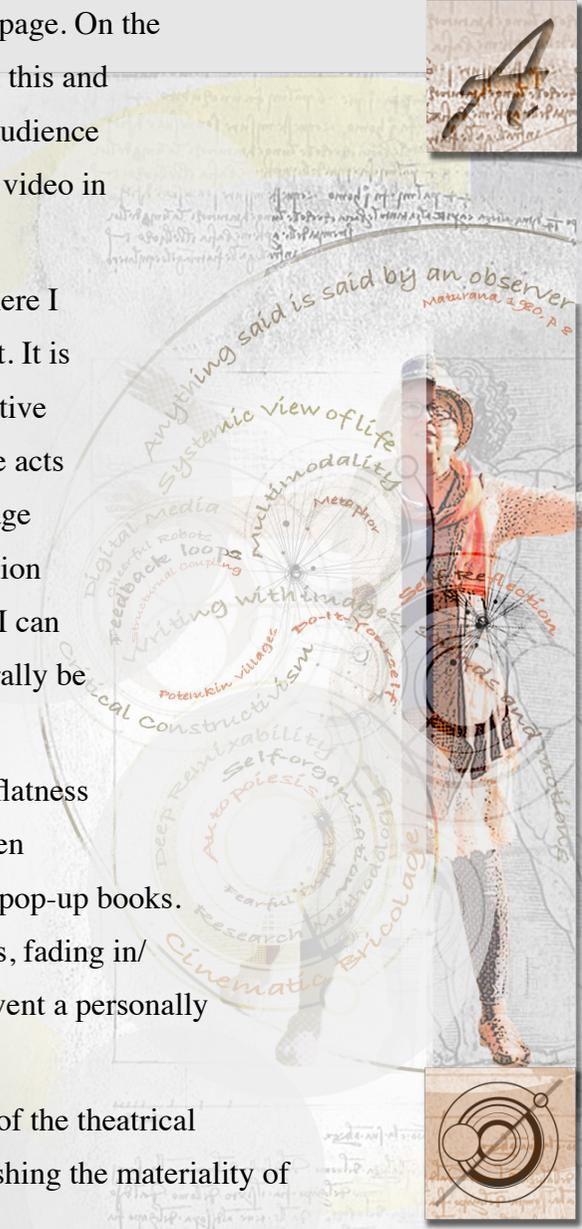


became manifest first in noticing how I perceived an electronic written page in contrast to a printed page. On the printed page filled with words, I would, for example, write: 'I saw that video and thought about it in this and that way...'. Such a way of mediating thoughts implied a conceptual separation of myself from an audience by: a) time – I saw the video some time ago, before people read my words; and b) space – I saw the video in a setting different from how the readers are seeing it.

By including the video inside the text on an electronic page, I turn the page into a digital space where I directly invite my audience to see it for themselves, at the same moment they read my thoughts on it. It is also recorded in a personal way, via my iPhone, positioned to capture a live video from my perspective or, in the case of recording the video from an already existing YouTube clip, for instance, the iPhone acts as my personal lens giving that footage a uniquely intimate feel. Composing inside the electronic page feels like forging a new space, a sort of stage. I am still separated from my audience by what I envision as a line of footlights and cannot see them clearly, but their location is considerably nearer to mine. I can not only write, but also talk or even do my poor humming (as I do in one of my pages) and will literally be 'heard' by the audience.

The digital pages can thus be considered as being in a stage of transition – from two-dimensional flatness into three-dimensional constructions. My primary metaphor in getting the grasp of digital pages when publishing the thesis in electronic format (EPUB) was seeing them as theatrical stages in electronic pop-up books. The physicality of digital objects (sizes, shapes, colours, and so on) and their behaviour (movements, fading in/out, buttons reacting to a mouse touch and so on) provide a communicator with the conditions to invent a personally affirmed presence in the communicated content.

As the study progressed and the notion of cinematic bricolage emerged into full view, the context of the theatrical stages, as I envisioned the pages of the document, shifted from pop-up book to film frames, thus pushing the materiality of the print and paper pages further toward the materiality of the digital.



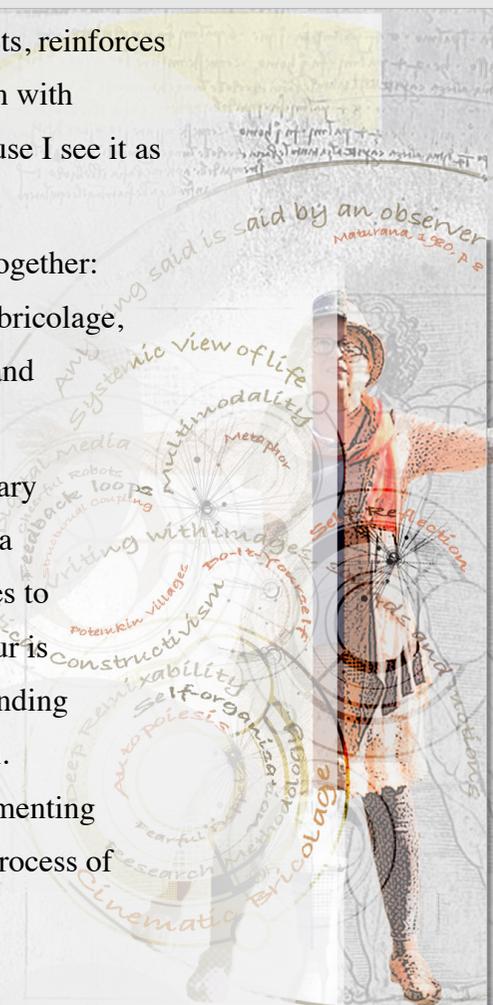
To me, this suggested that the process of ideation can be more flexible, allowing a more personal interpretation when working with digital media. The golden rule of bricolage, that of an amateur tinkering with ideas and objects, reinforces the notion of the private nature of ideational activity, enhancing the possibilities of realising self-expression with cinematic bricolage. The personalisation is advocated here not for the sake of sheer self-assertion but because I see it as a 'yarn' with which a prerequisite for richer knowledge production can be woven.

Elaborating on this assumption, it is important in the concept of cinematic bricolage to clasp two words together: cinematic, implying that it is cinematic writing, which is writing with images, sounds and movements and bricolage, an eclectic and individual assemblage of theoretical concepts, methodological approaches, gathered ideas and various types of data, collected on the basis of individual experience.

Cinematic bricolage is a remix type of production, which is compared to do-it-yourself (DIY) contemporary practices. In our culture, DIY is linked to the concept of home improvement. In other words, a bricoleur is a dilettante who fiddles with whatever is at hand in order to improve something at home. The bricoleur strives to make things more appropriate and meaningful to her environment, doing so in a personal way. The bricoleur is not a professional for whom such fiddling is a commoditised production but a researcher concerned with finding personal ways in which what is 'at hand' can be re-organised in a fashion that speaks to and of the research. Through recursive shifts, from doing to examining, the bricoleur explores personal choices through experimenting with ideas and tools in existence and those connected to the suitability of the intended purpose. Thus, the process of re-assembling is a process of self-reflection and ultimately, deep learning.

As Maturana and Varela (1998) put it:

This circularity, this connection between action and experience, this inseparability between a particular way of being and how the world appears to us, tells us that every act of knowing brings forth a world [...] All doing is knowing and all knowing is doing. (p.26)



Undertaking such an approach means breaking the rules and taking a leap of imagination and with this, reliance on positive assurance, which, in an academic investigation is not always a favourable or safe act. And yet, I would like to bring such aspects of cognition, as intuition and imagination, to the surface and grant them a more privileged status in the process of meaning construction.

### 3.1.2 Changing Actively and with Care

Looking good ...

What does it mean when people say that a page is looking good? Perhaps they mean that the layout is well established, that the text is easy to read, and that the eye is led to follow the sequences of text and graphics. Perhaps they talk about the colour that suitably supports the layout. Perhaps they talk about a style that suits the type of message being communicated. More likely, they talk about all these components working efficiently together creating an amalgam in which the meaning can be found. In scholarly writing, all these additions to the written word are relevant in texts only as improvements that make the page more accessible for the reader. In other words, it is better when the writing takes visual appeal into consideration, although this makes little difference to content. Graphics, photos, diagrams and such are there only to illustrate, clarify, confirm or reinforce what has already taken shape in the mind of the writer or reader.

In other words, writing exists because:

[...] it functions, circulates, shifts, and has varying value and weight within complexly articulated social, cultural, political, educational, religious, economic, familial, ecological political, artistic, affective, technological webs (you can name others, I am sure); we know that, in our places and times, writing is one of many operations by which we compose and understand ourselves and our identities and our abilities to live and work with others. [Wysocki, 2004, p. 2]



Wysocki elaborates on the importance of going along with changes in writing practices that are in process now 'actively and with care'. She calls for keeping 'the old rug' rather than replacing it with a new one 'as though that rug ever existed as anything but an imaginary comfort' [p. 2]. What she thinks we have at the moment, in terms of theoretical concepts and practical strategies for multimodal writing, are 'the equivalent of carpet scraps, some tentative weaves, bits and pieces of matting and colourful materials for you to consider and, if they seem at all useful, to arrange as they fit you for now' [p. 2]. I believe that in the research process of individual DIY improvement, the practice of cinematic bricolage, which is an assemblage of 'tentative weaves', means the 'scraps' and 'bits of pieces of matting' if worthy of inclusion, should be built upon rather than discarded.

Placing my thinking in accord with Wysocki as well as with Hayles' (2012), I believe that researchers would not benefit from breaking with traditional ways of meaning conveyance, 'leaving behind millennia of thought, expression, and practice that no longer seem relevant to its concerns' [p. 7]. The approach that I am advocating, in using cinematic bricolage as a research methodology, is not to plunge ourselves into multimodal totality but to continue using writing as the main body of communicative modes, while tentatively interweaving new methods and techniques into familiar practices of meaning making. The focus here lies not in the production of decoratively appealing and impressive texts, but in finding ways to integrate new modes as tools for novel types of knowledge generation.

One reason we should start incorporating multimodality into research practices as Fortane-Gomex and Crawford Camiciottoli (2015) state, lies in the fact that 'language is inherently multimodal' [loc. 172]. Shipka (2011) argues that by failing to consider the integration of multimodality into our scholarship:

[...] we run the risk of overlooking the fundamentally multimodal aspects of all communicative practices. If we acknowledge that literacy and learning practices have always been multimodal and that 'communication has always been a hybrid blending of visual, written and aural forms' (Hill, 2004, 109), the challenge becomes one of finding ways to address – in our scholarship, research, and teaching – the multimodal, technologically mediated aspects of all communicative practice. [loc. 370]

In acknowledging the challenges, Shipka also alerts against facilitating changes that result in the substitution of one set of sign systems, technologies and limitations for another, or downplaying any of them [loc. 382].

It is not uncommon for educational institutions and university faculties that are, as Wysocky puts it 'raised on alphabetic literacy' to feel anxious about welcoming multimodality into the set of communicative tools. Possessing the advantage of professional expertise in visual communication, I carry a sense of responsibility for contributing to the construction of hybridised bridges between writing and other representational modes. This study is a venture in originating one of the many possible ways of closing the gaps between fragmented systems of expression and building a probe for the mental cinema to stream out of its confinement and through a computer screen, into a global webwork.

### 3.1.3 Recovering the 'Atmosphere'

McLuhan (1964) suggests that with the advent of the alphabet and invention of other technologies, people have drifted away from tribal traditions and isolated themselves from being spatially connected to each other. Academic writing, to tailor McLuhan's words to fit the topic of this study, has assumed the role of 'an aloof and dissociated literate Westerner' [p. 4].

Going back to oral culture, considering a campfire storyteller for example, I imagine him to communicate the story not entirely by words. Everything matters: sometimes, not uttering a word, the storyteller just shrugs. Sometimes, the storyteller unexpectedly pokes the person next to him in the ribs, making the whole crowd burst into peals of laughter at the start the person gets. Sometimes, the storyteller throws a log onto the fire and for a few moments just watches the sparks and rising smoke. There are sounds of crackling fire, chirping of crickets, rustling of leaves, people's breathing, movement of the wind – it all creates a memorable



atmosphere. It is not just background for the story being told; it is a classroom where they recognise and make connections between the story and the world around them.

Perhaps these ‘atmospheric’ aspects of storytelling are still present in a text, coded in the words or hidden between the lines. I suggest that with the use of digital media, there is the possibility of releasing these ‘atmospheric’ elements from their imprisonment in text-boxes and giving back what belongs to them: their physical form and space. I see the craft of this being developed on the basis of extending the essential moments in the content of the writing – realising those extensions through sound, motion, video, colour and so on, to shake the rigidity of typographic text. By doing so, the experience of writing acquires a new dimension of physicality or, as it may be, the storytelling comes back to its original form.

Selfe (2009) titles her essay, in which she argues for the integration of aural and writing modes, *The Movement of Air, The Breath of Meaning*. With this title, she aptly encapsulates the significance of atmospheric presence in the formulation of meaning. Selfe writes: ‘We need to better understand the importance that students attach to composing, exchanging, and interpreting new and different kinds of texts that help them make sense of their experiences and lives—songs and lyrics, videos, written essays illustrated with images, personal Web pages that include sound clips’ [p. 642]. In other words, the students’ atmospheric experience of life as an aesthetic property is widely multimodal. ‘Human normal perception [of such a multimodal environment] gravitates toward holistic integration, with all sensory streams able to receive some degree of mental representation at the same time’ [Tucker, 2007, p. 67]. Traditionally, in academia, when asked to make meaning of any abstract concept, academics do so by squeezing its multidimensional essence inside one representational modality at a time.

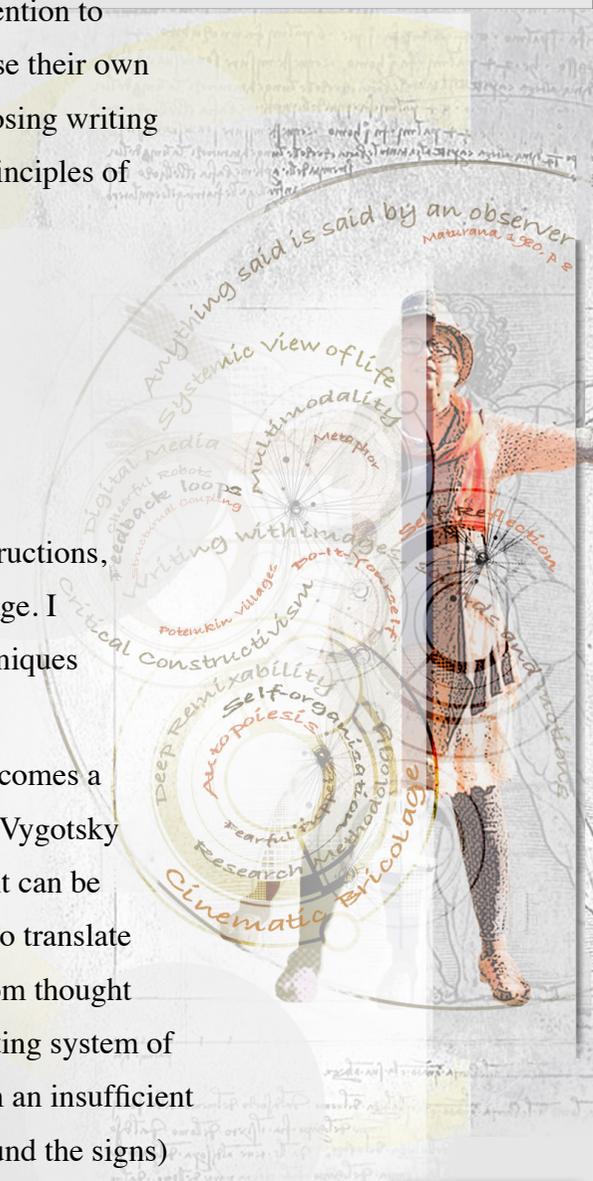


This is, perhaps, not a bad exercise in terms of intellectual development. Along with Selfe (2009), I do ‘not suggest that we pay attention to auralty rather than to writing. Instead, I suggest we need to pay attention to both, writing and auralty, and other composing modalities,’ (p. 618) thus allowing students to choose their own ways of representing themselves and making meaning of their experience. Selfe argues that by imposing writing as the ‘most formally acceptable modality for composing knowledge’, we disregard fundamental principles of ‘rhetorical sovereignty’:

[...] the rights and responsibilities that students have to identify their own communicative needs and to represent their own identities, to select the right tools for the communicative contexts within which they operate, and to think critically and carefully about the meaning that they and others compose. (p. 618)

The assertion of the right for free individual expression within the framework of ideological constructions, or rigid cultural or academic traditions, runs as one of the central threads in the fabric of this bricolage. I suggest that every individual has to be given an opportunity to choose her own communicative techniques that are congruent with fulfilling this right for self-expression.

Vygotsky (2012) maintains that in inner speech, ‘a single word is so saturated with sense that it becomes a concentrate of sense. To unfold it into overt speech, one would need a multitude of words’ [p. 342]. Vygotsky compares ‘a thought’ in inner speech with a cloud shedding a shower of words [p. 346]. Therefore, it can be said that a thought is a shower of a saturated sense which, borrowing from Vygotsky, is impossible to translate through ‘a direct transition from thought to word’ [p. 346]. As I understand, the ‘direct transition from thought to word’ means matching a grasped essence with a concept constructed of signs, taken from an existing system of representation. Thus, it can be assumed that the impossibility of direct translation results either from an insufficient scope of the representational sign system or a lack of human ability to read ‘between the lines’ (around the signs)





gesture and writing [p. 84]. Elaborating on this, he adds facial expression [p. 87]. Kress then poses questions: is font a mode? Is layout a mode? Is colour a mode? [p. 87]. After considering these ‘candidates for mode status’, Kress concludes that, ‘meaning can be made through the affordances of font as it can through colour’ [p. 88]. However, the ideational functions of layout in relation to the three categories outlined above are not as clear as in the case of font and colour [p. 92].

Shipka’s (2011) approach is to see modes as spatially inclusive forms of representation. She considers sights, sounds, scents and movements as viable communicative modes [loc. 493]. Ball, Bowen and Fenn (2013) refer to modes of communication as linguistic, aural, visual, spatial, gestural expressions, and combinations thereof [p. 18].

Jewitt (2011), explains a mode as:

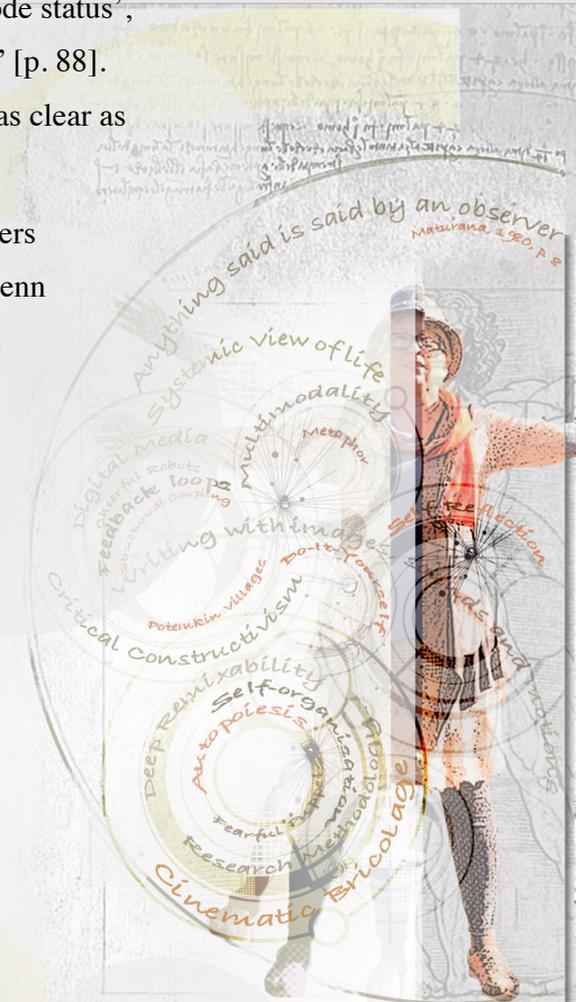
[...] a set of organising principles and resources (e.g. image, music and gesture are modes) that is an outcome of the cultural shaping of a material. Each mode consists of a set of semiotic resources, which have meaning potential, based on their past uses, and affordances based on their possible uses.

[p. 184]

To summarise, I borrow from Jewitt, Bezemer & O’Halloran (2016):

[...] everyone working in multimodality uses the term ‘mode’: some prefer to talk about ‘resource’, or ‘semiotic resource’, and generally avoid strong boundaries between different resources: highlighting instead the significance of the multimodal whole (‘gestalt’).

[loc. 202]



The authors articulate three propositions supporting identification of multimodality:

1. Meaning is made with different semiotic resources, each offering distinct potentialities and limitations.
2. Meaning making involves the production of multimodal wholes.
3. If we want to study meaning, we need to attend to all semiotic resources being used to make a complete whole. [loc. 192]

It can then be concluded that meaning-making in a multimodal artefact is formulated by gestalt, a multimodal whole which is an interplay of all modes.

A theatre production can be considered a perfect example of multimodality – gestalt of language as written and spoken word, a variety of visual, auditory and movement modes, as well as an emerging creative field of lighting. Gestalt as a multimodal whole can be paralleled with Eisenstein's (1949) notion of montage. If a digital page is understood in terms of the metaphor of a film frame, the gestalt of modes can be considered as their montage. Eisenstein writes about 'intellectual cinema' as a montage 'combining shots that are depictive, single in meaning, neutral in content – into intellectual contexts and series' [p. 30]. The intellectual architecture of this thesis is a gestalt of representational modalities into a written text, forming the intellectual context of cinematic bricolage.

However, the field of multimodality appears to be broad with fuzzy boundaries between categories of modes and semiotic resources. Using the Kress metaphor of mode being language it can be said that in the field of multimodality meaning-making can be realised by gestalt of a variety of 'languages'.

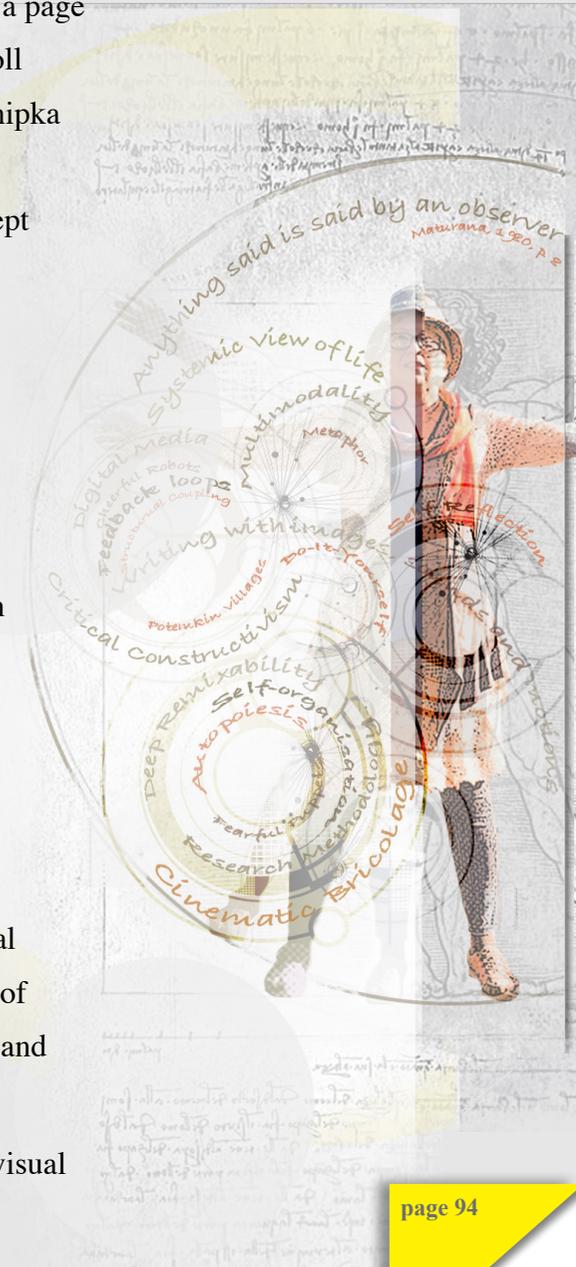
The combinational diversity of languages used together with writing is broad. For example, Shipka (2011) argues that multimodality is a customary and often mechanical activity used together with language [loc. 365]. She writes: 'part of the problem [...] is the discipline's fading interest in composing process studies coupled with its tendency to 'freeze' writing, to treat it as a noun rather than a verb, and to privilege the analyses of static text' [loc. 365]. In her endeavour

‘to thaw’ such ‘icy’ tendencies in academic writing, Shipka breaks the rules of spatiality. For example, she gives her students a self-reflective assignment, *Product Academe*, in which they have to write not on a page as usual, but on a box. The task involves imagining that a prototype of the student in the form of a doll lies in the box while writing an argument for the compelling aspects of their identities as students. Shipka writes: ‘I underscored that they (students) would not be graded on artistic ability. Instead, I would be looking for evidence that they spent enough time engaging with [... formulating] a compelling concept or argument of self-as-studenthood’ [loc. 2532].

In such a limited and non-linear spatiality, students had to narrow their focus to one or two aspects of their identities and learn to argue their points within a ‘non-flat’ surface. The task involved doing research; developing skills of being tightly focused on the chosen point; learning how to sell the importance or value of the argued point; gain awareness of communicational limits; do the writing ‘in accordance with generic or disciplinary conventions’, and learn how to appeal to their readers. In other words, as Shipka asserts, the completion of the task was associated with the typical ‘production of academic text’ [loc. 2452]. Shipka refers to this project as heuristic [2585]. She believes that the importance of such a task lies in the students becoming more mindful of the various ways in which individuals make meaning.

Another example of multimodal self-expression was described by Biddulph (2004) where he constructed a mural of black and white photocopies from his photographs and prints with different font sizes and styles, to reveal his ‘emotional and physical fragility’ [p. 56] in articulating his personal experience as a gay teacher. The process of composing the mural helped him to discover ‘some kind of human system, where relationships and behaviours, values and attitudes are simultaneously separate and yet connected (no matter how distantly)’ [p. 55].

Selfe (2007) designed a series of multimodal assignments ‘to provide teachers with approaches to visual



texts' [p. 73]. The purpose of these learning tasks is to connect 'the less-familiar realm of visual composition with the more-familiar realm of alphabetic composition' [p. 73]. In these assignments, Selfe requires students to be creative when it comes to representational formats [p. 77] and encourages them to consider either web pages or poster boards.

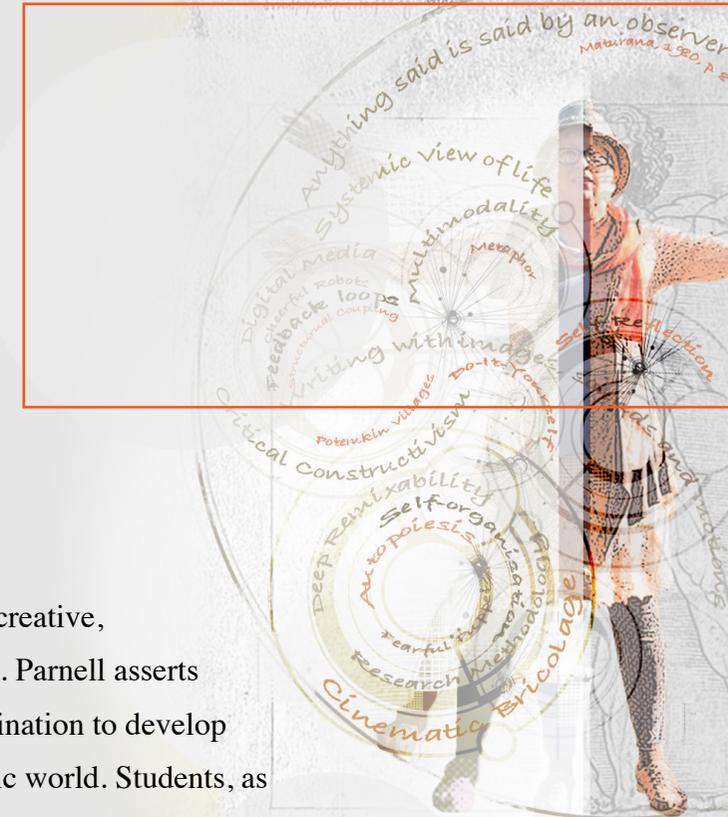
Zak (2014) completed her PhD in a series of video and blog formats. Here is a Youtube video recoding introducing her thesis.

By presenting these examples, I am demonstrating possible combinations that can be assembled for multimodal writing. In such 'a motley of knowledge spaces' – which is how Turnbull (2000) defines various activities used for knowledge generation [p. 19] – I feel that it is necessary to better articulate what cinematic writing and cinematic bricolage is and what it is not.

## 3.2 Unconventional Research Approach

### 3.2.1 Thesis with the Status of Provisionality

The rapid progress of digital technology has inspired many doctoral students 'to take creative, unconventional and innovative approaches toward their research' [Parnell, 2012, p.120]. Parnell asserts that the impetus for doing so comes not from a mere desire for novelty but from an inclination to develop and demonstrate research practices that are reflective of the social, cultural and academic world. Students, as thesis writers, reconsider and reinvent patterns of practice that researchers traditionally used for gathering and interpreting data and presenting their academic work. Parnell states that many research students who, in doing their research, break with conventional methods that include 'the linear format of a text-based thesis' and 'encounter



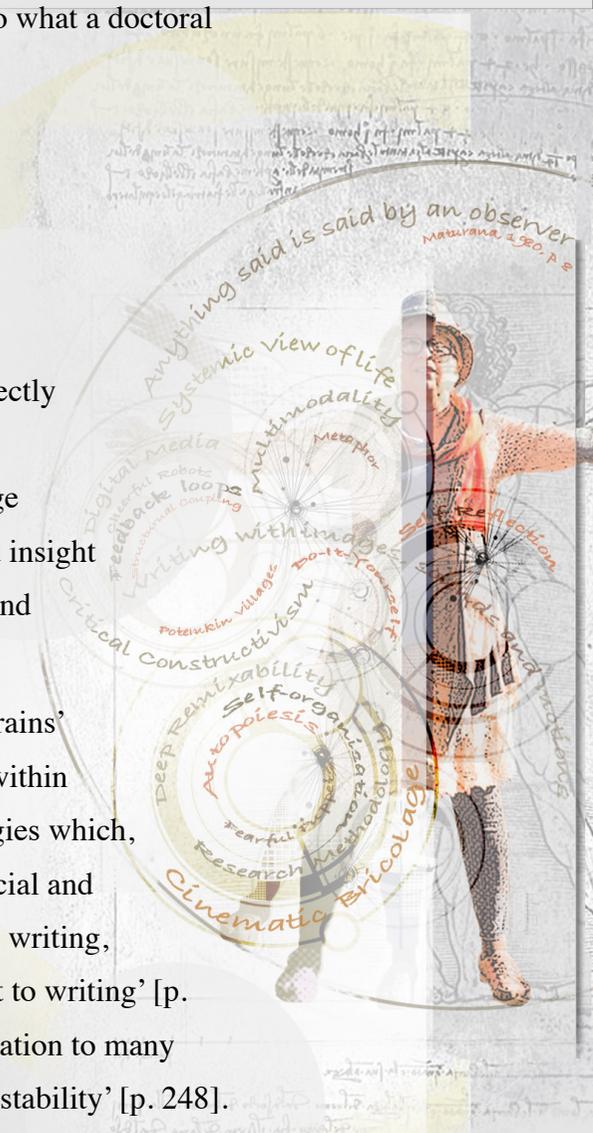
conflict at some point in regard to the design and delivery method of their research' [p. 120].

In considering how far this particular thesis can go in pursuing novelty, I try to pay full attention to what a doctoral thesis is about with deferential regard to knowledge production.

A question about the 'standing' and the characteristics of the PhD is at the same time a question about the function of research in relation to producing (academic/disciplinary) knowledge: The PhD has been – and still remains, ostensibly at least – a certification of competence in the production of such knowledge. [Kress, 2012, p. 245].

Kress sees writing a doctoral thesis as 'a social, academic and intellectual phenomenon' that is directly linked to the construction of 'meaning and identity'. The production of knowledge cannot happen independently from the imposition of the researcher's subjective meaning to the produced knowledge projected by her personal experiences (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 12). Meaning is constructed socially and insight gained by the researcher as a result of the inquiry is derived from a synthesis of historical, cultural and ideological practices of the researcher's particular situatedness (p. 11).

The researcher constructs meaning within 'the frame "of the social" and what it enables and constrains' [Kress, 2012 p. 246]. Kress' discussion is shaped by the notion that the social is an essential frame within which to consider the characteristics of the PhD. However, recent advancements in digital technologies which, in Kress' (2012) words, 'have been astonishingly – nearly frighteningly rapid' [p. 247], shake the social and conceptual frames in the same 'frighteningly rapid' ways. In relation to writing, especially scholarly writing, technological developments have given rise to a feeling of unease, often being perceived 'as a threat to writing' [p. 247]. 'The fraying of what had previously been – or had been taken to be – strong boundaries' in relation to many levels of social structures and cultural traditions, creates a condition where 'stability gives way to instability' [p. 248]. This paradigmatic shift is expressed in metaphors such as that of the 'rhizome' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1978), a 'web', or a

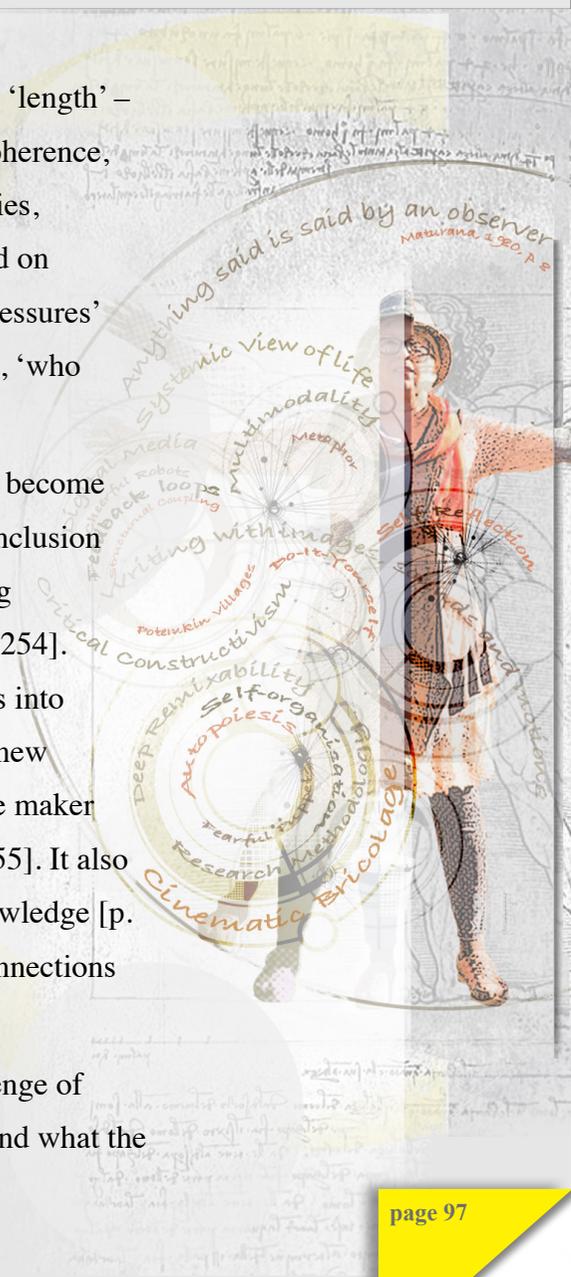


'network'. These metaphors signify opposition to the previously widely used PhD metaphors such as of 'frame', 'hierarchy', 'chronology' and 'sequential order' [p. 251].

Stable categories that were earlier associated with doctoral theses, such as the presentation medium, 'length' – which always was 'a reliable signifier of (academic) significance', the sequential order of chapters, coherence, and completeness, are now questioned by thesis writers [p. 250]. The refusal to follow these notions lies, as Kress puts it, in 'a congruence of social givens': social environments, theoretical conceptions based on postmodern theories and the ubiquitousness of digital technologies [p. 251]. This 'exerts enormous pressures' on a doctoral thesis and creates 'extreme anxiety by researchers', especially by doctoral thesis writers, 'who fear the sceptical eye of the examiners' [p. 252].

In relation to meaning-making, 'consideration of multimodality in academic research seems to have become even more urgent and even more relevant' [Gibbons, 2012, p. 8]. Multimodal technology claims the inclusion of a wide range of potential in making sense of the natural, technological and symbolic worlds. Taking such a perspective, a multimodal researcher finds alphabetic text 'a limited resource' [Kress, 2012, p. 254]. In trying to represent the surrounding world in all its manifestations, the multimodal researcher delves into an ontological investigation of the existing modes of representation. This leads to the introduction of new epistemological dimensions to study. With the implementation of digital media, 'each mode forces the maker of the representation into an epistemological/ontological commitment: 'this is how the world is' [p. 255]. It also brings to the surface and in a new light a long-lived epistemological issue of implicit and explicit knowledge [p. 255]. In the multimodal view, the materiality of modes and embodiment of meaning establish new connections with 'the sensuousness of modes, the body and its senses' [p. 256].

Being engaged with addressing the issues described above, multimodal thesis writers face the challenge of recognition of their approaches, as well as 'a problem of mismatch between university's regulations and what the



world around the discipline and the university both enables and demands' [Kress, 2012, p. 256]. 'And all this at a time when there is a profound theoretical scepticism about the very category of knowledge itself' [p. 257].

Outlining the precarious nature of a novel approach to doctoral thesis writing, it is important to highlight my own awareness, not only of the timeliness and relevance, but also the challenges of this kind of research. Yet by discussing these challenges, I also gain confidence in proceeding with this study. I did not embark on it out of a blind devotion to the 'coolness' of impressive multimodal effects. Rather I see this approach as a rigorous, potential system for new ways of generating knowledge. It is also important to emphasise that breaking with 'tried and true' methods and developing new practices, inevitably positions the thesis within the provisionality. This means that I bring the potential to the surface. The methods, approaches and concepts, however, are subject to further trials and examinations.

### 3.2.2 Methodology of Collecting and Reassembling

Kress (2012) places an emphasis on cultural tools that are 'at hand' for the process of PhD production. He considers them as two kinds: 'modes' and the digital media [p. 246].

In this study, I see modes and digital media tools as overlapping systems of representation and meaning making. My rationale for this lies in the notion that digital modes result from the affordances of digital media tools. For example, the mobile phone as a digital media tool allows us to take photographs (mode one); record audio (mode two) and video (mode three); type (mode four); collect internet data with screenshots (mode four); utilise hyperlinks (mode five). There are drawing and sketching apps that some people manage to successfully employ (mode six). Multimodality is embedded as a subsystem into a mobile phone system for the purposes of achieving certain tasks or effects.







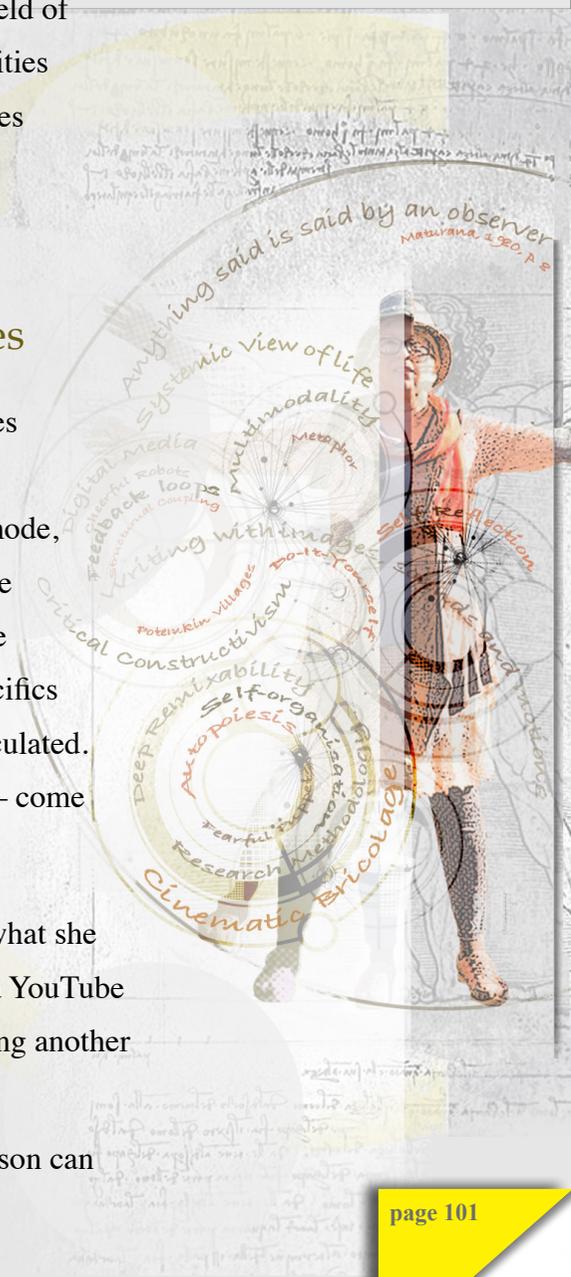
seen from a different angle, in a more holistic way, which results in the construction of a different type of meaning. In my argument, I see multimodality expanding the limitations of one mode by opening a field of exploration facilitated by another mode(s). It allows the researcher to explore different sides and qualities of the meaning which is in the process of being formulated. Therefore, multimodality not only modifies the presentation of meaning but shapes the construction of a new type of meaning: a meta-meaning.

### 3.2.3 Material Affordances and Limitations of Representational Modes

The thought can become evident by being embodied in physical modes such as signs, sounds, images or movements. It needs to be literally ‘squeezed’ into a chosen physical body of the symbolic system. The word ‘squeeze’ underscores the notion that as the thought adopts the chosen physical body of a mode, it needs to assume the physical properties of that mode and with them, their physical constraints. If the thought acquires a physical body through a particular voice, it also acquires all the restrictions that the individual voice possesses in terms of tone, accent, volume and other specifics of delivery. These specifics allow for the thought to be uttered, but also in some ways, obstruct the meaning from being fully articulated. Then another mode of expression such as movements – gestures, facial expressions and body moves – come to the aid of the meaning being delivered more clearly.

Elaborating on the above example, we can imagine a teacher talking to the class. To better explain what she is saying, she turns on an electronic image on a smart board, writing a word or sentence and starting a YouTube video. She does this to break the physical limitations of one body of a representational mode, by adding another because it has different affordances and allows her to fill the gaps of the previous mode.

According to Norman (2012), ‘an affordance is a relationship: it speaks to the possible actions a person can



perform upon an object' [p. 228]. Norman asserts that in design (representation), affordances have to be perceivable 'if affordances are not known, then they might as well not exist'. In relation to digital representational modes, we recognise various modal affordances that exist within the space of a certain software by the presence on its interface of globally understandable signifiers. As representational software evolve, they become platforms for accommodating a range of modal actions that can be performed on an object. Examples that can be used here are two software that are employed in the production of this document. They are *Adobe Photoshop* and *Adobe InDesign*. Originally, *Photoshop* was a photo editing software. Along with photo editing options, its affordances now include: professional drawing, painting, 3-D, video-editing and animation capabilities. *InDesign* began as a publishing layout software. Now, it enables the conversion of a multi-page document into an electronic book, similar to a website. The pages can be hyperlinked, graphics can be animated, and options for audio and video are included in the package.

In other words, we observe a rapid merger in the affordances of representational modes, not only within the overall computer environment, but also within particular representational software. Since being part of the same software, various modalities are unified under compatible computational principles, their orchestration becomes more affordable for those less technically and more creatively oriented. The task now, as I see it, is to look for the ways in which, as Wysocki (2004) puts it, 'to open new media to writing' [p. 5]. That is, to find explanations and strategies for the processes when 'the human and non-human actors are involved in a medial relation to each other' and the result of these interactions is 'a human and machine cognition intermesh' [Hayles, 2012, p. 13]. The observation of the nature of interactions, between human cognition and computer material affordances and limitations, is the ontological focus of this study. From the insights gained as a result of this observation, knowledge of how such an intermesh is achieved in the area of cinematic writing can be generated. For there, as Wysocki (2004) observes:

[...] is little or nothing that bridges those two categories to help composers of texts think usefully about effects of their particular decisions as they compose a new media text, to help composers see how agency and materiality are entwined as they compose. [p. 5]

### 3.2.4 'Baiting' Experiences with Modes

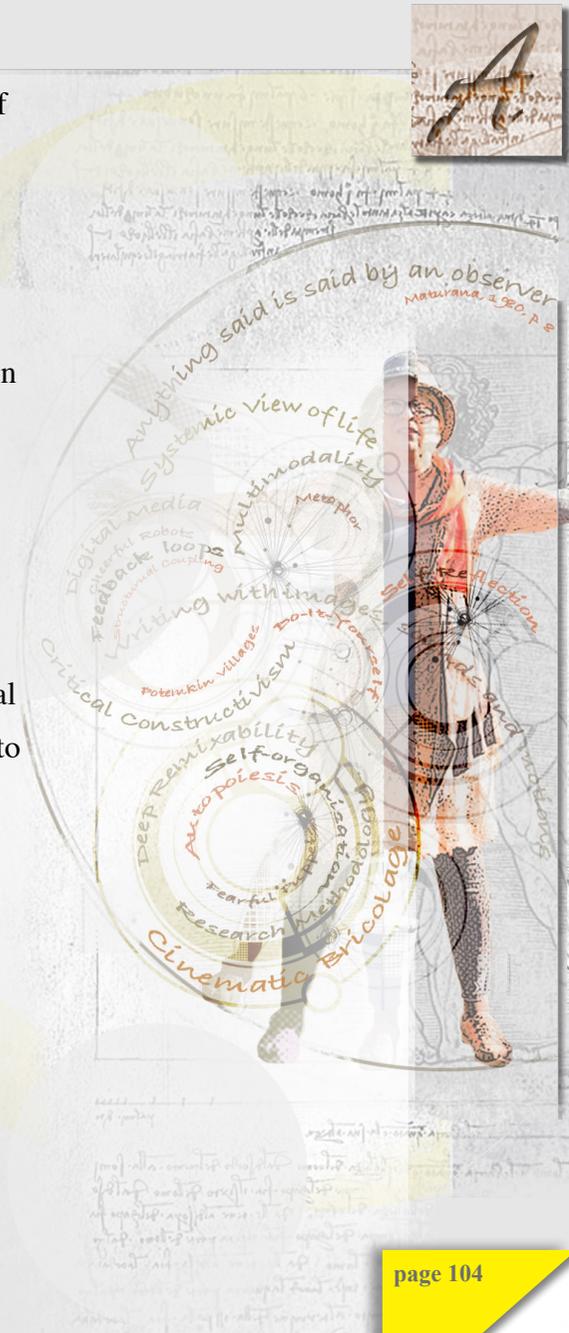
As previously discussed, according to Kress (2012), 'modes are socially produced and become cultural resources' [YouTube interview]. They 'carry the discernible regularities of social occasions, events and hence a certain stability; they are never fixed, let alone rigidly fixed [...] A society, its cultures and the representation of their meaning, form a tightly integrated whole [Kress, 2010, p. 7].

In cinematic bricolage, modes are considered an integral part of digital media. They are cultural tools representing certain historical and social situatedness in the production of this thesis. At the heart of the study is the question of how texts generated by means of these socially produced modalities impact on the production of meaning.

Variety of modes can be facilitated by such socially established platforms as *Adobe Creative Cloud (ACC)* that offers software and services enabling constructions of and dialogue between various digital semiotic resources. ACC is a hub of contemporary digital tools that is situated at a cultural junction of software development and software application and therefore is in a process of continuous systemic interactions between an individual user and global webwork of people's collective ideas and values.



‘Meaning is not the text itself, but is the active product of the text’s social articulation, of the web of connotations and codes into which it is inserted’ [Grossberg, 1997, p. 180]. Drawing on this quote, the probing of meaning-making through the use of a variety of digital modes, in this study, has been organised in a social context where the conflict resulting from the interaction between an individual (myself) and social ideological forces is brought to the centre of attention. Making meaning of my childhood experiences takes place in the abstractedness of the mind-space that I refer to as a collection of memory grasps. In the initial stage of the probes (chapters seven and eight), the memory grasps are not necessarily there. They are not placed like ducks in a row; I have ‘to fish’ for them using the bricoles as bait. The bricoles are personal photos and photos found on the internet, familiar sounds, bits and pieces of information discovered on websites, abstracts from literature, Facebook posts, and YouTube videos. They are the bait. To ‘catch’ the memories and make meaning of them I need tools and techniques. The tools and techniques are encapsulated in the process of being engaged with digital modes. The actions of deconstruction, manipulation, reconstruction, and framing modal categories into new compositions, contribute to meaning development.

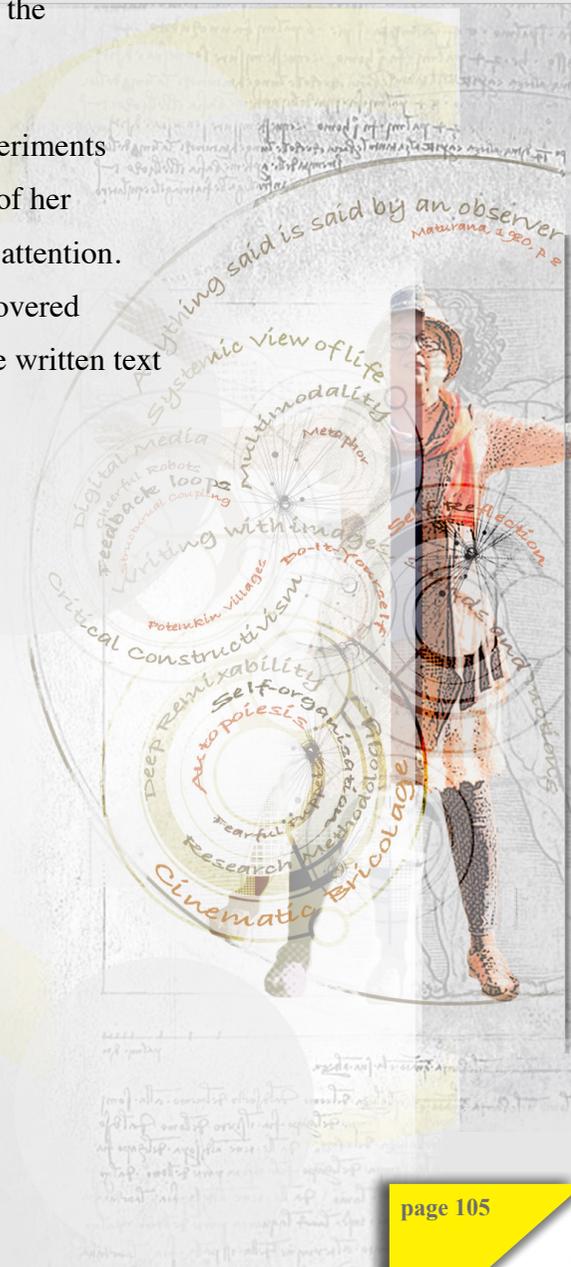


This process is recursive, directed at exploring the relationships between various bricoles, whereby the formulation of new associations between gained insights and constructed concepts is established.

Considering this aspect of the process analysis, it was inspiring to read about Kinnear's (2004) experiments with the multimodal research projects given to her students. Although she acknowledges that not all of her students responded to the activity in the same way, there were some compelling outcomes worthy of attention. Working on the relational positioning of images and writing, some of the students, for example, discovered something new about their research questions which they could not see through the application of the written text alone [p. 194].

Kinnear analyses her students' results:

The combination of physically playing with relationships represented through images and symbols provided Paul with a mediational means that helped him move from those everyday concepts of amassing and reporting data toward a more systematised, relational scientific interpretation. [p. 194]



Chris experienced the visualisation exercise as much more of a dialogue, first with himself and then when his visualisation was read to the class. [p. 195]

Andrea's poster was a visualisation not of her final product but of the messy process she was engaged in [...] It appears that this visualisation exercise afforded her the opportunity to try out her ideas about performance, something that had not yet emerged from her analysis of her data until the visualisation exercise. [p. 196]

These observations confirm the notion that breaking down rigid assemblages of data and objects and enmeshing them in new relational patterns, helps the researcher see things differently.

Another invigorating example of working with students on multimodal writing is provided by Ellis (2004).

He observes:

Some written genres are more visual and auditory than others. In terms of spirit, if not chronology, the relationship between the essay and the multimedia essay is not so much linear and hierarchical as much as fluid and symbiotic. The curricular progression from studying, writing, 'multimediating', and then once again writing the essay ultimately helps students not only develop more thoughtful essays and more engaging multimedia projects but also helps them inhabit the flexible frame of mind that lies at the heart of both genres [p. 39].

In developing such flexibility of mind, I was informed by Ellis' detailed account of one of his students' multimodal projects, which explored her love of break-dancing. In describing the 'powerful multimedia essay', Ellis writes about the sounds of Katya's (the student) footsteps and jingling of her keys as she enters her apartment [p. 58]. Reading about this, it struck me that sounds can be used as disembodied elements that can add 'another layer of meaning' [p. 58]; and



that a narrator's voice-over can be dropped into an alphabetic text-box, making the written words 'ripple with sound waves'. These are the aspects of 'the atmospheric presence' I tried to describe earlier, that can be grasped from flowing moments, revealing what is impossible to explain with alphabetic signs, something in inner speech that lies on 'the plane beyond the semantic place' [Vygotsky, 1986, p. 317].

From reading Kinnear's and Ellis' reports of their students' multimodal writing, I obtain another valuable aspect to take on board when developing cinematic bricolage methodology.

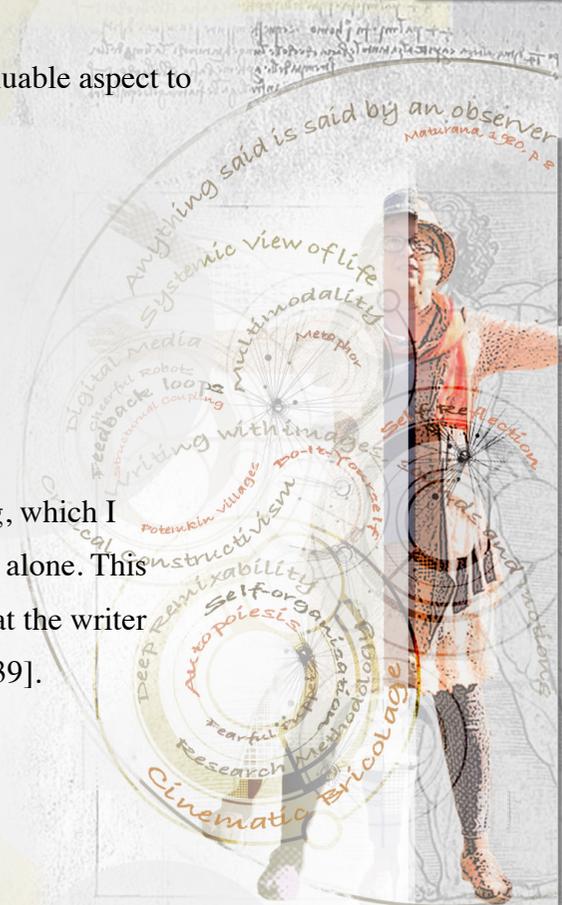
As Kinnear (2004) observes:

Most of the students remained firmly based in text and text alone. I do not think this came from any lack of technical skill, as most of these students were adept with web design, desktop publishing, and photo and drawing computer software. Rather, I think it partly comes from what students have been taught to value and continues to be valued in an academic setting. [p. 198].

Cinematic bricolage offers a tentative transition to the development of multimodal scholarly writing, which I believe can ease the hesitation students or researchers might feel in letting go of their reliance on text alone. This is because it is a text-based methodology that offers a gradual integration of new modes into those that the writer is naturally familiar with. As Ellis suggests, one should start with what is well known to students [p. 39].

Whereas an abrupt shift from writing conventional academic discourse to creating ambitious multimodal discourse can threaten to disorient students and overburden them with the need to learn, simultaneously, not only new technologies and a new rhetorical situation but also a new genre (or combination of genres), the multimedia essay flows relatively smoothly from its print ancestor. [p. 39].

Cinematic bricolage is not 'a radical reinvention' [p. 39]. In its nature, it is an encouragement to think from multiple perspectives. Whether we are looking from conceptual or representational paradigmatic planes, cinematic bricolage is a tool to view these paradigms as moving fractal compositions and thus evolving entities. Cinematic bricolage is a device



that allows us to recognise relational associations between conceptual and representational fractals and extract and re-shuffle them into new correlations, thereby gaining insights that have not been subjected to ideations before.

As discussed, cinematic writing is writing with images, sounds and movements. Developing this further, I see cinematic bricolage as a research methodology based on a multiperspectival approach that reflects the complexity of life. Cinematic writing that is used in cinematic bricolage is a multimodal semiotic resource for making and representing meaning. This multimodal semiotic resource is realised through modes of meaning making and representing: writing, images, audio, motion. Each mode operates through its bricoles of expression as is shown in the table on the next page.



CINEMATIC WRITING – writing with images, sounds and movements

CINEMATIC BRICOLAGE – multiperspectival research methodology executed by a gestalt of multi-conceptual, multi-methodological and cinematic writing approaches

CINEMATIC WRITING is realised with *visual, audio and motion modes*

THE MEANING IS EXPRESSED through VISUAL, AUDIO and MOTION MODES with the use of their conduits/ bricoles as it shown below:

VISUAL MODE bricoles	AUDIO MODE bricoles	MOTION MODE bricoles
Language signs (writing); Signs, Symbols, Icons, Indexes, Photos, Graphics, Drawings, Diagrams, Forms, Shapes, Colours, Letterforms, Layouts	Speech, Songs, Music, Sounds of Nature, Sounds of Objects Sounds of Actions	Gestures Facial Expressions Moving Letters Moving Objects





# Systemic Approach: Act of Autopoiesis as a Result of Feedback Loops

## Introduction: The Method is the Message

Contemporary social life can be seen as being subjected to profound digitisation. The patterns of social interaction are in rapid alteration, congruent with the structures established by widespread digital networking. Such vigorous changes influence practically all aspects of modern life including those of scholarship. In research, digital domination expands not only in the areas of generating, presenting and disseminating research data but also at the level of interpretation and concept-conveyancing. Many research students re-examine the traditional regulations of theses writing. This inevitably paves the way for a break with the accepted guidelines in order to promote unconventional approaches.

In this chapter, I argue it is a logical consequence for social research methodologies – of which this study is a fraction interwoven in a larger network – to be consistent with the essential characteristics of the culture that they are designed to investigate. Striving to viably integrate this study into modern digital environments, I adopt bricolage as a methodology that manifests a research practice reflecting the complexity and interconnectedness of life and that corresponds with the non-linearity of digitalistic logic.

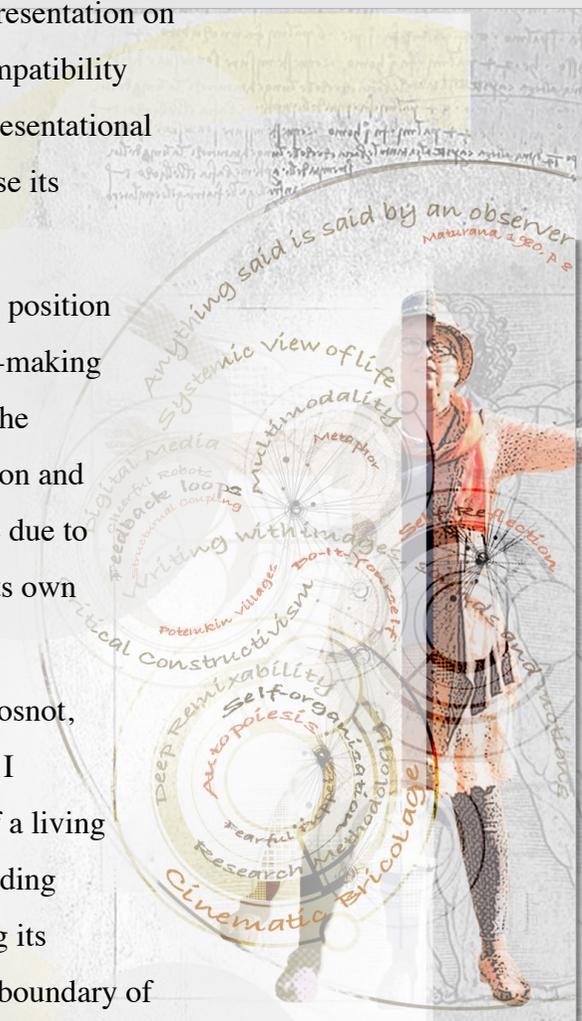
In the adaptation of bricolage, I seek to enmesh cognitive research approaches with digital material logic. Therefore the process of knowledge generation by means of digital multimodality in this study, conveys the meaning that ‘the method is the message’, an altered version of McLuhan’s (1964) famous aphorism: ‘the medium is the message’.



The underlying principle of ‘the method is the message’ is of generation, manipulation, interpretation and presentation of data. In spite of working within such constraints as time, word count, style and general rules of presentation on the one hand, and ‘bleeding edge’ technology, meaning insufficient support, unsolved problems, compatibility issues and many others, on the other, I focus on incorporating digital cognitive, explorative and representational approaches. Most of the visual, auditory and kinetic data in this document is left unexplained because its purpose is not one of additional clarification to the writing but of self-explanatory probing.

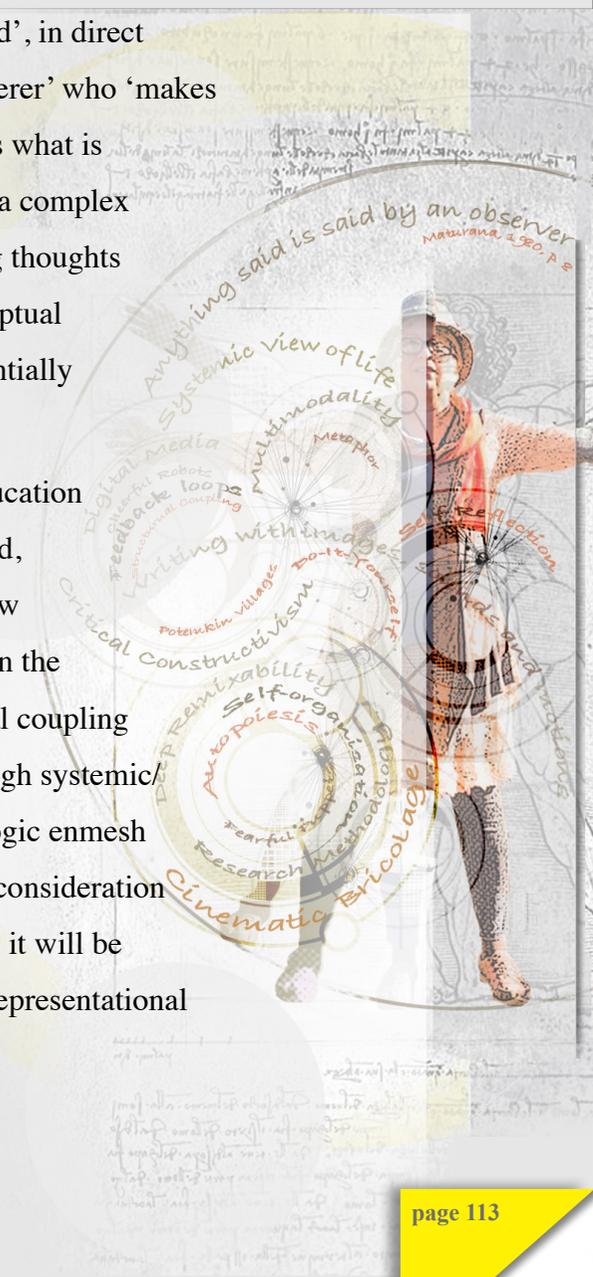
Adopting a critical constructivist theoretical perspective, in this chapter I introduce my conceptual position as critical-constructivist/systemicist. This means that I see the complexity, inter-wovenness and self-making of life through the lens of autopoietic-systems theory, developed by Maturana and Varela in 1972. The term autopoiesis comes from the Greek *auto* – meaning self – and *poiesis* – being creation, production and self-making. As Capra and Luisi (2014) explain: ‘The main characteristic of life is self-maintenance due to internal networking of a chemical system that continuously reproduces itself within a boundary of its own making’ [p. 149].

A systemic view is accepted by several constructivist scholars (see for example Poerksen, 2004; Fosnot, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008; Capra & Luisi, 2014; Mohapatra, Mahapatra & Parida, 2015). In this study, I implement the theory of autopoietic systems to draw an analogy between the dynamic interaction of a living organism with its environment and an individual’s dynamic interaction with social structures. According to Maturana and Varela (1980), the autopoietic mechanism makes a living unit capable of preserving its individuality, while at the same time engaging in a recursive process of self-reinvention ‘within the boundary of its own making’ and in accordance with maintaining its equilibrium with the environment. Systems theory seems to be a close analogy that can be applied to many aspects operating within social structures. For example, it can be associated with academic study that is searching for compatible forms of performance to co-exist with the contemporary digital culture.



Structural coupling and systemic/analogical reasoning are features of the systems view that carry evident correspondence with the instrumentality of bricolage. Bricolage works by using systems, materials and tools ‘at hand’, in direct proximity to the observer. The observer-bricoleur becomes, using Lèvi-Strauss’ (1962) term, a ‘tinkerer’ who ‘makes do by adapting the bricoles of the world’ [Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 9]. The bricoleur deconstructs what is gathered and pieces things together in a new ‘set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation’ [p. 10]. In this situation structural coupling becomes an analogical mechanism of coupling thoughts with bricoles through making analogies between abstract concepts and material objects. Such conceptual constructions are achieved through the application of metaphoric thinking. I see metaphor as a potentially viable device with which to compose dialogue between various modes of digital representations.

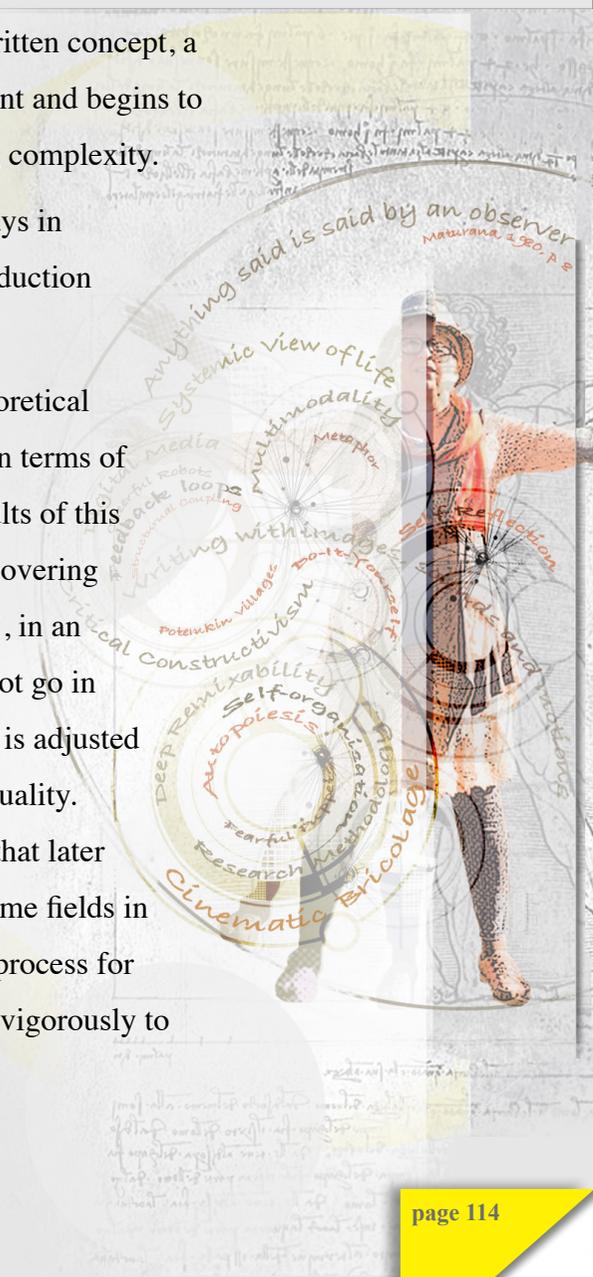
In this chapter, I discuss Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (2001, 2003) promotion of self-research in education from a critical-constructivist point of view. The concept of utilising digital tools for self-research and, ultimately, self-reinvention in a scholarly setting, is for me an advantageous opportunity to add a new dimension to generating, interpreting and presenting knowledge. One of the mechanisms observed in the systems-theory network, within the processes of autopoiesis (self-making), is a continuous structural coupling between a living organism and its environment. The notion of structural coupling, as observed through systemic/analogical reasoning, provides an analogical approach for the exploration of the human-computer logic enmesh in the context of interactions with digital media. This aspect of structural coupling also leads to the consideration of another important aspect of digital society, which is the cultural logic of remix. In future chapters it will be given more detailed attention. In this chapter, it is mentioned as an indispensable feature of digital representational strategies.



Berry (2014) has developed a technique of constructing bricolage by means of ‘threading through the theoretical landscape’. It starts with a pivot-point laid out as the point of departure. The pivot-point can be a written concept, a photograph or object. The bricoleur identifies theoretical structures that are relevant to the pivot-point and begins to thread around the theoretical landscape in feedback loops that increase in amplitude thus generating complexity.

In the introduction chapter, I established a pivot-point to pilot the study, in order to explore the ways in which an emergent multimodal system, that is cinematic bricolage, can be used as a knowledge-production methodology. In other words, in this study, I argue that ‘the method is the message’.

This chapter is one of the feedback loops in addressing the pivot-point. It ‘threads through the theoretical landscape’ and gathers relevant conceptual pieces. As they are brought together they are evaluated in terms of their relatedness to the pivot-point and to each other. A new loop is then set up according to the results of this evaluation. Every chapter that follows is a new loop that threads around relevant theoretical areas, covering ever larger areas and gathering bricoles of knowledge that are brought together, then ‘tinkered with’, in an attempt to construct a set of representations specific to the issue under investigation. The loops do not go in sequential order, often not complying with the initial design. Because the strategy of each new loop is adjusted in accordance to the insights gained from the previous one, the study design acquires an emergent quality. For example, in this particular project, there was initially much unnecessary looping in some areas that later turned out to be of limited importance. Likewise, there is looping that was done repeatedly in the same fields in frustration at not being able to procure the necessary set of bricoles. But this, I believe, is a normal process for anyone engaged in scholarly research. The feedback looping method, as I have learned, contributes vigorously to knowledge construction.



The conceptual construction zone of this bricolage is situated in two probes: chapter eight, *The Tea Party* and chapter nine, *The Harlequin*. These are two probes where ‘tinkering’ with the bricoles results in the production of two cinematic essays. Both are composed along the lines of critical-constructivist principles and reflect a rebellious character of a developing individual against a dominating ideology of political oppression. The probes are digital multimodal artefacts in which representational metaphors serve as a device for creative hermeneutics. These two probes are explorations of how the cinematic bricolage system of data generation, reconstruction and representation can be applied to knowledge-production tasks.

The diagram on this page illustrates the complexity of the lived world which is represented as a dynamic congregation of natural, social, cultural, historical and other systems, each nested within the other. The area delineated for this study, that is the construction of two probes by means of cinematic bricolage, is framed within this energetically rippling medium. Therefore the probes are part of their medium’s kinetics. As Capra and Luisi (2014) define it: ‘The systems view of life implies looking at a living organism in the totality of its mutual interactions’ [p. 130].

According to the systems view, an individual living organism is involved in complex multi-systemic interactions with its environment. This results in changes inside the organism and in the surrounding environment, pre-determined by the individual organism’s and the environment’s existing structures.



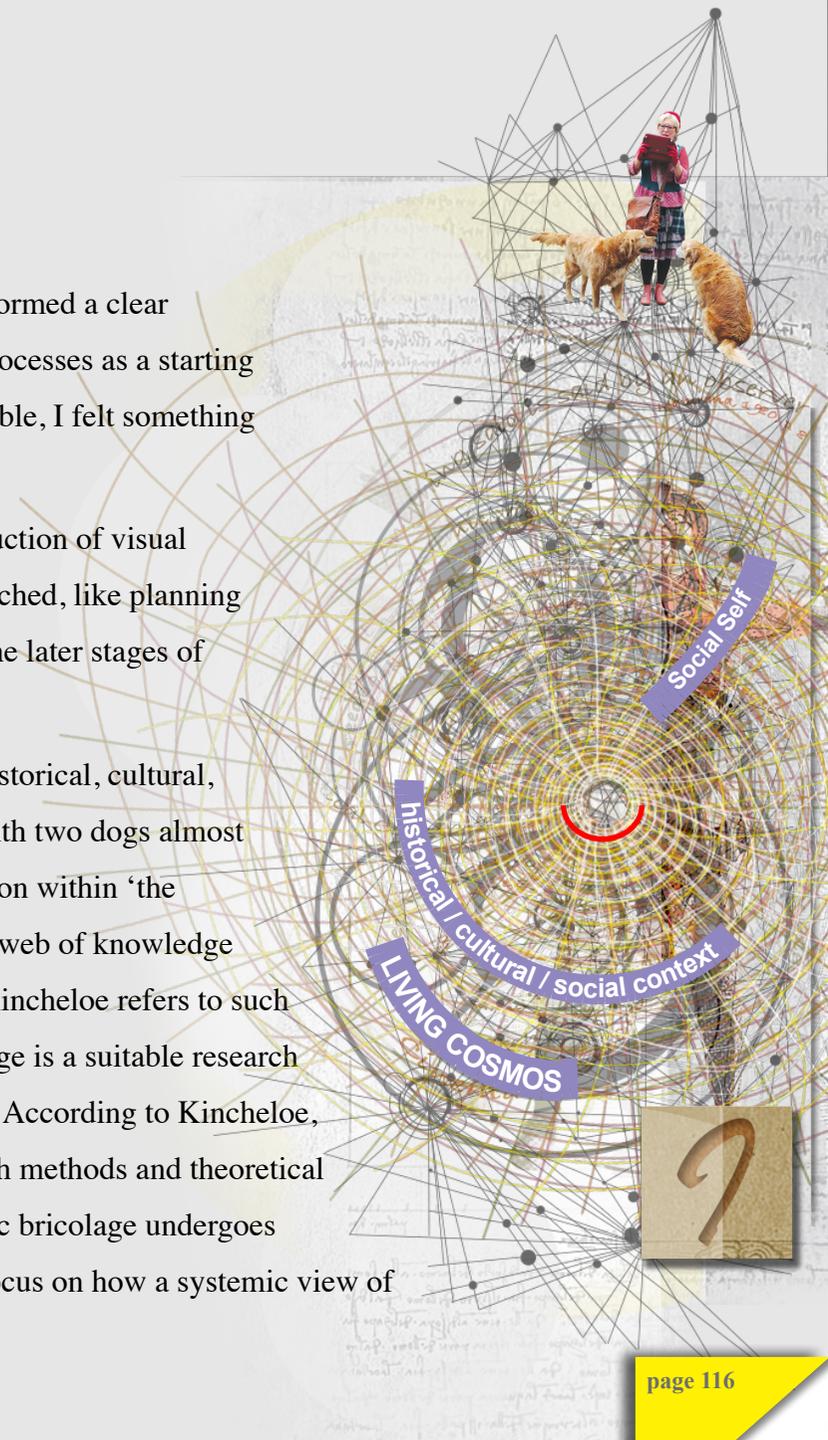
## 4.1 Living in Cosmos

### 4.1.1 Bricolage as a Systemic View of Life

As a mature student, I have naturally generated a wealth of life experience and formed a clear understanding of my interests. The exploration of digital visual communication processes as a starting point for this study was my initial choice. As much as I thought the idea was sensible, I felt something was amiss.

Constructing my argument around the effectiveness of digital media in the production of visual communication was an interesting topic that nevertheless felt incomplete and detached, like planning for cosmetic surgery without having a face on which to operate. It took me until the later stages of the study to realise that the ‘missing’ face was my own.

To explain this, I have to draw an abstract multidimensional web representing historical, cultural, social and theoretical dynamic complexity of existence. My figure on the right (with two dogs almost permanently attached to it) acts as a map legend . It signifies my location within ‘the biotic web of the natural world, the social web of human life, the epistemological web of knowledge production and the civic web of the political domain’ (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 85). Kincheloe refers to such a complex contextual structure as ‘a living cosmos’ (p. 85). He argues that bricolage is a suitable research methodology in accommodating and conducting research within such complexity. According to Kincheloe, ‘bricolage is a multimethodological form of research that uses a variety of research methods and theoretical constructs to examine a phenomenon’ (p. 8). As a research methodology, cinematic bricolage undergoes continuous development throughout the chapters of this thesis. In this chapter, I focus on how a systemic view of life informs the formation of cinematic bricolage .



The theoretical paradigm that represents the foundation for cinematic bricolage is critical constructivism in which ‘we pursue epistemologies and ontologies that provide us more power to construct and reconstruct our ‘selves’ in the ways that we want them to be’ (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 87). Critical constructivism argues ‘for a unified theory’ where multiple theoretical ‘dimensions fit together and are synergistic in their interrelationship’ (p. 7).

Kincheloe suggests that ‘it would be hard to pursue a critical constructivism pedagogy without the grounding of critical constructivism epistemological theories’ (p. 7). This study is oriented along the lines of Kincheloe’s (2008) conceptualisation of critical-constructivist theory that sets its focus on critical pedagogy. Inside the parameters of critical pedagogy, this project is particularly concerned with a developing individual’s struggle to maintain her autonomy within the conditions of a dominating ideology that ‘coercively manipulate citizens to adopt oppressive meaning’ (Kincheloe, 2008b, p. 55). In understanding how individuals relate to the larger structure of a social domain, constructivist theory has its roots in the science of biology. In this regard, the current study adopts a systemic view of life which postulates the autonomy of individuals within a circularly connected universe.

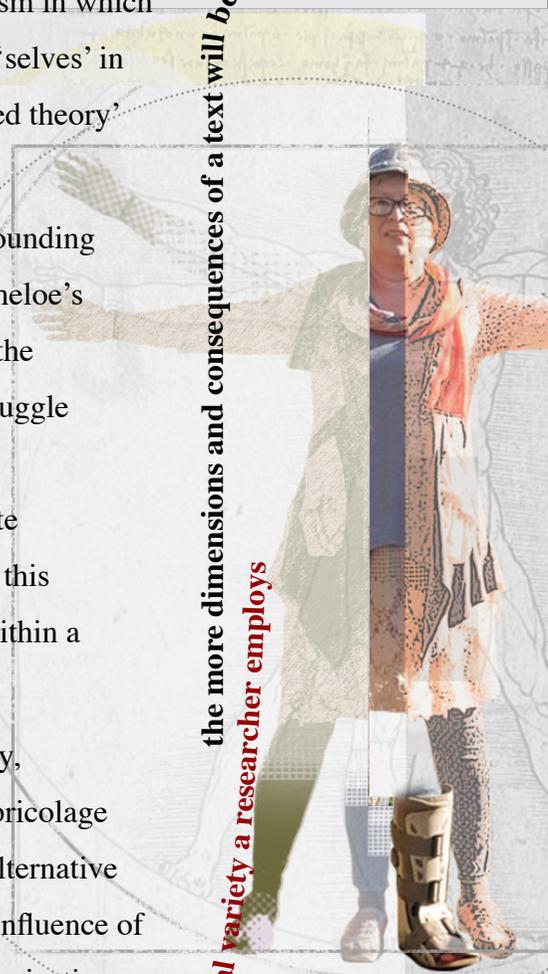
In this study, bricolage acquires a more specialised form of inquiry as it is embedded in, and shaped by, digital environments and tools. The study, therefore, explores the ways in which digital reality models bricolage as a research methodology and how, through digital applications, this methodology reaches out for an alternative approach to scholarly writing. This study constructs its understanding of this phenomenon through the influence of Manovich’s (2002) concept of digital categories and their remix with cultural aspects of modern communication.

**To avoid one-sided reductionism, [...] researchers must learn a variety of ways of seeing and interpreting...**

**The more perspectival**

(Kincheloe, 2004, p. 52)

**the more dimensions and consequences of a text will be illuminated.  
variety a researcher employs**

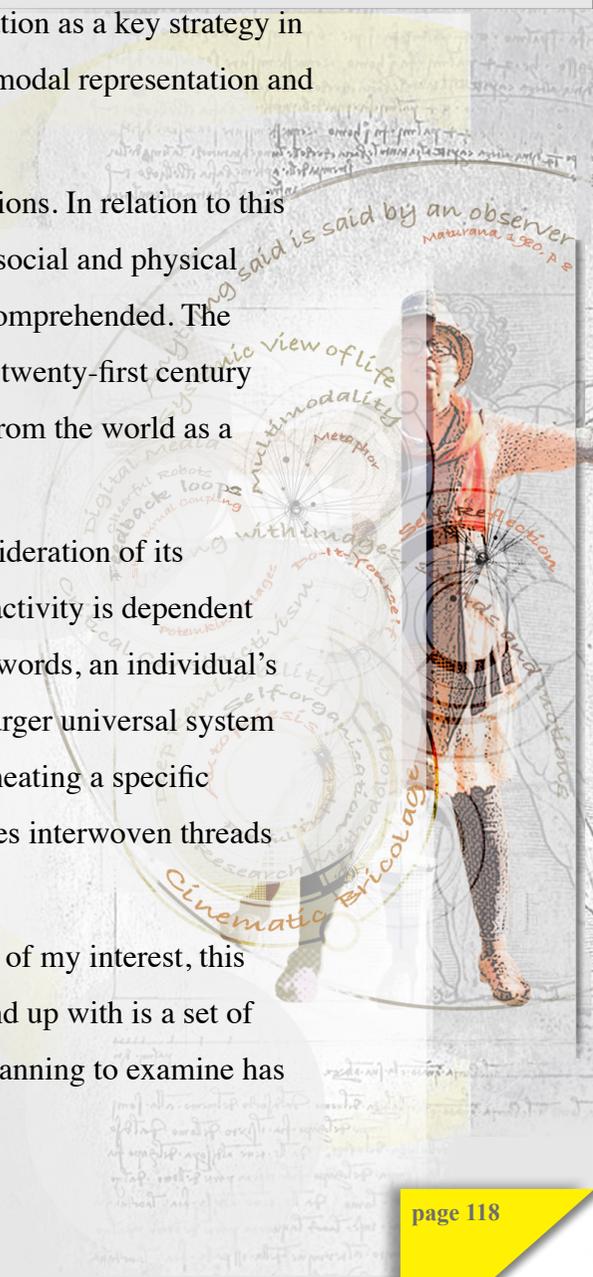


In remixing various conceptual, technical and modal representational components, metaphoric thinking becomes an effective cognitive device for making sense in delivering a message. This study adopts metaphoric representation as a key strategy in making meaning by remixing digital modes. This technique is referred to as multimodality or multimodal representation and the study's methodology, as multimodal bricolage.

The living cosmos is made up of a complexity of historical, cultural, social and individual interactions. In relation to this study, the complexity can be seen as the interdependence of the inner processes of mind; that is the social and physical environments as well as the tools and systems of production with which reality is represented and comprehended. The acknowledgement of such an awareness is a response to the zeitgeist (spirit of the age) 'of the early twenty-first century [which] is being shaped by a profound change of paradigms, characterised by a shift of metaphors from the world as a machine to the world as a network' [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 12].

In light of this, interpreting any individual activity becomes extremely complex and involves consideration of its intermesh within the web of historical, cultural and social systems (HCS systems). An individual's activity is dependent on her intentionality which, to a high degree, is in itself a context-dependent phenomenon. In other words, an individual's system of interactions, which results in and also comes from, certain intentions, is nested within a larger universal system which, in turn, is part of a cosmic system and so on; a series of interactions that go both ways. Delineating a specific human activity in a systemic web of reality resembles an outline of an area on a tapestry that includes interwoven threads going in many different directions in a complexity conditional on the overall pattern.

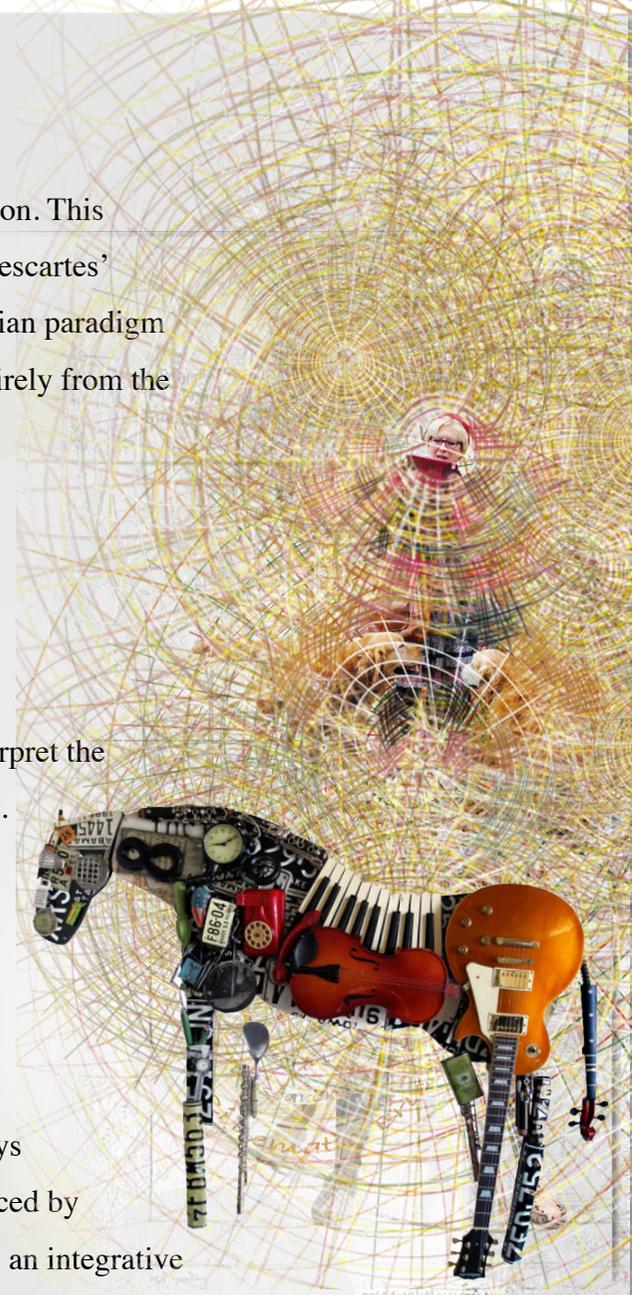
If I want to analyse a tapestry's defined area, perhaps in order to get to the core of how, in the area of my interest, this pattern is constructed, I pull out the threads, one after another in that particular place. What I will end up with is a set of threads in my hands and a hole in the tapestry where the pattern of interest was. Thus, what I was planning to examine has disappeared.



This example sketches the philosophical position of the systemic view of life, as a unifying vision. This scientific thought was developed in the beginning of the twentieth-century ‘as an alternative to Descartes’ celebrated method of analytical thinking’ [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 65]. If the centre of the Cartesian paradigm was the belief that ‘in every complex system the behaviour of the whole could be understood entirely from the properties of its parts’ [p. 65], in systemic thinking, this understanding has been reversed.

Systemic thinking is contextual, which is the opposite of analytical thinking. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole. [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 66]

Thus, adopting systemic thinking, ‘bricoleurs move from parts to the whole [...] looking for interconnections that shape all the parts’ (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 91). Bricoleurs ‘redefine and reinterpret the object of the study’ (p. 92) by incorporating a multitude of diverse methodologies and techniques. Confronting the power of mono-logical thinking, their work resembles the creation of found-object sculptures. By doing so, bricoleurs invite us to look at familiar organisations from a completely new perspective. They establish connections between bits and pieces making new conceptual constructions and interpreting the pattern of their organisation in a way that can be considered atypical to the accepted norm. ‘The multilogical nature of the bricolage draws upon perspectivism, positing that every description of the world is an interpretation and there are always new interpretations to encounter’ (Kincheloe, p. 93). In other words, the knowledge that is produced by bricoleurs is tentative, depending on a constantly changing ‘interplay of two opposite tendencies: an integrative tendency to function as part of a larger whole, and a self-assertive, or self-organising tendency to preserve individual autonomy [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p 64].



Ben Kikuyama, 2016  
*Equus Golden Concerto*  
Found-object sculpture

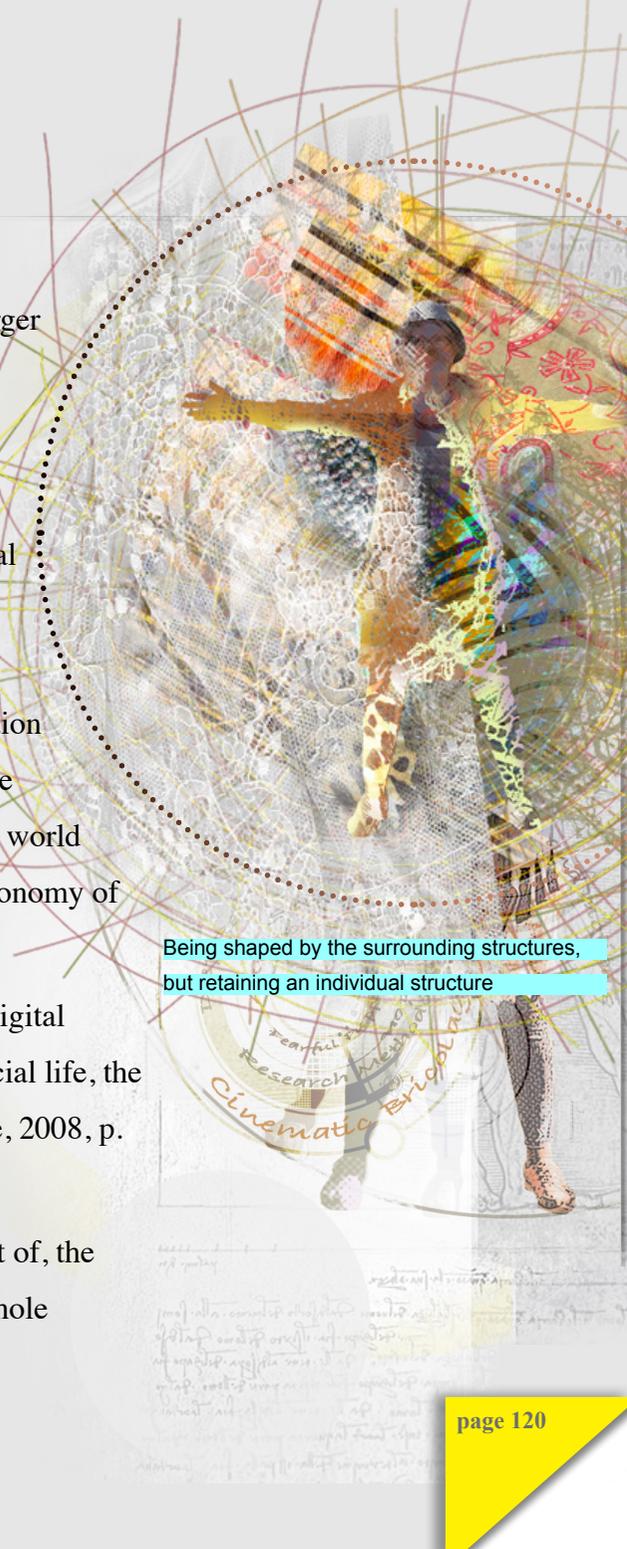
## 4.1.2 Autopoiesis and Structural Determinism

Based on the notion of smaller structures reaching out in a processes of integration with the larger whole, Maturana and Varela (1998, p. 47-48) developed the theory of autopoiesis – self-making. According to this theory, an individual system nested within a larger network ‘continuously reproduces itself within a boundary of its own making’ [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 129].

In keeping with the biological perspective, a living organism goes through continuous structural changes. To this end, the organism is always a chronicle of its previous interactions with the environment. Every new change, however, occurs only within the parameters of the organism’s previously and uniquely acquired re-making. This characteristic of the living organism’s interaction with its environment is called ‘structural determinism’ [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 136], ‘Hence, the behaviour of the living organism is both determined and free’ [p. 136]. The systemic view of the world is adopted into constructivist theory, which postulates synthesis of diversity with maintained autonomy of individuals [Stierlin, 2004, loc. 2757] in a circularly connected systems network.

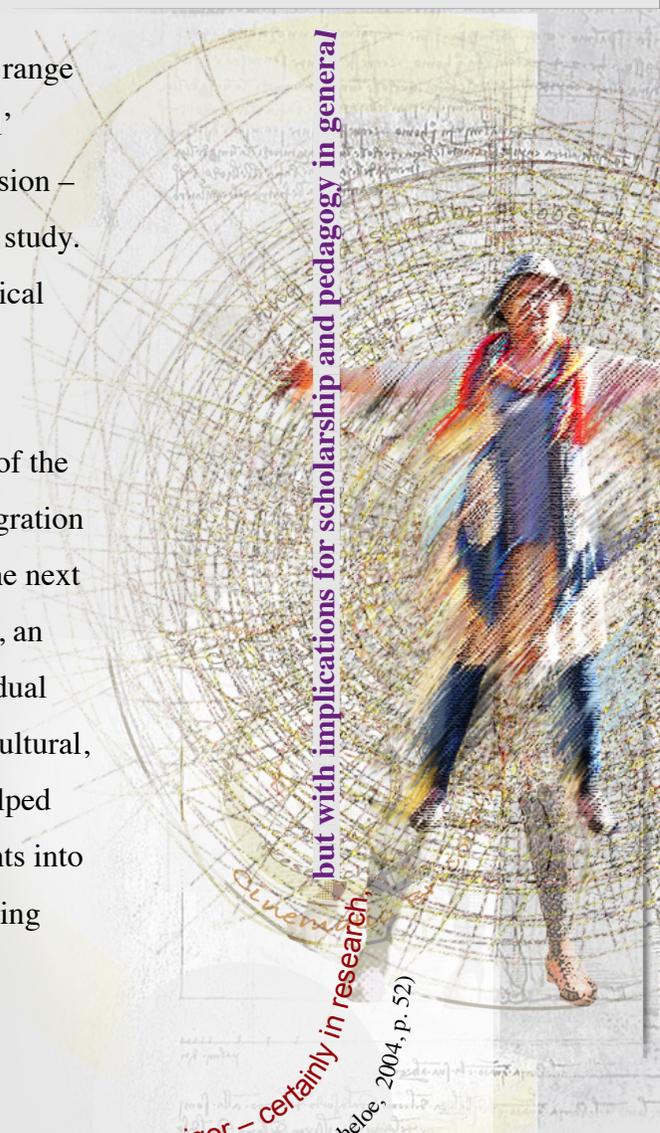
The concept of *structural determinism* is important here because this study is looking at how digital modes of expression can facilitate interconnectedness between an individual and her ‘web of social life, the epistemological web of knowledge production and the civic web of political domain’ [Kincheloe, 2008, p. 85].

The figure on the tapestry, no matter how discretely atypical, is riddled through, and woven out of, the threads connecting one particular point of view with a multitude of others, as well as with the whole constellation of existence.



Being shaped by the surrounding structures,  
but retaining an individual structure

As a teacher of Visual Communication, working on this project, I could not help but utilise a range of digital techniques to illustrate my ideas. Over time, this, what can be called a ‘show-and-tell’ meaning-making technique, gradually helped me realise that my preoccupation – even compulsion – with the use of digital visual communication was exactly the point I was trying to make in this study. That was that the availability and affordances of digital media are modern factors of technological development caused by an interplay between the historical-cultural-social (HCS) systems network. The incorporation of digital technology into this study is a response to the systemic-constructivist view of life, which I believe is a timely and topical approach. Taking advantage of the representational capacity of digital technology in writing a thesis has become a process of integration into the contemporary digital culture by ‘reaching out for difference, for novelty, to embrace the next ontological level’ (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 86). Concurrently, it has also been an act of autopoiesis, an integrative but also self-assertive and self-reorganising progression towards ‘preserving individual autonomy’. This has manifested through: a) synthesis of various theoretical, methodological, cultural, technological systems into my writing; and b) engagement in self-reflective practice, which helped me recognise things about myself that were previously obscured from view; to gain new insights into relationships within the context of my own life; and to gain confidence in myself as a social being and in my individual self-expression.



but with implications for scholarship and pedagogy in general

certainly in research

(Kincheloe, 2004, p. 52)

Embedded in the Denzin and Lincoln's bricolage and its concept of 'blurred genres' call for a new rigor –

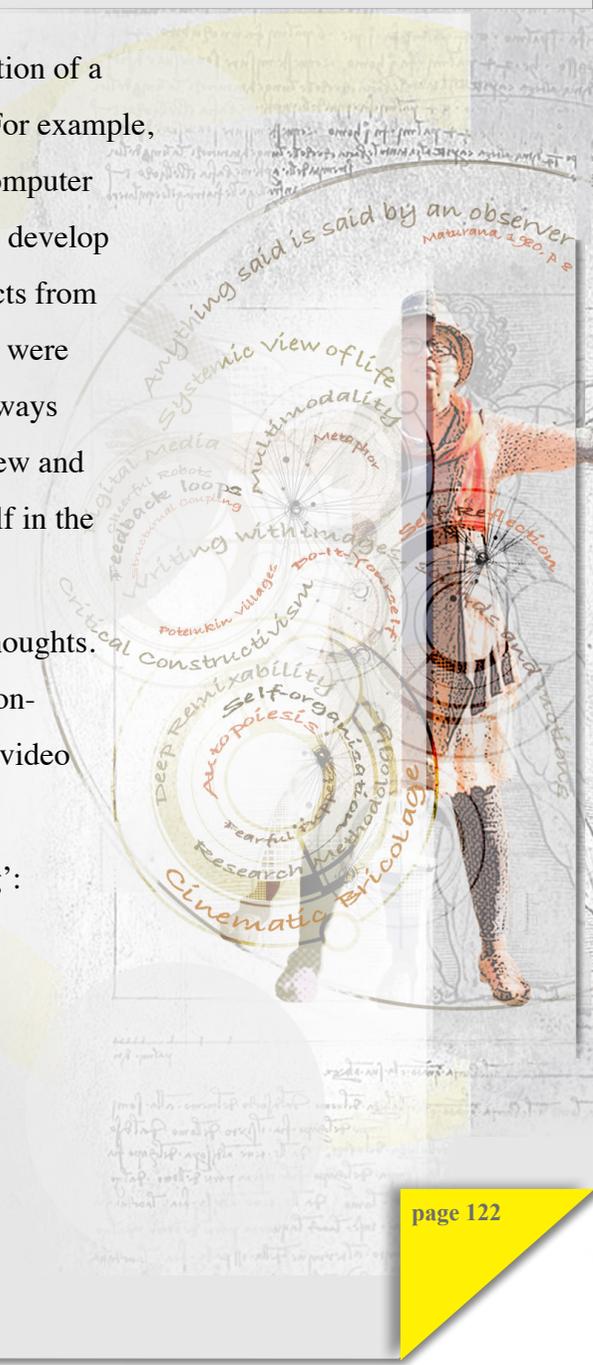
### 4.1.3 Structural Coupling

Employing digital media, I realised, was conducive to a departure from the mono-logical organisation of a project's development. It facilitated both modes of proceeding: linear as well as circular feedback. For example, being involved in the process of conceptualising my thoughts with a keyboard under my hands, a computer screen in front of my eyes and a mobile phone lying next to the keyboard on the desk, I would often develop the urge to take a photograph, or do an audio/video recording of metaphoric representations of objects from my own life experience to help me understand the issue I was working on. The realisation that there were tools in my hands, in a state of permanent readiness to respond to the immediacy of my thinking, always excited me. I think this excitement came from the recognition that the digital tools were not just a new and amazing set of machinery but were collaborators in the process of making sense of how I saw myself in the world.

People often perceive the thinking process as a linear flow, a stream of consciousness or train of thoughts. The perpetual intertwining of this flow of cognition with circular movements may come across as non-essential interruptions. However, I argue that coming back to your writing with a new image, audio/video piece or added interactive element provides you with a richer understanding of the issue at hand.

This is what Maturana (2014) says in his interview with Poerksen about his own 'circular thinking':

I realised that circular thinking did not endanger the soundness of my mind but that it expanded my understanding. The decision, in particular, to proceed from my own experience and not from an external reality can have a profoundly liberating and comforting effect. The experiences we make are no longer doubted, no longer denigrated as unreal or illusory; they are no longer a problem, they no longer produce emotional conflicts; they are simply accepted for what they are. [Maturana, loc. 1045]



I read this quote through the lens of digital writing and see that the liberating and comforting effects can originate from knowing that your writing can elucidate your own experience in a more explicit way. Something about you that was before locked between the lines can now be revealed in a new light, even – and maybe most importantly – to yourself. As you look at it with ‘new eyes’ or hear it with ‘new ears’, you make a distinction about yourself within the web of realisations and relations in your reality and make a decision whether to alter or accept it.

The application of digital technology to writing made me gradually realise that it began to inform my thinking patterns, thus fulfilling Marx’s premise, as interpreted by Leontiev (1978), on how through contact with the objects of their activities, people ‘test their resistance, act on them, acknowledging their objective properties’ and change themselves (see chapter 1.1).

This is also an illustration of the systemic-view notion of structural coupling. The biological structure of an organism and dynamic structure of its environment are in recurrent interaction with each other, which results in their continuous alterations ‘and it is the structural congruence between living system and medium that arises in this way that we call structural coupling’ [Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2012, p. 27]. People live not only in the physical space of their living structures and the medium of their environment but also in a symbolic social domain of their own making.

Language as a symbolic system of meaning embodiment is developed as the result of a long process of structural coupling between the reciprocal medium of existence and acts of symbolisations. Language becomes another dimension that is added to the medium within which life develops. Language is an abstract domain of virtual reality, which as Maturana & Verden-Zöllner argue, becomes ‘incorporated into daily living in a community’ and gradually, as ‘it begins to be systemically conserved in the community generation after generation’, its virtuality becomes a ‘non-virtual’ feature [p. 217].



In the case of this research, cinematic writing can be considered as a series of tentative exploratory steps of structural coupling in presenting and carrying out the doctoral thesis. The structural coupling here involves synthesising digital writing with the medium of digital culture and at the same time expanding my own thinking abilities as I ‘tinker’, using Lèvi-Strauss’ (1962) bricolage term, in expressing myself through various digital modes. This tinkering involves ‘both systemic analogical and local casual’ modes of thinking [p. 219]. According to Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2012):

*Local casual thinking* sees sequential coherences and abstract regularities in such local sequences [...] it entails a linear vision and never goes across nonintersecting phenomenal domains [p. 219]

*Systemic analogical thinking* involves abstractions by the observer of regularities in the coherences of his or her domains of existence as a human being [...] In systemic and analogical thinking the observer operates in awareness of his or her circumstances [p. 220].

In the development of this thesis I adhere to the accepted institutional regulations for theses writing. In spite of introducing some elements that can be seen as disruptions of the logical linear approach, I structure the argument and the pages as sequentially and coherently as possible. One of the main evidences of my adherence to the rules is my communication of ideas primarily through the written word. Although the thesis is carried out using exclusively digital means of production, the incorporation of multimodal elements into its body is still additional rather than fully integrated. As the ‘close association of written language and research-based knowledge’ [Borg & Davis, 2012, p. 9] remains a dominant method, I use it as a foundation for the argument.



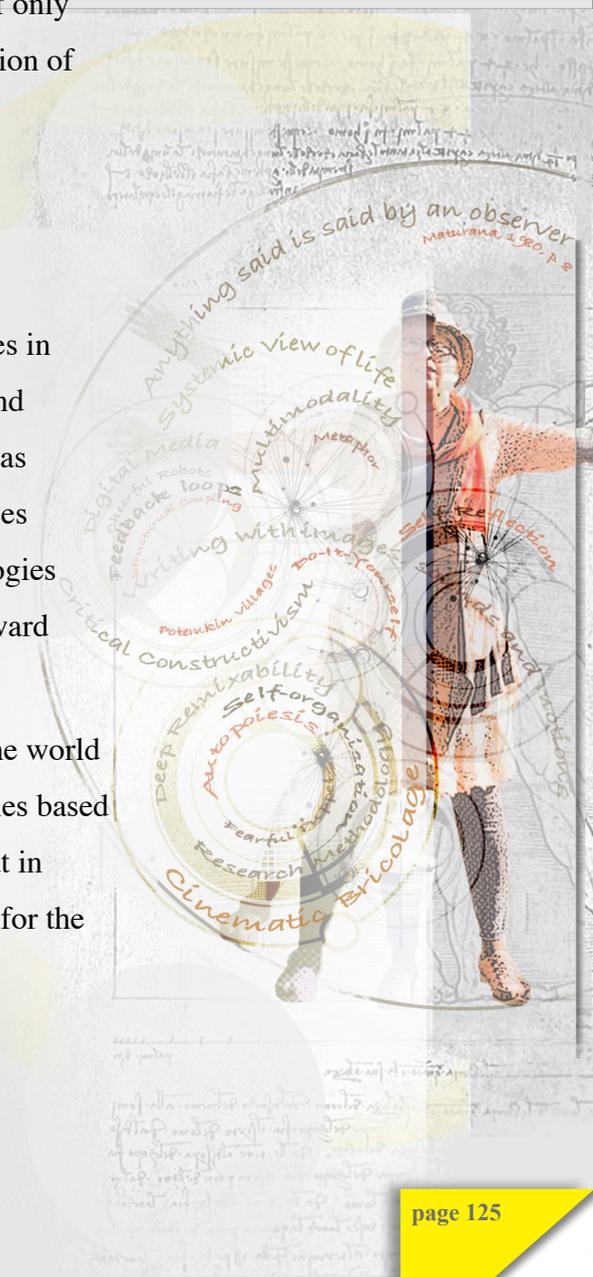
At the same time, this study is focused on looking for a synergetic expansion of cinematic bricolage into the culture of digital modernism in the way that the embodiment of meaning is not reduced to the use of only one modality. In this endeavour, I argue systemic analogical thinking can provide a path into formation of multimodal communication through compositioning analogies.

#### 4.1.4 Systemic/ Analogical and Metaphoric Reasoning

Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2012) maintain that: ‘Analogical thinking grasps systemic coherences in different non-intersecting domains, and thus it operates establishing relations between them that stand on systemic similarities’ [p. 205]. These authors consider such reasoning to be effective because it has the same grounding as when ‘a living system normally finds itself in a domain of systemic coherences with other living and non-living entities’. In other words, from a natural science point of view, analogies of systemic configurations and their interrelations can be found in domains that have no straightforward interconnectedness [p. 206].

This allows us to suggest existing analogies between the physical world of our environment and the world of our social constructions. It also clarifies why people often explain abstract situations with analogies based on the physicality of experience, such as ‘walking on thin ice’. From here comes the proposition that in ‘tinkering’ with multimodal communication, analogical reasoning can serve as an effective strategy for the origination of symbolic representation.

In the act of symbolisation the observer makes one thing stand for another, but it is the emotioning involved in what the observer does that determines what happens in the moment of living through the symbols. It is the emotioning that in fact gives a symbol its character as an aspect of human life. [Maturana and Verden-Zöllner, 2012, p. 219].



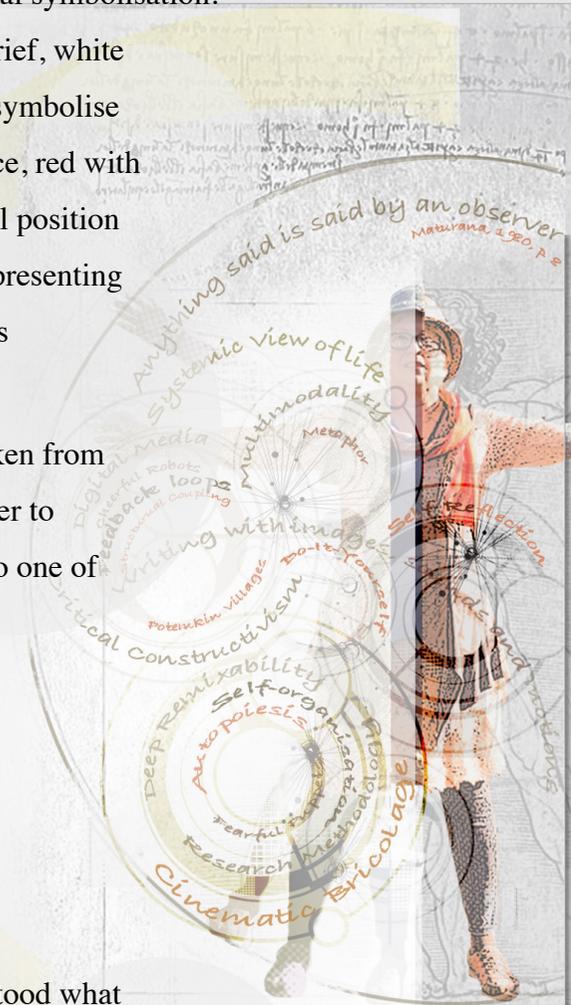
My own life experience will tell me, for example, that colour can be considered a mode of emotional symbolisation. According to Western conventions in certain countries, people wear black to funerals to symbolise grief, white or pink to weddings to symbolise love and new beginning, or bright colours to other celebrations to symbolise happiness. Purple is often considered a royal colour. Green is usually associated with health and peace, red with excitement and passion and so on. Furthermore, colour can be used to strongly express an ideological position or association with a certain organisation or society. Can colour, then, be one of the digital modes representing meaning? Can sound be a mode that adds to what colour portrays; and how can shapes or movements contribute to the overall conveyance of a message?

I argue that multimodality can add a new dimension to the conflation of associative abstractions taken from disparate domains, which is effectively the configuration of metaphor. It allows the composer/designer to expand her spectrum of individual expression by moving from an exclusively descriptive approach to one of representative qualia, or subjective experiences [Edelman & Tononi, 2013, p. xi].

Edelman and Tononi maintain that:

[...] no amount of description will ever be able to account fully for a subjective experience, no matter how accurate that description may be [...] No scientific description of the neural mechanisms of colour discrimination, even if it is perfectly satisfactory, will make you understand *what it feels like* to perceive a particular colour. [p. 11]

Edelman and Tononi tell John Locke's (1801) story about a blind man who declared that he understood what the colour scarlet was like. When his friend asked him to explain it, he answered it was like 'the sound of a trumpet' [p. 11]. I believe the key to the future language of multimodality can be found in this analogy. We first have to compare ourselves to a blind man, as at present we can only speculate what kind of symbolic system the language of multimodality will evolve into.



In this study, the notion of analogical reasoning is linked to metaphoric cognition. The mechanism of metaphoric thought is taken here as a strategy for multimodal composing. ‘The heart of metaphor is inference’, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue [p. 243]. This statement contains analogical regularity with Maturana and Verden-Zöller’s (2012) assertion about logical reasoning which involves a local, cause-and-effect grasp of coherences (p. 207). Lakoff and Johnson explain further: ‘Conceptual metaphor allows inferences in the sensory-motor domain (e.g. domains of space and objects)’ ... [p. 243] – which Maturana and Verden-Zöller (2012) refer to as the medium of physical space – ... ‘to be used to draw inferences about other domains (e.g., domains of subjective judgement, with concepts like intimacy, emotions, justice, and so on)’ [Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 243], – which Maturana and Verden-Zöller (2012) refer to as abstract, virtual domains of symbols. In other words, systemic analogical thinking helps us to grasp systemic coherences from disparate domains.

In relation to multimodal communication, I am therefore looking for approaches to interpreting abstract domains of thoughts, emotions, conceptual constructions and social structures, and their interrelations by symbolisations composed out of digital material modes: shapes, colours, layouts, audio, video and kinetic elements.

In this process, it is important to regard both modes of reasoning: systemic/analogical and linear/causal as equal ‘companions’. Maturana and Verden-Zöller (2012) warn us to ‘not invalidate systemic/analogical thinking’ as our ‘cultural orientation to reductionist thinking’ teaches us to treat ‘local causality as the only valid manner of reasoning’. Indeed, metaphoric thinking is not possible without application of systemic/analogical thinking. As Geary (2011) puts it: ‘The paradox of metaphor is that it tells us so much about a person, place, or thing by telling us what that person, place, or thing is not’ [loc. 241]. In other words, metaphor is the result of systemic analogy between non-intersecting domains, which reinforce the notion of composing multimodal metaphors by making

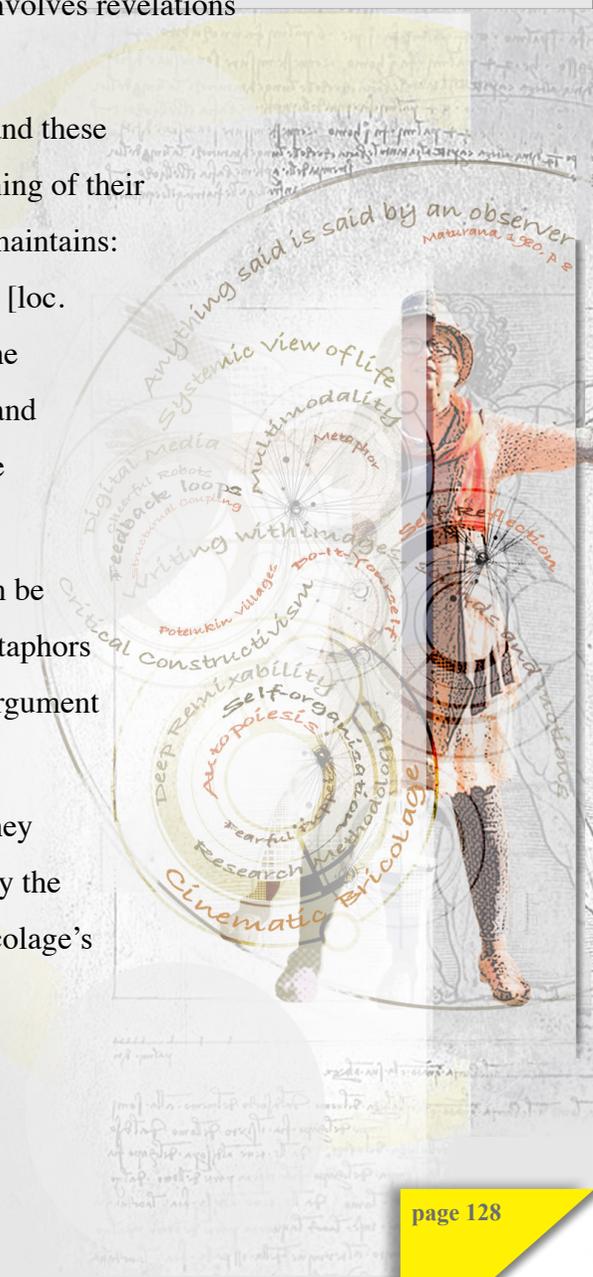


analogies between representational modes. Using Maturana and Verden-Zöller's terminology, this involves revelations of coherences between abstractions made by an observer through an awareness of her experience.

Two types of strategies have been used when employing metaphoric logic throughout this thesis, and these should be noted. The first is based on the idea that in 'real' life people make and communicate meaning of their experiences through the saturation of these processes with metaphoric reasoning. As Geary (2011) maintains: 'Look at and listen to the language around you and you will discover a moveable feast of metaphor' [loc. 368]. As I am developing an argument, I continuously use local/working metaphoric conflation of the association between the domains of experience in the same way people do in everyday life. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) refer to these as primary metaphors [loc. 616]. These metaphors help me explain the immediate situation that I am working on.

The second type is the result of conceptual blending in which 'two or more primary metaphors can be brought together to form a larger complex metaphor' [Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, loc, 622]. These metaphors are not of local/working character but are developed together with, and as conceptual parts of, the argument itself. They are 'image schemata, profiles and trajector-landmark structures' [loc. 433].

The local/working metaphors and image schemata metaphors are important for this argument as they have their own functional characteristics. To employ either only one type or the other would simplify the appreciation of our understanding of the cognitive processes of meaning making and reduce the bricolage's multi-systemic orientation to a mono-logical approach.



## 4.2 Self-Research and Digital Media

### 4.2.1 Scholars, Teachers and Students as Researchers

From what I have discussed in the previous section, I now see ‘the figure in the tapestry’ as not just a person but as a complex system of relations between various physical (including space and time) and symbolic domains of a particular human being’s existence. Within this systemic web of interactions, the observer’s engagement with digital media allows her to transcend the space and time dimension, establish relational connections and make sense of her own experience at the time when she was a child. Digital media facilitates the richness of making links, memory recollections and emotional experiences by gathering old photos and taking new ones; collecting information from the internet which previously was not given proper attention or which was simply hidden from the public eye; reading people’s comments and opinion pieces posted on social media; recording relevant fragments from YouTube videos and so on. All this turns the observer into an active participant who, by deconstructing gathered material artefacts, is discovering meaning through the compilation of new configurations. Subsequently, the observer in this study assumes the role of a detective, digital operator, critical analyst, ambassador, memoir writer, multimodal conveyor and, in short, that of critical constructivist agent.

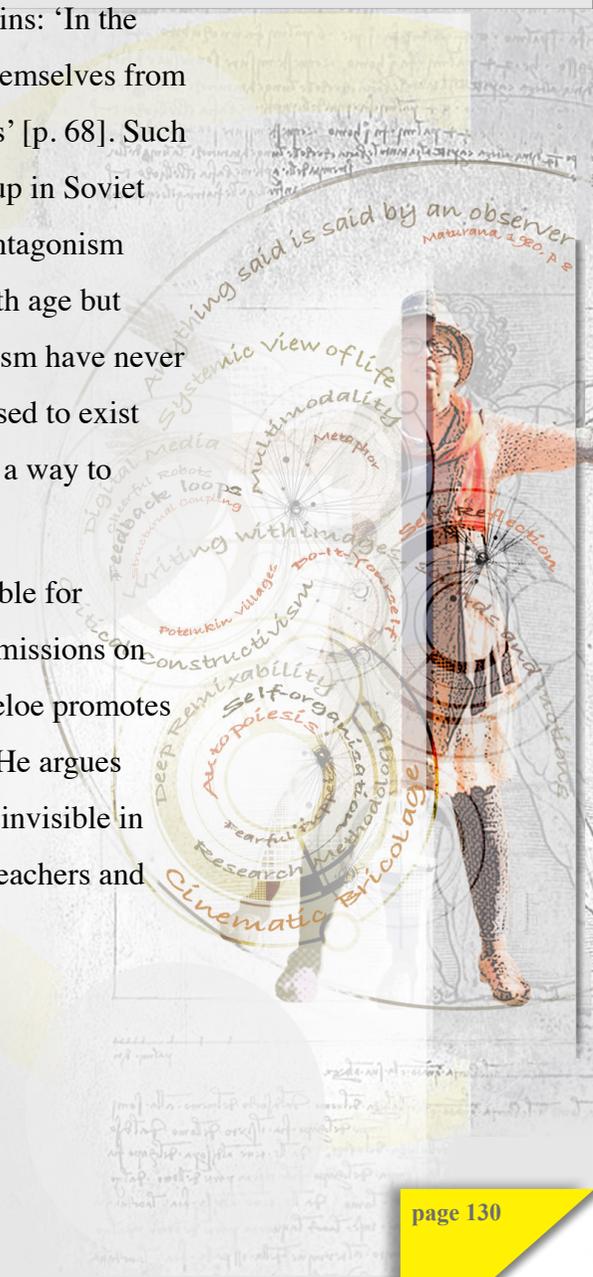
In relation to how people observe, Kincheloe (2003) brings to the discussion Marx’s view that ‘humans see only what their conceptual lenses allow them to see, and that they understand what the context for understanding permits’ [p. 68]. In other words, ‘It is not the consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness’ (Marx, 1846, p. 42).



Critical constructivism stands in opposition to such a deterministic view. Kincheloe (2003) maintains: 'In the spirit of hope, possibility, and anti-determinism, critical constructivist researchers seek to liberate themselves from such determinism by taking control of our perceptual abilities, by transcending what context permits' [p. 68]. Such an approach is important to me because, in making meaning of myself when I was a child growing up in Soviet Russia, I advocate individual emancipation from the constraints of the ruling ideology. My strong antagonism toward Soviet ideology, that for a long time paralysed Russian society with fear, is not subsiding with age but growing stronger and stronger each year. I believe this is because the atrocities of Russian communism have never been fully revealed to the world. The culture of secrecy, cheating and oppression not only never ceased to exist but extended its influence far across its country's borders. I view it as a natural human desire to find a way to explore and express the obscured danger that Russian society breeds.

But most importantly, adopting the position of critical pedagogy, I see education as being responsible for cultivating individuals who must know themselves and base their choices for commitments and submissions on their awareness of life situations and their position towards them. As a critical constructivist, Kincheloe promotes notions of *Teachers as Researchers* (2003) and *Students as Researchers (with S. Steinberg)* (2001). He argues that when teachers and students research themselves, 'they pursue meanings that are often rendered invisible in their taken-for-grantedness in highly regulated standardised classrooms' (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 97). Teachers and students therefore gain new insights into who they are and how their knowledge is constructed:

New ways of seeing help researchers and students achieve higher levels of self-awareness. Empowerment within this context involves the development of minds liberated from stale convention, a critical consciousness and free society. [Kincheloe, 2008, p. 97]



## 4.2.2 A Conscious Observer

Embracing wholeheartedly the idea of self-reflection and self-knowledge-generation as an educational practice that promotes cultivation of self-reflective individuals who are not victims of social drifts but informed and therefore responsible producers of their own lives, this study emphasises the special role of digital media and in particular, cinematic bricolage. Consideration of digital media involvement in educational research practices cannot be avoided in contemporary society due to its ubiquitous involvement in the systemic network of life. In this study, therefore, I focus on the interactions of digital media with an observer in the process of self-reflection.

As I walk along the lines of a constructivist position, I adopt Maturana's (2004) concept of using 'the observer as a starting-point of my thinking' [loc. 984]. In the series of interviews with founding figures of the constructivist school of thought, conducted by Poerkson (2004), Maturana explains:

The observer is the foundation of all knowledge, of any assumption involving the human self, the world and the cosmos. The disappearance of the observer would mean the end and the disappearance of the world we know; there would be nobody left to perceive, to speak, to describe, and to explain [...] I do not start with ontology, I start with experience [...] reflecting and posing the reflective question how it is possible for me to reflect and how to know how I know. [loc. 984].

Acting in self-awareness, the observer makes distinctions. In the same series of conversations, von Foerster (2004) elaborates on the subject of distinction:

The act of distinction is taken to be the fundamental operation of cognition; it generates realities that are assumed to reside in an external space separated from the person of the distinguisher [...] the world has been divided into two parts: it now consists of what we have named, on the one hand, and what is obscured by the name, the rest of the world, on the other. [loc. 397]





### 4.2.3 Human-Computer Cognition Enmesh

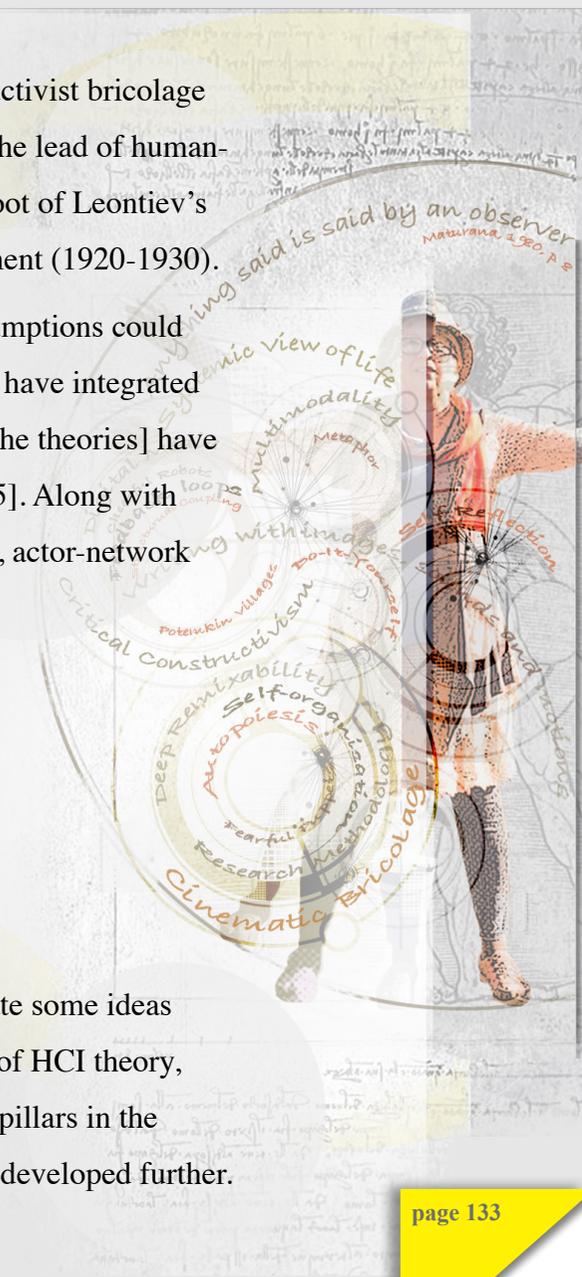
As already mentioned, it was a prolonged process to arrive at the decision to adopt critical-constructivist bricolage as the research methodology for this study. In the initial stages of the project, I had been following the lead of human-computer-interaction theory (HCI). HCI was developed by Nardi and Kaptelinin (1996) as an offshoot of Leontiev's (1978) activity theory (AT), which had its roots in Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of development (1920-1930).

Kaptelinin and Nardi (2006) observed that a synthetic model formed out of multiple theoretic assumptions could have provided a framework for 'a unique set of perspectives and concepts' [p. 195]. Therefore, they have integrated into the HCI model a number of theories that they have identified as 'postcognitivist because they [the theories] have been brought into interaction design to remedy perceived shortcomings of cognitivist theory' [p. 195]. Along with activity theory, Kaptelinin and Nardi have considered and adopted views from distributed cognition, actor-network theory, and phenomenology schools of thought.

Kaptelinin and Nardi write:

*Postcognitivist theories help us understand technology as central to human experience. They share common ground in depicting people as beings enmeshed in our own technological creations. These theories set the stage for explorations of invented worlds in which designed technical artefacts imbue human life with its distinctive character. [Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2006, p. 198]*

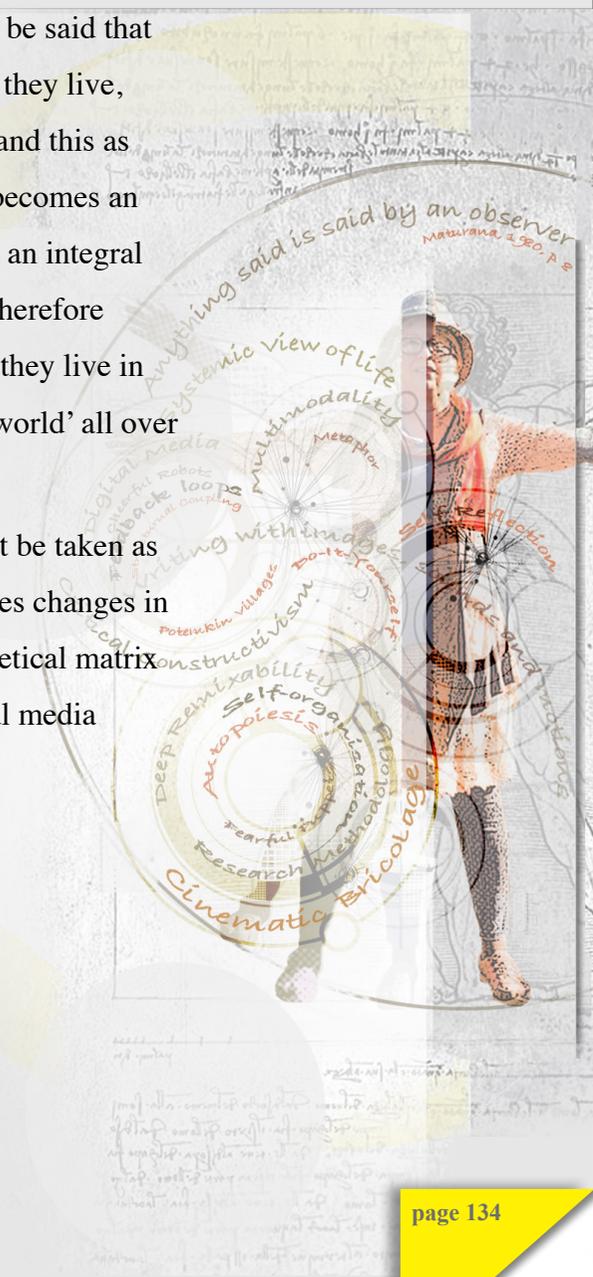
As critical-constructivist bricolage by itself is not a technologically specialised approach, I integrate some ideas from human-computer-interaction (HCI) theory into this study's theoretical framework. The notion of HCI theory, that people become enmeshed in their technological creations, is one of these. It remains one of the pillars in the theoretical framework of cinematic bricolage but in conjunction with the systemic view, it has been developed further.



For example, looking at people's activity with technology through the systemic-thinking lens, it can be said that as people enmesh with their technological creations, they 'bring forth their world and conserve it as they live, by living as the kinds of beings that they are' [Maturana & Verden-Zöller's, 2012, p. 141]. I understand this as every new turn in the spiral of technological development that, once people adapt themselves to it, becomes an enmeshed part of their lives and stays there 'conserved' as if it was always there. People accept it as an integral extension of themselves. Their thinking and behaviour are changed because of that enmeshing and therefore people cause changes in the world in which they live. These changes between people and the world they live in emerge in precise congruence. Being enmeshed into that changed world, 'people bring forth a new world' all over and 'conserve' it again causing congruent changes between themselves and the world.

In other words, technology and in the case of this study, digital representational technology, cannot be taken as a set of neutral instruments, but rather as an active collaborator in human practical activity that causes changes in humans and in their world. This notion is taken as one of the pivotal postulates wrought into a theoretical matrix of the multimodal bricolage. Thus, the observation of cognitive responses when working with digital media becomes the centre of the investigation. Borrowing from Hayles (2013):

Human relation in this view is deeply bound up with techniques on conscious, unconscious, and non-conscious levels, with media technologies serving to support, scaffold, and extend cognition in ways consequential for social, economic and political structures. [Hayles, 2013, loc. 210].

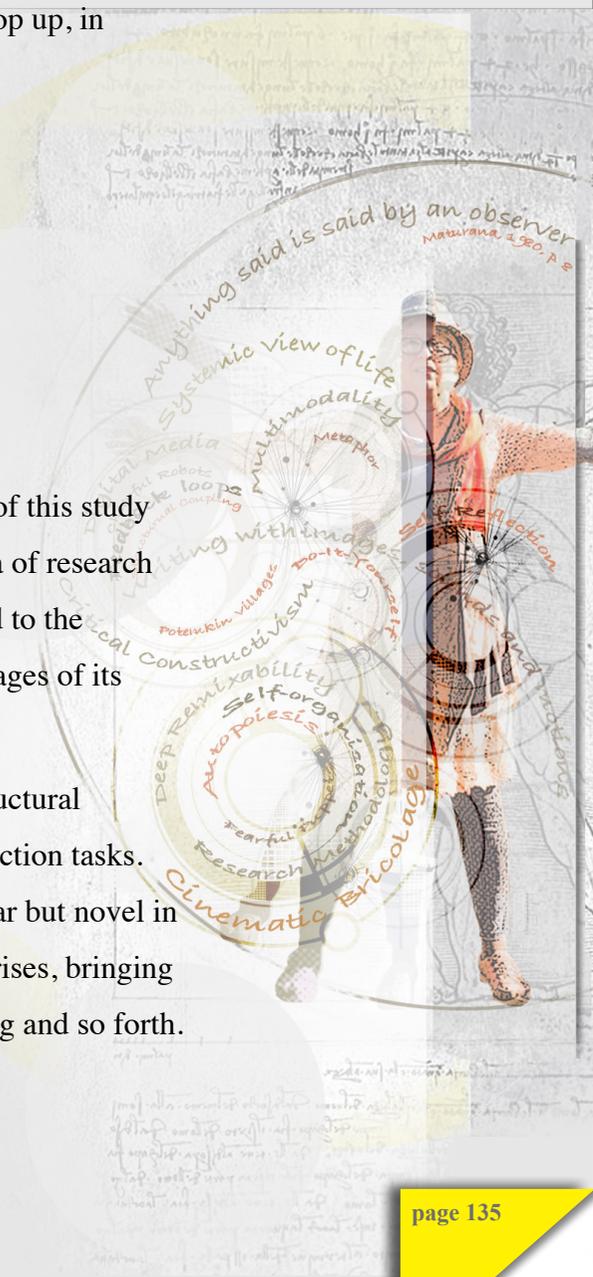


Hayles (2012) argues that, as a result of these interactions, multilevel and multiagentic systems crop up, in which 'human and machine cognitions intermesh'. Hayles elaborates:

Obviously, the meshing of these two different kinds of complex temporalities does not happen all at one time (or all at one place) but rather evolves as a complex syncopation between conscious and unconscious perceptions for humans, and the integration of surface displays and algorithmic procedures for machines. The interactions are dynamic and continuous, with feedback and feedforward loops connecting different levels with each other and cross-connecting machine processes with human responses. [p. 13]

Non-linear phenomena, such as self-regulating feedback loops, is considered an important aspect of this study as a pattern of circular causality in knowledge generation by means of cinematic bricolage. The idea of research done with the involvement of self-regulating feedback loops is not new, of course, and not restricted to the use of technology. Engaged in the research process, people usually evaluate their work at various stages of its progression and go back for corrections and additional generations of insight.

Why it is essential here is that the self-regulatory feedback has circular causality that results in structural coupling between the agent of the activity and her ways of utilising technology in knowledge-production tasks. Through its dissemination, the novelty of production reaches others, who attempt work that is similar but novel in their own way. Thus, the need for a modification of digital media to suit different types of writing arises, bringing forth a new world of technological progression and with it, a new approach to research-based writing and so forth.



## 4.2.4 Threading through the Landscape

An understanding of how non-linear phenomena can be incorporated into an individual process of knowledge generation is gained from Berry's (2014) adoption of the concept of a multi-systemic view. This is an appropriation of Lorenz's (1963) 'butterfly effect' of *Instabilities and Chaos in Nonlinear Dynamic Systems*, as interpreted by Capra and Luisi (2014, p. 114). It is explained as a joking claim 'that a butterfly stirring the air today in Beijing can cause a storm in New York next month' [p. 113]. The serious intent of this is that 'a simple set of nonlinear equations can generate enormously complex behaviour' [p. 114]. The progression is shown here as oscillations of increasing amplitude around the points.

Berry's (2014) adaptation of this effect is formed around a point of entry text (POET) (p. 113), which is the object under investigation and around which the investigation is carried out. POET is the initial concept of the research and a starting point. A bricoleur, according to Berry, 'threads' around the relevant areas of the defined concept in feedback loops with increasing amplitude. This results in increased complexity of the initial concept and changing of text within the POET with 'each rethreading enhancing the texture of the knowledge produced' (p. 111). From Berry's description of this method, it can be called 'threading through the landscape' (p. 111). With each loop, the thread becomes larger, making the exploratory area far-reaching and bringing more and more data to the central part of the pattern thus increasing its complexity. Every threading movement is a self-regulating feedback loop. Newly acquired data is synthesised with that which has already been organised into the study sketch. Gradually, a pattern begins to emerge in the area of data-gathering and its synthesis. Capra and Luisi (2014) describe such feedback loops as 'self-balancing' and 'self-amplifying' [p. 91].

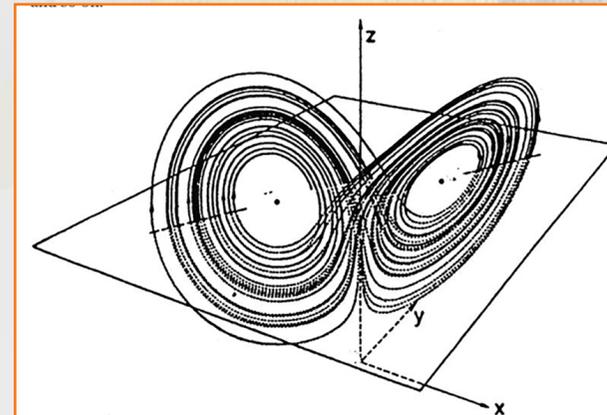


Figure 6.10 The Lorenz attractor. Image reproduced with permission from E. Mosekilde, J. Aracil, and P.M. Allen, "Instabilities and Chaos in Nonlinear Dynamics Systems," *System Dynamic Review*, 4, 14–15, 1988.

A screenshot from  
Capra & Luisi's, 2014  
*The Systems View of Life*

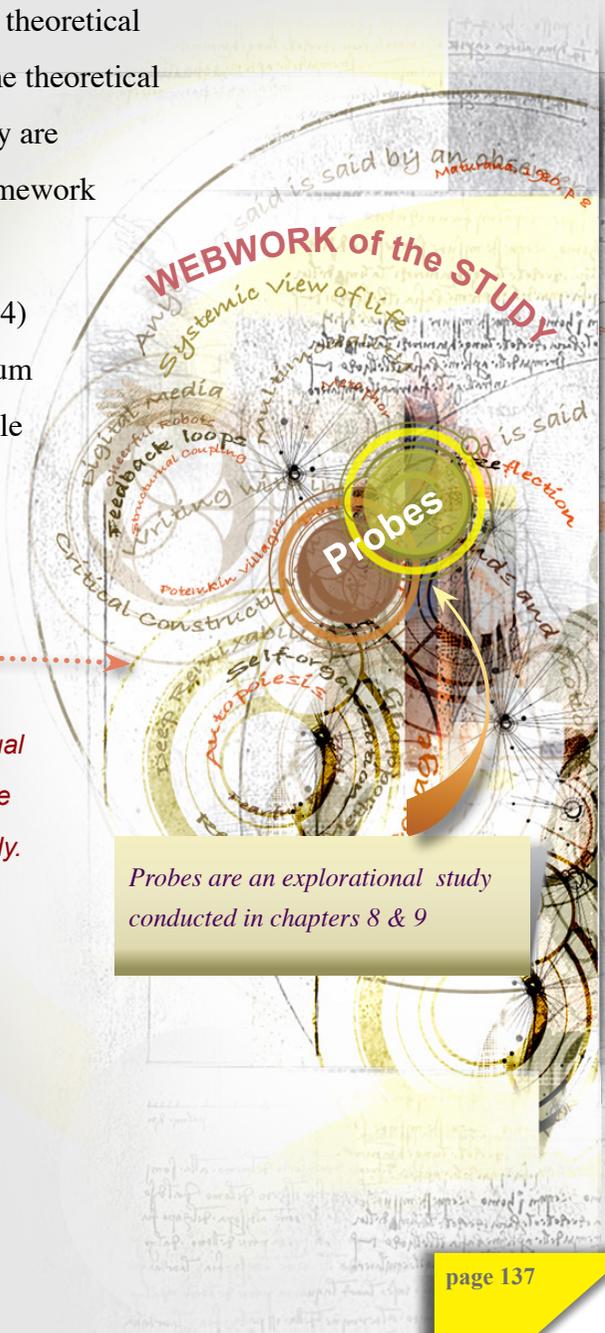
In the diagram on this page, the background pattern of circles represents the abstract model of a theoretical network constructed in association with a systemic view. Each circle symbolically represents some theoretical system or concept. Some of them are larger than others and have smaller circles inside them. They are overlapping systems. This indicates that the theories are usually modelled within a developed framework of other theories and always intersect with some of them.

In dealing with a research task it is imperative to outline an area of relevance, which Berry (2014) terms as a host structure (p. 106) and Maturana and Verden-Zöllner associate with a niche or medium [2012]. Dealing with a multi-theoretical framework, it is important to make the project manageable by clearly delineating the niche for the theoretical configuration of the bricolage.

This cinematic bricolage's theoretical niche is interwoven with such theoretical systems as:

- Systemic View
- Critical Constructivism
- Critical Pedagogy
- Digital Materialism
- Remix
- Metaphorical thinking
- Self-Reflection (Self in a Sociocultural Context)

*The theoretical and conceptual approaches that compose the dynamic webwork of the study. They map the areas through which the study 'loops' in the next several chapters.*



*Probes are an explorational study conducted in chapters 8 & 9*

Systemic-view theory has been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. Other theories will be given consideration and their integration into the theoretical framework of cinematic bricolage described in the following chapter.

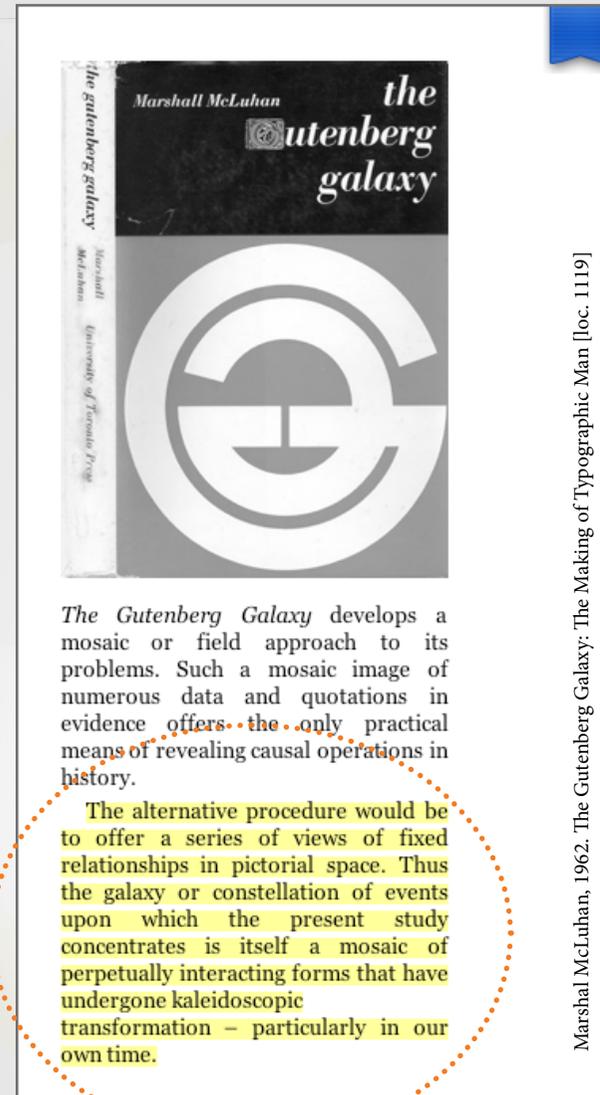
## 4.2.5 The Probes

To explore the digital process of self-experience representation embedded in a historical-social-cultural niche, I develop *two probes* in chapters eight and nine. The idea of the probes and the mosaic form of writing, which I incorporate in these chapters and in other places of the thesis, was inspired by McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962).

In the essay analysing this book, Lamberti (2011) suggests that 'the probes and mosaic *substance*' are 'verbo-vocal-visual tools' of McLuhan's writing that relate 'to memory and orality' [loc. 624]. These probes are like 'adapter cables which activate interfacing, juxtaposing different media on what stays as a "text-based operating system"' [loc. 624]. The aim of such an approach is to treat a digital page as an event experienced through the multi-sensory dimension. '[...] the page can handle other inputs, so that you can, in effect, plug other media into it' [loc. 624].

Taking McLuhan's suggestion to assume an alternative approach, I deal with pages of the research activity as pictorial spaces in which communication is augmented by the affordances of digital media, namely writing together with audio, motion and interactive effects composed into an event, which facilitates a unified multi-sensory experience.

I think this can be compared to a printed page having its content displayed on drawn stage curtains. Now the curtains are open and the digital page enables its components with such physical properties as:



*The Gutenberg Galaxy* develops a mosaic or field approach to its problems. Such a mosaic image of numerous data and quotations in evidence offers the only practical means of revealing causal operations in history.

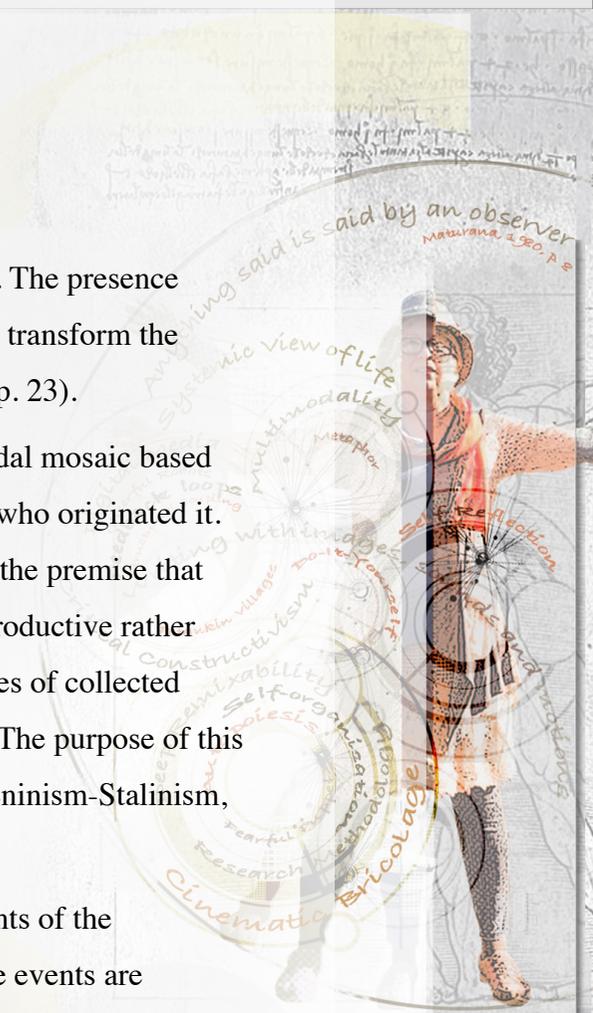
The alternative procedure would be to offer a series of views of fixed relationships in pictorial space. Thus the galaxy or constellation of events upon which the present study concentrates is itself a mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscopic transformation – particularly in our own time.

- multi-groundness, *space*;
- multi-movements, *space/time*;
- multi-interactions, *dynamic relationships*;
- multi-sensory aspects, *quality of experience*

Hayles (2002) states that changed material artefacts ‘transform context and circumstances’ (p. 23). The presence of a space/time continuum transforms the context of the representation. Interactions/sensory aspects transform the circumstances and the essence of experience ‘which inevitably changes the meaning of the words’ (p. 23).

The first probe I compose in this study is *The Tea Party*, an allegoric narrative which is a multimodal mosaic based on collected historical, informational and visual data about Russian Soviet ideology and the people who originated it. Bricolage, as Kincheloe (2004) indicates, is the ‘creative activity [...] of the researcher’ (p. 95). On the premise that construction of knowledge involves more than just imitating nature or the situation, bricolage is a productive rather than reproductive interpretation of the world. In the active process of sculpturing from bits and pieces of collected data, bricoleurs deconstruct the existing forms and forge their own configurations of reality (p. 95). The purpose of this probe is to develop a conceptual schema that reflects my deeply rooted frustration with Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, the belief system that dug into the matrix of existence of so many people’s lives.

The second probe, *The Harlequin*, is a collection of events from my childhood that are embodiments of the interactions between myself as a growing individual and a heavily indoctrinated environment. These events are associated with the notion of primary metaphors and metaphoric schemata that people, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue, develop throughout their lives. The events reflect Lakoff and Johnson’s concept of four types of everyday experiences that contribute to the evolution of primary metaphors and their conceptual blending. They are:



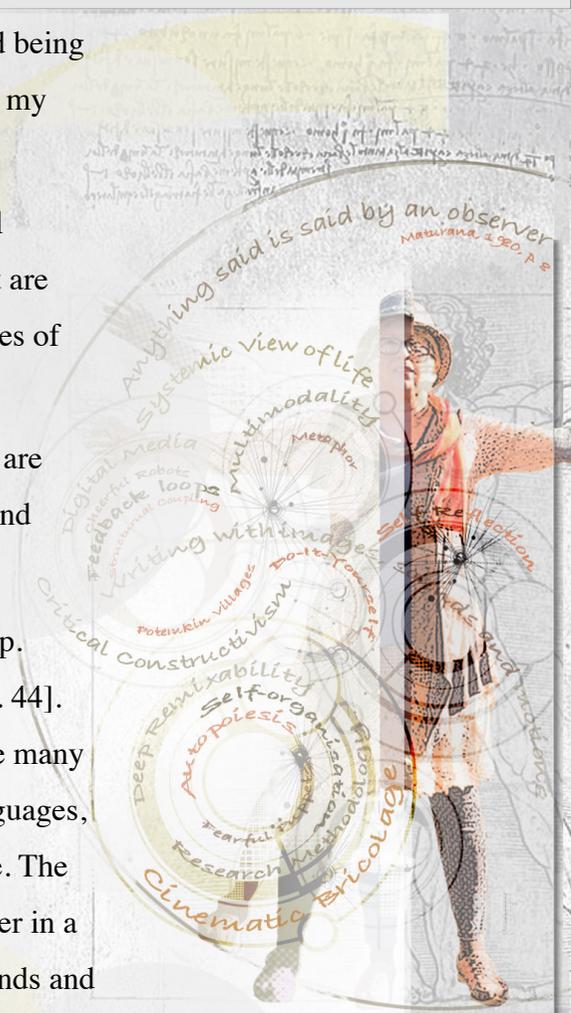
manipulating objects, being located in space, social relations, and empathic projection [loc. 3272]. In this probe, I look at events from my childhood through the lens of these four categories of functioning and being in the world. Through remembering things from the past, I try to restore the metaphors that supported my thinking patterns at that time and that help me develop an improved self-awareness.

In both probes, the mind/digital media interactions are the main focus of the study. How does digital media influence collection of data? How do these specific approaches change ways of thinking? What are the cognitive responses to the collected data? How are thinking patterns modified through the processes of deconstruction and reinterpretation of generated data by means of digital media?

The hermeneutic circle converges at the 'feedback and feedforward loops' [Hayles, 2013, p.13] that are recursive shifts resulting from two-fold activity: interpreting and representing the act of interpreting and representing.

The dimension of aesthetics is important in the hermeneutic process of bricolage (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 97). Borrowing the term from Denzin and Lincoln (2013), in this study aesthetics are 'intertextual' [p. 44]. According to Dewey (1934), 'because objects of art are expressive, they are language. Rather they are many languages' (p. 110). By virtue of digital media that offers a platform for dialogue for many media languages, various media languages become interwoven into each other; they become one 'intertextual' language. The aesthetics of cinematic bricolage, therefore becomes evident not in skillful artistic portrayals, but rather in a crafting of coordinating heterogeneous digital bricoles, such as fragments of written text, images, sounds and kinetic features, that are appropriated and self-made into one unified intertextual invention.

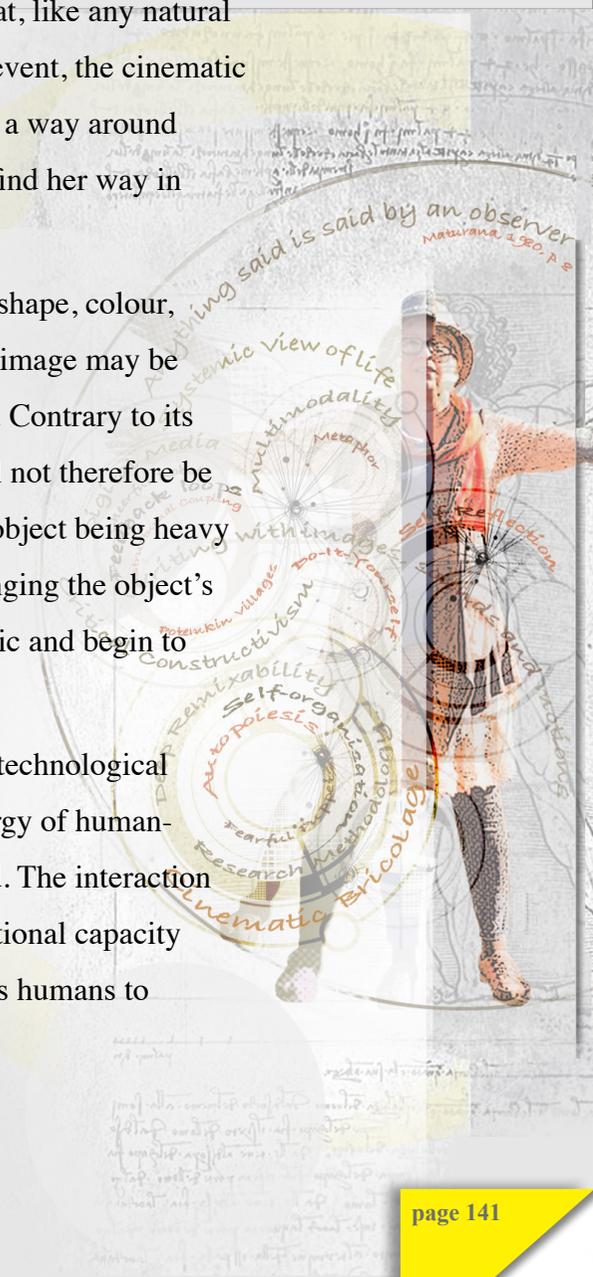
The enmeshing of human and technology cognition is examined here through the complementarity of human creativity and affordances of digital media. Digital media facilitates an extension of consciousness in the sense



that it allows an invention of the habitat for the event to be communicated. The event's digital habitat, like any natural environment, offers the human agent certain possibilities as well as limitations. In representing the event, the cinematic bricoleur extends her consciousness in order to take advantage of the possibilities offered, or to find a way around the limitations. The bricoleur virtually places her mind inside the digital habitat of the computer to find her way in representing reality by means of abstract algorithms and digital data.

By assigning the objects of manipulation within the digital space with physical properties such as shape, colour, sounds and movements, the designer also modifies their physical-reality qualities. For example, the image may be a prototype of the real object, have all its likeness and look 'heavy' juxtaposed next to other objects. Contrary to its physical-reality counterpart, however, it will not possess such physical properties as weight and will not therefore be subjected to such physical laws as gravity. This means the designer has to create the illusion of the object being heavy and falling under its heaviness to the ground of represented space, by scripting the action or by changing the object's position in relation to other objects. However this is done, the designer needs to adopt computer logic and begin to speak its language.

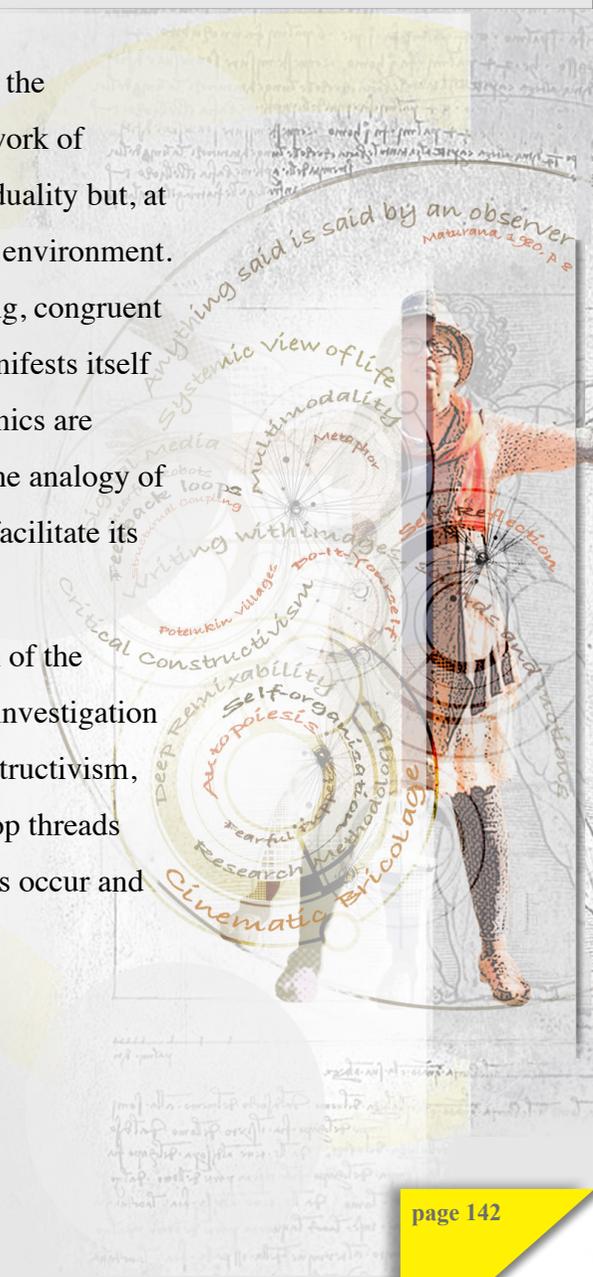
Likewise, the most affordable algorithms and the richest digital data will remain just that, a set of technological possibilities, if human intention and effort does not activate them. In other words, it requires a synergy of human-computer interactions to construct a new meaningful representation of reality or an imaginary world. The interaction between a human agent and computer logic is reciprocal in the sense that the computer's representational capacity is developed in accordance to humans being able to use it. At the same time, computer logic requires humans to recognise and adapt to the parameters and particulars of its expanse.



### 4.3 Convergence Points

This chapter is a feedback loop that introduces the systems view, which is the underlying logic for the theoretical framework in cinematic bricolage. Systems view is a theory about life as a complex network of systems where self-organisation of an individual unit has the ability to maintain its structural individuality but, at the same time, is always reaching for new-reconstructions in order to maintain equilibrium with the environment. This phenomenon is called autopoiesis. Structural coupling in the systems view is defined as ongoing, congruent changes within the unit and its medium as a result of their recurrent interactions. An autopoiesis manifests itself in the continuous self-recreations of the individual units. The ontology of autopoiesis and its mechanics are taken by some constructivist thinkers to be compatible with the constructivist theory of knowing. The analogy of autopoiesis and structural coupling can serve as an example of how activity with digital media can facilitate its enmeshing with cognition.

This study progresses in recursive feedback loops. Every loop provides a more detailed discussion of the theoretical concepts enmeshed into the webwork of the study. The dynamic webwork in which this investigation is embedded consists of the following interacting conceptual systems: Systemic View, Critical Constructivism, Critical Pedagogy, Digital Materialism, Remix, Metaphorical thinking and Self-Reflection. Each loop threads through the theoretical systems listed above in order to learn about the medium in which interactions occur and learn how to proceed with construction of the probes.



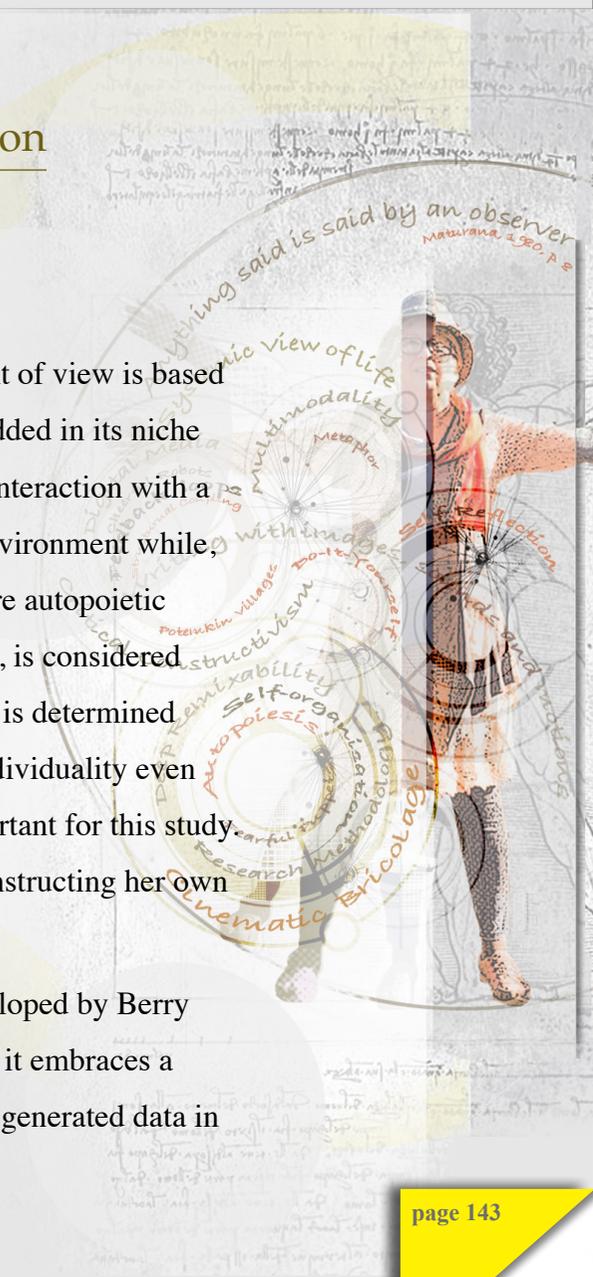
# Critical Cinematic Bricolage:

## Cinematic Bricolage as a Device for Individual Knowledge Production

### Introduction: Critical Self-Reflection

In the previous chapter, I described my theoretical position as constructivist-systemicist. This point of view is based on understanding the world as a complex network of systems. An individual living organism, embedded in its niche among intersecting systems, is a system on its own. As an integral part of a whole, it is in constant interaction with a set of intersecting systems, whereby it self-makes itself in order to maintain equilibrium with the environment while, at the same time, conforming to its own identity. This is the concept of autopoiesis. Living beings are autopoietic systems within which the self-making is determined by their own structures. Cognition, in this view, is considered to be an autopoietic apparatus, it reaches out to the world, but the perception and interpretation of it is determined by individual cognitive structures. The aspect of autopoiesis, that the organism always retains its individuality even through the process of continuous self-remaking according to the surrounding environment, is important for this study. Seeing the individual as a contributor together with biological and cultural parts of the matrix in constructing her own reality is the main topic of this chapter.

Being guided by the non-linear systemic view, I follow the dynamics of bricolage generation developed by Berry (2004) which is known as feedback looping. Each chapter is the next feedback loop, in the sense that it embraces a wider and deeper scope of relevant theoretical paths, concepts or situations while also assessing the generated data in terms of its pertinence to the study's topic in order to quilt together congruent pieces.



This chapter ‘threads’ through the theoretical landscape of constructivism, critical constructivism and cybernetic (systems view) constructivism and braids them together into one theoretical framework for self-reflective cinematic bricolage.

This chapter explains how the biological theory of autopoiesis can be adjusted in order to understand the mechanisms of knowledge production through the theoretical lens of constructivism. It interlinks Piaget’s (1947) notion of equilibration, which is based on mental assimilation and accommodation, with the conceptualisations of contemporary constructivist scholars who see human adaptation to the environment as the main cause of its alteration, and vice versa.

This chapter reinforces the notion of the centrality of the observer who constructs subjectivities, moving through an experiential dimension. Following this discussion, this chapter considers some examples of how digital media application informs my personal thinking. These elaborations include viewing some elements of the thesis-page organisation as a reflection of certain symbolic notions, as well as observations done in this study from personal experience.

In this chapter, I complete the theoretical framework for this cinematic bricolage based on the integration of cybernetic and critical-constructivist paradigms. This means I adopt the notions proposed by cybernetic constructivists who advocate the world be viewed as a systemic network of self-recreating systems, in which the property of autopoiesis is rooted in structural coupling within structural determinism. I regard the concept of structural coupling as viable and effective in examining and explaining the following: a) a human ↔ computer logic intermesh; b) the development of the language of multimodality envisioned as emotioning ↔ languaging; c) individual ↔ society interactions.

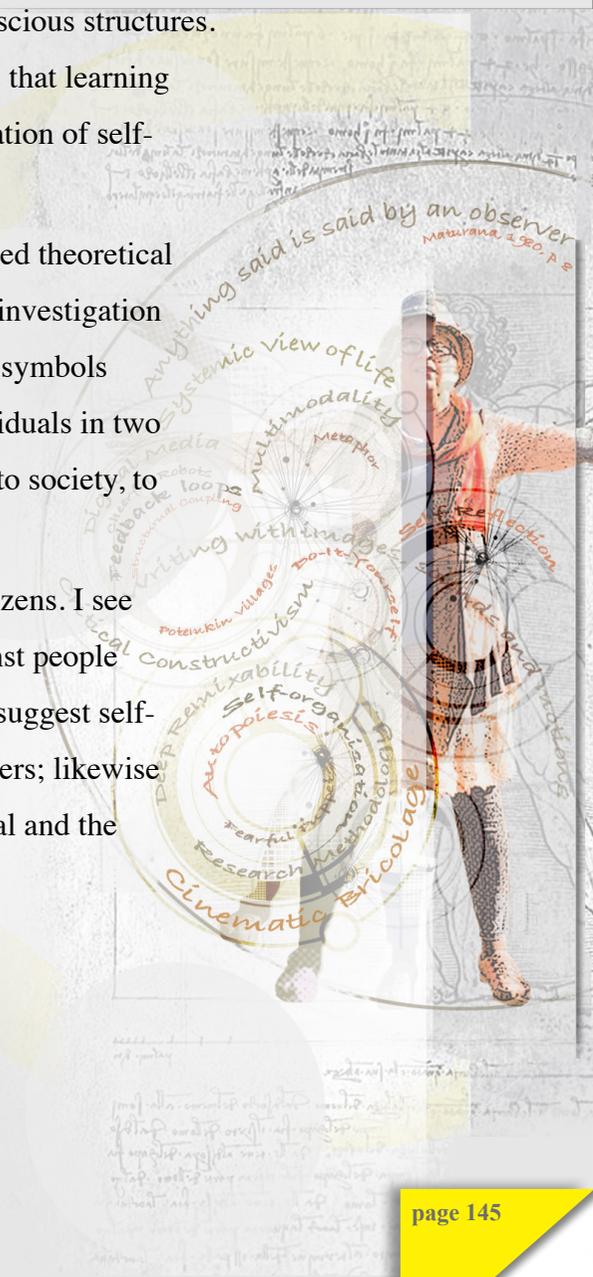
In relation to critical constructivism, I adopt the notion of a culturally/socially/historically constructed world within which an individual constructs her reality; the idea of the observer’s situatedness shaping knowledge-



generation and the concern with the role that power plays in the development of an individual's conscious structures. In this regard, I undertake a critical-constructivist position because of its special interest in the ways that learning construction is affected by the research method and, in this particular study, deepened by the application of self-reflective cinematic bricolage.

The second part of the chapter threads through the social landscape relevant to which the established theoretical framework is intended to be administered. It outlines the contextual niche where the interest of this investigation is situated. Following the cybernetic constructivist notion of emotioning ↔ languaging, I develop symbols that, in my opinion, encapsulate the combined body of emotional properties of the majority of individuals in two types of modern society. These are cheerful robots – members of societies who are ‘alien to nature, to society, to self’ [Mills, 1959, p. 172]; and fearful puppets – those who live in totalitarian societies.

In this chapter I argue that education plays a significant role in the cultivation of these types of citizens. I see these two characters, cheerful robots and fearful puppets, as prototypes for social vaccinations against people becoming aware and active agents able to challenge cultural conditioning and ideological coding. I suggest self-reflective cinematic bricolage can be a methodology utilised in research tasks for students and teachers; likewise as an antidote to the social and cultural forces that define values and ethical systems for an individual and the ways they perceive themselves to be in the world.



## 5.1 Theoretical 'Threading' Toward Cinematic Self-Bricolage

### 5.1.1 From Biology to the Constructivist Perspective

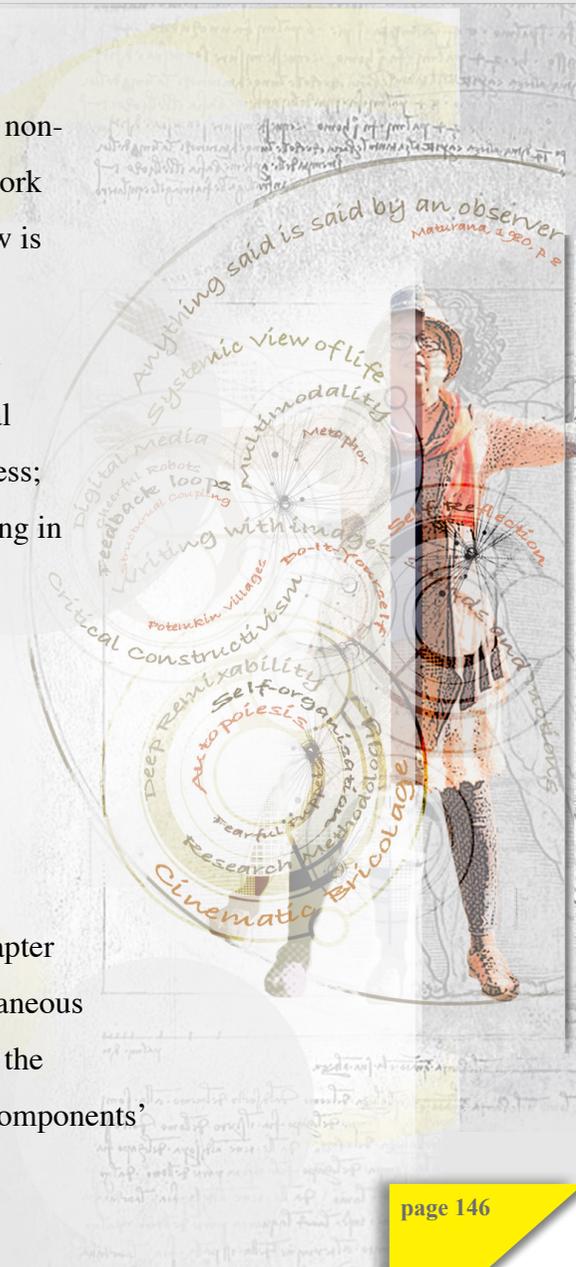
In the previous chapter I described the systems-view theory, how it understands the living world as non-linear, a web-like pattern involved in continual interactions between individual systems and the network of systems, in order to sustain life's equilibrium. In this chapter I concentrate on how the system view is interwoven into the constructivist paradigm and how it is integrated into processes of learning.

Cinematic-bricolage methodology is built on constructivist principles of learning. In explaining the complexity facing the bricoleur when working on her research project, Berry (2004) identifies several important principles: 'self-organisation; far-from-equilibrium condition; feedback looping; randomness; spontaneity, and bifurcations' (p. 108). The bifurcation is explained as an increased instability resulting in self-organisation 'for coherency and efficiency' [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 376].

As Capra (1984) asserts:

The two principle dynamic phenomena of self-organisation are self-renewal – the ability of living systems continuously to renew and recycle their components while maintaining the integrity of their overall structure and self-transcendence – the ability to reach out creatively beyond physical and mental boundaries in the process of learning, development and evolution. [p. 269]

This is defined by Maturana and Varela (1998) as structural coupling with the environment (see chapter four). Structural coupling is the process by which an organism and its environment go through spontaneous congruent changes – autopoiesis [Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2012]. Through this structural coupling the organism and the environment continually re-create themselves 'by transforming or replacing their components' [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 397].



In relation to cognitive processes, Piaget identified a phenomenon analogical to the one described above, as equilibration, that is an ‘adaptation between the action of the organism on the environment and vice versa’ [Piaget, 1947, p. 8]. Two polar behaviours, as Piaget established, were necessary for the equilibration to happen: mental assimilation and accommodation.

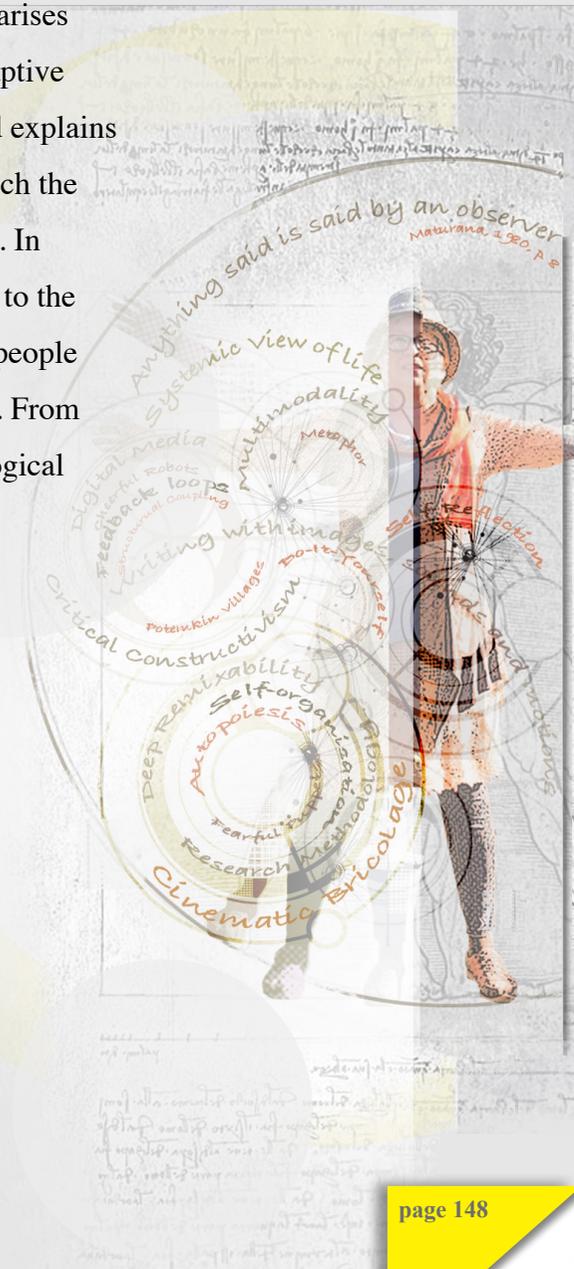
Mental assimilation is thus incorporation of objects into patterns of behaviour [...] Conversely, the environment acts on the organism and, following the practice of biologists, we can describe this converse action by the term ‘accommodation’ [...] [...] the pressure of circumstances always leads, not to a passive submission to them, but to a simple modification of the action affecting them. [p. 8]

Mohapatra, Mahapatra and Parida (2015) explain the mechanism of equilibration as an ‘external experience to be incorporated into internal structure’ [loc. 405]. In other words, it is an experience involving ‘self-reflection and auto-regulation’, or assimilation and accommodation that seeks adaptation with the environment. ‘This being so, we can then define adaptation as an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation’ [Piaget, 1947, p. 8]. Piaget linked this principle to his theory of cognition, arguing that:

Intelligence, the most plastic and at the same time the most durable structural equilibrium of behaviour, is essentially a system of living and acting operations. It is the most highly developed form of mental adaptation, that is to say, the indispensable instrument for interaction between the subject and the universe [...] [...] its origins are indistinguishable from those of sensori-motor adaptation in general or even from those of biological adaptation itself. [p. 7]



Based on this, Piaget argued that the production of knowledge is not an act toward direct replication of reality but toward an adaptation to environment [von Glasersfield, 2005, loc. 155]. Knowledge accordingly arises as a result of the agent's actions, his/her sensori-motor perceptions of physical reality and his/her adaptive interpretations. Thus, 'knowledge does not exist outside a person's mind' [loc. 201]. Von Glasersfield explains that if we isolate a particular item for observation, we isolate it together with the surroundings in which the item exists. As we observe the item within its surroundings, we turn it into our own experiential field. In other words, we construct knowledge through segmenting the flow of our own experience in relation to the isolated fragments [loc. 201]. Cobb (2005) asserts that ways of knowing are actively constructed by people striving 'to be effective by restoring coherence to the worlds of their personal experience' [loc. 922]. From this point of view, cognitive and social dimensions merge together to form a platform for 'a psychological theory of learning called *constructivism*' [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 655].

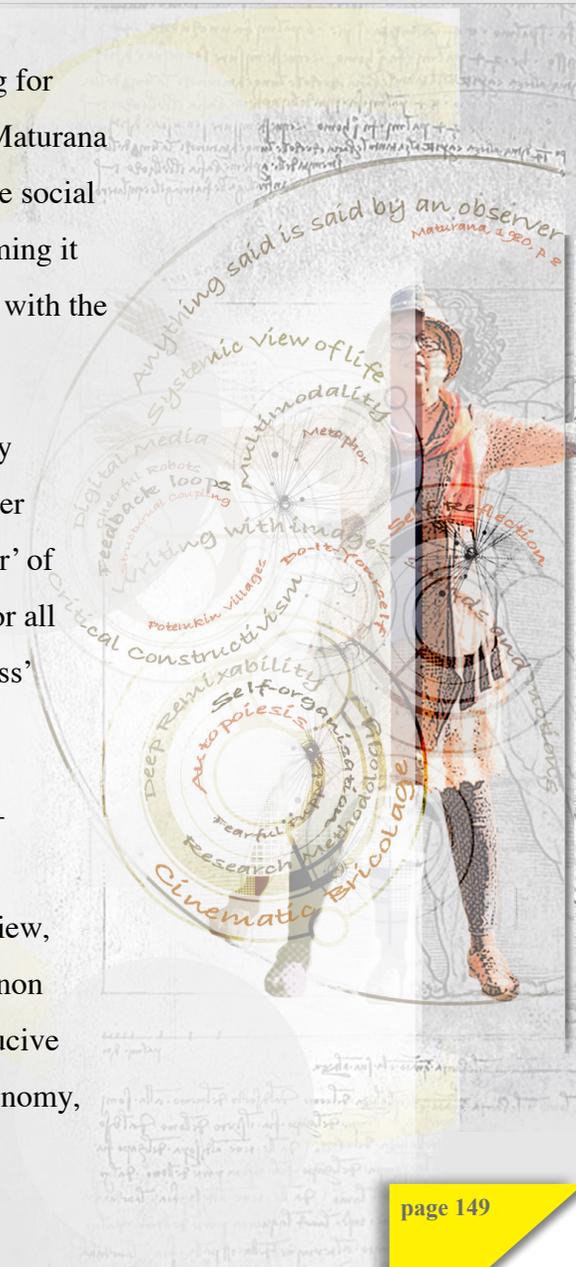


## 5.1.2 Individual Autonomy of the Observer

The previous section of the chapter has described the cognitive perspective of an individual striving for equilibrium with the environment of her existence, ‘in which we conserve identity and adaptation’ (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 234) from a constructivist point of view. Taking into consideration that humans are social beings on the one hand, and that it is impossible to imagine a society without human individuals forming it on the other, constructivism is concerned not with prioritising the individual or the society but rather with the desire to understand the interplay between them [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 657].

However, being abstracted from the web of reality, the area of observation that includes an interplay between an actor and his/her environment cannot be separated from the observer. Without the observer (see chapter four) there is no one to observe and interpret. The observer is ‘one common denominator’ of all the factions of thought within the constructivist paradigm. ‘The observer is the point of fixation for all the divergent interests; the observer, by general consent, plays the central role in any cognitive process’ [Poerksen, 2011, loc. 83].

Following the lines of this constructivist ‘point of fixation’, I assume an autopoietic systems view – identified as cybernetic constructivism – not only as emphasising the role of the observer but also as highlighting the observer’s cognitive structural autonomy. This is because adopting the autopoietic view, I see the integration of digital modes of representation into communicational practices as a phenomenon that facilitates viable interactions with physical and conceptualised realities. I argue that this is conducive to discovering ways of gaining better self-awareness and, through the appreciation of individual autonomy, becoming more informed by engaging into dialogue with the wider community.



Fosnot & Perry (2005) maintain that:

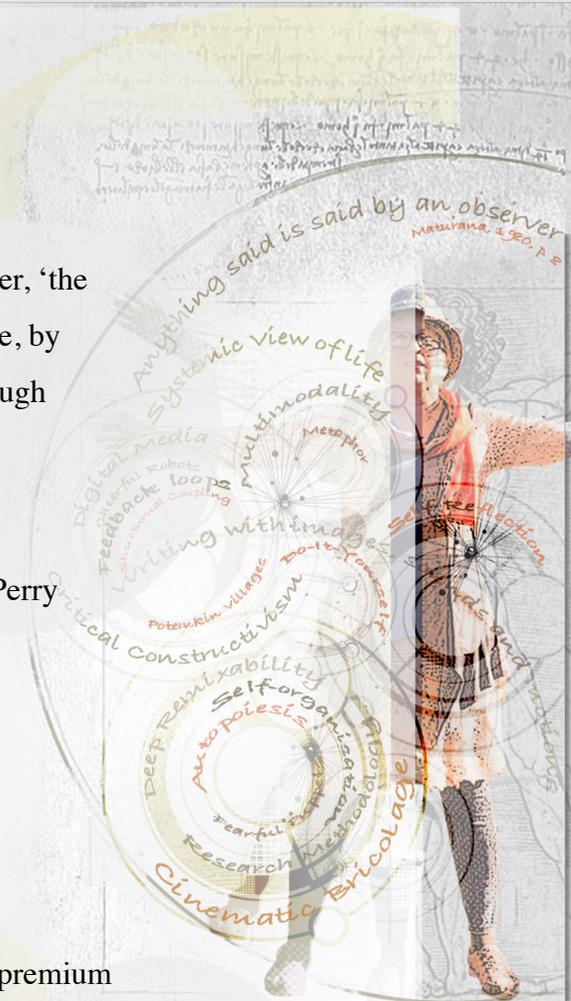
As learners struggle to make meaning, progressive structural shifts in perspective are constructed – in a sense, ‘big ideas’ (Schifter & Fosnot, 1993). These ‘big ideas’ are learner-constructed, central organising principles that can be generalised across experiences, and which often require the undoing or reorganising of earlier conceptions. [loc. 786]

Stressing the point that knowledge is constructed through the experiential application of the observer, ‘the big ideas’ are acquired, first of all, through structural shifts in the observer’s consciousness. Therefore, by understanding the topic of observation, the observer becomes more informed and confident and, through altering his/her self-positioning in relation to the observed issue, a more responsible and sympathetic advocate in representing others.

Working with digital media opens new dimensions for reflective abstraction, which as Fosnot and Perry (2005) argue ‘is the driving force of learning’ [loc. 777].

As meaning makers, humans seek to organise and generalise across experiences in a representational form. Allowing reflection time through journal writing, representation in multi-symbolic form, and/or discussing connections across experiences or strategies may facilitate reflective abstraction. [loc. 786]

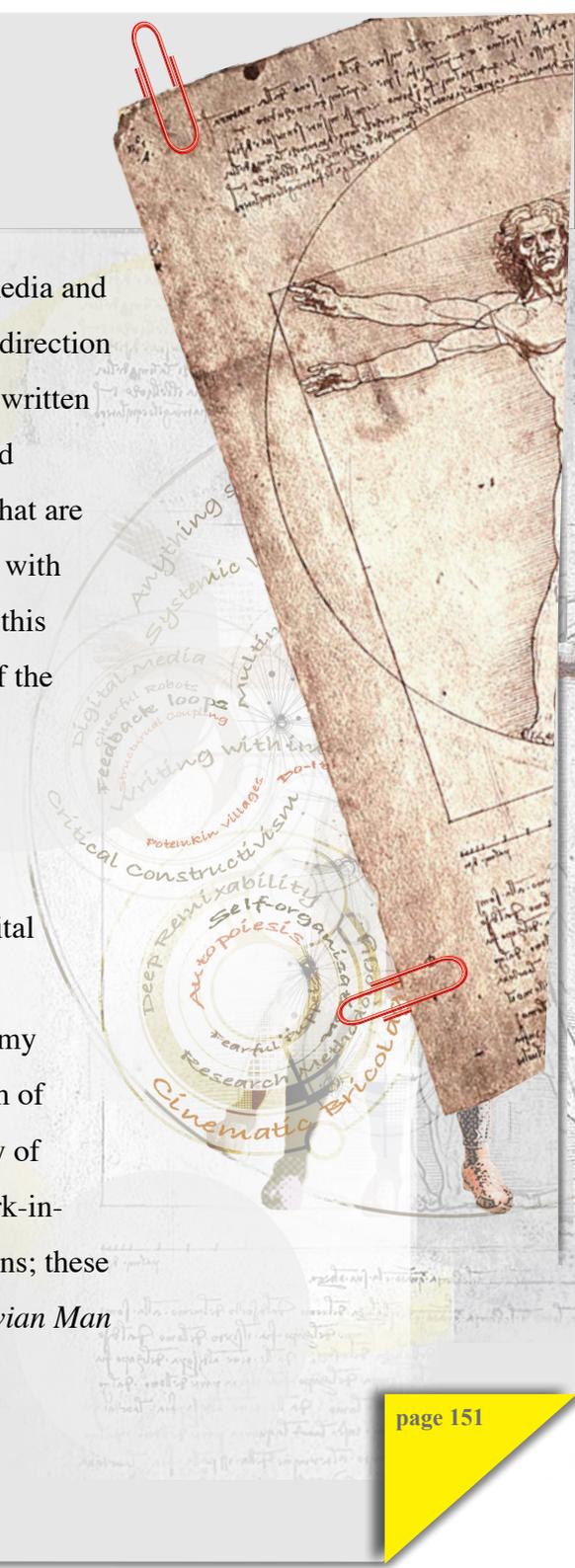
It is exactly from this perspective that I see the role of digital media and mulimodality as that of a premium player for learning in digital culture. I see it as a reflective device that fosters cultivation of more informed and responsible individuals and in turn, guides society to another level in the development of democratic culture.



### 5.1.3 Systemic/Cinematic Thinking

In respect to meaning making and how I see its ability to be affected by the application of digital media and bricolage, Fosnot and Perry's quote from the previous sub-chapter comes as an underpinning for the direction in which I move. As I strive to make meaning and communicate it to others, I embody my ideas into written words and (given there is time to do so) integrate visual elements, images, sometimes movements and sounds. I also employ techniques such as bricolage, which implies that I use the tools and materials that are 'at hand'. These are: computer, iPhone, internet, iPad, scanner, printer, and representational software with a vast array of possibilities. This, as I already mentioned (see chapter two), reflects a claim taken for this study that 'the method is the message'. This means that the argument is being developed by means of the method is utilised.

This, perhaps, should be true for all research, which is why it is important to choose the right methodology for the topic to be investigated. However, I borrow from McLuhan (1964) here: 'But there is this difference, that previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electric [digital media] is total and inclusive' [loc. 884]. This is because in cinematic bricolage I employ the method even before I start writing. By organising the design for the pages of the thesis I have already begun my argument. I make my thinking visible by depicting the pages as if they are bound together in the form of a paper folio or a journal to convey the idea that this document is in a format that disrupts the rigidity of academic writing. With the use of 'sticky notes' I create the impression of this document being a work-in-progress space, rather than one set in stone. Sticky notes on some pages may also be functional buttons; these represent the document's digital origin. At the initial stages of the project, Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*



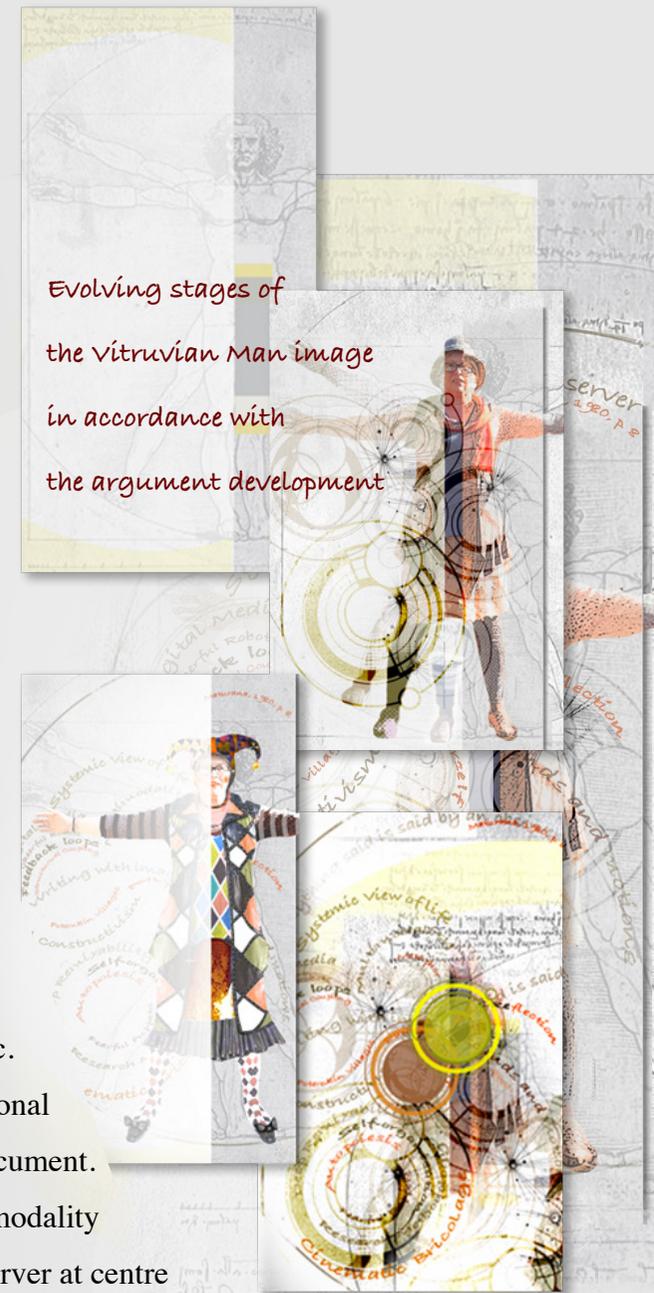
(1490 approximately) was used as a watermark common to all the pages of the thesis. This symbolises the blend of mathematics and art as well as man being part of nature in Leonardo's study of proportions. 'The circle represented the cosmic and divine; the square represented the earthly ...' [Lester, 2011, loc. 71].

Lester goes on:

But it is also something more subtle and complex. It is a profound act of philosophical speculation. [... it] embodies a timeless human hope: that we just might have the power of mind to figure out how we fit into the grand scheme of things. [Lester, 2011, loc. 81]

Leonardo's method of generating knowledge was visual. 'He used natural processes and structures as models for his design' [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 7]. Central to this study is a similar approach, that of a theoretical framework based on systemic thinking which entails figuring out the self through interactions with natural, social and technological domains.

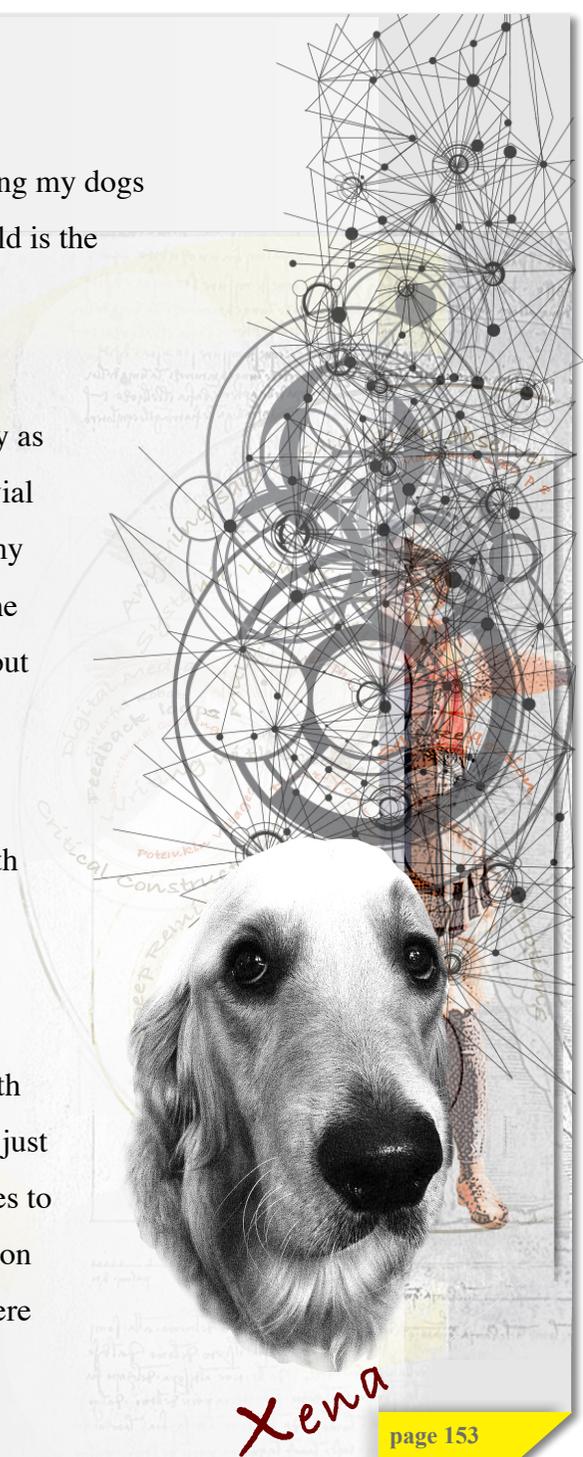
As I seek to construct meaning across the experience of producing this thesis, as if writing a journal, I make 'representations in multisymbolic form' and establish connections 'across experiences or strategies' that 'may facilitate reflective abstractions' [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 786]. For example, if I did not adopt cinematic bricolage methodology, but adhered to a traditional thesis format, I would not have used personal photographs in the ways they are used in this document. It is the logic of bricolage that encourages me to 'tinker' with ideas and objects at hand; multimodality implies exploration of the use of the modes and constructivist argumentation that puts the observer at centre



stage. Granted this liberty, I am moving ahead with my exploration and use images of myself, including my dogs who are always with me, to illustrate the point that the observer's experiences of the surrounding world is the centre of this observation.

I never used to be 'a dog person', but five years ago I got Xena and Henry and developed a strong affection towards them; now they are practically attached to me. Being engaged into reflective activity as a result of this study, I began to notice that my strong bond with my dogs was much deeper than a trivial desire to have them around me in the photographs. This connection with them had actually changed my perception of the animal world, nature and life itself. It was as if before, my awareness of myself in the totality of existence had some damaged roots and I was incompletely connected to its dynamic web; but now the damage was in the process of restoration.

Looking at it from the systems view, I see this bond as an example of structural coupling. This structural coupling resulted in autopoiesis on several levels, although in this study I am concerned with looking for and noticing different ways of communicating. My dogs have developed a vocabulary – some words they know well and respond to in a 'conscious' way. They also understand some gestures and I can communicate with them (to a limited extent) without words. What I also learned, especially looking through the photos when choosing them for my representations, is that dogs communicate with me through their body language in quite a sophisticated way. For example, the wagging of tails is not just happy wagging; there are different types of wagging showing different types of happiness. This applies to other parts of their body that move in certain variations depending on the situation. This communication between me and my dogs is multimodal, consisting of words, gestures, body language, sounds and there are also ... eyes. As an embodiment of meaning, dogs' eyes are a whole system of communication.



Xena

They are worth a thousand pictures  $\times 1000 =$  million words.

It is like stepping into a different semiotic space, inside eyes so deep you almost have to hold onto something not to fall through – ‘a conversation of emotioning’ as Maturana says [Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2012, p. 3].

Maturana and Verden-Zöllner refer here to mother-child or organism-niche relations.

The authors write:

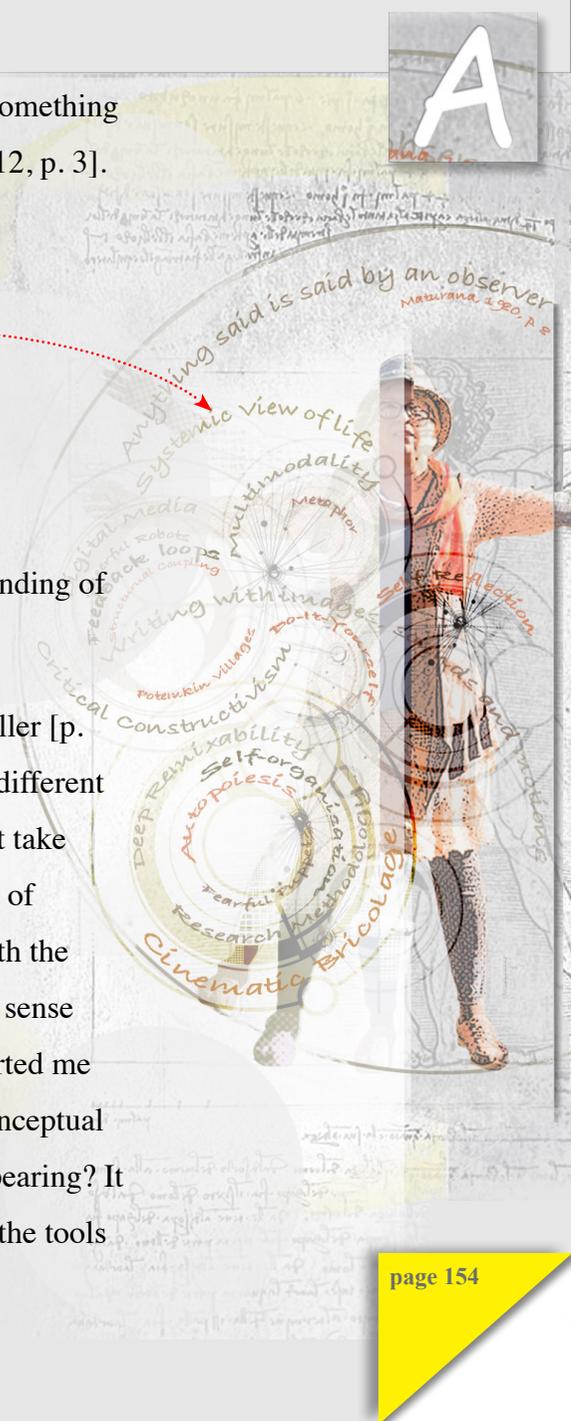
... that adaptation is necessarily a constant relation of operational coherence between the organism and its niche in the continuous realisation of its living, and that both organism and niche spontaneously change together congruently. [p. 5]

That is how, perhaps, the bond between people and dogs – or any other animals – and their understanding of each other develops, through structural coupling and emotioning.

‘We human beings exist in the braiding of languaging and emotioning’ state Maturana & Verden-Zöllner [p. 33]. With the example of my dogs, I can see this may happen not only between humans but also, at a different level and format, between humans and animals. This demonstrates continuous systemic dynamics that take an individual through various systemic experiences, in which the individual re-constructs her systems of perception. In my case, developing a bond with the dogs made me enter into a space of interaction with the world of animals and the natural world. It deepened my respect for living creatures, I began to form a sense of responsibility for them, an understanding of being connected with them and with nature, which started me thinking about my eating preferences. My attitude for the bio-world took a shift from being purely conceptual towards experiential. What made me become aware of these changes and why and how were they appearing? It was my work on this project, following the principles of constructivist cinematic bricolage. By using the tools

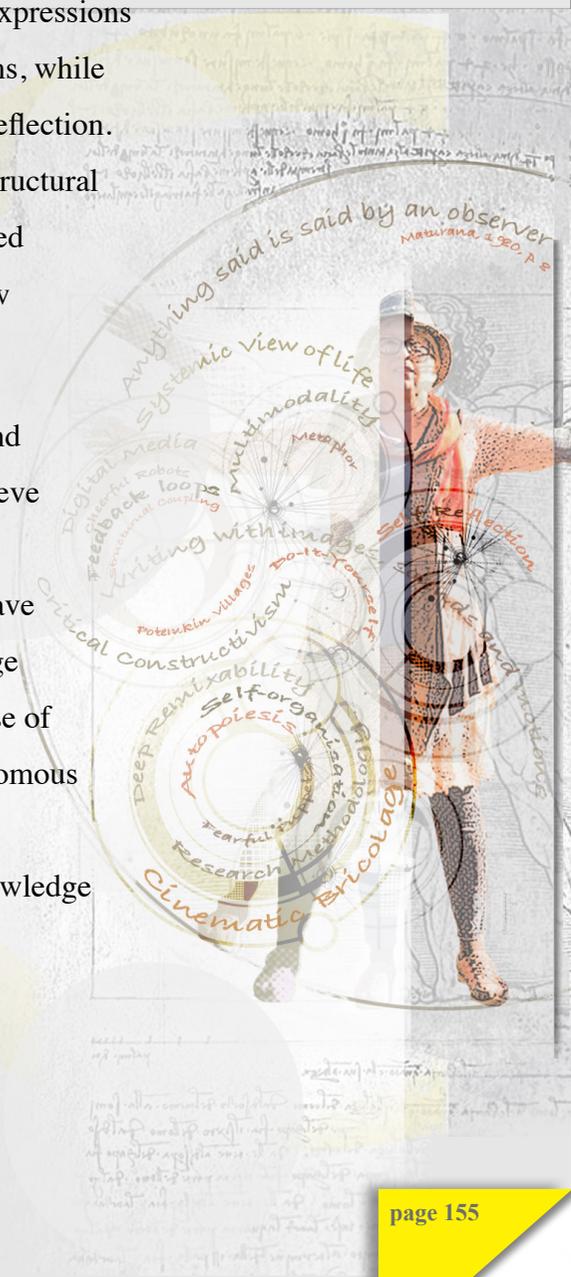
A

.....as a matter of fact.....



‘at hand’ – that is, looking for objects that were around and striving for novelty in methodology and expressions by taking photographs and videos and integrating them with the written text by software manipulations, while noticing recursive loops throughout these actions and investigating them – I began to engage in self-reflection. As a result I developed an insight that the dogs and I were two systems of continuous interaction of structural coupling. Therefore, while I was generating a new idea in a completely different domain, the conserved coupling that was a result of interaction with my dogs, intertwined within my mental space where new ideation was taking place.

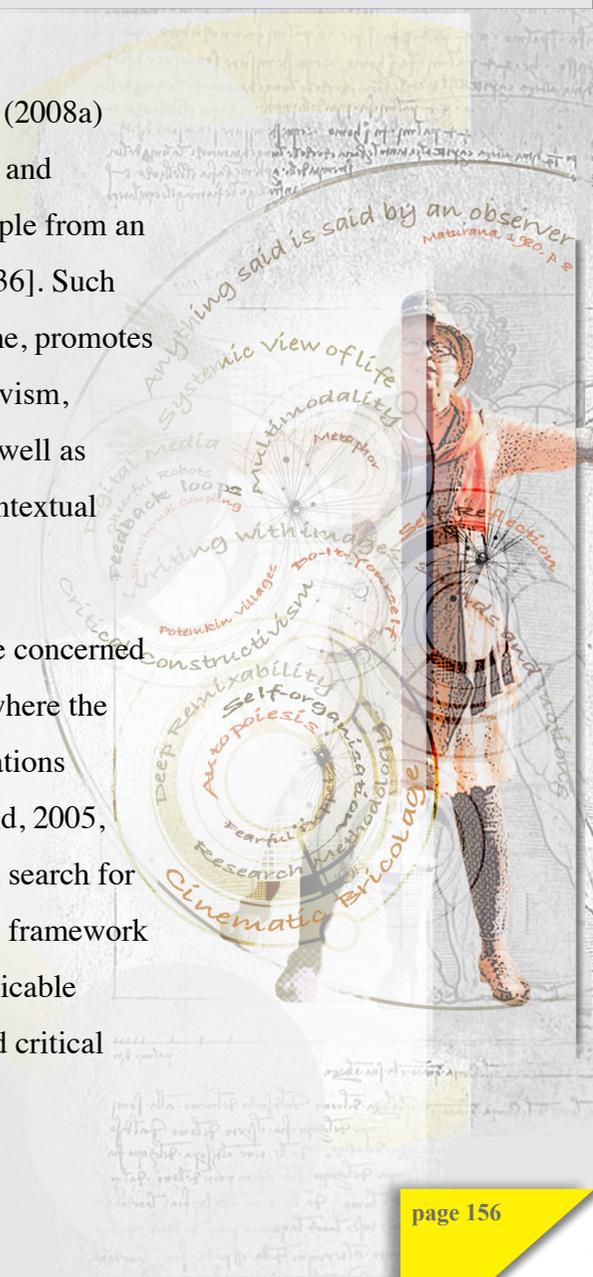
This study is about cinematic bricolage methodology being integrated into doctoral thesis writing and facilitating knowledge generation. By using the example of my dogs’ involvement in the thesis, I believe I show how digital bricolage may offer a new set of approaches to research. Coming to this research from the teaching profession leads me to continuously reflect on how the subject of my writing can have a practical application in education. From this point of view, the dogs example may suggest knowledge construction from topics and objects of immediate observation in the areas of everyday life and the use of tools ‘at hand’ to promote effective events of learning. My assumption is that if people become autonomous makers of their own knowledge, constructing it from what they see around in their real lives and with consideration of their personal skills and interests, it can not only increase the level of productive knowledge acquisition but also cultivate caring and responsible members of the global community.



## 5.1.4 Finalising the Theoretical Framework

Critical constructivism is a theoretical platform for teaching and learning developed by Kincheloe (2008a) as his ‘particular “take”’ on the complex topic of constructivism in order to clarify ‘much confusion and misunderstanding’ (p. 1). Constructivism argues ‘that knowledge and meaning are generated by people from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas’ [Mohapatra, Mahapatra, & Parida, 2015, loc. 36]. Such an approach delivers more practical and rigorous ways to knowledge generation but, at the same time, promotes growth of a large variety of forms. There are several seminal types such as: philosophical constructivism, sociological constructivism and educational (cognitive, personal, radical, social) constructivism; as well as other less prominent pathways such as communal constructivism, computational constructivism, contextual constructivism, critical constructivism, cybernetic constructivism and some others.

As was already discussed in the first section of this chapter, all constructivist groups of thought are concerned with acquisition of knowledge and meaning generation ‘through creation or invention’ [loc. 1799] where the observer is a constructor of knowledge that he/she generates by abstracting the objects and their relations ‘from the flow of their experience’ in ‘not an observer-independent objective world’ [Von Glasersfeld, 2005, loc. 201]. Application of bricolage methodology promotes moving to ‘a new conceptual terrain’ in a search for ‘epistemological innovation’ (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 1, 2]. In addressing this call, I model a theoretical framework that is suitable for this particular study by adopting underlying tenets of constructivism that are applicable to all its forms and emphasising certain conceptions from such pathways as cybernetic (see p. 6) and critical constructivism.



The table on the few pages summarises the following:

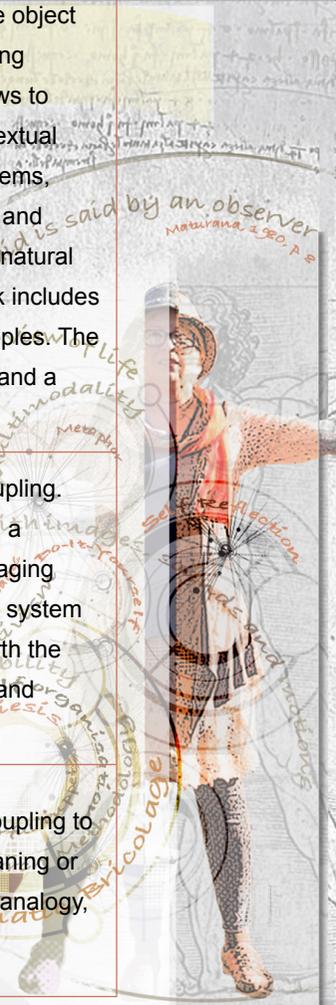
1. The first column – the main principles of critical constructivism as formulated by Kincheloe (2003, 2008);
2. The second column – cybernetic constructivism. The principles are drawn from Maturana and Varela (1998); Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2002); Maturana (2014);
3. The third column – adaptation of the critical and cybernetic constructivism applied to this cinematic bricolage.



<i>Critical Constructivism</i>	<i>Systems View/ Cybernetic Constructivism</i>	<i>This Study Adaptation – Cinematic bricolage</i>
The world is socially constructed.	Systemic view of life / bio-cultural matrix.	People are complex systems that exist within constant interactions with a natural (bio), man-made (cultural) and conceptual (social) systems network.
There is no knowledge of the world without a knower.	'Everything said is said by an observer'. All realities are created through the observer's operation of distinctions. No one can claim to be in possession of the truth but there are numerous possible realities.	Knowledge is generated by the observer (bricoleur) who, through being engaged in the activity of representing her reality, strives to understand and explain the experiences of her observation. The bricoleur makes distinctions of her observations as she sees them through the multiple intersecting and overlapping layers of her own experience, which inevitably distorts the distinctions, turning them into subjective constructions.
All knowers are historical and social subjects. People's situatedness in the time/space continuum shapes production of their knowledge.	Living systems occur as discrete organisms in the medium that makes them possible. Consciousness and mind belong to the realm of social coupling, they constitute part of the environment in which we conserve identity and adaptation.	Mind exists inside a medium of multiple systemic rippling. Although mind's coupling (remaking) occurs only within its conserved structural identity, structural changes are necessary and take place because of a continuous need for adaptation. The patterns of the rippling depend on their location within the space-time (historical/social) continuum of the medium. Therefore, structural coupling is shaped by the situatedness of the bricoleur and so is her knowledge production.
People take charge of the process of their own selfhood (distinct individuality), reconstructing themselves as social selves. Understanding of ontology of new selfhood is the quest for different perspectives, new ways of seeing.	Organisms are self-creating and self-sustaining systems. This is the concept of autopoiesis. Living beings are autopoietic systems (the learner constructs himself/herself). Structural determinism is a reconstruction within the boundary of its own making.	A distinct personal identity is a reflection of the subjectiveness of the knowledge produced by the bricoleur. As the bricoleur moves through her life, she is a social being engaged in structural coupling (reconstruction of the self). Although the remaking is determined by her existing structure, the conscious bricoleur takes charge of this process through self-reflection and continuous raising of her level of self-awareness.



<p>Generating knowledge in feedback loops allow for new insights and ideas to emerge as concepts that are viewed in light of new perspectives; and different ways of meaning making engenders epistemological diversity.</p>	<p>Expansion of understanding results from circular thinking, i.e. proceeding from your own experience and not from external reality.</p>	<p>Knowledge generation is carried out by self-reflective feedback loops – threading through the abstracted niche (the area in which the object of investigation is interwoven into a systems network). Threading through the different intersecting systems within the niche allows to draw together concepts that can be expressed in a variety of textual representations. If the world is envisioned as a network of systems, the systems then have to be envisioned in the variety of forms and materials they are ‘made of’; they also include intersections of natural and man-made elements. In this bricolage, the system network includes such textual representations of forms as tapestry and water ripples. The mind, as it will be later discussed, is envisioned as an iceberg and a waterwheel.</p>
<p>A key aspect of education involves understanding the nature of knowledge construction.</p>	<p>It is by languaging that the act of knowing brings forth the world. Learning occurs in congruent structural transformations.</p>	<p>Learning takes place through the actualisation of structural coupling. As the previous structure gives up, an expansion happens and a new structure is established in place of the old one. The languaging (articulation) of this process is materialised through a symbolic system of representations. In this bricolage, ‘languaging that brings forth the world’ is a digital system of multiple modes (a remix of written and spoken words, images, audio-video recording, motion).</p>
<p>Life forms unfold in relation to their exposure to multiple levels of diversity in a manner that can be described as a creative cognitive process.</p>	<p>Creativity - the generation of new forms - is a key property of all living systems.</p>	<p>Systemic/analogical thinking makes it possible for structural coupling to take place between systems that are not intersecting. The meaning or interpretation of meaning is carried out by creative principle of analogy, metaphor and remix.</p>

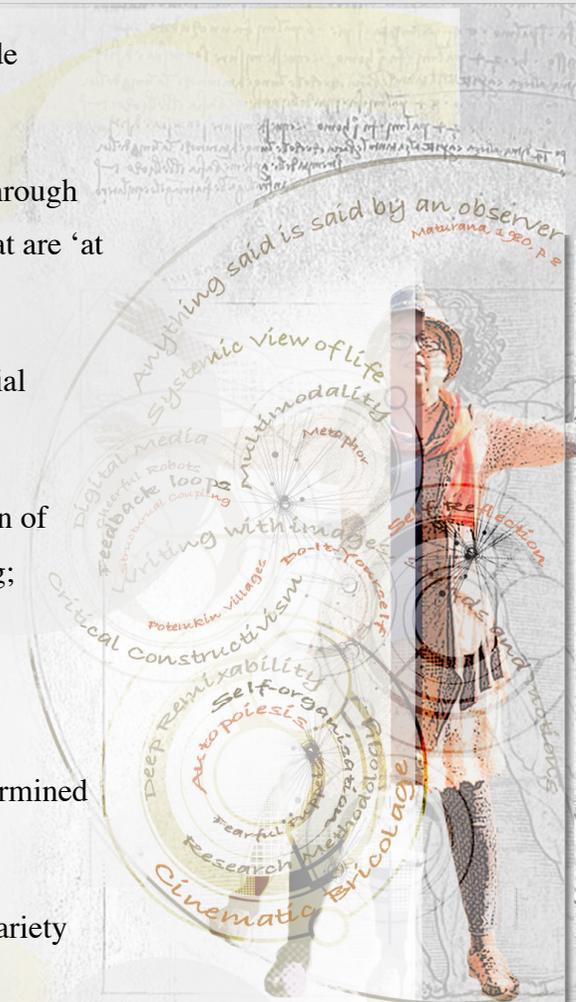


<p>People operate and create themselves with cultural tools at hand.</p>	<p>Existence is in part determined by culture. Human beings live languaging, and languaging is our manner of living.</p>	<p>Languaging – embodiment of meaning – is executed through a cultural conceptual/cognitive device such as analogy, metaphor and remix and by the implementation of cultural technological tools such as digital media.</p>
<p>The goal of education is to cultivate social responsibility.</p>	<p>What we do with our awareness of our awareness is our basic responsibility in our present moment of human history.</p>	<p>Each life is too precious to allow people in power to use it as they wish for their own benefit. The central goal of education is to raise awareness of this fact of existence and cultivate the desire to act upon it, raising the sense of responsibility for the life of the self and others.</p>
<p>The learning process is intimately connected to the research act through which students achieve higher level of self-awareness.</p>	<p>To live responsibly means to act in full awareness of the self and possible consequences of one's actions.</p>	<p>The research strategy allows access for deep self-reflection that propagates understanding of the position taken by an individual to act in 'full self-awareness'.</p>
<p>In their search for ways to produce democratic and evocative knowledges, critical constructivists become detectives of new ways of seeing and constructing the world.</p>	<p>Democracy must be created anew every day, as a space of living together in which participation and cooperation are possible, based on self-respect and the autonomy of every single individual.</p>	<p>Educational tasks built as research activities imbue an individual with a sense of autonomy for the gained knowledge, which cultivates in him/her self-respect and better understanding of others. The students become detectives of the problems in the society they live and constructors of a space of equal participation and cooperation for all members of society.</p>
<p>We gain awareness of ourselves as social, cultural and historical beings. We promote self-reflection and self-analysis that results in changes in attitudes and disposition.</p>	<p>Power arises through submission. We must declare one's responsibility and invite others to act in full awareness of this. We bring forth the world in which we live. Self-observation is performed through a linguistic operation.</p>	<p>Digital media provides an opportunity for educational tasks to become investigative events in all areas of natural or constructed life. This cinematic bricolage develops two probes to explore the ways in which digital media facilitate the process of self-awareness generation. This particular bricolage uses the ideological setting of Soviet Russia, based on imaginary constructions and recollections from the bricoleur's childhood, as a context to observe the multimodal knowledge generation process.</p>



## A SUMMARY OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF CINEMATIC BRICOLAGE:

- Cinematic bricolage sees the world as a complex network of interacting natural (bio), man-made (cultural) and conceptual (social) systems;
- Cinematic bricolage is a research methodology. Its central goal is to interpret self-experience through ‘tinkering’ with cultural tools (digital media) and techniques (analogy, metaphor and remix) that are ‘at hand’ in a ‘do-it-yourself’ way;
- Cinematic bricolage brings to light an awareness of self-positioning within the bio/cultural/social matrix of life;
- By doing so, the bricoleur moves into uncharted waters of self-awareness resulting in expansion of self-appreciation and development of self-assertiveness and self-responsibility as a social being;
- The knowledge generated by the bricoleur is subjective. It is shaped by the bricoleur’s specific situatedness within a certain niche of historical-cultural-social intersections of events;
- Structural coupling within the network of interacting systems is a continuous process. It is determined by individual structures and happens within the boundary of the system’s making;
- Knowledge generation is carried out by self-reflective feedback loops causing a layering of a variety of textual representations;
- Digital media is seen as a cultural tool that provides an opportunity for educational tasks to become investigative events allowing memory recollections, intuitive interpretation and imaginative reconstructions that are achieved with the involvement of systemic/analogical thinking.



## 5.2 Critical Perspective on Knowledge Production

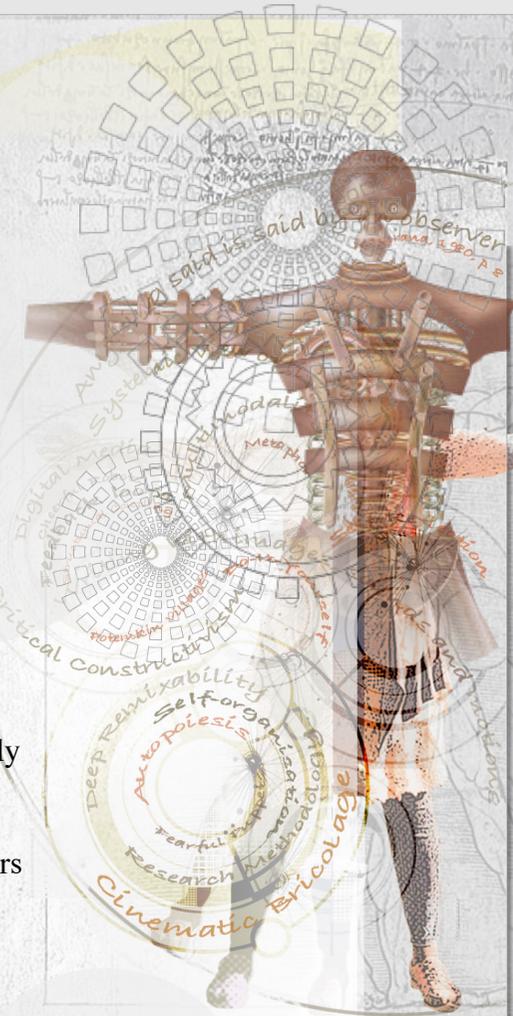
### 5.2.1 Alienation and Emergence of Automaton

In the previous section I have outlined the theoretical assumptions that underpin the construction of multimodal self-bricolage. My proposition is that learning tasks built on these principles may promote a better understanding of social constructions, raise levels of self-awareness and develop critical insight for an individual about her interactions with the surrounding world. One of the reasons I had an impetus for this project while working as a teacher at a secondary Victorian school was that I was facing a strong contradiction that was intertwined in the social construct. On one hand, there was a prominent sense of the world entering a new era of existence. There was formal and friendly talk about globalisation, all-embracing and all-penetrating technology, new ways of communication. All this was seemingly demanding a much higher intellectual involvement in social life, greater awareness about environmental issues and an understanding and capital responsibility in the employment of new technology.

On the other hand, as far as at least the subjects I was teaching were concerned, they remained absolutely alienated from the passionately discussed issues. Instead of cultivating informed citizens for the future ‘with an urge for freedom and a will to reason’, it felt that we were busy nurturing what Mills (2000) refers to as ‘cheerful robots’ [p. 171].

Mills writes:

The advent of the alienated man [...] is a major theme of the human condition in the contemporary epoch and of all studies worthy of the name [...] The society in which this man, this cheerful robot, flourishes is the antithesis of the free society – or in the literal and plain meaning of the world, of democratic society. [p. 171-172]

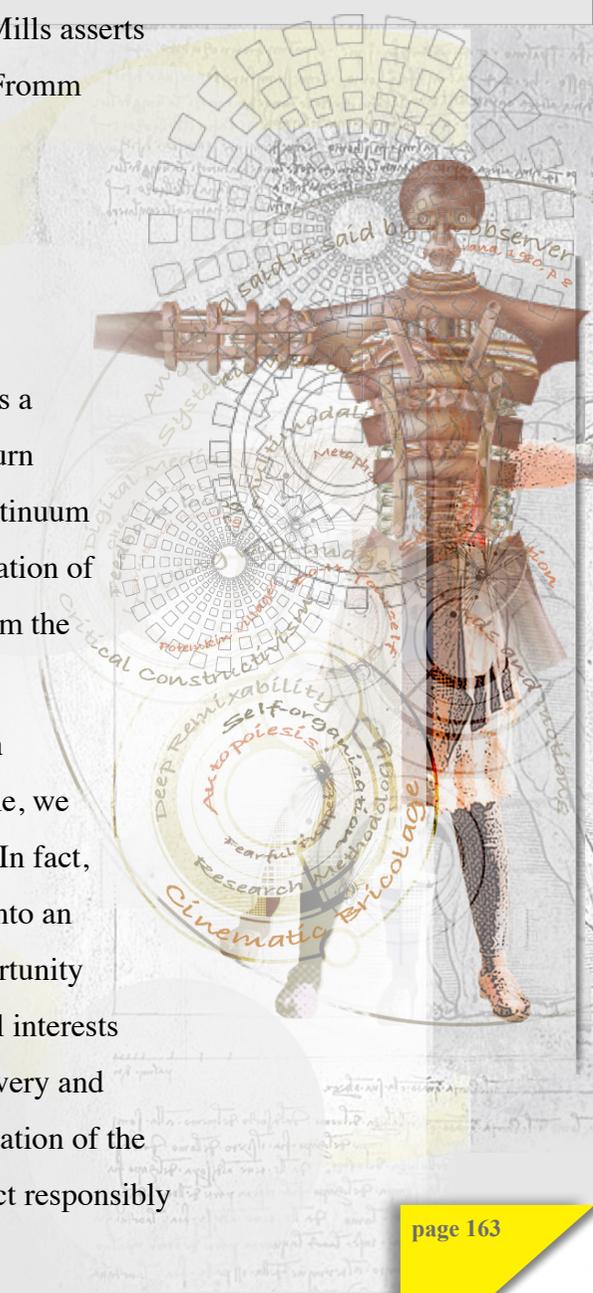


Mills refers to other theorists and authors, such as Karl Marx (1842-1894), Georg Simmel (1903-1924), Graham Wallas (1889-1940), and George Orwell (1949) who were aware of the ascent of this kind of man. Mills asserts that the construction of the 'cheerful robot' results from Fromm's idea of the 'automaton' [p. 171]. Fromm explains:

The person gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him, need not feel alone and anxious any more. But the price he pays, however, is high: it is the loss of his self. [Fromm, 2013, p. 184]

The terms 'alienation', 'automaton' and 'cheerful robot' come jointly into the focus of this study as a benchmark charged with a negative connotation. Alienation cultivates automatons who eventually turn themselves into an army of cheerful robots – this concept is placed on one side of the ideational continuum of this study. Involvement, on the other hand, results in the development of personal autonomy, appreciation of the subject being researched and the world in which the research is taken place and others with whom the world is shared.

What I would like to bring to attention with this study is that we equip students and ourselves with authority to use the most powerful technology that has ever existed in the world, but at the same time, we alienate ourselves from understanding and gaining full responsibility for the automated production. In fact, we create conditions conducive to freedom from 'feeling alone and anxious' by turning ourselves 'into an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around them'. I see in digital media an opportunity for people to be involved in the processes of their own intellectual discovery based on their personal interests and strategic preferences. Working in an area of personal passion enables better access to self-discovery and self-remaking. As my assumption tells me, an innate interest in one's own production leads to cultivation of the sense of individual significance, which in its turn endows people with an understanding of how to act responsibly





and sentimental stuff within the curriculum. When I asked for

in the Victorian VCD subject association, he explained that in the VCD course we should be dealing

exclusively with the aesthetic side of the subject. A member of the group developing a new

course for VCD, people responded that they didn't have enough to worry

about and they had to have 'at least some moral and

social elements into the course

In contrast to the above, I will always remember a student who, following my encouragement

their request, told them about the Bond films – things like crypt

Bond films – things like crypt

vodka drinkers – became a re

I will always remember a student who, following my encouragement

campaign to support homeless people and developed graphic design

Visual Communication

Multimedia (MM)

even and twelve

ical for the society

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and often were quite

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ol stuff'. This also met

or 'that political, social

of the leading teachers

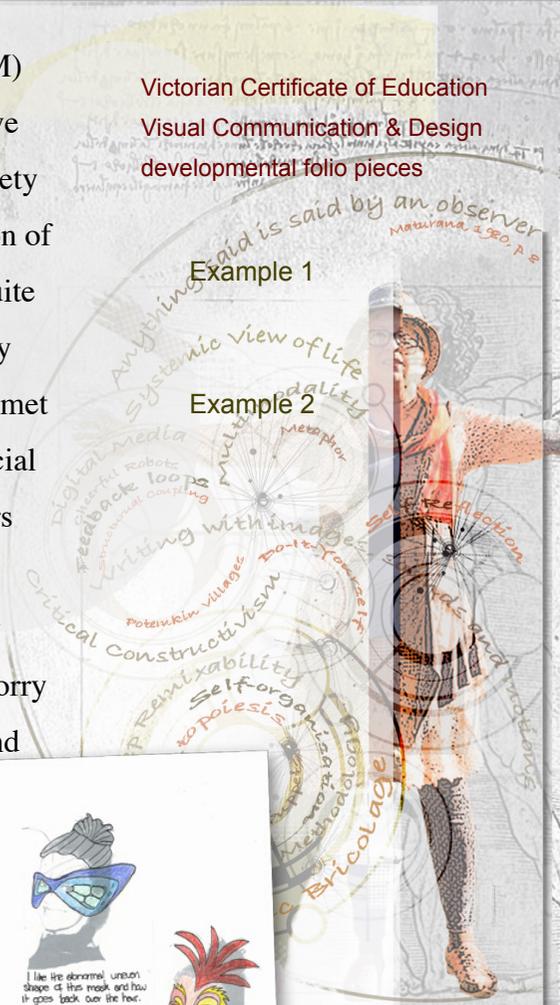
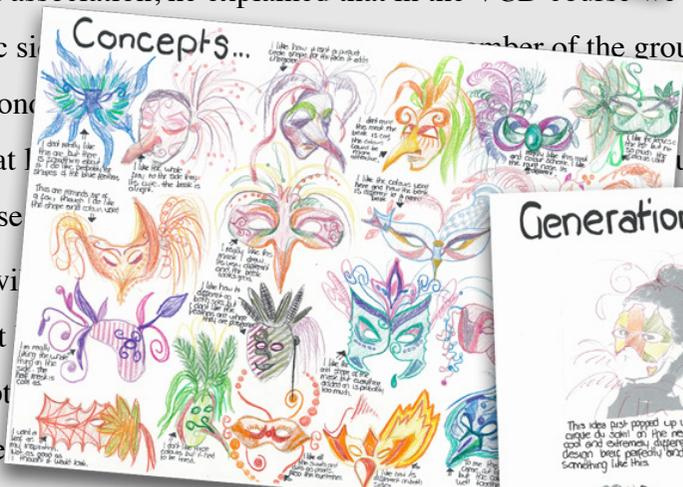
Victorian Certificate of Education

Visual Communication & Design

developmental folio pieces

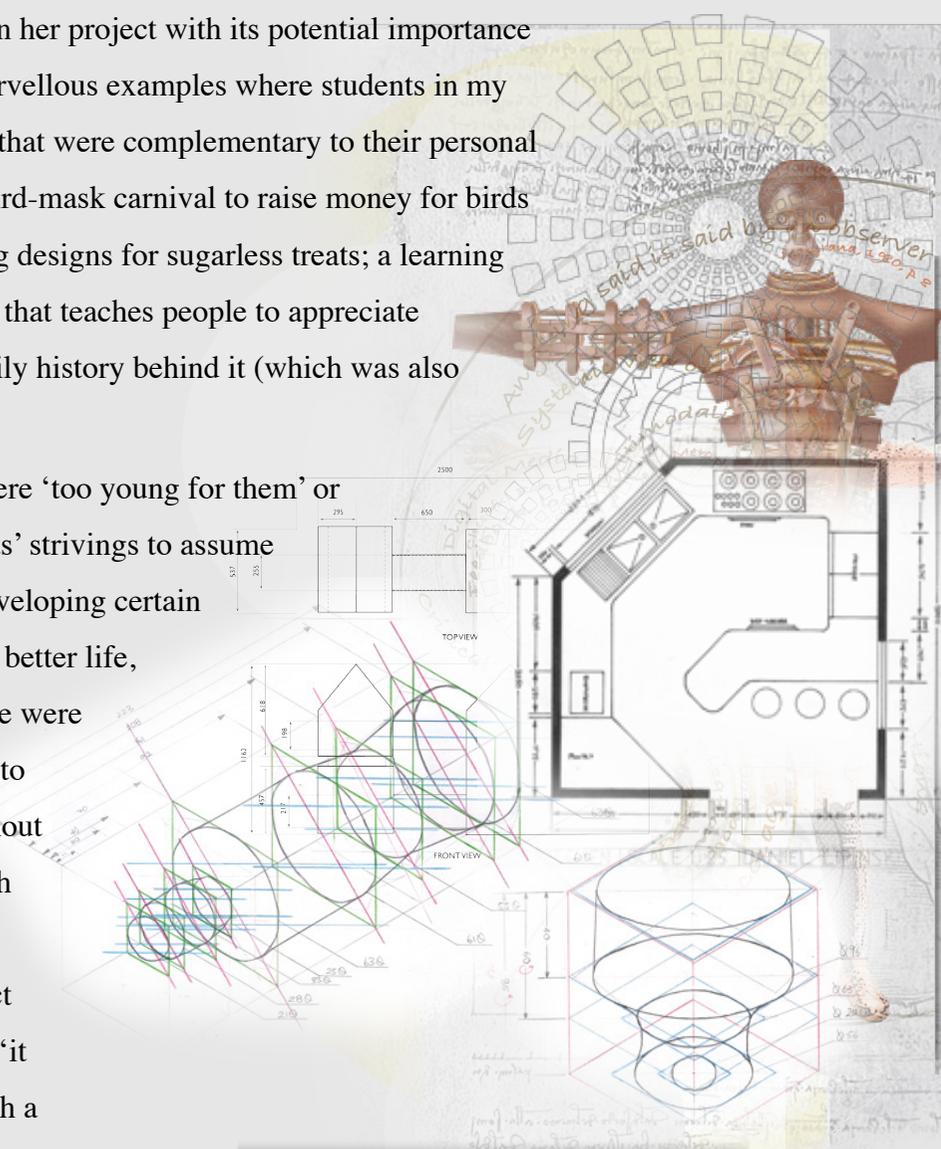
Example 1

Example 2



she presented the data about homeless people in Melbourne to a stunned class. She was passionate and proud about what she had discovered and about what she was planning to do in her project with its potential importance to real life and to real people (click 'in' for example 1). I have some marvellous examples where students in my VCD and MM classes engaged themselves in the development of tasks that were complementary to their personal interests but also had public associations. Among them: an imaginary bird-mask carnival to raise money for birds who 'lost their homes' in bush fires (click 'in' for example 2); packaging designs for sugarless treats; a learning space to facilitate more engagement in the classroom; a tree-house park that teaches people to appreciate Australian nature; an animated story about grandma's hands with a family history behind it (which was also a lesson in Australian history but in a more personal manner).

I disagree that the students engaged in the projects described above were 'too young for them' or that they were missing out on having fun. But unfortunately, the students' strivings to assume positions of valuable and concerned members of a community while developing certain professional skills that could contribute to building a caring society and better life, were not recognised or supported by the school curriculum and therefore were bound to lose their force. Those students who had chosen, for example, to do pictorial designs for T-shirts or graphic surfaces for skateboards without any particular connection to social contexts, found themselves in a much 'smarter' position. They did not need to conduct much research or do much thinking. They just needed to demonstrate a wide range of abstract experimentation with design elements and principles until aesthetically 'it all came together'. They were completing their projects much faster with a guarantee of getting good, or at least passing, marks.



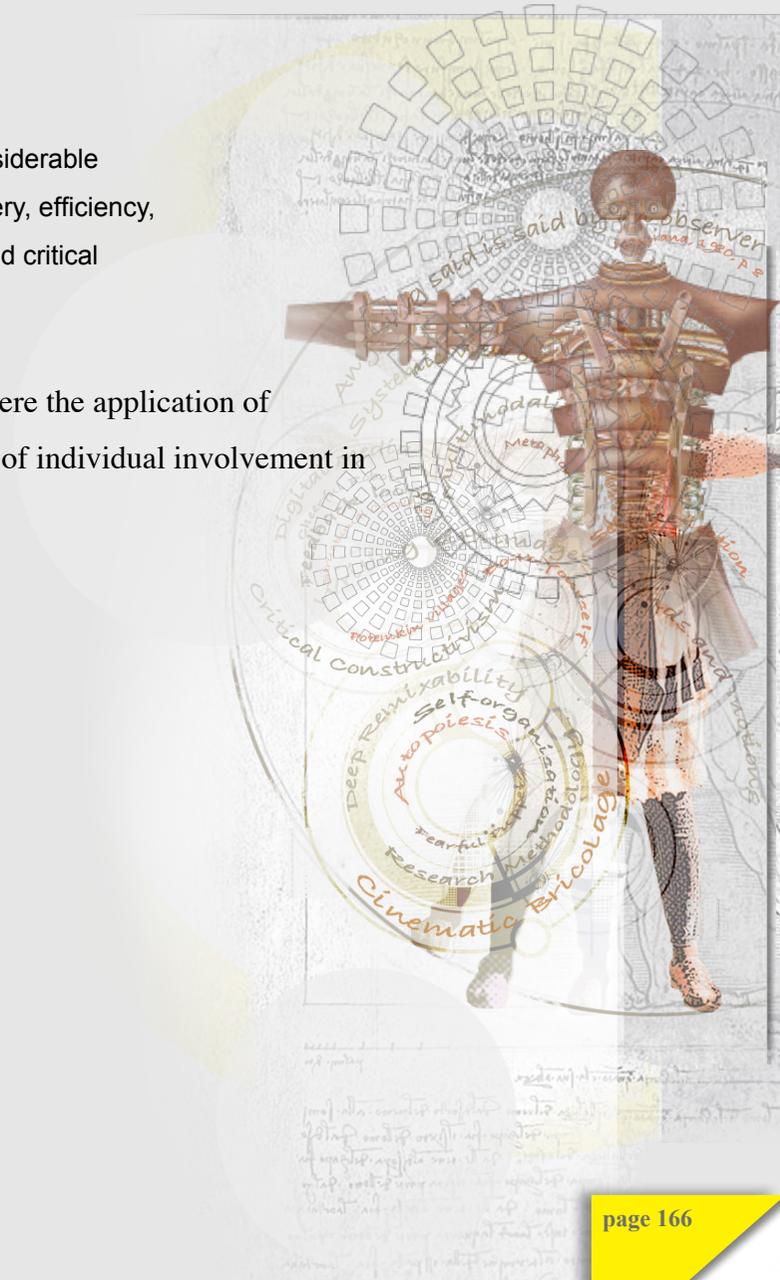
To me, such an approach to schooling appears to be ‘reduced to the imperatives of corporate self-interest, industrial psychology, and cultural uniformity’ [Giroux, 2005, p. 18].

As Henry A. Giroux argues:

Underlying the dominant trend in teaching and in learning, one that structures to a considerable degree the form and content of most public school curricula, are the principles of mastery, efficiency, and control ... Within this perspective, civic education no longer promotes the social and critical attributes to improve the quality of public life. [Giroux, 2005, p. 18]

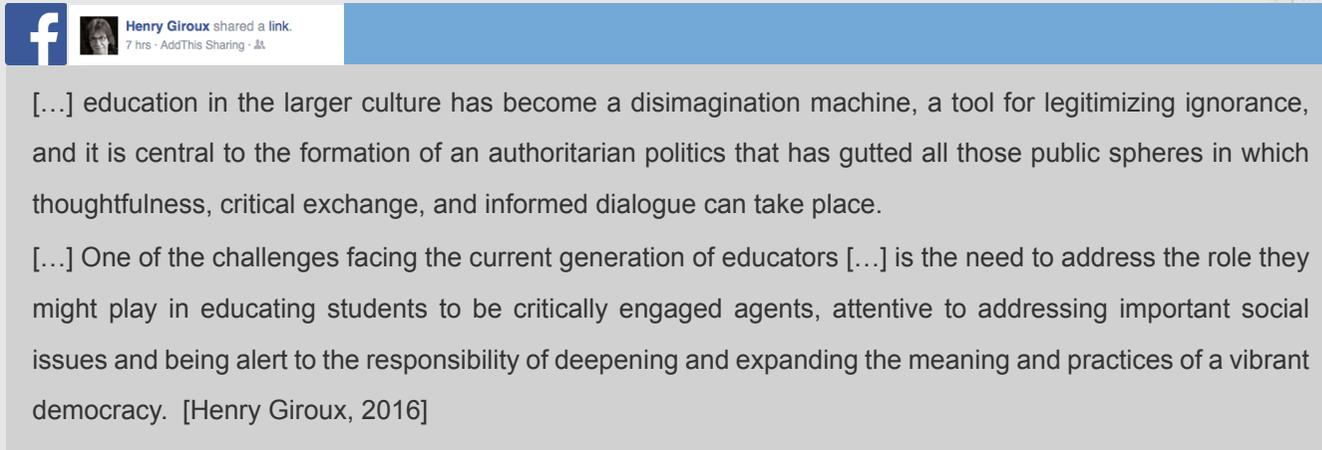
In the context of VCD and MM, as well as that of any other educational subject where the application of multimodal representational capacity can be effectively involved, I see the reduction of individual involvement in learning projects to be expressed on the following planes:

1. An underestimation and sabotage of students’ innate inquisitive and productive qualities, as if incapable of gathering and producing their own knowledge;
2. An alienation of students from their interests and of their learning projects from moral dimensions and socio-cultural contexts;
3. A deliberate disregard of the fact that digital media, and more specifically multimedia (not just the use of *Microsoft Word*), is a rapidly developing form of contemporary communication; and
4. Reducing the concept of creativity to learning technical skills of production.



Looking at contemporary education from the point of intersection of these four planes, the first-rate conditions for the propagation of ‘cheerful robots’ become apparent.

As Henry Giroux states in his article from a shared link on Facebook (Apr 25, 2016):

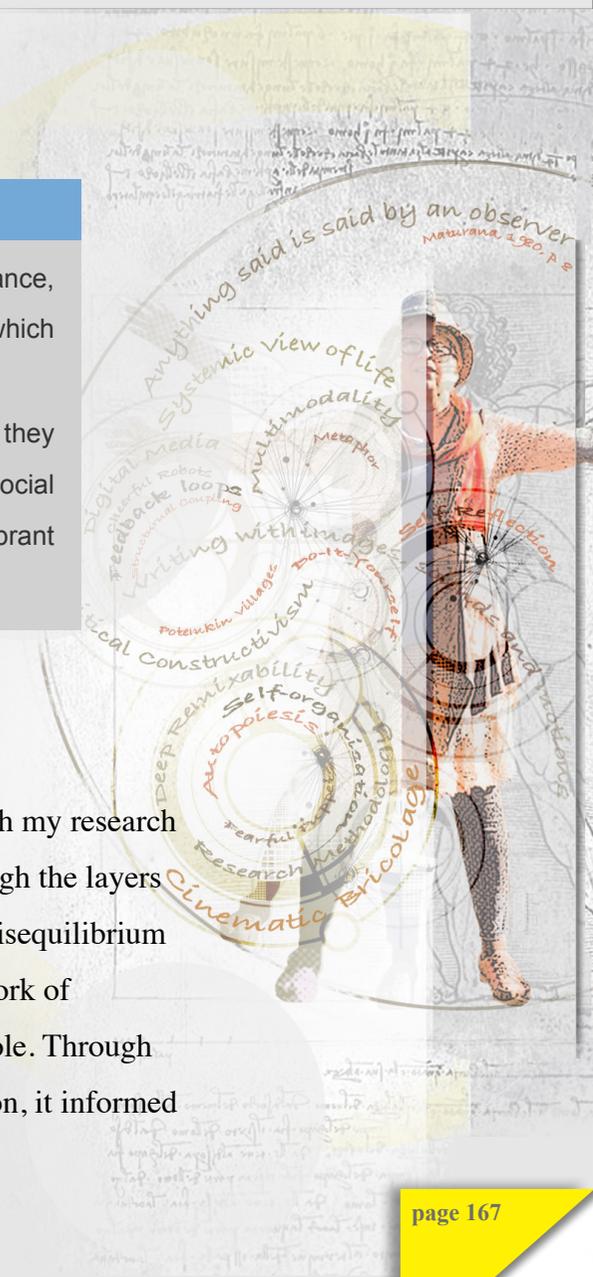
A screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top left is the Facebook 'f' logo. Next to it is a small profile picture of Henry Giroux and the text "Henry Giroux shared a link. 7 hrs · Add This Sharing · 2". The main text of the post is in a grey box and reads: "[...] education in the larger culture has become a disimagination machine, a tool for legitimizing ignorance, and it is central to the formation of an authoritarian politics that has gutted all those public spheres in which thoughtfulness, critical exchange, and informed dialogue can take place. [...] One of the challenges facing the current generation of educators [...] is the need to address the role they might play in educating students to be critically engaged agents, attentive to addressing important social issues and being alert to the responsibility of deepening and expanding the meaning and practices of a vibrant democracy. [Henry Giroux, 2016]"

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[...] One of the challenges facing the current generation of educators [...] is the need to address the role they might play in educating students to be critically engaged agents, attentive to addressing important social issues and being alert to the responsibility of deepening and expanding the meaning and practices of a vibrant democracy. [Henry Giroux, 2016]

## 5.2.2 Teaching Technical Standards

As mentioned earlier, for a prolonged period of time in the course of this study, I felt unsettled with my research objectives. This discontent forced me into a deeper examination of my intentions and to break through the layers of hesitation about what I really wanted to say. Looking at this from a systemic point of view, this disequilibrium brought about a considerable remaking and expansion of my ‘determined mental structures’. The work of Kincheloe and especially his book *Teachers as Researchers* [2003], I believe, played a significant role. Through this book I gained enough confidence to express what I had wanted to for a long time and, in addition, it informed this thesis which I hope can influence others.



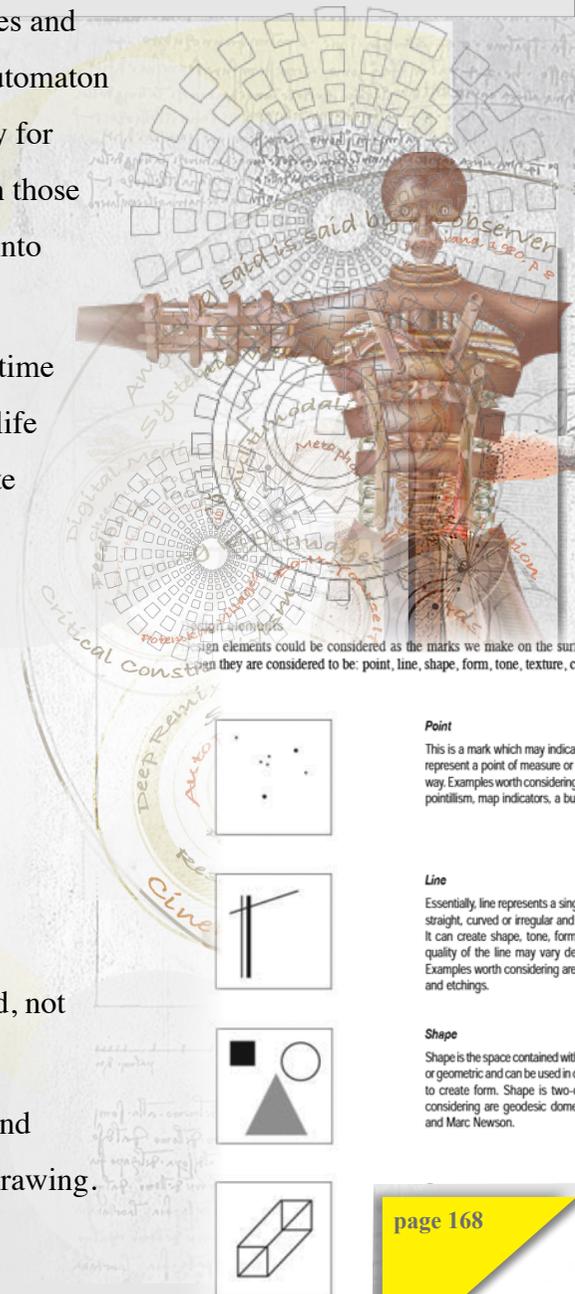
From seeing my lack of simple ability to adopt the mindset and behavioural patterns of society as a source of irritation for others, I began to develop the idea that perhaps what I considered to be ‘negative qualities and inabilities’ were in fact signs of resistance to what Fromm (as mentioned earlier) conceptualised as automaton conformity. I began to realise that there were others who also disagreed with education existing solely for the purpose of students acquiring technical skills for different disciplinary fields. I could identify with those who assumed a critical position towards the preoccupation with technical content that was crammed into the school curricula.

To enable state assessment processes to be better standardised and regulated, there was no space or time left within educational courses to connect learning tasks with the students’ natural environment, real-life situations, cultural characteristics or individual interests. In other words, acquiring skills to manipulate technical content becomes an individual-detached activity and therefore, makes little sense inside the body of knowledge that students generate during their formal education. As Kincheloe puts it:

[...] technical standards work to destroy intellectually rigorous educational programs (Fenimore-Smith and Pailliotet, 2001) and undermine concern with the nature and best interests of learners [...] Indeed, technical content standards violate a key pedagogical principle: educational experience should be tied to the psychological and social investments of the learner. [Kincheloe, 2003, p. 6]

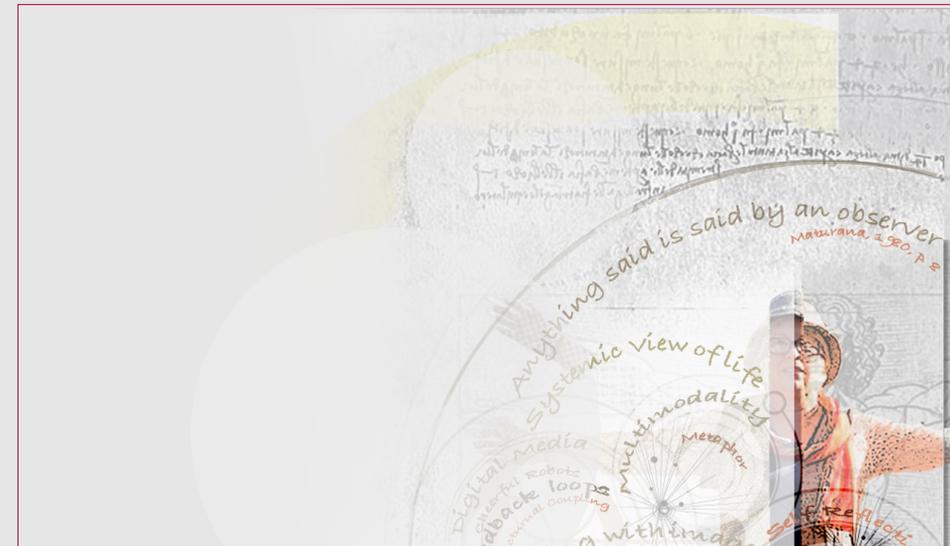
Kincheloe (2003) also speaks about dispirited teachers who describe education as ‘anti-intellectual culture’ filled with ‘obstacles they face in their desire to be challenging and inspirational teachers’ and, not being able to succeed, leaving the teaching profession [p. 5]. I can identify with this.

As I can only talk about the area of my expertise, I bring an example from Visual Communication and Design (VCD) course. A large part of its curriculum space is occupied by gaining skills in technical drawing.



This is the most reliable area of assessment in the course because accuracies and errors in the test-tasks can be literally counted, thus awarding marks withstands any criticism, objectivity wise. The question, however, is: to what extent are these technical drawing skills important to a person living in a highly technological environment where such tasks can be achieved easier and faster by the application of automation? My answer is that such skills are important only for one thing – passing the end of the school examination (VCE, VCD, Written Examination, 2015, p. 8, Q4). I base my response on the fact that technical drawing systems are embedded into specialised representational software. Should a student choose a professional field where the skill for technical drawing is required, she needs, first of all, a comprehension of the digital embodiment of ideas and an understanding of computer logic behind interpreting 3-dimensional forms.

Another large part of the VCD curriculum is experimentation with design elements and principles (DEP) that boils down to production of a volume of work, which again can be counted by the pages in the developmental folio for assessment purposes. The next chunk of the process of ‘design concept development’ is experimentation with materials, media and methods (MMM). Volume and counting pages is, one more time, a reliable evaluation of the ‘learning outcomes’. Both types of experimentation consist of repetitive mechanical procedures with



FIGURES IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY  
Joe Kincheloe and Henry Geroux  
2007

minor alterations in each step. For instance, if a student experiments with a dot as a design element (DE) and organises the dot in a certain pattern (which is a design principle [DP]) in the next episode, it would be enough to replace the dot with a line (which is another DE) and use a different colour (another DE) and slightly modify the pattern (a DP). Then the lines can be replaced by squares to represent a shape (a DE) and so on (VCE, VCD Study Design, 2012, p. 40-43). This is how pages of work in a design development folio are generated. Again, subjectivity of assessment is perhaps avoided but the involvement of intellectual and creative abilities in these low-skill activities is reduced to a basic level.

Having generated visual communication and design skills over years of my own professional practice and having had the dramatic experience of transitioning from pure free-hand production to computer generation, I saw in the latter a great opportunity for releasing creative potential without being bogged down by the technicality of production. Therefore, I came to teach at school being motivated and highly passionate to train students in new approaches to creative expression. As I have progressed trying to do so, I could not stop becoming increasingly disappointed with my teaching agency being directed almost exclusively to the development of, as Giroux (2011) puts it: '[...] market-oriented skills in order to compete favourably in the global economy. This type of pedagogy celebrates rote learning, memorization, and high-stakes testing, while it produces an atmosphere of student passivity and teacher routinisation' [p. 9]

Unfortunately, experiencing disagreement with the course design, my attempts to deal with the issue did not change much. I did not have enough knowledge and skills to argue for my position. I felt similar to Henry Giroux (2007) when he wanted to resist his school principal and did not know how to (play the video).



Similar to Geroux, I needed to find a voice, only unlike the one night it took him to do so, it took me several years of working on research and hesitating to get to a point. Getting acquainted with Kincheloe's work was a study turning point and a tremendous relief because it made me realise that there was nothing wrong with being frustrated – even irritated – about the superficiality of the courses I was teaching.

In fact, as Poerksen (2011) argues:

Irritation brings about new dynamics, opens up opportunities of understanding and appreciating new perspectives [...] it encourages intellectual flexibility, it is basically anti-dogmatic ... [p. 2]

Taking this position, I could finally channel my negativity into a positive course.

### 5.2.3 Emotioning ↔ Linguaging

As I am taking a recursive self-feedback loop, threading through the theoretical and practical niche of interacting systems in which I am busy observing how my thinking is influenced by the digital media 'at hand', I keep bringing new textual elements to the knowledge in the construction zone. As discussed in chapter three, the pivot-point (bricol) that was placed in the centre of that construction zone is encapsulated in the proposition that 'the method is the message'. This means that the ways I am gathering, analysing, organising and presenting data are communicating a qualitative property of the argument under construction.

Namely, threading through the niche in the abstracted systems network, I employ the digital media tools 'at hand' collecting conceptual data-bricoles from the internet, Kindle and social media, recording the bricoles with my iPhone or iPad, and creating graphics and visual representations in *Adobe Illustrator* and *Photoshop*. I am reconstructing

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M.A.S.

Nothing said is said by an observer  
Maturana, 1980, p. 5



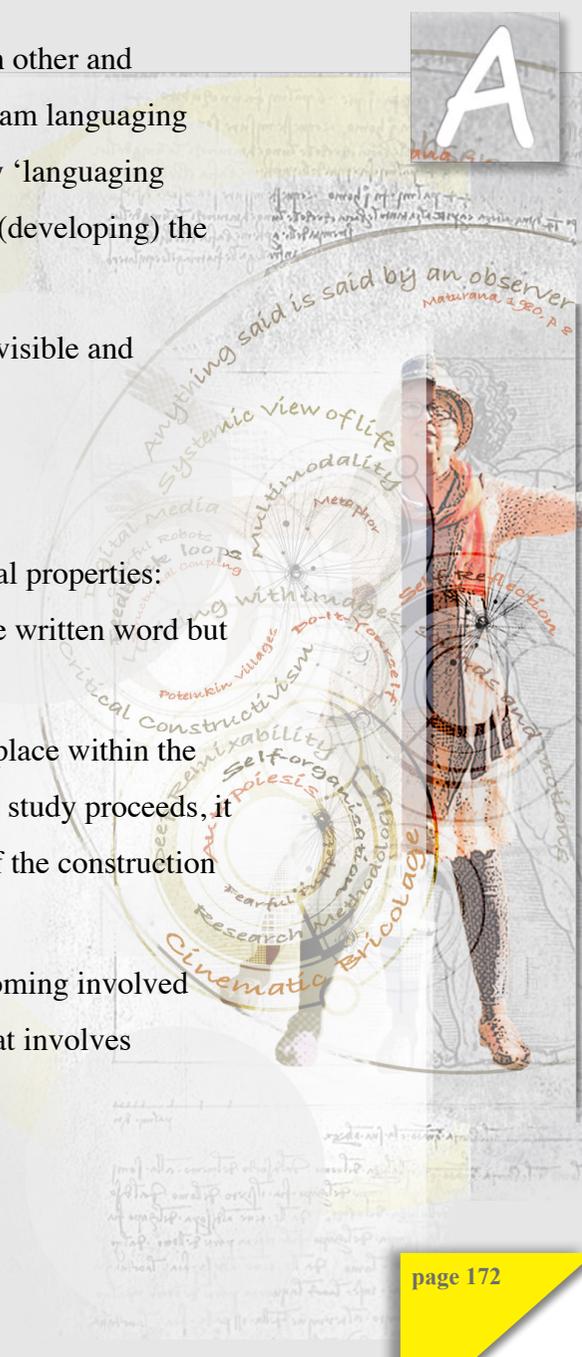
conceptual fragments through ‘tinkering’ with the gathered bricoles, making them interact with each other and causing a structural coupling between them. Using Maturana and Verden-Zöller’s (2012) concept, I am languaging an argument through my emotioning. My ‘emotioning changes in the course of languaging’, and my ‘languaging changes in the course of our (my) emotioning’ [p. 30]. This process can be described as languaging (developing) the multimodal language of the argument.

By applying this method I am trying to make the logic of the argument and my thinking behind it visible and sometimes moveable or audible. So, the method turns into a system of its own. It becomes one of the systems in the interacting network of the chosen niche. Being a system, it interacts with the other systems in the niche which results in a structural coupling – an intermesh of abstract and material components. In other words, the ideas begin to acquire physical properties: form, colour shape, movement, sound and so on. The thinking becomes evident not only through the written word but by means of other modalities as well.

For example, now when the concept of the ‘cheerful robot’ has been introduced, it takes a certain place within the visualised network of systems. The method is the message is spreading throughout the niche. As the study proceeds, it is blending with the rest of the systems in the niche, while the cheerful robot shifts into the centre of the construction zone.

As I engage in visualising the concept in *Adobe Illustrator* and *Edge Animate*, my thinking is becoming involved in observing the embodiments on the screen. The process of representing becomes an experience that involves emotioning that changes my thinking and my thinking is changing the embodiments – languaging. Thus, the concept of cheerful robots has come to ‘a full view’.

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## 5.2.4 Cheerful Robots & Fearful Puppets

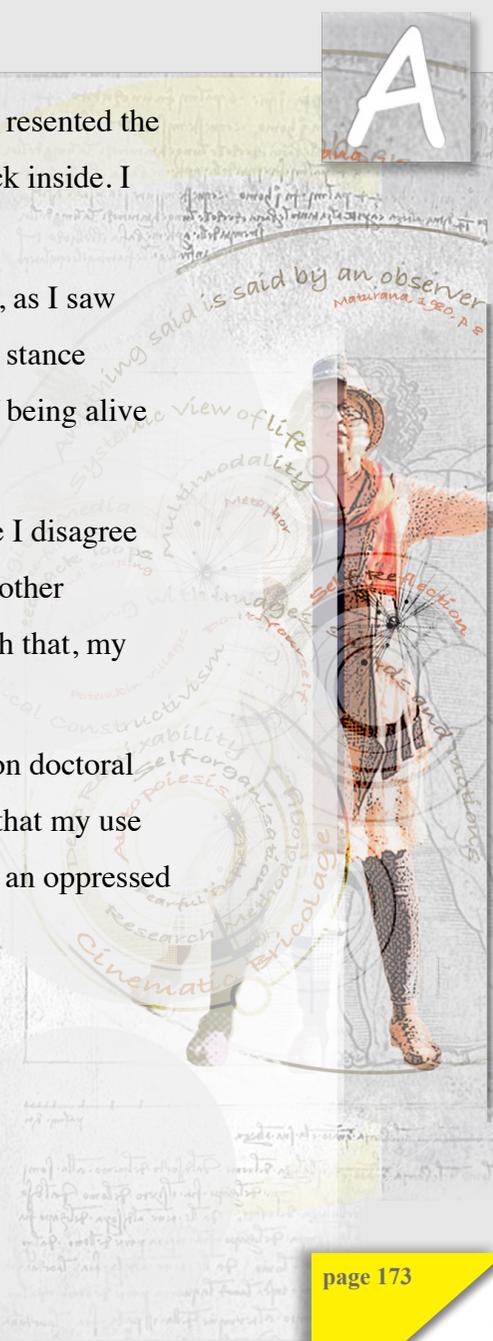
Growing up under an oppressive Soviet regime, I experienced myself through a constant inner struggle. I resented the oppression. My negation was continually showing through, no matter how much I was trying to push it back inside. I was pretending to be a genuine young communist which was doomed because I never was a good actor.

So as much as I could never close my eyes to the audaciousness and unfairness of the Soviet government, as I saw many others doing, and live in relative contentment, I also was never brave enough to take a firm and open stance against the Soviet System (as we used to refer to it). The desire to stay alive, even though the conditions of being alive only vaguely resembled that of freedom, overrode my moral principles.

Living in Australia, I do not have any obvious reason to fear for my life or the lives of my family because I disagree with a decision made by the government or, for example, aspects of the education system. However, I find other issues that cause my inner struggle. Among them is, above all, my English language skills, and coming with that, my shortcomings in properly understanding Western culture in general and Australian culture in particular.

Perhaps, it has been exactly this life-long inferiority complex that has finally pushed me into embarking on doctoral study. I needed not only the right words (and sentences) as Geroux (see p. 26) did, but also a confirmation that my use of words and sentences made proper sense to others. I needed to gather concepts about how people outside an oppressed society saw the world and how they use those concepts to further their construction of a free society.

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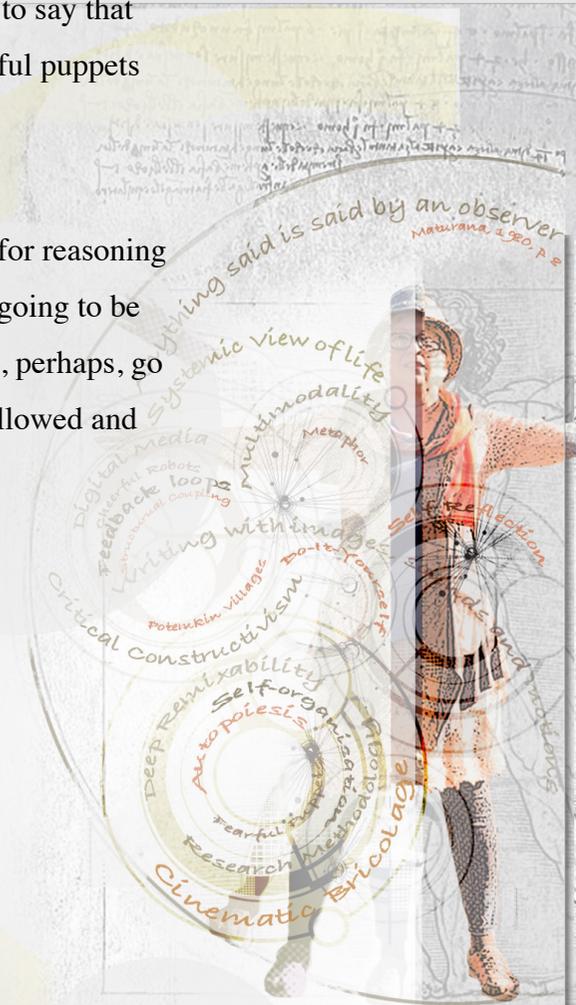


I am immensely grateful to Australia and Monash University for allowing me to achieve this personal goal. And I hope that my critical view on education is not taken as me being ungrateful. However, I would like to say that coming from Soviet education to Australian, I had the impression that it was like coming from a fearful puppets theatre to a cheerful robots factory.

The difference, of course, is tremendous.

In spite of the mental conditioning, the cheerful robots have a choice, in the sense that their ability for reasoning is not forcefully suppressed. If a cheerful robot wakes up from a programmed slumber, he/she is not going to be eliminated on the grounds of a newly acquired awareness about the quality of her existence. She will, perhaps, go through a period of struggle, but she has a fair chance of being heard and influencing others, to be followed and fight together if needed. In other words, cheerful robots are not stripped of hope.

By contrast, fearful puppets are not only programmed mentally, but also have their hands and feet tied to the strings. Their ability for free reasoning can be not only suppressed, but totally destroyed, by fear. A constant painful pulling at the extremities is a continuous reinforcement of their mental coding. If someone in such a state of being manages to break free (it is amazing some actually do), they cannot do much as only, let's say, scream in desperation – which would only



result in them being tied up more firmly. This is life in totalitarian societies – modern Russia is still one of them.

A quick Google search supplied me with an update to illustrate the current situation in Russia, supporting the above claim about how difficult it is, in a totalitarian society, for the people to break free. Here is a snapshot from one of the articles:

### THE MOSCOW TIMES (Sep, 2015), Victor Davidoff

A comparison of the most recent list with previous versions shows some disturbing trends. In less than a year the number of political prisoners has doubled, and since March the repressions have intensified. Every month 12 people are charged with political crimes. And the sentences are growing harsher: In March the average sentence was five years, seven months, but now it's six years and two months.

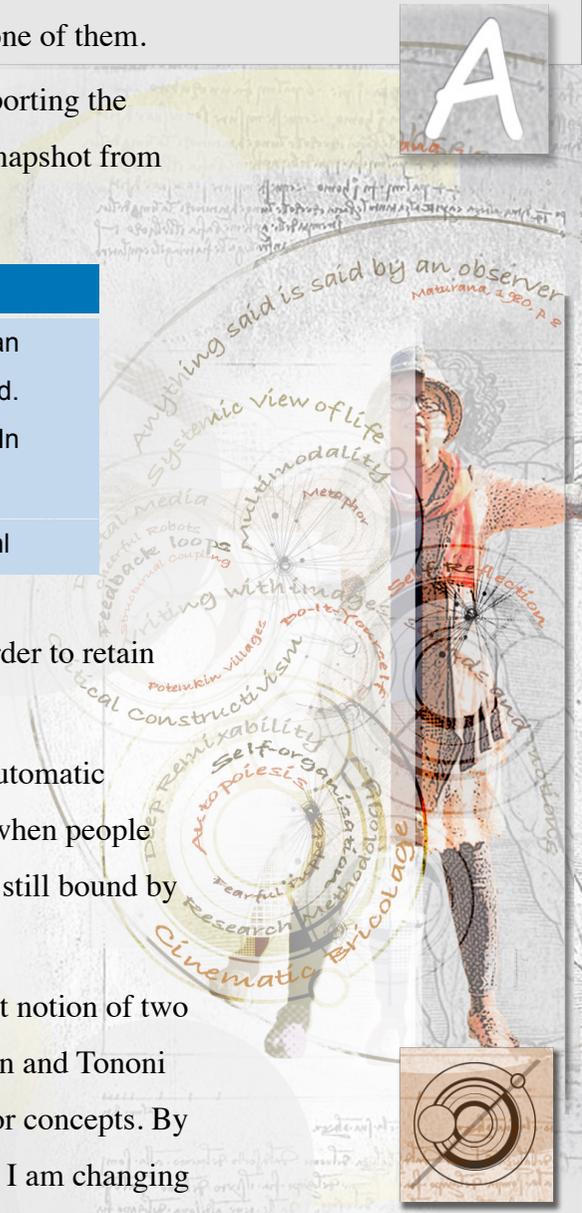
<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-has-political-prisoner-deja-vu-op-ed/529897.html>

This is just one paragraph, but it illustrates clearly that in a society of fearful puppets it is much harder to retain individual integrity.

Here is also a screenshot from a recent Facebook discussion between two of my Russian friends (automatic English translations are underlined), in which the comments reflect my point. Even now in the time when people have the Internet and cable TV, they are still afraid to accept the freedom of consciousness. They are still bound by their hands and feet.

The analogies of cheerful robots versus fearful puppets in this study are embodiments of an abstract notion of two different cultural forces that shape peoples' consciousness in certain ways. They reflect what Edelman and Tononi (2013) (see chapter two) identify as a qualia mental state that people construct in relation to objects or concepts. By portraying my state of mind or emotioning, as Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2012) say, (see page 28) I am changing the languaging to express the qualia. For example, an ignorantly confident cheerful robot's greeting comes from

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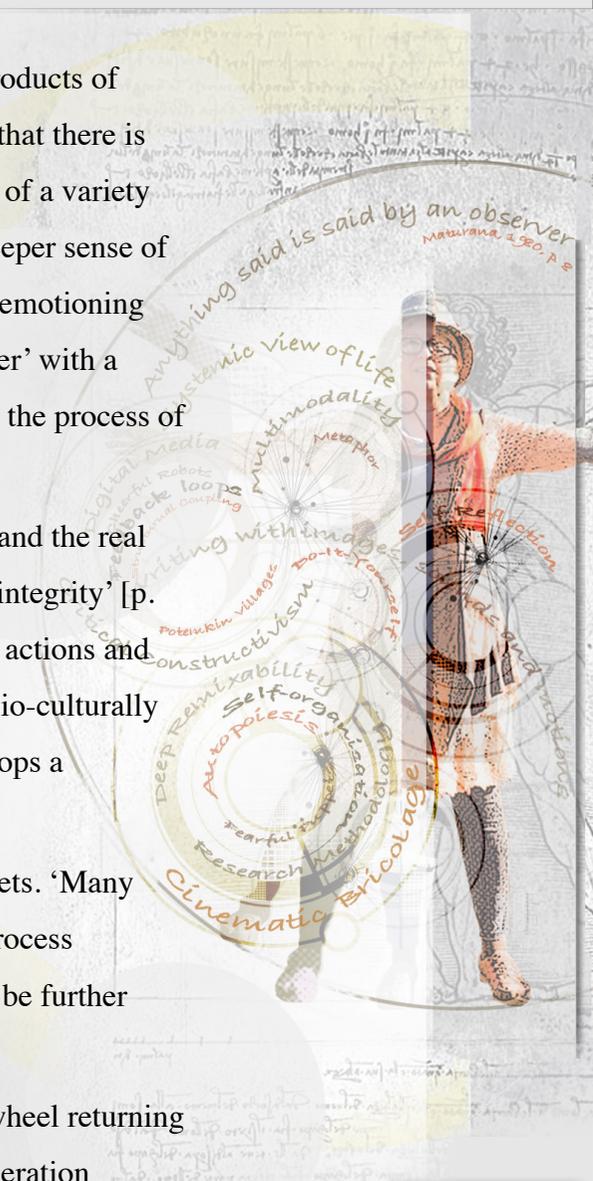
a solidly-built, cute and shiny figure, as opposed to loosely assembled fearful puppets, whose jerky movements signify tension between the desire to move freely and being attached to strings.

Cheerful robots and fearful puppets are the characters that encapsulate the qualia of the final by-products of two types of modern societal conditioning. Having them expressed in those two characters, I imply that there is a unique individual hidden inside each of them. The assumption of this study is that through the use of a variety of digital representational modalities in self-reflecting bricolage, an individual can regain a much deeper sense of the self, their relation to others and the world. This is because, as I argue, a personal engagement in emotioning through a range of digital modalities that help an individual to see, hear, feel differently and to 'tinker' with a constellation of symbolic embodiments, widen the scope of systemic/analogical thinking and enrich the process of languaging, not according to cultural conditioning but to individual qualia.

Fromm (2013) argues that the development of 'genuine individuality' starts from a very early age and the real aim of education is 'to further the inner independence and individuality of the child, its growth and integrity' [p. 241]. However, Fromm continues, education often suppresses individual spontaneity and individual actions and replaces them with 'superimposed' patterns for learning [p. 241]. That is how the child becomes socio-culturally conditioned, as she learns to experience thoughts, feelings and emotions that are not 'her' and develops a customary set of cognitive and behavioural responses that work 'like an electric switch' [p. 242].

Socio-cultural conditioning is an engine in the process that forms cheerful robots and fearful puppets. 'Many social psychological analysts believe that one of the most important features of the human mental process involves its capacity for self-awareness' [Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, loc 228]. Such capacity can be further developed through self-reflection by the application of cinematic bricolage.

I see the value of this kind of involvement to be found in what McLuhan (1962) referred to as 'a wheel returning to an organic form' [loc. 2045]. That is when the technology opens the possibility of knowledge generation



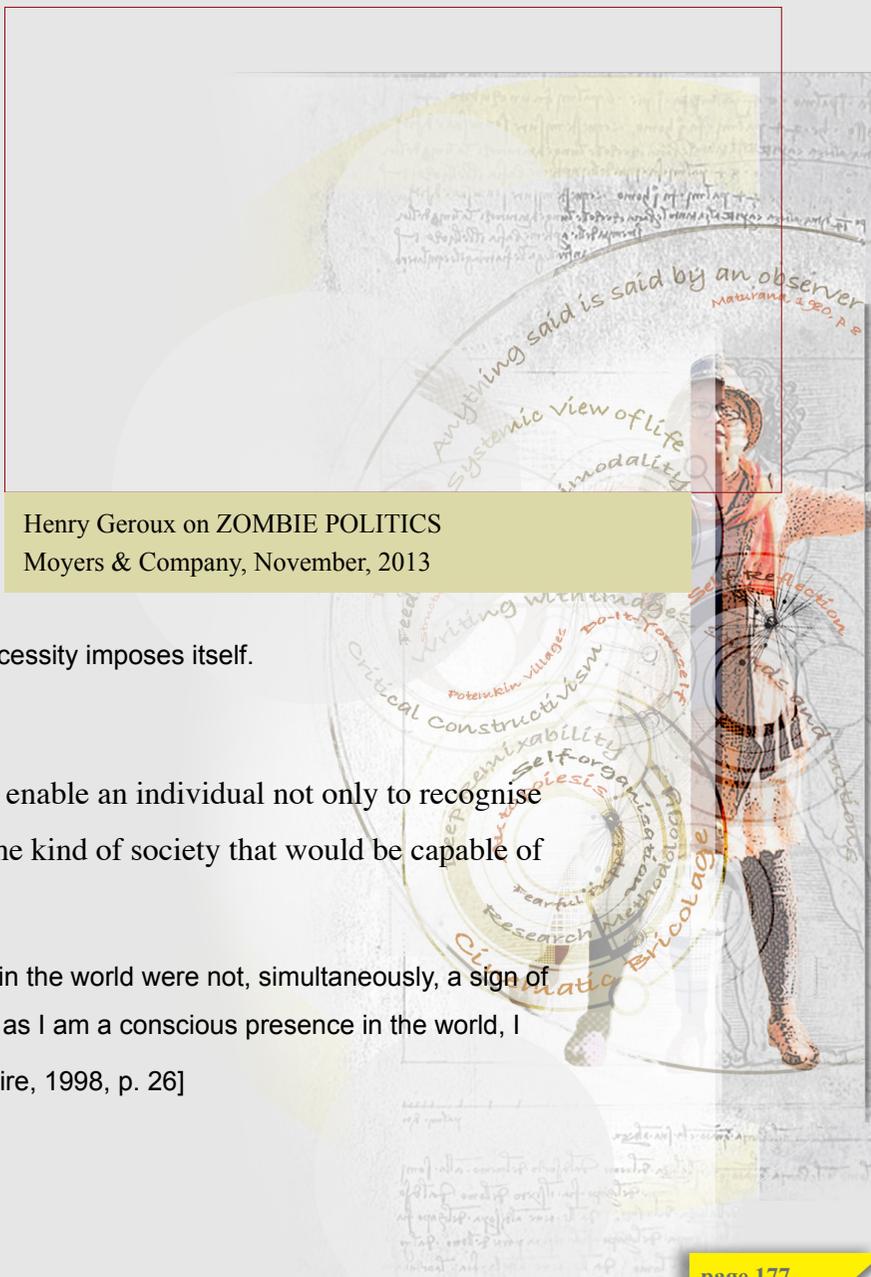
through application of inherently present characteristics in each individual as something elementary, exceptional and inventive. This is when the individual reveals her 'presence' to herself and to the world.

This kind of 'presence' is described by Paulo Freire (1998) as:

[...] a 'presence' that is relational to the world and to others. A 'presence' that, in recognising another 'presence' as 'not I', recognises its own self. A 'presence' that can reflect upon itself, that knows itself as presence, that can intervene, can transform, can speak of what it does, [...] but that can also take stock of, compare, evaluate, give value to, decide, break with, and dream. It is the area of decision, evaluation, freedom, breaking with, option, that the ethical necessity imposes itself. [p. 25]

Awareness of such 'a presence' allows the development of the qualities that enable an individual not only to recognise all sorts of robot/puppet traps, but to also grow responsible for constructing the kind of society that would be capable of avoiding having them in the first place:

[...] it would be incomprehensible if the awareness that I have of my presence in the world were not, simultaneously, a sign of the impossibility of my absence from the construction of that presence. Insofar as I am a conscious presence in the world, I cannot hope to escape my ethical responsibility for my action in the world. [Freire, 1998, p. 26]



Henry Geroux on ZOMBIE POLITICS  
Moyers & Company, November, 2013

As Geroux states in the video on this page, we need to develop a sense of ethical responsibility, to become ‘moral and political agents’ for the world we live in.

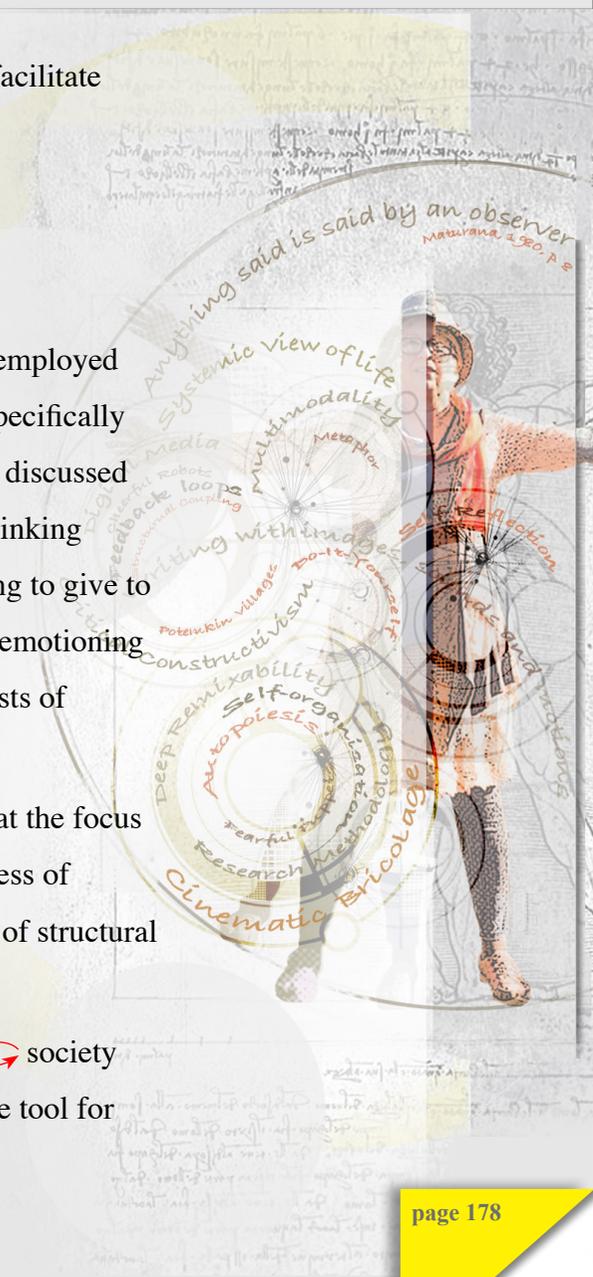
With this study, I look at cinematic bricolage as a viable approach to self-reflective activities that facilitate awareness of individual self, thus empowering individual agency for political and moral actions.

### 5.3 Convergence Points

In this chapter, I finalised the theoretical framework for cinematic self-reflective bricolage as it is employed in this study. This theoretical platform is built on the principles of the constructivist paradigm and specifically bricolaging together such branches of constructivism as cybernetic and critical constructivism. Also discussed in this chapter are some of the ways that engagement in multimodal representations can influence thinking processes based on the cybernetic-constructivist approach of emotioning ↔ languaging. Attempting to give to a qualia – a certain state of mind developed in relation to an object or concept – an embodied form, emotioning gives rise to a new way of languaging. Emotioning ↔ languaging is a recursive process that consists of structural coupling and self-feedback loops.

In finalising theoretical perspectives for the self-reflective cinematic bricolage, it was identified that the focus of this approach is directed toward observing the mind ↔ digital media intermesh during the process of meaning making. It is done by means of the cybernetic-constructivism rational, namely, application of structural coupling in striving for novel ways of expressions.

Critical constructivism here provides a context for the study, targeting the area of an individual ↔ society relationship. Within this target, cinematic bricolage is spotlighted as a self-reflection and an effective tool for raising self-awareness and establishing a personal civic position.



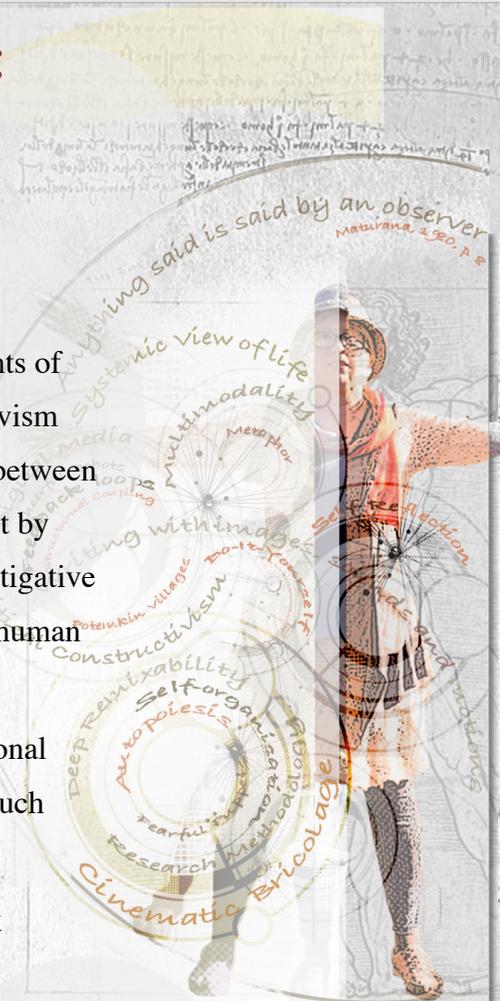
## Emotioning ↔ Languaging through Digital Media: Digital Representation

### Introduction: 'What is it made of?' and 'What is the Pattern?'

The previous chapter constructed a theoretical framework for this thesis. It identified conceptual key points of cinematic bricolage and their specifics in underpinning this study. It was established that critical constructivism provides a base structure for this study to be built on, the focus of which is being adjusted at the interplay between individual experience and the larger social-historical context. This knowledge-generation task is carried out by means of cinematic bricolage, thus it becomes a methodology for meaning construction as well as an investigative field within which the experience of meaning production is observed. The phenomenon under study is the human ↔ digital logic intermesh that is observed during the act of representing social ↔ individual interplay.

This chapter focuses on the ontology of digital media and how these ontological aspects provide a functional platform for human ↔ digital meaning making, which in the cinematic bricolage is manifested through such principles as using the tools and concepts that are at hand in a remix and do-it-yourself approach.

The chapter discusses digital tools at hand for implementation in research activities. It draws on the work of such scholars as Chesher (2012) and Burgess (2012) and places an emphasis on mobile media, such as smartphones and iPads, as potentially viable devices for generating and storing research data. It emphasises the fact that these devices, as a rule, are personal and can be used to personalise research projects by generating a database of personal memories and representations of individual identity. Being self-contained devices, they also serve as collections of literature resources.



By virtue of their mobility, these devices provide us with the opportunity for constant thought extension through either reading and taking notes and shots, as well as recording audio or video fragments. The thought is further extended by sophisticated manipulations in the digital domain. This chapter looks at how this is achieved through the use of algorithm and data structure.

Drawing on Manovich's widely acclaimed (2002, 2013) theoretical work in the field of digital media, this chapter examines the relationship between two cultural forms of expression: database and narrative. This chapter argues that in the construction of cinematic bricolage, two systems of representation have an interdependent association. According to Hayles (2012), database and narrative are 'natural symbionts' [p. 175]. The rest of the chapter looks at this relationship from the perspective of material locks of digital media and layered representational production. Understanding this interplay by viewing them as natural symbionts, allows the development of deeper insight into the process of meaning making with digital media.

To investigate the issue, this chapter further capitalises on Manovich's (2002a) concept of five principles of digital media: numerical representation, automation, modularity, variability and transcoding. These five categories are the cogs in the digital media mechanism that propel remix; they grow into cultural fabric, changing the patterns of production and representational constructions. Considering these five aspects of digital media and their 'networking' with layered systems of representation, leads to a synthesis of database and narrative associations in the process of meaning embodiment.

Two questions borrowed from Capra and Luisi (2014) about the study of matter, 'What is it made of?', and the study of form, 'What is the pattern?' [p. 4], are integrated into the discussion. The aspects of the database are explored to answer the question about their materiality and the steps of the process are investigated as patterns. The visualisation of the layered production with its stacking order and database/narrative interplay helps gain further insight into the digital process of meaning making.



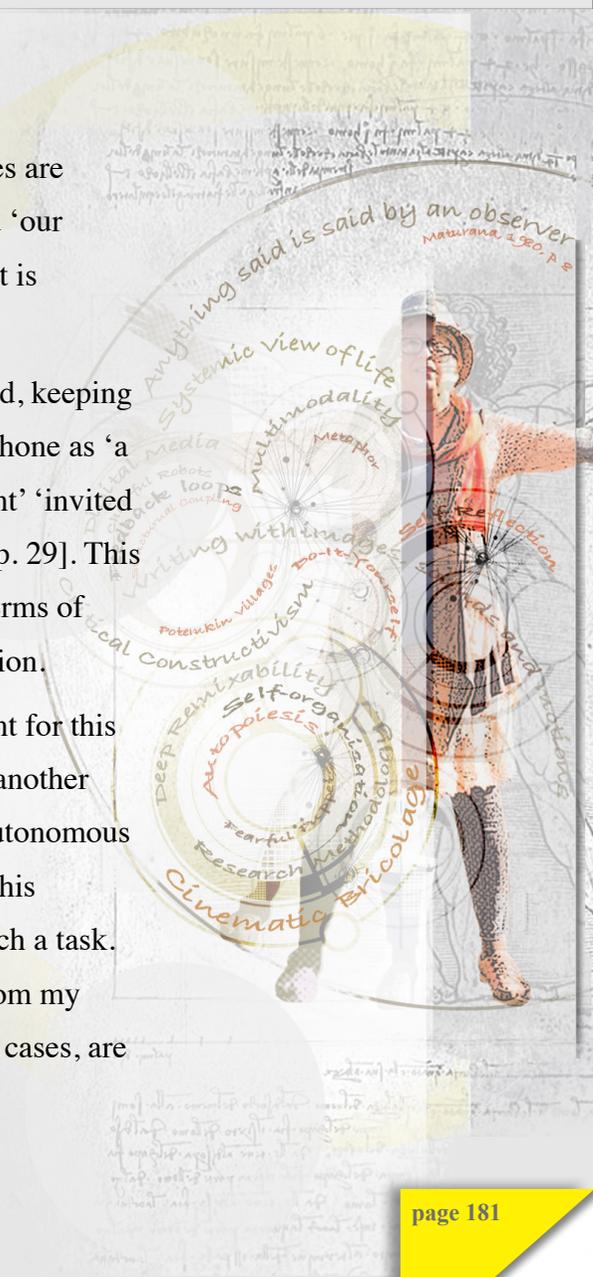
## 6.1 Making Meaning in the Digital Age

### 6.1.1 Digital Tools 'At Hand'

Out of all digital tools that people use in their daily life in our contemporary society, mobile phones are perhaps most common. They are, in McLuhan's (1964) sense, extensions of our physical bodies and 'our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned' [p. 16].

It is hard to find a person at any time of the day who is not holding their mobile phone in their hand, keeping it in their pocket, having in a bag or lying nearby on a table or desk. Burgess (2012) positions the iPhone as 'a moment in the history of cultural technologies' [p. 28]. She further observes that the iPhone 'moment' 'invited us, as users, to be repositioned in relation to the technologies we integrate into our everyday lives' [p. 29]. This repositioning, I believe, is concerned with how we see ourselves situated in the world, not only in terms of space, but also how we feel about our perpetual inter-wovenness into the social web of communication.

This is a topic which I mention in passing, not to elaborate on, but to emphasise the point important for this study. The realisation of having such a perpetual dependence on the social web – that I may be just another link, or cog, tightly woven into the web – provoked in me the desire to resist this, and be my own autonomous system interacting 'with' it, rather than 'within' it. Naturally, it came from the underlying theme of this study, which is to promote an individuality and seeing digital tools as an apt vehicle in achieving such a task. From this perspective and in relation to this study, I saw my iPhone as a device to gather the data from my personal experiences and my own reality. Chesher (2012) argues that mobile phone images, in most cases, are representations of individuals.



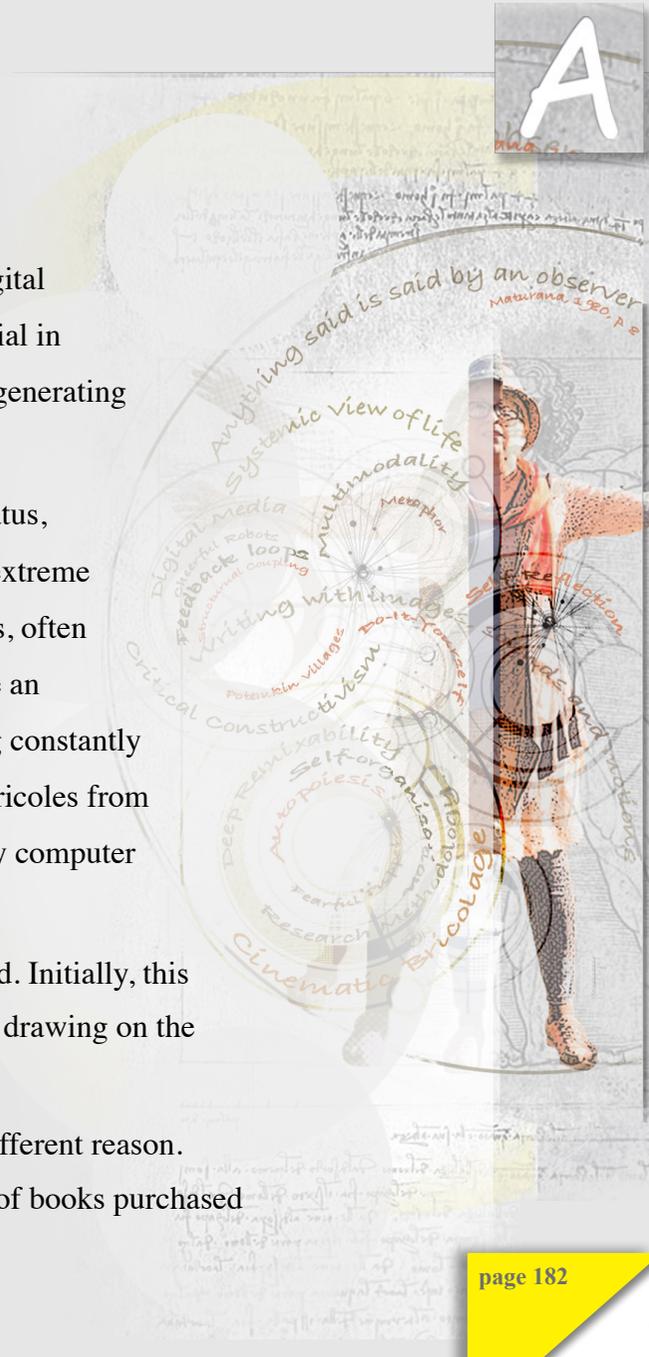
Phones typically (but not always) belong to a single person; therefore, the images that accumulate in the camera relate directly with that one user's everyday point of view and experience. With internal storage, the phone itself became a personal image collection, implicated in mediating the user's sense of identity. [p.106]

In this study I promote learning by personalised knowledge-production tasks by means of digital media. From this perspective, I consider the mobile phone to be a device of exceptional potential in seeing and recording life from the individual perspective and in providing the opportunity for generating a mobile archive of recorded memories that represent personal identity.

The mobile phone as Chesher puts it 'became a self-contained simple mobile imaging apparatus, constantly at hand and largely self-contained' [p. 106]. Burgess observes the mobile phone's 'extreme usability – where a technology affords easy access to a pre-determined set of simple operations, often via intuitive, “friendly” interfaces' [p. 30]. Other essential features that make the mobile phone an indispensable device in generating a database of personal research are: self-containment, being constantly at hand and its extreme usability. In this study, I use my iPhone regularly for generating data bricoles from my daily life experiences in the form of photographs, videos, recording working 'bits' from my computer screen and YouTube.

Another digital media device that is used regularly and extensively for this research is an iPad. Initially, this was considered as a mobile sketching device. However, after running a pilot probe, the idea of drawing on the iPad was dismissed due to its stylus imprecision and some other technical inconveniences.

Nevertheless, the iPad is employed in this study to the same extent as the iPhone, but for a different reason. The iPad is my mobile Kindle library and store. I find it amazing to have the whole collection of books purchased



from Kindle and articles collected from the internet hanging on my shoulder and I do not even feel its supposedly substantial weight. No matter where I go, it is always with me. If there are a few spare minutes when I have to wait for something, and when time would otherwise be lost, I can open the library and start reading where I left off, memorise an important phrase, read again what I did not understand well on first reading and so on. I can buy a new book at any place and time and usually for a cheaper price than its hard-copy version.

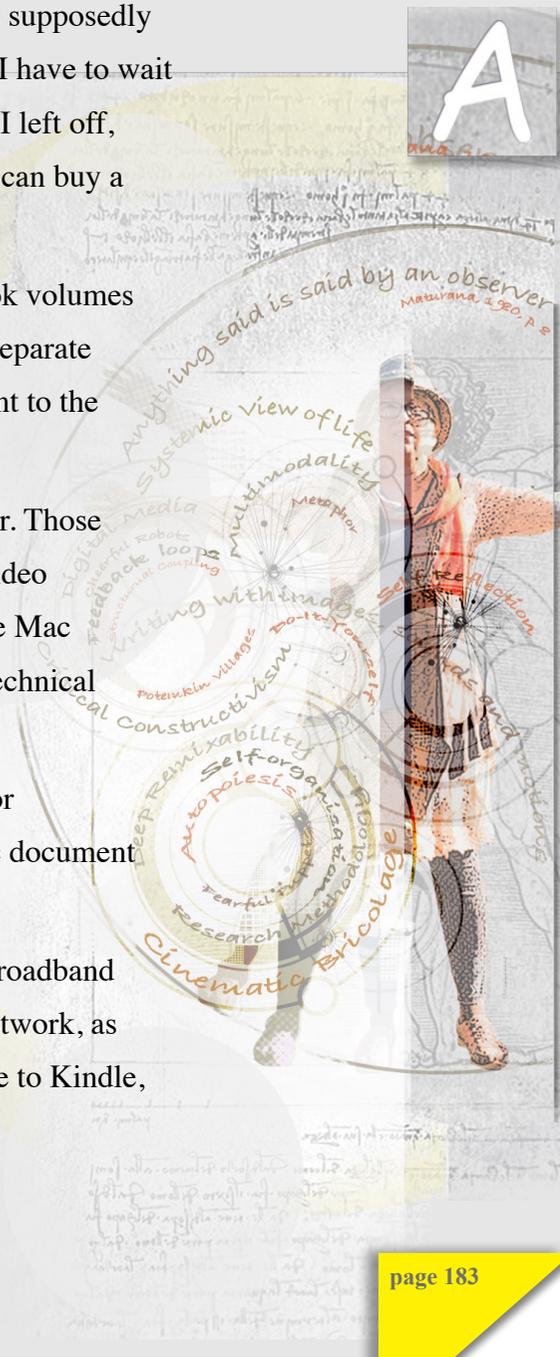
There is another Amazon.com feature that I find useful for research purposes: the availability of book volumes that hold collections of related academic articles. In other words, I do not need to search for a single separate article in a library database but can buy a book that contains an assemblage of selected articles relevant to the topic of my interest under one 'cover'.

In my home office, I work with stationary equipment: a computer, Wacom tablet, scanner and printer. Those are the digital tools I use to convert the gathered data into applicable formats, generate images, edit video and audio files, and write and assemble my multimodal document. To make them workable, my Apple Mac is equipped with online *Adobe Creative Cloud* platform that supplies me with updated software and technical support when needed (but not as much as I would like).

In this study, I place emphasis on the potential of the *Adobe Creative Cloud* to become a platform for gathering, organising and analysing research data; likewise assembling a thesis or any other academic document in either EPUB or a website format.

Living in a rural area, I had a difficult time before our property became connected to the National Broadband Network. My struggle prior to this connection provided me with an appreciation for the broadband network, as my production and delivery of material was dependent on the internet. Without the internet linking me to Kindle, YouTube, Google, *Adobe Creative Cloud* and Facebook, this research would not have been possible.

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## 6.1.2 Extending the Mind through Algorithms and Data Structures

Welcome to the world of permanent change – the world that is now defined not by heavy industrial machines that change infrequently, but by software that is always in flux ...

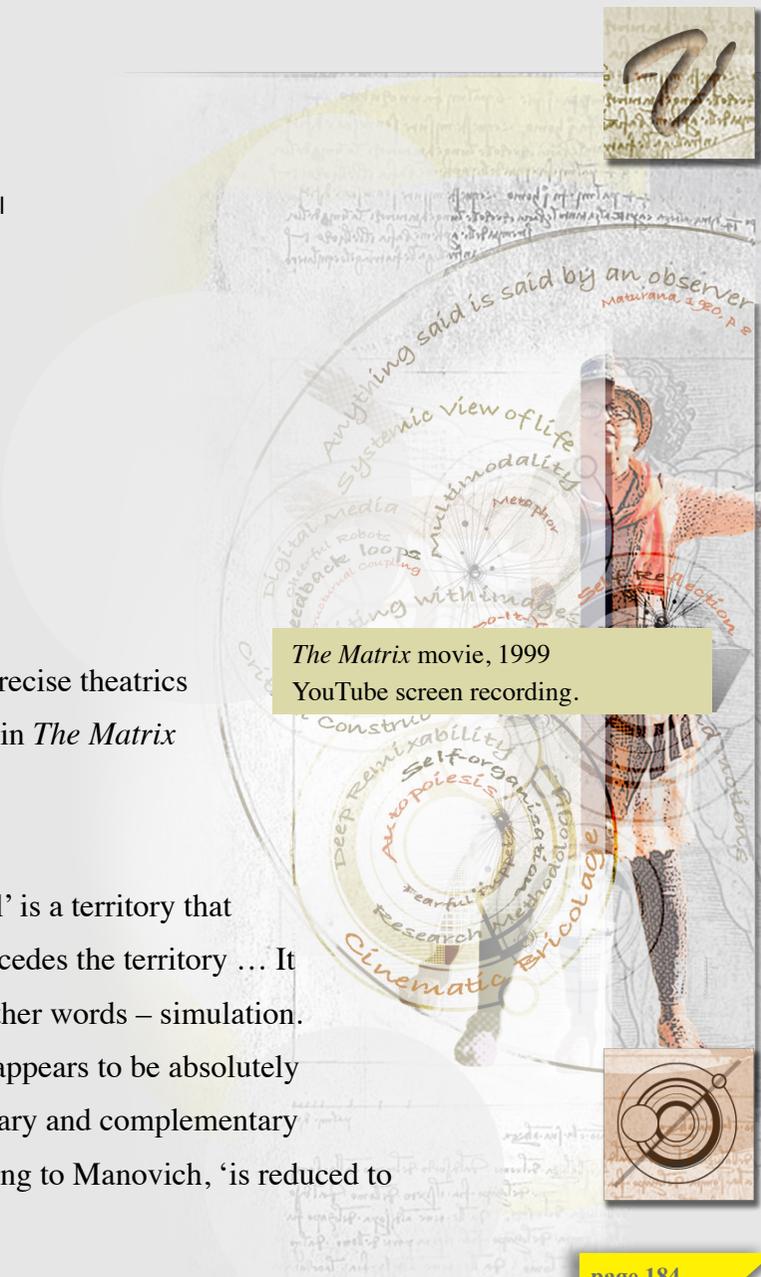
Software has become our interface to the world, to others, to our memory and our imagination – a universal language through which the world speaks, and a universal engine on which the world runs. What electricity and the combustion engine were to the early twentieth century, software is to the early twenty-first century.

[Manovich, 2013, loc. 133, 149]

The above quotation can provoke mixed feelings. Entering a new world is always intriguing, but because Manovich makes it sound so theatrically zestful, that precise theatrics conveys an air of caution. It is reminiscent of a comment from Morpheus, a character in *The Matrix* movie (1999):

‘Welcome to the desert of the real’.

According to Baudrillard (1981), the originator of the concept, ‘the desert of the real’ is a territory that ‘no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless that map that precedes the territory ... It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal’ (p. 2). In other words – simulation. That is to say, something that is put together without any components of the real, but appears to be absolutely real. This is the world of software where the latter reduces the former to their elementary and complementary parts – data structure and algorithms [Manovich, 2002a, p. 222]. Any process, according to Manovich, ‘is reduced to

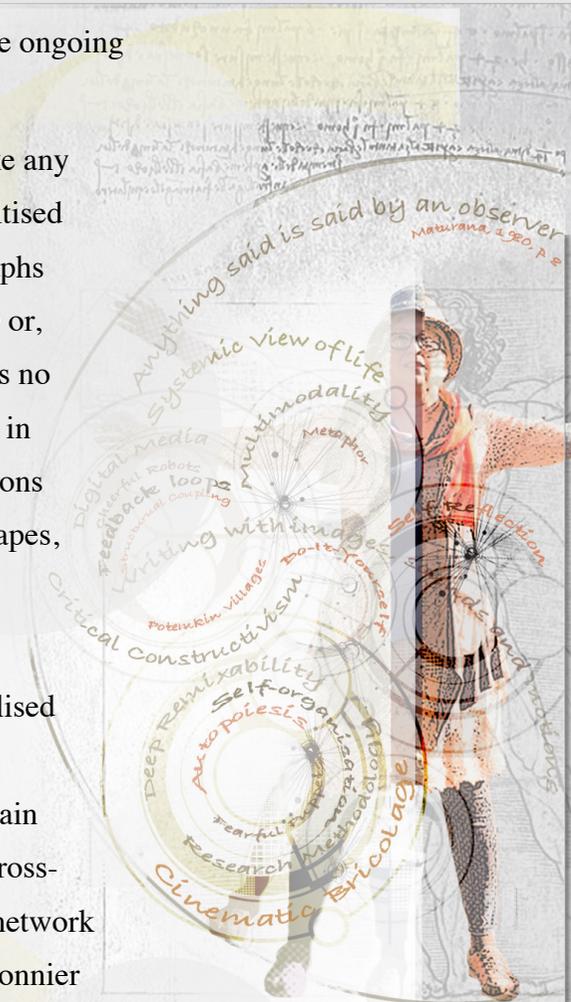


The Matrix movie, 1999  
YouTube screen recording.

an algorithm' and any object 'is modelled as a data structure' [p. 222]. The algorithms and data structure are two fundamentals of the ontology of the world that is set in a state of continuous fluctuation caused by the ongoing evolution of software [Manovich, 2002a, p. 223].

Seen from the binary instrumentality of algorithms and a data structure point of view, this thesis like any other digital document, is the 'desert of the real', a simulation where thoughts are embodied into digitised symbols that are run and organised by algorithms into specific configurations of data. Here, photographs are scanned and translated into numerical representations and each line or shape drawn in *Photoshop* or, if generated in *Illustrator*, is composed of digital pixels or vector codes. Inside this document, there is no such thing as material presented either by biological elements, produced chemically or demonstrated in any physical form, that is likely to be touched, smelt or tasted. There are only mathematical descriptions manipulated by appropriate sets of sequential steps – algorithms. Any physical modalities such as shapes, spaces, movements or sounds are simulations. On the other hand, thoughts are not.

Thoughts, in a digital multimodal document, are given a body by means of physically simulated properties: width, length, sound waves, time, distance, colour and transparency. They can be materialised through sounds, movements, interactive features, images and alphabetic text. In this case, digital externalisation of a thought through the simulation of physical qualities causes expansion in the domain of representation which motivates the origination of primary metaphors. Metaphors constructed by cross-modal mechanisms, in turn provoke a wider range of conceptual blending that 'choreographs a vast network of conceptual meaning, yielding cognitive products that, at the conscious level, appear simple' [Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, loc. 34]. Fauconnier and Turner suggest that behind every thought lies a complex conceptual blending that gives rise to a new meaning. Describing a thought, the authors make the analogy of looking at a spectacular tree while not noticing the forest behind it [loc. 34].

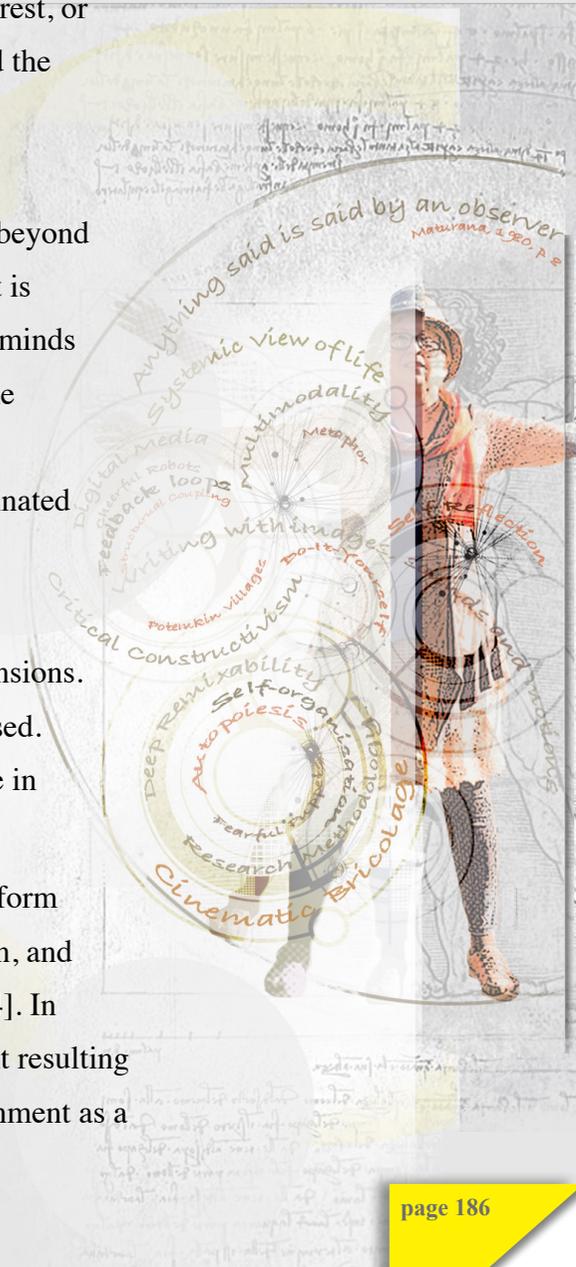


My assumption is that the digital simulation (desert) of the real as used in cinematic bricolage allows us to compose the forest behind the thought. The thought can be expressed in alphabetic writing but the forest, or what I referred to in chapter three as atmospheric presence, gives a glimpse of an entire forest behind the tree(s).

The importance of seeing the whole forest behind one tree (a thought) is, in my view, a response to Vygotsky's (1934) recommendation to probe 'deeper in explore(ing) the plane of inner speech lying beyond the semantic plane' [p. 237]. In extending and transcribing thoughts into simulated representations, it is perhaps also useful to remember McLuhan's (1964) advice not to become 'a closed system', as he reminds us through the story of Narcissus [loc. 649]. Narcissus, according to McLuhan, was not aware that the image he was looking at was the reflection of himself. The reflection 'numbed his perceptions' until Narcissus 'became the servomechanism of his own extended [...] image', so 'men [...] become fascinated by any extension of themselves in any material other than themselves' [loc. 649].

The wisdom of the myth, it appears to me, lies in the fact that without exploring what is behind an embodied meaning, there is a risk of people falling into servomechanisms of their own material extensions. This is especially important as digital tools and digital spaces in modern life become more personalised. Through the internet and social media we extend our embodied minds further than ever before, while in terms of physical reality we are at risk of becoming 'closed systems'.

Capra and Luisi (2014) state that the study of matter asks, 'What is it made of?' while the study of form ('systems thinking') asks, 'What is the pattern?'. 'And that leads to the notions of order, organisation, and relationships. Instead of quantity, it involves quality; instead of measuring, it involves mapping' [p. 4]. In other words, systemic thinking instructs us to investigate the thought not as one isolated natural event resulting in the tree (as a closed system), but in its totality; that is, the ways in which the forest and the environment as a whole facilitate the emergence, existence or structure of that tree.

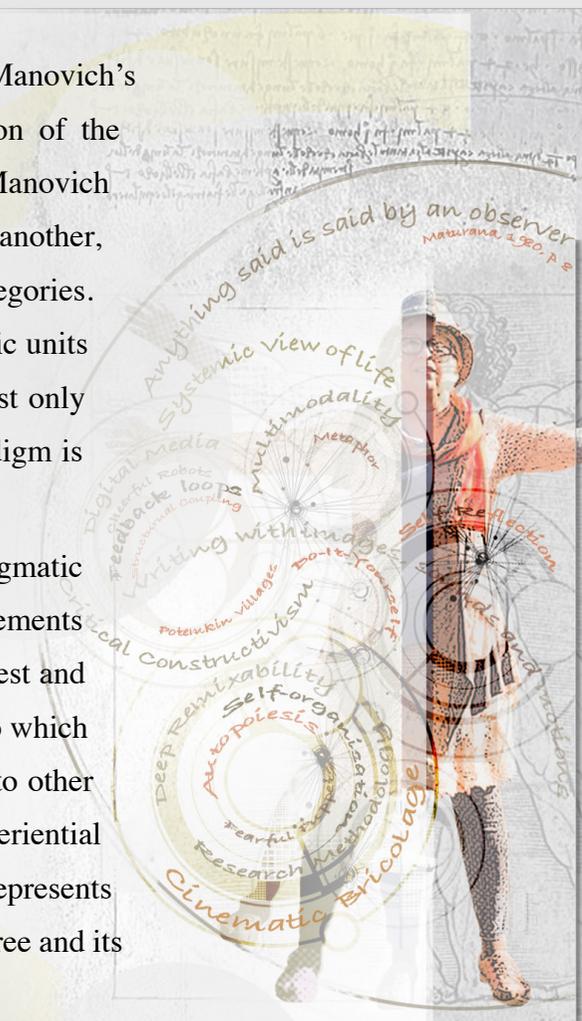


### 6.1.3 Narrative and Database

To understand how cinematic bricolage relates to the analogy of the tree and forest, I draw from Manovich's (2002) theory of database/narrative opposition [p. 225]. I first start with Manovich's discussion of the semiological theory of syntagm and paradigm [p. 229]. To articulate the syntagmatic dimension, Manovich gives an example of the speaker producing 'an utterance by stringing together elements, one after another, in a linear sequence' [p. 230]. The paradigmatic dimension is explained as a set(s) of related categories. 'All nouns can be one set; all synonyms of a particular word form another set' [p. 230]. Syntagmatic units are evident through the modes of representations, either speech or writing. Paradigmatic units exist only as abstract categories that facilitate a system of operation. Therefore, syntagm is explicit and paradigm is implicit [p. 230].

In relation to Fauconier and Turner's analogy mentioned earlier, the tree signifies a syntagmatic dimension. In the same way that 'the utterance' consists of a sequential order of evident material elements such as sounds, words and sentences, the tree consists of roots, branches, leaves and so on. The forest and environment in which the tree grows, together represent a matrix, a pattern of different categories to which the tree relates, the climate zone, its positioning in relation to a landscape, its location in relation to other vegetation in the forest, and the tree family. The tree together with its immediate locality is the experiential field that is extracted from the matrix of its existence and available to an observer for analysis. It represents the paradigmatic dimension because what is investigated here are patterns of relations between the tree and its living conditions.

The syntagmatic dimension, borrowing from Capra and Luisi (2014), can be said to be a study of matter that answers the question 'What it is made of?'. The paradigmatic dimension answers the question 'What is the



pattern?’ [p. 4], that is, ‘What is the organisation and relationship?’ . According to Manovich, ‘Database (the paradigm) is given material existence, while narrative (the syntagm) is dematerialised’ [p. 230]. The investigative field of this study consists of cinematic bricolages positioned on the pages of the digital thesis. Cinematic text on a single multimodal page of the thesis can be taken as a single investigative unit of the study. It is composed of a gestalt of digitised bricoles that are the elements taken from various electronic databases.

The table below illustrates the categorisation of the database and narrative elements and their vividness of expression within the study.

DATABASE DIMENSION (explicit) MATERIAL ELEMENTS – their study answers the question ‘What are they made of?’				NARRATIVE DIMENSION (implicit/explicit) THE WAYS of ORGANISING THE MATERIAL ELEMENTS – Their study answers the question ‘What are the patterns and relations?’		
Writing	Images	Sounds	Movements			
Citations Alphabetic text	Personal photos	Mobile sound recordings	Mobile video recordings	Space/time organisation of database elements through composing a gestalt of modes and elements in making and projecting meaning (implicit)	Process (implicit)	
	Internet stock images	Internet stock sounds	Mobile YouTube recordings		Presentation (explicit)	
	Created graphics	Pre-coded behaviours of objects	Pre-coded software operations	Pre-coded behaviours of objects	Argument developed throughout the thesis resulting from ongoing qualitative analysis of patterns that emerge from engagement with space/time organisation of database elements	Process (implicit)
					Narrative composition of the probes presented in chapters eight and nine as allegoric and (or) memory remixes	Presentation (explicit)

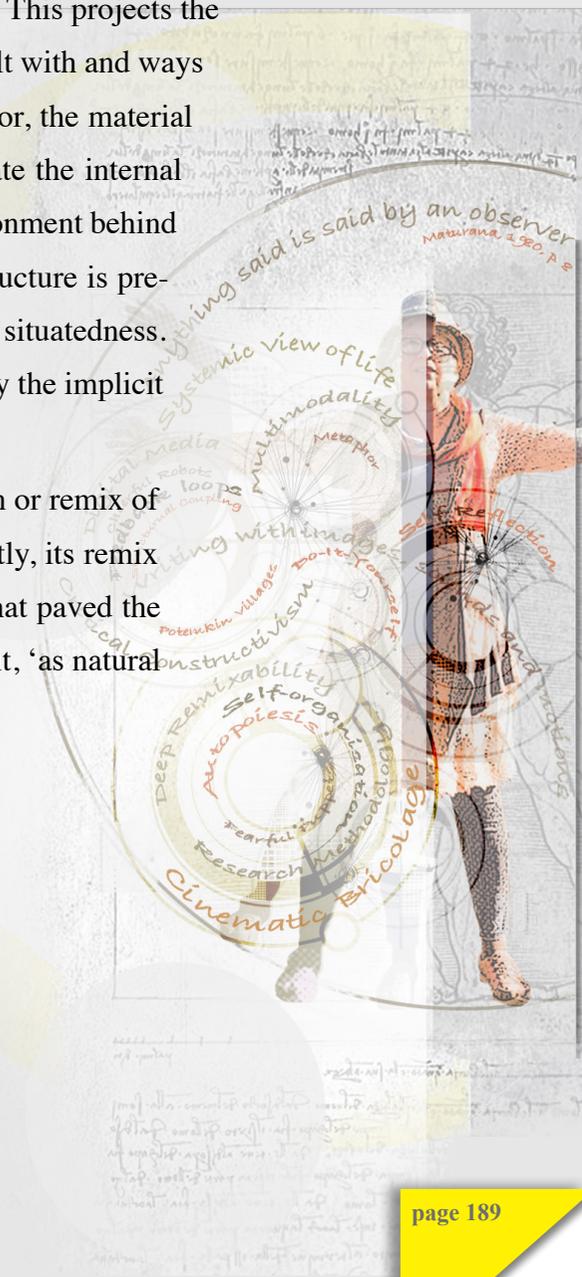
As we can see in the table, there is an obvious interplay between database and narrative elements. This projects the ontology of any construction in the sense that there are material elements that the construction is built with and ways these material elements are organised. Coming back to Fauconier and Turner's tree/forest metaphor, the material database elements can be associated with the explicitly-presented tree, while the ways that facilitate the internal structure and organisation of the elements can be the implicitly-presented forest, as well as the environment behind and around the tree. In spite of the fact that the tree has its unique and individual structure, this structure is pre-determined by the effects of the environmental development within its historical and geographical situatedness. In the same way, a meaning expressed in the digital page of cinematic bricolage is pre-determined by the implicit patterns of the text producer's socio-historical situatedness.

In cinematic bricolage, these implicit patterns are projected by a gestalt of space/time organisation or remix of representational modes and their elements. If a thought is expressed through alphabetic text explicitly, its remix with other modes (images, sounds and movements) becomes a projection of the implicit patterns that paved the way for this thought. Narrative and database are seen in cinematic bricolage, as Hayles (2012) puts it, 'as natural symbionts' [p. 175].

Hayles explains:

Because database can construct relational juxtapositions but is helpless to interpret or explain them, it needs narrative to make its results meaningful. Narrative, for its part, needs database in the computationally intensive culture of the new millennium to enhance its cultural authority and test the generality of its insights. If narrative often dissolves into database [...] database catalyses and indeed demands narrative's reappearance as soon as meaning and interpretation are required.

[p. 175]



I agree with Hayles that, as contemporary cultural mediators, the narrative and database are both important systems of communication. However, it appears that in the process of meaning construction, the boundaries between the roles of database and narrative are not clearly defined. Quite often it is hard to determine whether it was a database or narrative that mediated a certain viewpoint and whether it is narrative or database that interpreted a certain meaning better than another. Most often than not, I am inclined to think their functions are so deeply remixed that in unpacking these implicit relations we need to look at more obvious explicit associations.

For a better understanding of the relationship between narrative and database aspects of the process, I suggest to look at two types of necklaces.

- Here is a traditional approach: the string can be compared to a narrative, sequential progression, while the beads can be compared to elements of database.

In this case, the process is more contemporary. It can be compared to a digital layered production. The distinction between aspects of narrative and elements of database is difficult to identify as they are intertwined.



*Bio-organically inspired necklace, 2012*  
Author: Jillian Moore.  
Society of Contemporary Craft



*Acrylic Necklace, 2012*  
Author: Sue Gregory.  
Wearable Art Blog



## 6.2 Building Blocks of Digital Media

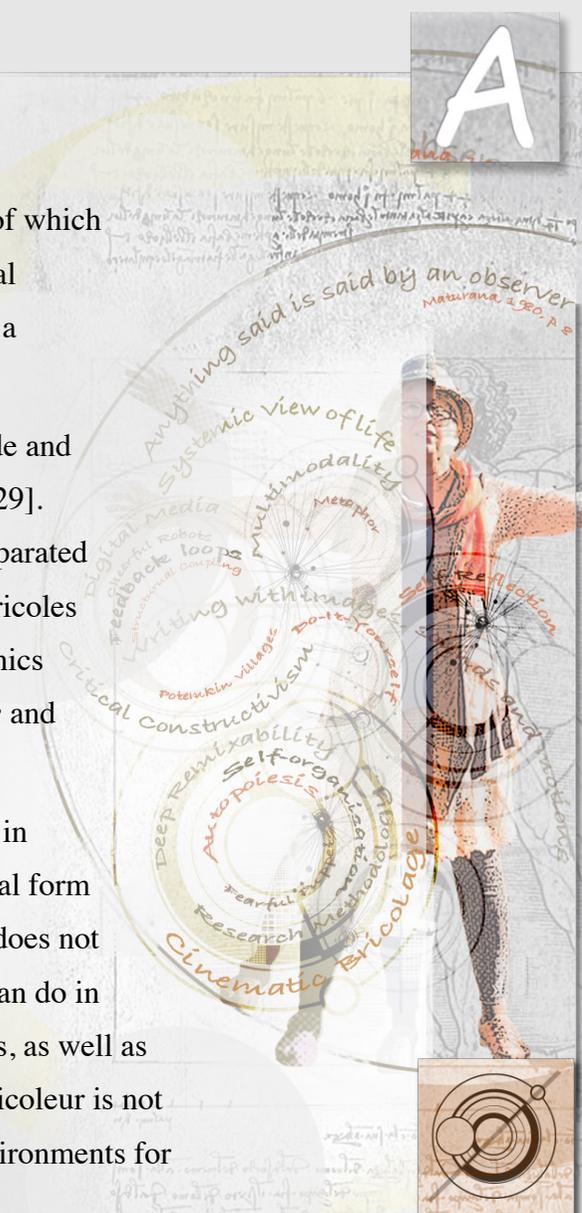
### 6.2.1 Numerical Representation

Manovich identifies (2002) five principles of digital media that are shaping the logic on the basis of which digital objects and their behaviours are constructed, manipulated and assembled. They are: numerical presentation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding. I see these five principles playing a fundamental role in cinematic bricolage assemblage.

With numerical presentation applied, analogue media is converted into discrete units of digital code and acquires a new system of semiotics, as Manovich (2002) puts it, it 'follows the logic of factory' [p. 29]. That is, the data is first described by a standardised code and second, the units of the code can be separated and recomposed. In the case of cinematic bricolage, this means that old photos and other material bricoles are either scanned or digitally photographed. Sounds and bits of videos are digitally recorded. Graphics are constructed in such applications as *Adobe Creative Cloud*, *Illustrator*, *Photoshop*, *Edge Animate* and *InDesign*. Hand drawings and sketches are also scanned.

This means that all the bricoles can be represented as separate files saved into appropriate formats in order to be compatible with other digital bricoles. All the digital bricoles are represented in numerical form whereby they are subjected to algorithmic manipulation. A cinematic bricolage producer, however, does not operate on this level. The bricoleur engages in an interplay between what she knows and what she can do in terms of operating with representational digital media and understanding how these new affordances, as well as limitations, make her think differently about the meaning she tries to express. In other words, the bricoleur is not a professional computer programmer but a user of what is already made available within digital environments for her to collect, disjoin and remix in her personal fashion, in a 'do-it-yourself' manner.

A



## 6.2.2 Automation

Automation is a principle of standard software operations. Certain algorithms assigned to certain operations allow the access and manipulation of media objects. Inside a given software environment, the media object can be manipulated only within the parameters of what it was codified to do. In other words, it can display intelligence but only in the narrow scope of its programming. Although limited by programming, automation is the principle that makes human-computer interactions possible. Automation also modifies the bedrock of the interaction between humans and the media.

On the right hand side of the page are two renderings of a ball: one was done by hand and the other computer generated with *Adobe Illustrator* software. Even without the captions it is obvious which is which.

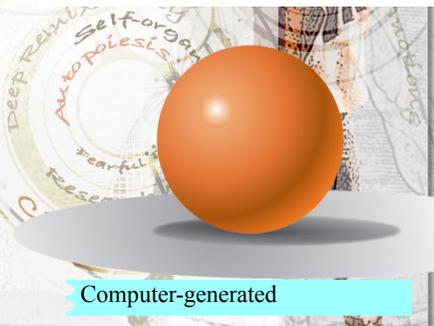
In relation to the projection of reality, the image produced by means of automation is more accurate. Its roundness is flawless, its tonal gradations from light to shadow are smooth and it was also drawn in one minute as opposed to the thirteen spent on the hand-drawn image.

In a nutshell, the computer-generated image is visually more effective, produced with less effort and in less time. However, it misses the personal touch. The absence of individual interpretation makes it flat and flavourless. The image being so perfect makes it hard to assess the artist's ability in her visual representation of reality.

Nevertheless, for many other purposes, automation opens up new possibilities to explore the spatial and qualitative relationships of represented objects. By providing easy production, even for a person without any natural ability for drawing, and freeing her time, automation removes the hurdles of the primary task and opens up possibilities for different types of representational manipulation.



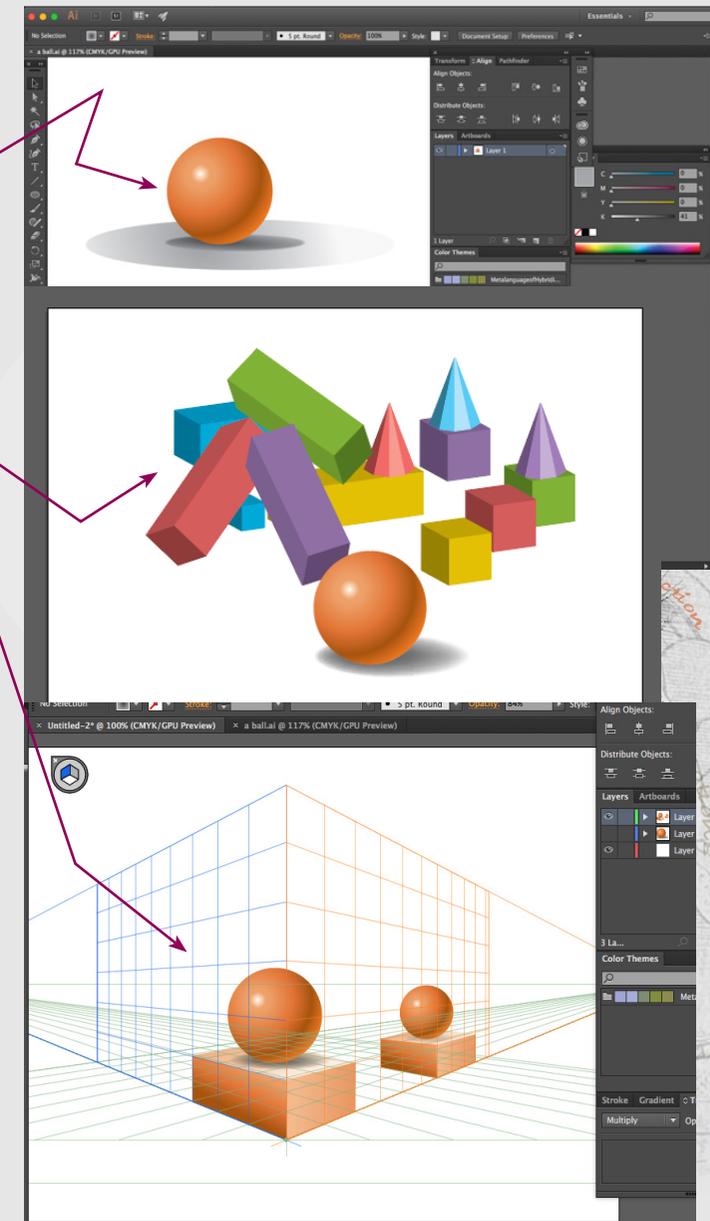
Hand-drawn



Computer-generated

For example, looking at *Adobe Illustrator's* interface, on the drawing area we see the generated image of the ball from the previous page. *Adobe Illustrator* is a vector-graphic program, which means that each object can be selected and manipulated in ways separate to other objects on the drawing surface. Let us assume that a teacher-researcher is writing a scholarly paper on how to teach students about forms. She can generate and copy/paste different kinds of 3-D forms in Illustrator, move them around and explore their similarities and differences in relation to each other. To examine the principles of visual illusion, the teacher-researcher can use *Illustrator's* easy construction of perspective and place the generated objects within it. In a way, the teacher-researcher here adopts a bricoleur's approach. She uses the tools and media objects at hand already available inside the representational software that can be seen as a 'bricolage studio'. The studio has collections of all sorts of bricoles: pre-coded shapes, brushes, strokes, patterns, operations, effects and so on. The software is also conducive to the addition of new sets of more personal bricoles. By virtue of numerical representation, the teacher-researcher can disjoin the computer-generated as well as personal bricoles, remix their elements and mix them with other representational modes in a 'do-it-yourself' way. As a software user, the bricoleur manipulates ready-made bricoles, remixing them with her personal bricoles; she constructs new meaning and acquires a sense of ownership of newly-emerged presentations and ideations.

The footnote in Lévi Strauss' (1962) book says: 'The 'bricoleur has no precise equivalent in English. He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a Jack of all trades or kind of professional do-it-yourself man' (p.11).

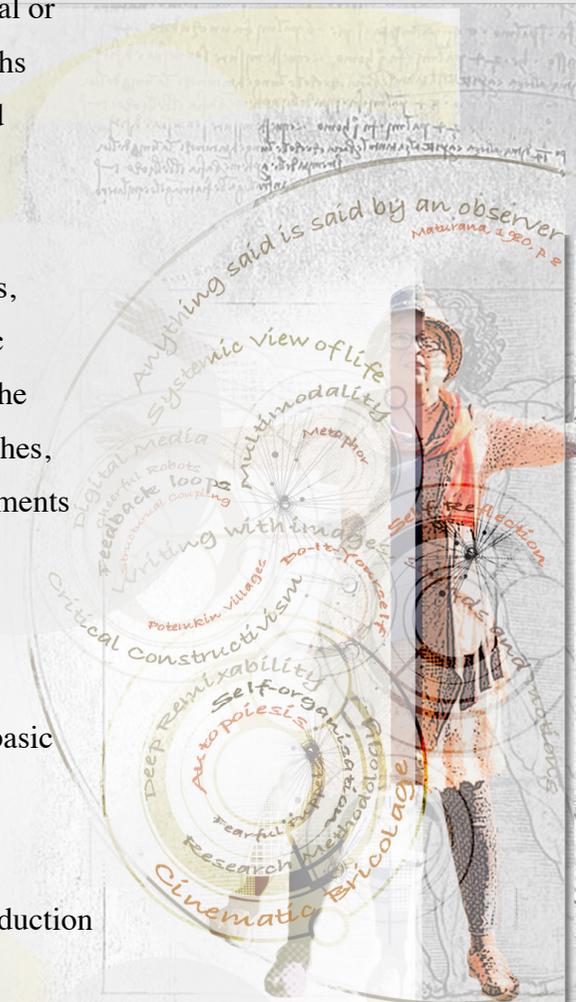


In other words, automation allows a teacher-researcher, a classroom teacher, as well as a student-researcher to avoid the anxiety of having ‘no talent’ when creating representations in either visual, sound/musical or movement form. Easily-manageable, automatic acquiring of basic multimodal representations smooths the path to more sophisticated cognitive operations in the explorations of patterns of associations and constructions of new meaning.

Automation can also aptly serve metaphorical formations. A social researcher can benefit from the easy remix of bricoles between the domains of associations and representations. Such social concepts, for example, as transparency of management, saturation of phobias, racial differences, individualistic self-expression and contrast of opinions, can be discussed by means of metaphorical logic and with the employment of automated software functions in manipulating shapes, colours, patterns, strokes, brushes, sounds, movements and combined effects. Such easy manipulation and remix of representational elements and formats, facilitated by automatic functions of digital media, promotes ‘individual customisation, rather than mass standardisation’ of research [Manovich, 2002a, p. 29].

The three aspects of automation described above are:

- no requirement for special professional skills or talent but do-it-yourself principle in generating basic representations;
- friendly, manageable remix between elements and modes in construction of metaphors;
- comfortable manipulation and remix of elements and modes in personalisation of knowledge production – constitute a basic framework for the development of the argument in this study.



### 6.2.3 Modularity

According to Manovich, modularity is analogous to irregular self-similar fractals which when combined, represent a larger construction. In other words, a digital media object is an assemblage of other media objects, and this assemblage can be part of a bigger assemblage. Each object is stored independently and can be seen as a fractal element that always retains its own autonomy [p. 30]. Manovich writes:

A new media object consists of independent parts, each of which consists of smaller independent parts, and so on, down to the level of the smallest 'atoms' – pixels, 3-D points, or text characters.

[Manovich, 2002a, loc. 860]

The animation on this page shows the development of the generation of a fern. The leaf-fractal was drawn with the Pen tool. By means of automation, it was then copy-pasted a number of times in a specific order with decreasing size and a slightly changed rotation, whereby it was turned into an image of a branch. The branch was copy-pasted into a pair of branches. And then it continued to be copy-pasted into a bigger branch. This could be done again and again but the initial object, the leaf, can always be selected and manipulated independently

A hand-drawn object can be treated only as one solid piece of work. If the image is computer-generated or digitised into a numerical presentation, it can be always disassembled into separate modules and re-assembled into a new composition.



The animation on this page is a metaphorical expression of the modularity of digital media objects.

Various media components, whether they are sounds, behaviours or videos can now be combined together in one composition. The ontology of these compositions remains as collections of discrete units of data.

The object can be inserted directly into alphabetic text and become an integrated unit of the written word. It then becomes part of the flow of the alphabetic text. And yet, it can be selected independently, copied, modified and manipulated in different ways without affecting the written structure.

## 6.2.4 Variability

Variability is realised by the interplay between numerical coding, automation and modularity. Variability is a digital-media mechanism by which endless reconstructions realise themselves. As already mentioned, in contrast to old-media objects, new-media objects can be separated by their numerical presentations or fractal elements and remixed in new ways as many times as required. As a cultural category, variability enables the user with a great deal of freedom in producing, manipulating and personalising media outcomes.

The result is the emergence of 'new hybrid aesthetics that exist in endless variations but its basic principle is the same: juxtaposing previously distinct visual aesthetics of different media within the same image' [Manovich, 2013, loc. 4413]. This is consistent not only with objects that are represented as images but also as alphabetic signs, or through audio and behavioural modes.

A digital object can be reconstructed and re-organised into a new assemblage

The computer therefore, as Manovich proposes, can be seen as a meta-language platform: ‘the place where many cultural languages of the modern period come together and begin creating new hybrids’ [Manovich, 2013, loc. 4413].

Manovich observes that in professional and cultural practices people usually use a subset of resources that are appropriate for constructing ‘particular kinds of content and experiences’ [loc. 4837]. Every such subset facilitates the realisation of techniques necessary for meeting a distinct performance. The groups of work that can be distinguished by exhibiting apparent patterns represent individual genres [loc. 4837]. In this context, variability has an important role to play in establishing a subset of conventions and resources for the emerging genre of what is identified in this study as cinematic bricolage. Digitisation, automation and modularity catalyse assembling the variables and adjusting the components to reach a synthesis between academic standards and ‘the social/semiotic trends’ are intensified ‘through the technological potential of the digital media’ [Kress, 2012, p. 253].

### 6.2.5 Transcoding

Transcoding in media terms means to translate something into another format [Manovich, 2002a, p.47]. McLuhan (1964) defines the act of translation as a ‘spelling-out’ of forms of knowledge’. On this account, he conceptualises technology in general as nature translated into amplified and specialised forms [loc. 866]. However, in the case of electric technology, he sees a difference. That is, as already mentioned in chapter five, ‘all previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electric is total and inclusive’ [loc. 877].

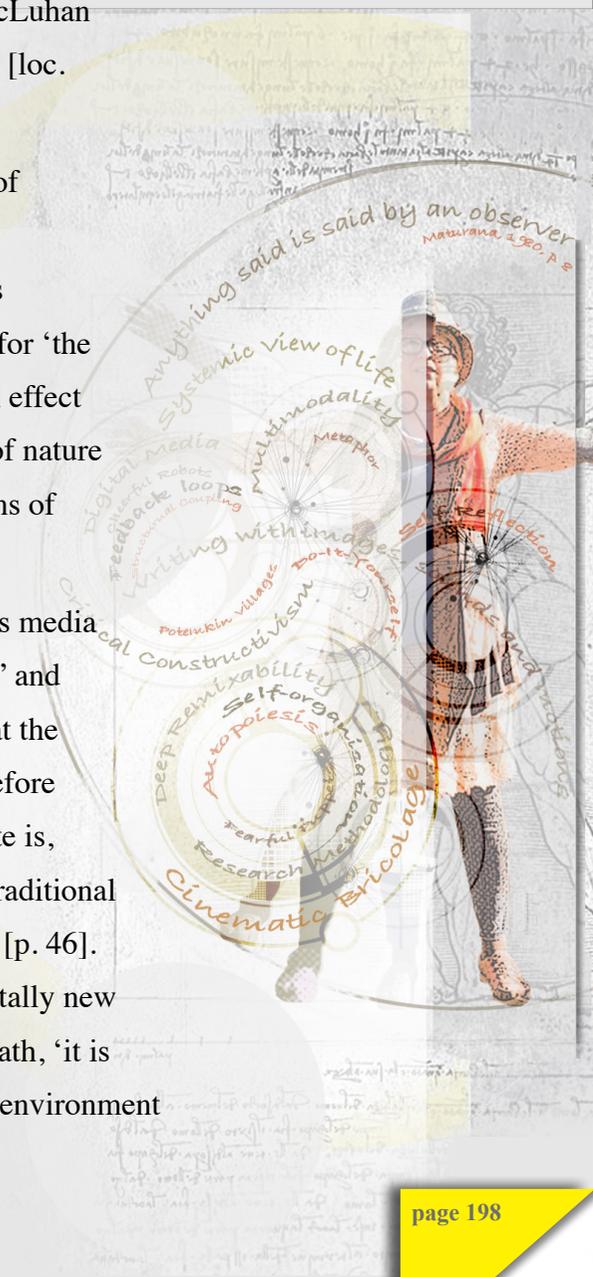


A digital object can be ‘remixed’ with the elements of the modalities that are ontologically different

Talking about computers when they were in their infancy, McLuhan recognises their affordance of ‘getting in touch with every facet of being at once, like the brain itself’ [loc. 3548]. The digital computer, McLuhan maintains, ‘points the way to an extension of the process of consciousness itself, on a world scale...’ [loc. 1158].

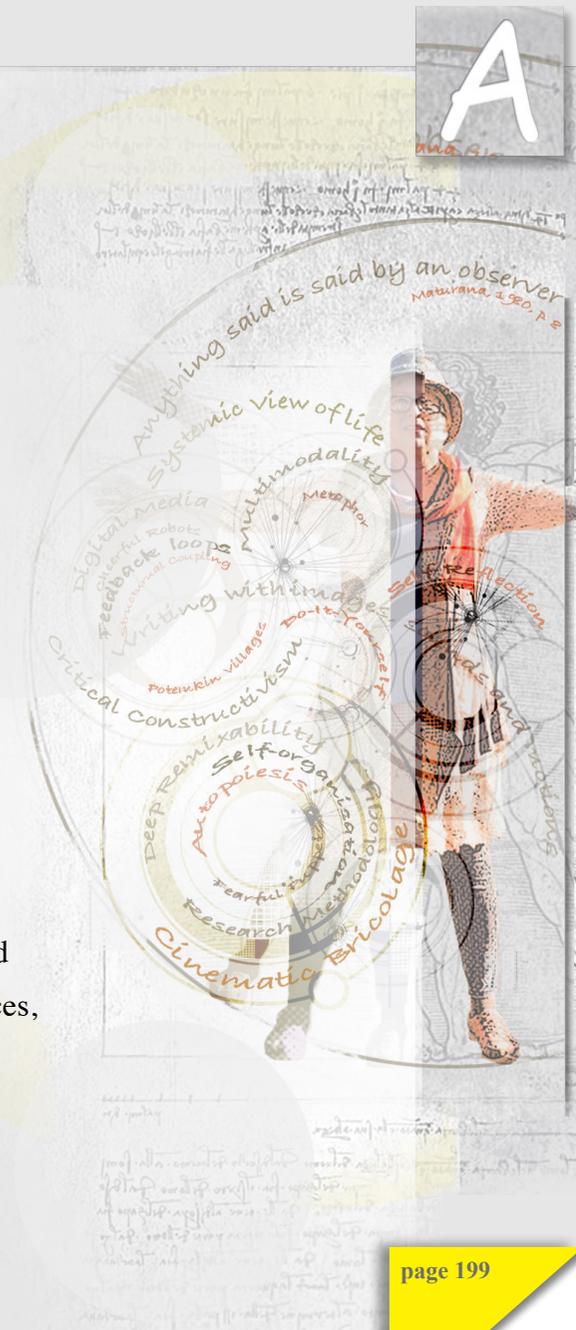
Discussing the transcoding category, Manovich (2002a) refers to the ‘revolutionary work’ [p. 47] of Marshal McLuhan and other theorists who began media studies in the 1950s-1960s. Following their example, he calls for a new stage of media study that will move from media to software theory. This initiative is a result of discussion about the transcoding category, as Manovich views it, to be cause for ‘the most substantial consequence of the computerisation of media’ [p. 45] and therefore having a global effect on culture at large. In other words, transcoding can be seen as a process of all-inclusive translation of nature into digitised forms that causes the emergence of, borrowing from McLuhan [loc. 151], ‘new patterns of human association’.

Within the context of digital media the ‘patterns of human associations’ with computers are seen as media ecology, which consists of two distinct layers. Manovich (2002a) defines these as the ‘cultural layer’ and the ‘computer layer’ [p. 45]. According to the main principle of the ecology system, all elements that the system is composed of interact with each other towards maintaining the system’s equilibrium. Therefore all elements are found to be under the influence of each other. The result of media ecology composite is, Manovich (2002a) states, ‘a new computer culture – a blend of human and computer meanings, of traditional ways in which human culture modelled the world and the computer’s own means of representing it’ [p. 46]. In the act of being codified into a symbolic system of numerical presentation, old media becomes totally new media. Manovich observes, ‘new media may look like media, but this is only the surface’ – underneath, ‘it is simply a computer data’ [p. 47]. In this way, McLuhan’s prediction (1965) about ‘fashioning a total environment as if it were an artefact’ is coming one step closer to being fulfilled.



To become an artefact, the databases of a transcoded data need to enter another dimension – that of human meaning and the way that meaning is expressed. In other words, a sequential human logic, the narrative. Within the parameters of this dimension, the function of transcoding acquires a new nature. It is not just a dialogue between the elements, borrowing from Manovich [p. 46], within the ‘computer’s own cosmogony’, but as I see it, an emergence of new patterns resulting from the interactions between human logic and the affordances and the limitations of digital media. These patterns make themselves evident by endorsing a greater complexity of configurations and favouring an aesthetic dimension to facilitating articulations and recognitions of their relations.

In this I can see a direct link between the emergent patterns of human ↔ computer logic remix, on the one hand and cinematic bricolage, on the other. ‘The bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world’ (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, the bricoleur consciously chooses to enter a dimension of complexity as the only space/time extension that can project the web-like reality of the world. Placing yourself inside the net-structure appears to be a risky business, one in which it is easy to become entangled. The bricoleur therefore, carefully disentangles the thread-bricoles ‘at hand’ and transcodes them into layers of meaning. As she does this, she remixes her reasoning with digital media affordances, which catalyses an aspect of aesthetics to enter the scene as a cognitive mechanism. The research as bricolage is multi-layered and multi-directional but the dimension of aesthetics, which is integrated through digital media affordances, transcodes it, thus making it easier to articulate and read.

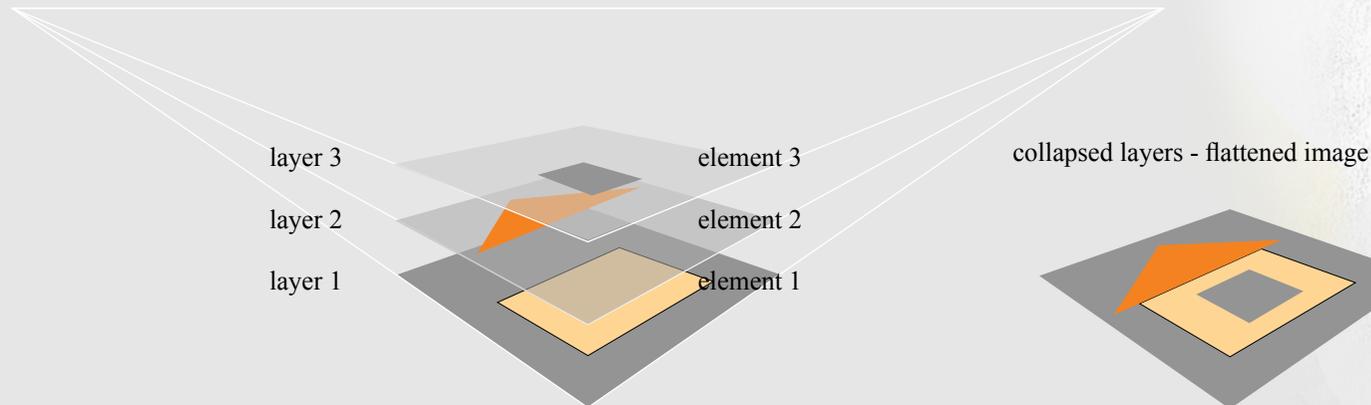


## 6.3 Layered Ideation

### 6.3.1 Ontology of Layers

In producing a digital artefact, an individual, as a rule, manipulates each layer of the composition separately, but sees the composition as if the layers are merged together. This condition reflects the agency of the digital representational process mediated by the interplay of narrative and database. On the one hand, the nature of a process (any process) itself is associated with a narrative – traditional linear/ sequential – approach. Multimodal composition development can start with a line sketch gradually rendered into a colourful artwork, with sound or movement integrated into it. On the other hand, a digital layered technique can be seen as a database structure. Each layer can be moved independently from the others, vertically, and the elements within it, horizontally. The layers can be grouped to create a specific effect or they can be juxtaposed in such a way that their elements overlap with each other creating a new effect, or they can be re-organised into a completely new composition.

The diagram below shows each element of an image presented on a separate layer and then all the layers being collapsed into one flattened image as if it has been drawn on a drawing surface.



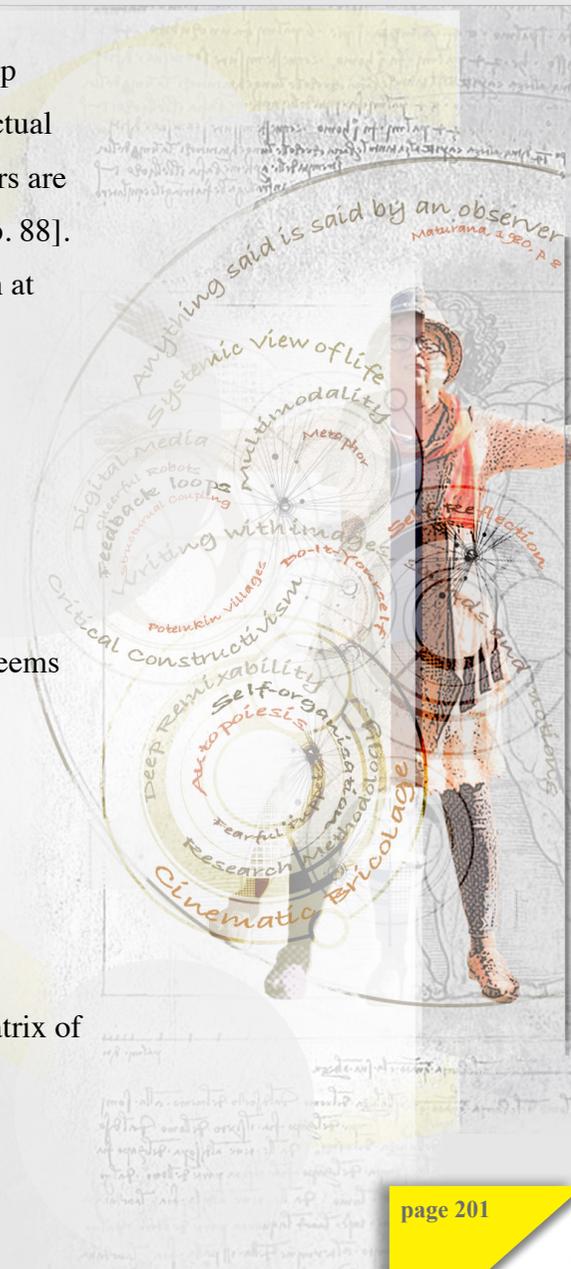
Working with layers can resemble the process of meaning production, where it is as if the discrete, provisional grasp-fractions of the emerging concept are placed on different layers. They are moved up and down, manipulated and various effects are applied. They ‘are intermixed and interfused in our actual thinking’ as Johnson (2007, p. 88) puts it, through the flow of the process. The fragments on the layers are ‘things that have value, meaning, and significance, such as various qualities, shapes, and relations’ [p. 88]. But it is when we see them in one projection that we are able to make sense – characterised as ‘much at once’ [p. 88] – that is we get a grasp of the whole thing.

### 6.3.2 A Holistic Matrix: Perception Parallels and Software Layers

Irvine (2015) writes: ‘Meanings “grow” in a recursive process in the sense that from one state of symbolic representations we develop higher or more inclusive concepts’ [loc. 1028]. Digital media seems to have the capacity of facilitating such a ‘recursive process’ that leads to the establishment of more complex and holistic symbolic articulation of meaning. Johnson [2007] writes:

the meaning ... grows as we mark more differences, similarities, changes, and relations– that is, as we make finer discriminations within the ongoing flow of experience ... Cognitive processing does not occur merely in a linear direction from core to shell structure. There are reentrant connections ... [Johnson, 2007, p. 102].

I would like to complete Johnson’s sentence with Tucker’s [2007] words: ‘... fused in a holistic matrix of information charged with visceral significance’ [Tucker, 2007, p. 179].





The *Adobe Edge Animate* item was then published and imported into *Adobe InDesign*. Again, although the layers acted as discrete components, together they have created one unified field for the experience.

Likewise, the work of the mind. Tucker (2007) continues:

Information can be maintained in parallel, the concepts formed from sensory data tend to be configural, that is, shaped into patterns that integrate the entire sensory surround. [p. 67]

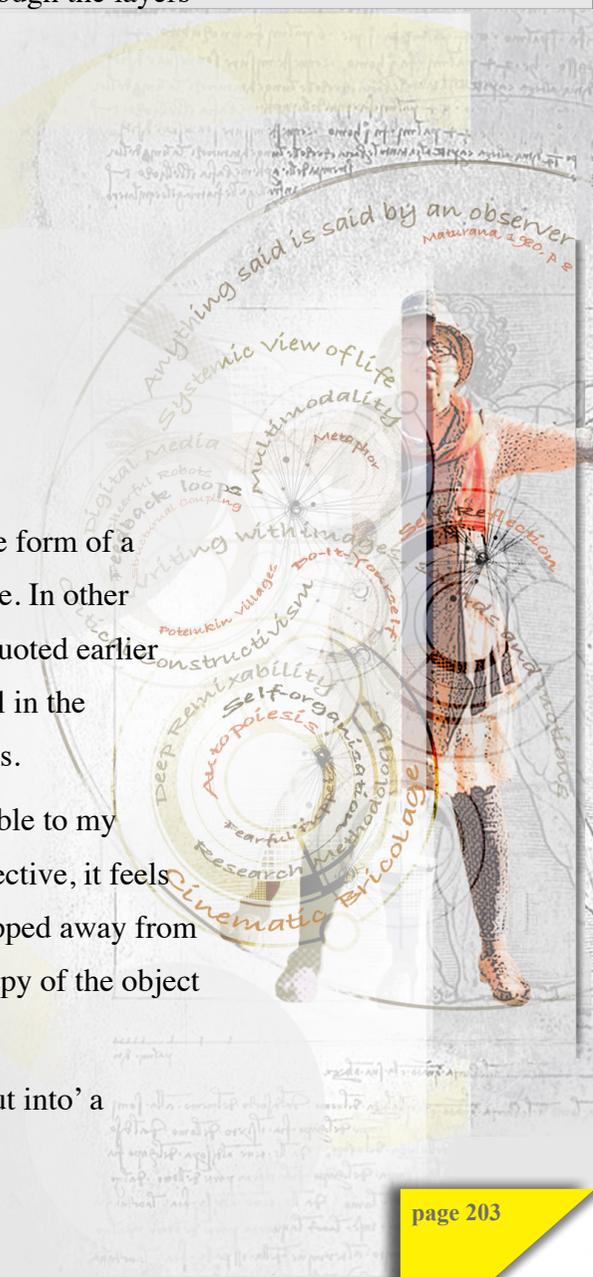
In describing his investigation, Tucker writes:

We may not notice how a certain smell colours the quality of a time or place until an unexpected encounter at some future time brings back a vivid memory of a unique episode of personal history. [p. 66]

I am inspired by Tucker's observations, especially in relation to the term colour which assumes the form of a verb to assign a quality to smell, that in turn, evokes certain experiences in specifying time and place. In other words, this can be a clue as to how 'a finer discrimination within the ongoing flow of experience', quoted earlier from Johnson, can be actualised. This is indicative of how the mechanism of metaphor can be useful in the employment of modularity, variability and layered structures in the development of semiotic systems.

As a digital-media user and not a computer programmer, I see things within a sphere comprehensible to my level of understanding, which is outside the realm of algorithms and data structure. From this perspective, it feels that by virtue of being 'mechanically reproduced', that is, uprooted from its unique context and stripped away from 'its underpinning in the ritual', the aura of the object fades away [Benjamin, 1936, loc. 223]. The copy of the object is reduced simply to a data structure.

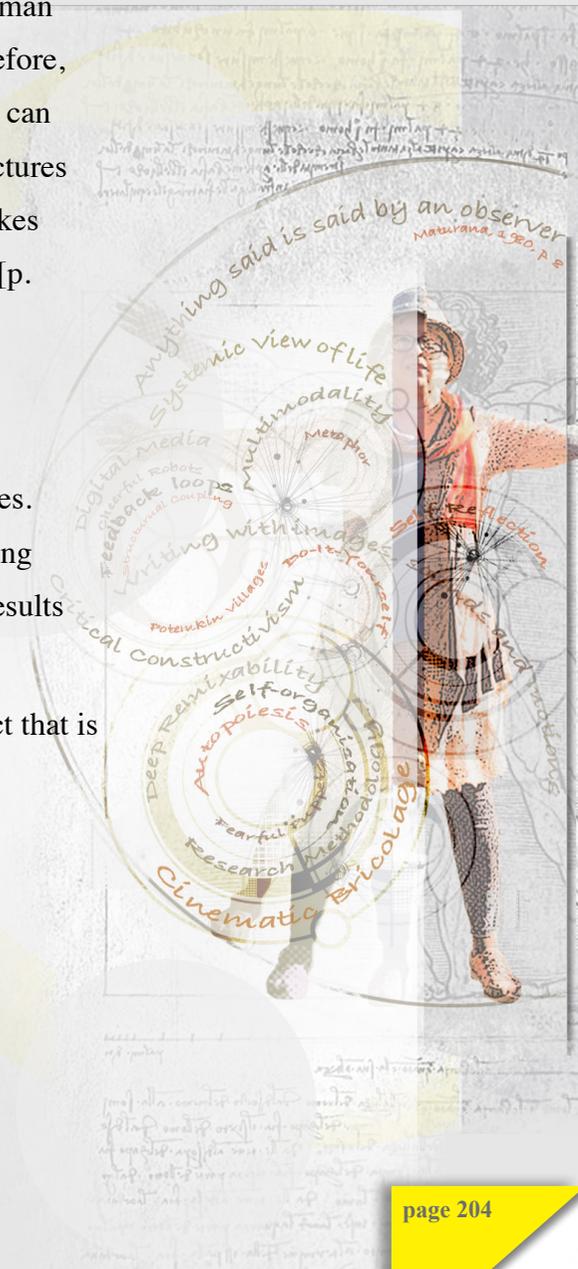
On the other hand, the object is extended by, borrowing McLuhan's terminology, 'being spelled out into' a



new 'form of knowledge' (see p. 37). It was 'spelled out' into an interface where the intermesh of human consciousness with digital media affordances inaugurated it with a new context, new ritual, and therefore, new aura. By the application of the principle of modularity, the object represented as a data structure can be de-constructed into smaller data structures and re-constructed into a new remix with the data structures from other objects and other modalities. Here, the principle of variability comes into action which takes the whole process further, as Manovich (2002) puts it, to 'a blend of human and computer meaning' [p. 46] – transcoding.

If the digital media principles are envisioned as part of the digital mechanism, the software layers could be regarded as automated frameworks or automated material bookcases. The digital objects/bricoles are put on the various shelves/layers and manipulated in accordance with the media principles. In addition, the layers by themselves are pre-programmed. Through the automated effects and blending of the bricoles on the layers, the process also modifies human thought development which, in turn, results in the production of novel organisations of the bricoles on the shelves.

As the composition is completed, the 'bookcase' collapses. The layers become one integrated object that is taken to another 'bookcase' to become a new separate layer in the process of new integration.



### 6.3.3 'Framed' Meaning-Making

Kress (2010) maintains that the internal process of meaning making is always in progress. As a response to some occasional 'prompts', this process of meaning-making is 'framed' for a moment [p. 93]. 'The relation of meaning and mode presents itself', as Kress argues in: a) considerations of modal affordances and rhetorical requirements; b) orientations of modes and their different 'takes' in the world; c) organisation of modes if it is 'a multimodal ensemble' [p. 93].

While agreeing with Kress on the notion of the ongoing nature of mental meaning-making activity, I would however like to look more closely at the particular moment that Kress describes as a 'halt' in continuous mind processing. Kress sees the 'halt' occurring as a result of the moment getting 'framed' in the mind. It brings about a 'prompt' to make that internal process visible by choosing an appropriate mode of representation. The question then is formulated as Kress poses it: 'In what mode(s) should meaning be 'fixed'?' [p.93]. Kress explains that he refers to older forms of photography in relation to the term 'fix'. Following his example, I apply the same reference to another term that he uses, that is, 'frame'. So considering an ongoing mind meaning making, in terms of older photography with arrested/framed moments in the flow of the film, I would like to go a few 'frames' back and explore the process of ideation at that particular instant where meaning is 'getting framed'.

Before doing that, I would like to introduce an amazing sculpture that I saw in Alice Springs. It first of all, reminded me of 'a culture defined by recyclability and appropriation' as Navas (2012, p. 7) describes the new cultural phenomenon of remix that was activated by the arrival of digital media.

In addition to such relevant-to-this-study cultural categories as recyclability, appropriation and remix, I saw in this sculpture something else.



*The Recyclator*, Author: J9 Stanton, Alice Springs.

This sculpture is made of found objects and represents the recycling process.

Personal Photograph



*The Recyclator*, Author: J9 Stanton, Alice Springs.  
This sculpture is made of found objects  
and represents the recycling process.  
Personal Photograph

I decided to use the sculpture as a metaphor for the present discussion.

We can assume that the flow of incoming information never stops and the mind is always busy perceiving and making meaning of the experience.

As Kress (2010) puts it:

Semiosis, the making of meaning, is ongoing, ceaseless. Occasionally there is a 'prompt' to make that internal process visible, and there is then an 'utterance', an outward material sign-complex, always as a response to the prompt. It is a punctuation of semiosis: the ceaseless process of inner meaning-making is halted for a moment. It is 'fixed' and it is 'framed'  
Kress [2010, p. 93].

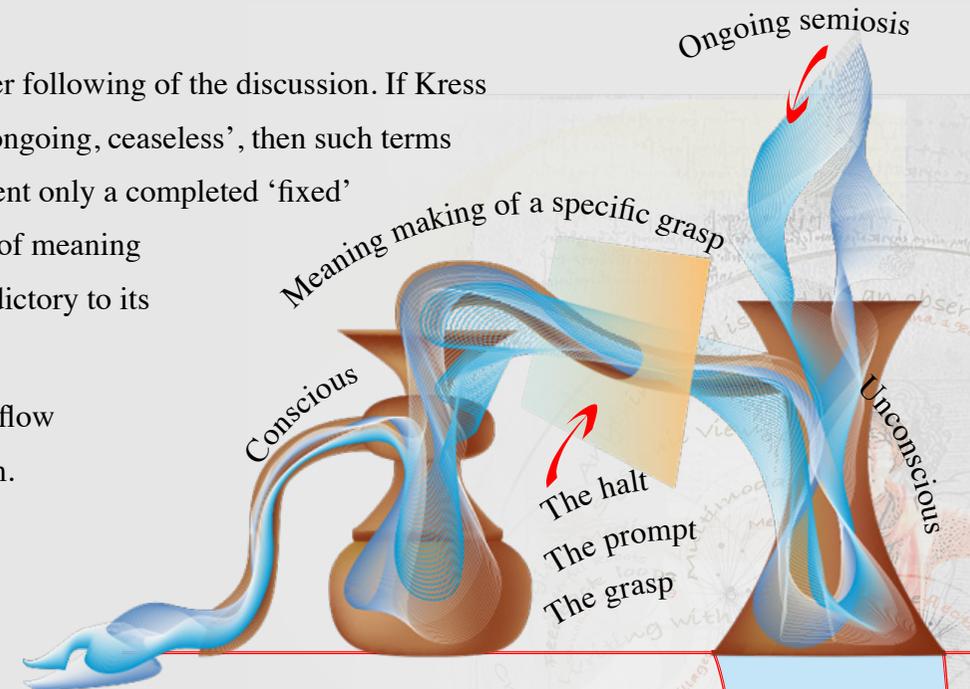
Then the question arises, as Kress (2010) puts it:

*'In what mode(s) should meaning be fixed?'* [p. 93].

Here I re-drew *The Recyclator* in *Adobe Illustrator* for an easier following of the discussion. If Kress suggests that semiosis, that is, the making of meaning [p. 93] is ‘ongoing, ceaseless’, then such terms as a ‘halt’, ‘fixed’ and ‘framed’ are the descriptors that can represent only a completed ‘fixed’ and ‘framed’ artefact. If, however, we refer to the mind’s process of meaning making, then such terms as ‘halt’, ‘fixed’ and ‘framed’ are contradictory to its ‘ceaseless’ flow.

As Kress proposes, ‘occasionally there is a prompt’ in the mind flow that needs to be uttered, that is, embodied into some material form. The concept of ‘prompt’ is important here as it will be used to further this discussion. To better respond to my purposes, I will refer to what Kress identifies as ‘prompt’ as a ‘mental grasp’ or ‘grasp’.

For the mental grasp to occur, there should be a stimulus. For example, in the case of spoken language, ‘a stimulus elicits a spoken word as a response, then the speaker perceives his or her own response, which serves as the next stimulus, eliciting one out of several words as the next response, and so on’ [Pinker, 2007, p. 84]. In other words, this ‘and so on’ is an ongoing process shifting between the stimulus and the response. The grasp exists in a continuous modifying state between and depending on the stimulus and the response. The prompt or grasp is the essence of the meaning-making process, as Kress puts it a ‘punctuation of semiosis’ [p. 93], but by virtue of its flowing and altering nature it cannot be ‘fixed’ or ‘framed’ until the process is completed.



*Ongoing unconscious assistance to our conscious life occurs whenever we speak aloud or only to ourselves, write or type, play a musical instrument, perform athletic routines, drive, or simply set a table.*

[Edelman & Tononi, 2013, p. 182]

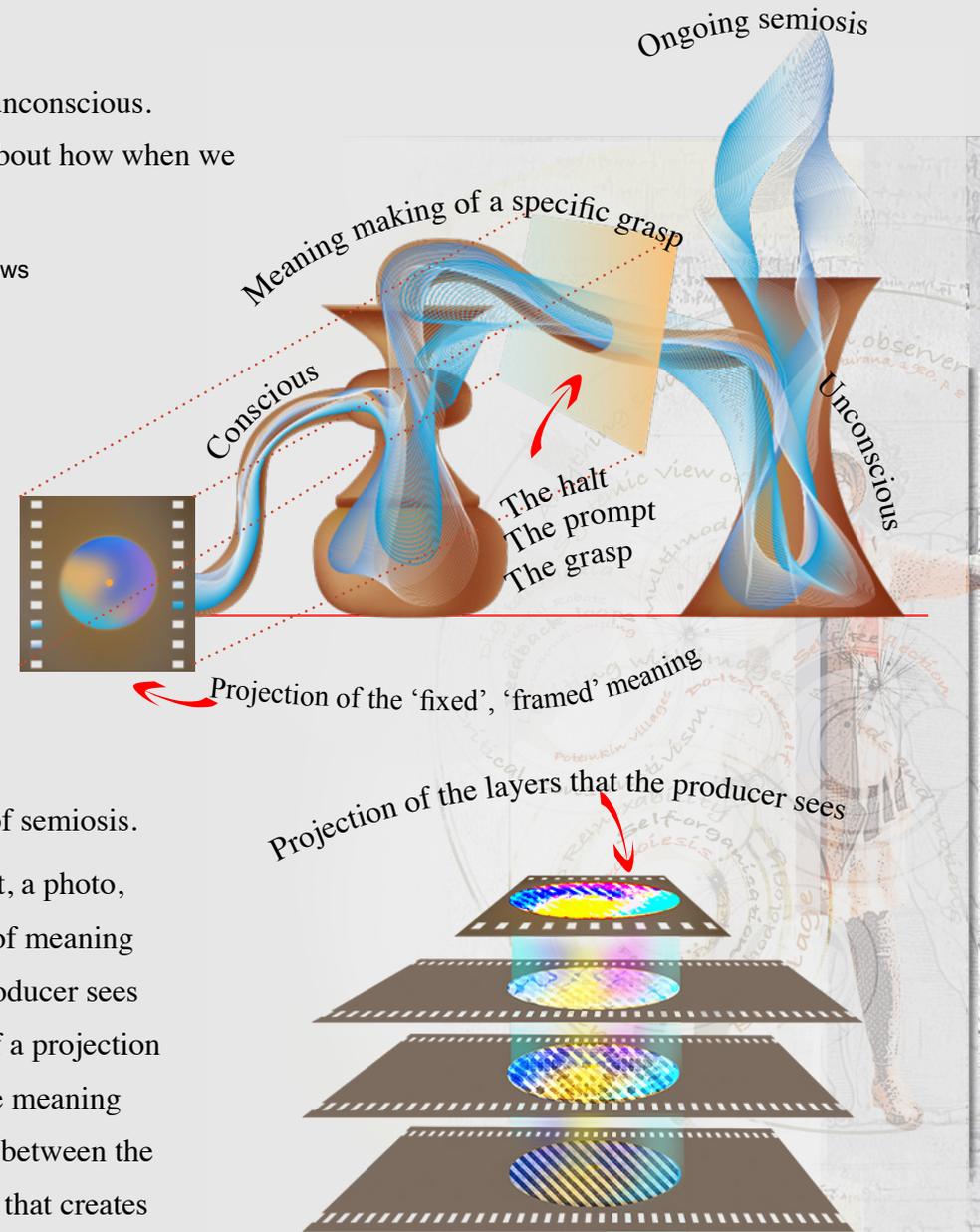
The stimuli can come from the outside or can be drawn out of the unconscious. Edelman and Tononi (2013) give two examples from other authors about how when we speak, we know only 'roughly what we want to say'.

*Parole Intérieure*, M.V. Egger remarked that 'before speaking, one barely knows what one intends to say, but afterwards one is filled with admiration and surprise at having said and thought it so well.'

The woman in E.M. Forster's novel *Howards End* said memorably: 'How can I know what I think till I see what I say?' [p. 182]

Linking the above discussion to the process of semiosis achieved by means of representing with digital media, I argue that we know how and with what modes the meaning is 'fixed' or 'framed' only after the process of 'fixing' and 'framing' is completed. In this view, the technicality of the layered representational production appears to be illustrative of the process of semiosis.

In constructing a cinematic bricolage, the stimulus can be a thought, a photo, an image or a sound, which is placed on a layer. During the process of meaning making, other layers are filled with associative bricoles. What the producer sees throughout the stages of semiosis is ongoing alteration in the form of a projection of all layers – a unified mental grasp. This unified mental grasp is the meaning in a process of being interpreted, refined and understood. Its locus is between the stimulus – a condition that provokes the response – and the response that creates a new stimulus. Each stage of working with different modalities adds its own associative fragment that makes the producer of meaning see the whole thing in



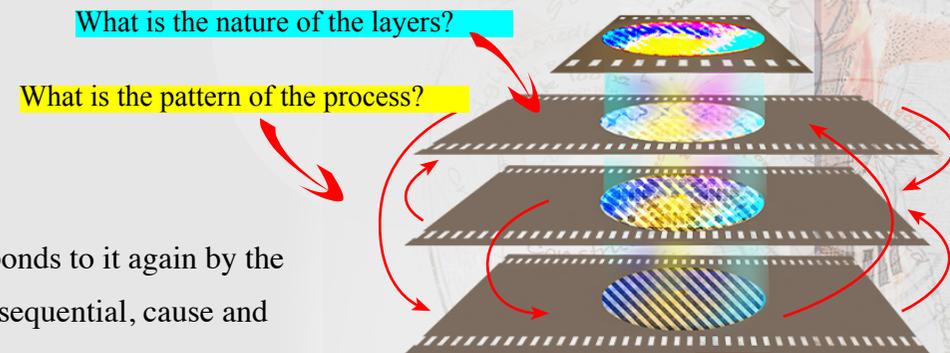
a different light and perceive it in a different manner, which calls forth formation of a novel concept.

Working with layers, in my view, is a clear demonstration of a symbiosis between two cultural mechanisms of representation: narrative and database. Layers encapsulate the essence of the database in its content, structure and instrumentality. The elements of the database are placed on the layers. The layers are organised in a stacking order thereby affecting each other through the automated projections. The producer of the representation applies narrative logic and the stimulus materialises as a result of the layers' (database) unified projection. Perceiving the stimulus as a mental grasp, the producer responds to it by applying associative elements either retrieved from a database or generated anew, still employing the automated database codes. By doing so, the producer is presented with a new stimulus - mental grasp and responds to it again by the involvement of the database. In other words, the producer works in a sequential, cause and effect order, that is narrative.

However, the physicality of the narrative process is split. The time sequence stays the same, but its linearity is bent. It turns into recursive feedback loops and due to a not linear but stacking order of layers, the loops take the directions determined by stimulus  response associations.

*Coming back to a treeforest metaphor (see p. 11), the unified projection can be seen as the tree in front of the forest.*

*The layers with database elements and the recursive loops of the process can be seen as patterns that facilitate the unified projection.*



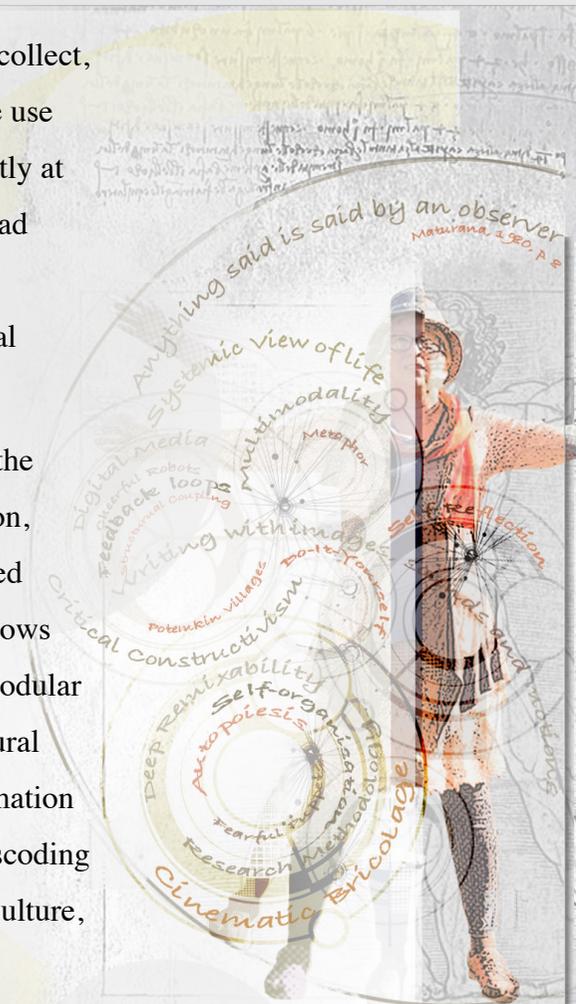
*The linearity of the process is broken by a stacking order of layers. The sequential thread of the process goes in various directions between the layers depending on associations provoked by the stimulus and response.*

## 6.4 Convergence Points

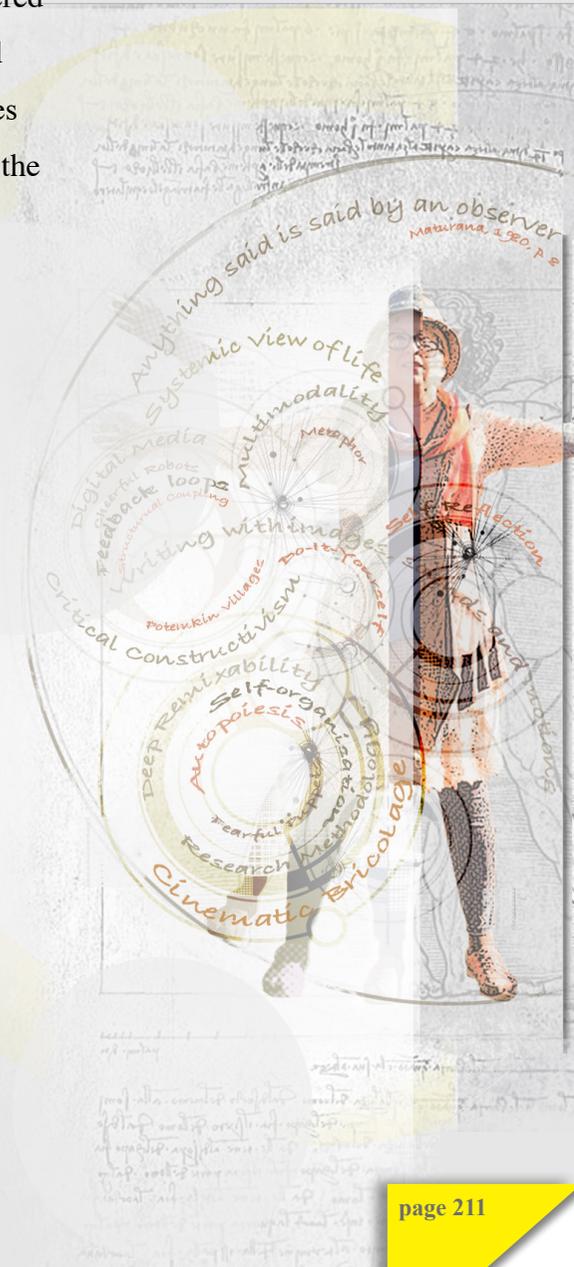
This chapter discussed such important aspects of the study as the set of digital-media tools used to collect, analyse and represent data, and develop an argument. It drew attention to advantageous factors in the use of mobile phones for contemporary methods of research due to their self-containment, being constantly at hand and extreme usability. The chapter emphasised the suitability and efficiency in the use of the iPad as a mobile collection of literature resources, and Kindle as a store/library. It argued that thought can be extended through the representational means of digital media by the interplay between two cultural symbolic systems: database and narrative.

The second section of this chapter is an overview of Manovich's (2002) theoretical perspective on the building blocks of digital materialism. He identifies five aspects: numerical representation, automation, modularity, variability and transcoding. In digital documents, objects are either generated or converted from analogue media resources by means of a digital code or numeric representation. Automation allows creation, conversion and manipulation of the objects. Automation is achieved by the agency of the modular structure of digital objects. Modularity is a property of digital objects that brings forth remixing cultural practices that manifest themselves through an abundance of variables. Numeric representation, automation and modularity facilitate transcoding, that is translating one format into another. Manovich sees transcoding as being not just a computer function, but something that contributes to the emergence of computer culture, resulting in 'a blend of human and computer meanings' [p. 46].

The third section of this chapter continues discussion about the ontology of digital representational production by integrating the topic of software layers. After describing the five material blocks of digital media, the chapter focuses on an automated structure which supports the positioning of digital objects, their



fragments and affords new variables and different views of the composition under construction. Layered organisation of representational production appears to be congruent with the proceedings of the mind in making meaning. The recursive shifts from stimuli to responses are scaffolded by layered structures with the database elements and operations and narrative sequential steps to constitute an interplay of the process.



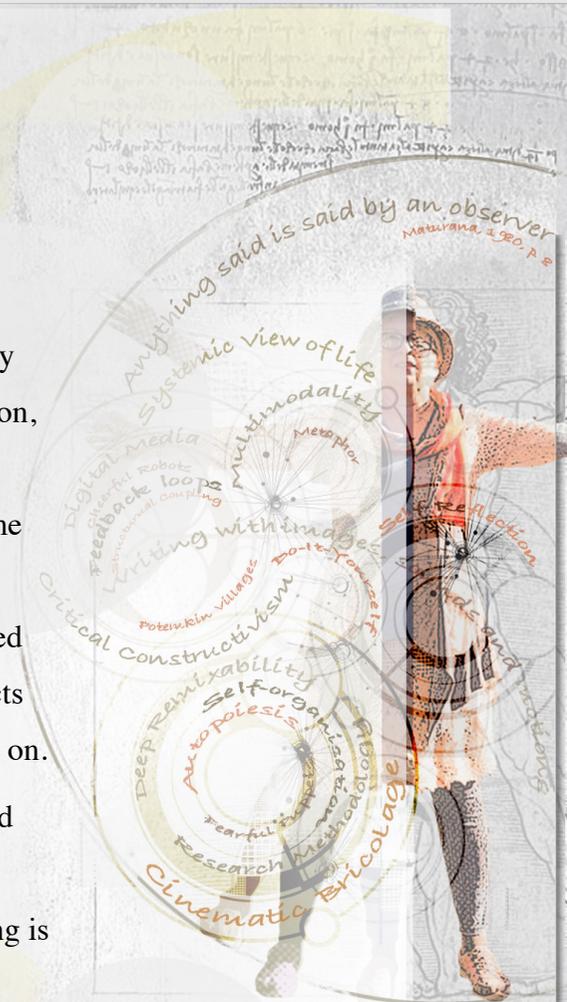
## Minding Metaphorically: Metaphoric Language in Cinematic Bricolage

### Introduction: Mental Grasps and their Embodiment

The previous chapter examined the ontology of digital media. Drawing on Manovich's (2002) theory of digital materialism, five instrumental categories of digital media: numeric representation, automation, modularity, variability and transcoding were considered as constituent parts of the meaning-making process. These categories support the layered system of representational digital production and become composite aspects in a database/narrative dialogue that underpins the process of meaning-making. This dialogue is seen as a recursive feedback process. A stimulus, that is a database object or pre-coded operation, incites a thought-response in the producer that activates new manipulations of digital objects with pre-coded operations, which, in turn, form the next stimulus to produce the next response and so on.

This chapter consists of two 'threading loops'. The first expands on the concept of mental grasps and the interaction of the grasps with other components involved in the process of digital representations. The second section of this chapter maps out two chapter-probes where the process of cinematic writing is explored.

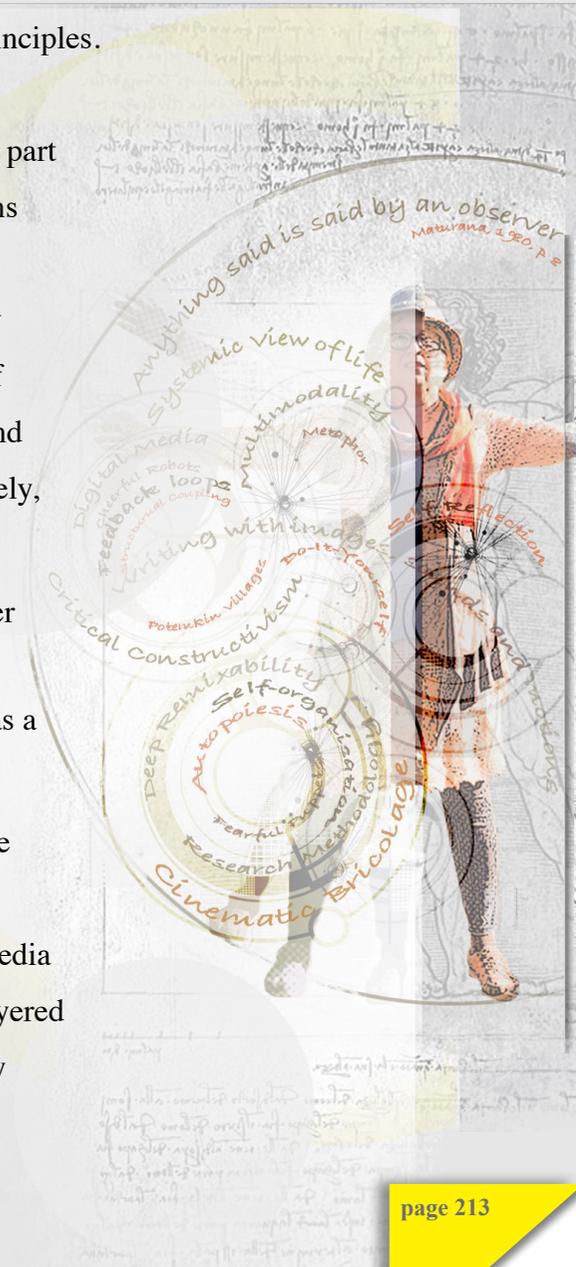
As discussed throughout the previous chapters, mental grasps are thought-responses stimulated during the process of digital representation. They are clusters of visceral reactions that through the process of representational activity become evident and conceptualised. Their ideation is often realised through metaphoric



logic, which can appear clumsy in the beginning, but through further confluations with other mental grasps, finally results in a refined concept. This final representation is most often formed by metaphorical principles. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), a metaphoric mechanism is based on cross-association of everyday sensori-motor experience and subjective experience [loc. 645]. Primary metaphors become part of the unconscious. Through their conflation with other metaphors and association with other domains of experience, they form a metaphoric schema and then more complex metaphoric schemata. In this study, mental grasps are analogous to these primary metaphors. However, they are termed differently to clarify that mental grasps are responses stimulated by working with digital media in the process of representation and ideation. As metaphoric formation, mental grasps conflate into a grasps schema and further into complex grasps schemata. Again, this refers to the process of digital representation, namely, writing with images, sounds and movements.

In developing the idea of mental grasps I draw on the work of such scholars as Fauconnier & Turner (2002) and their concept of mental spaces and conceptual blending; Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and their concept of metaphoric schemata; and Edelman and Tononi (2013) and their theory of memory as a melting and refreezing glacier.

The relationship between the embodied idea and the hidden subconscious is symbolised through the image of an iceberg. Mental grasps, within this concept, are self-similar primary fractals of a bigger whole – the iceberg. The subconscious can be seen as ‘a factory’ that reacts to activity with digital media by activation and confluations of mental grasps. As discussed in chapter six, this process includes a layered system of production. This chapter puts the layered production and cinematic writing into practice by developing a metaphorically-supported schema of the process of representation.



In this chapter, I consider the mental grasp as a self-similar fractal in 'a larger whole'. As one mental grasp is constructed on the basis of the associations that the mind holds in bigger mental-grasps schemata, each mental grasp embodies a similarity of the structural characteristics of the whole thing. In looking at this from a systemic point of view, it can be said that a mental grasp is a system of conceptions embedded within a larger, self-similar system of blended conceptions. As all the systems are in constant interplay with each other, they are involved in the processes of structural coupling, which means that modifications in one mental-grasps schema can influence the whole. For this study, this implies that focusing on one aspect of the system may bring change to the same aspect in many other systems.

The second section of this chapter threads through the proposed probes, describing their purpose, genres, structure and relationship to each other. These two probes are designed to complete an intellectual loop that I am threading through. They are encapsulations of the statement, 'the method is the message', tailored from McLuhan's (1964) famous, 'the medium is the message'.

The method is, of course, a by-product of the medium. The message of this thesis is that the medium has far-reaching consequences for people's personal and social lives that result in a restructuring of the methods that people employ for their everyday experiences, thus, altering their associations and views of the world in which they live.

Digital media has allowed people to take a multi-focused view on a complex world. Undertaking this new position requires a reflection of new conditions, therefore the method requires alteration as well. This thesis is a demonstration of the emergence of an eclectic method suitable for this particular inquiry.



Marshall McLuhan, 1979

It demonstrates how multi-layered digital production brings about intellectual engagement that inevitably spreads to other areas of life. The generation, manipulation and reconstruction of multimodal data adds another dimension to the research. In the case of this study, this dimension has emerged as an aspect of an individual and her relationship with the larger social structure.

This chapter explains the aspects that guide the design of the two probes that explore cinematic bricolage as a methodology for self-discovery and self-affirmation of an informed individual capable of, and responsible for, engagement with civic concerns. The social orientation of the probes is a result of personal choice as I see this to be a deeply anchored, densely rhizomed and critical issue in my own life. However, an embedded message in the probes is that cinematic bricolage has substantive potential for self-affirmation by providing a student, teacher or scholar with the opportunity to apply their own unique individual abilities for knowledge production. I see the importance of this aspect lying in the fact that the knowledge produced in association with self-interest while natural tendencies help the researcher become a critical thinker and establish an informed position of her individual agency in life.



## 7.1 Representing the Process of Representation

### 7.1.1 Smart Meaning-Making Devices

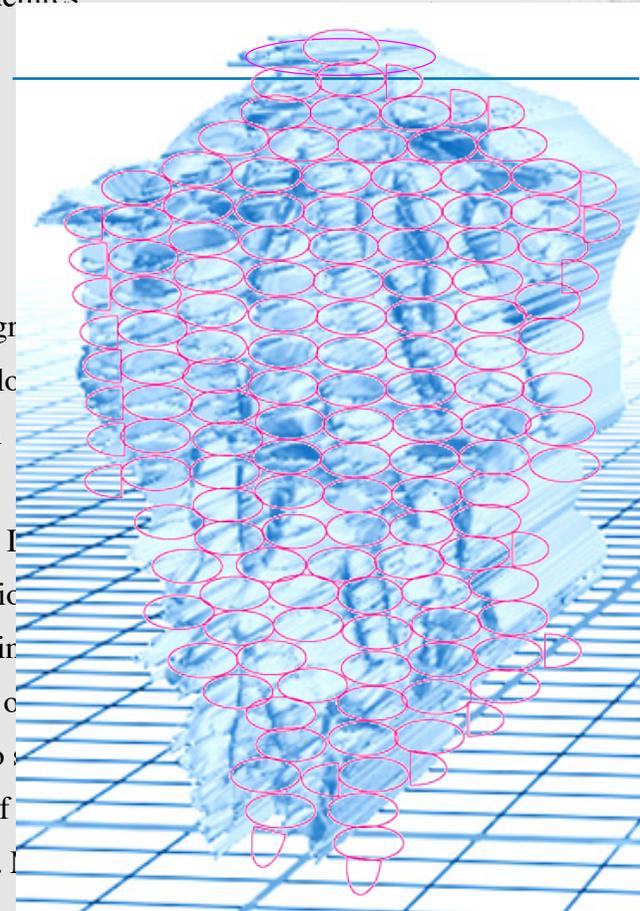
Lakoff (2015) claims that a thought is 98% unconscious.

Reflecting on these words from a snippet of Lakoff's address – and the metaphor of an iceberg which he uses – I take the iceberg image and extend it to illustrate the proportional relationship between conscious and unconscious cognitive structures

I believe Lakoff's goal in using an iceberg as a metaphor to compare conscious and unconscious mental bodies, is to have an instant mental image that would cause mental shock at the enormity of the difference. The mental image, nevertheless, is vague.

To achieve slightly better proportional 'accuracy', I applied a grid of 98 outlined spaces on the iceberg's surface (click on the yellow sticker on the left to see it). The precision of the representation can be questioned because, in reality, the tip of the iceberg as well as the iceberg itself is a three-dimensional structure. Here I am challenged by my lack of technical skills in digital production of 3-D objects. All I can do is make an extrusion of the image in *Adobe Photoshop*, which gives a rough idea of the appearance of the mass of the iceberg (click on the green sticker on the left to see it). In spite of the loose estimates, the visual gives some idea of proportional approximation between the mass of the two parts.

a conceptualised thought



Iceberg's grid

Iceberg's extrusion

George Lakoff .  
April, 2015

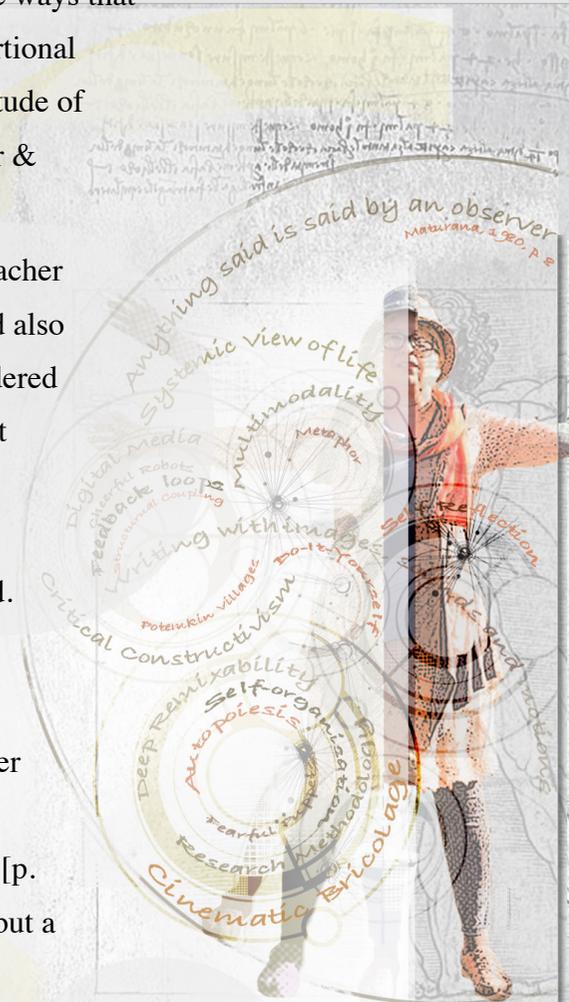
alisation of the  
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periences and 2%  
ceptualised thought.

was not to achieve mathematical precision in exhibiting proportional values, but to present alternative ways that cinematic writing can provide when engaging in a process of meaning-making. Looking at the proportional relations between the body of the iceberg and its tip through a different lens, has amplified the magnitude of a hidden part of the mind and reinforced the idea of ‘meaning being largely unconscious’ [Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 263].

What I also intend to demonstrate here is the use of a cinematic page in the way that a classroom teacher would use a smart board. Rather than explaining what I was doing by means of speech (which I could also do in a cinematic page) I explained it in writing. This illustrates that the cinematic page can be considered a dynamic space for making and explaining meaning, in which the minds of a producer as well as that of a recipient can be actively engaged. Through disturbance of the narrative linearity, by engaging in generation or activation of other modalities, the meaning maker steps outside the routine, linear progression. This changes the rhythm with which the stages of meaning-making or ‘minding’ proceed. The modification of the rhythm, as well as the re-positioning of observation, alters the mechanism of perception. In other words, the mind maker grasps the thing anew.

Perhaps this is a more natural way of making meaning because, according to Postman & Weingartner (1996), the mind should be observed not as a thing but rather as a process [p. 83]. ‘We would come much closer to actuality if we spoke of “minding” (as process) rather than of “the mind”’ (as a thing) [p. 83]. Edelman and Tononi (2013) state that they ‘take the position that consciousness is not an object but a process...’ [p. 9].

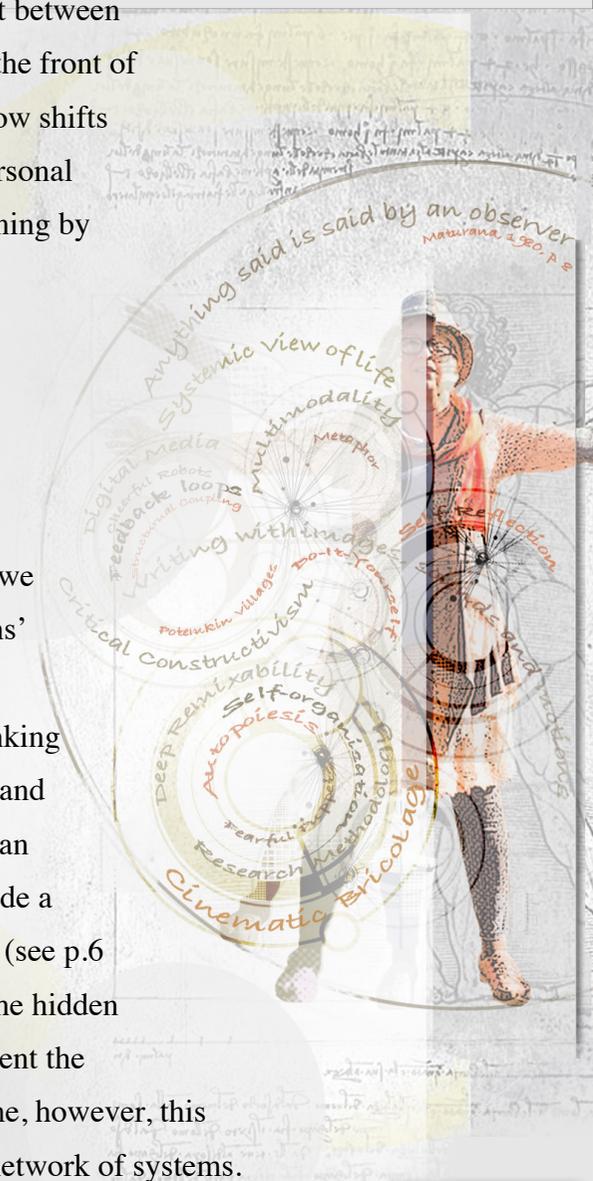
If the mind is a process, this means that it is not a static but an active, constantly flowing entity. It is ‘a process of minding, including the fact that “minding” is undergoing constant change. “Meaning making” also forces us to focus on the individuality and the uniqueness of the meaning maker (the minder)’ [Postman



& Weigartner. 1996, p. 91]. Going back to the analogy of the teacher giving instructions at the front of the class with the use of a smart-board, it appears that the cinematic writing approach offers a significant shift between the position of the instructor of ready-made meaning and the learner. The smartness of the board at the front of the class that is viewed as a spring of knowledge from which the teacher fills her students' minds, now shifts into the students' smart cinematic pages. They generate their own smartness with the use of their personal smart digital tools at hand: smart-phones, smart-tablets and smart-books. They make their own meaning by constructing and presenting it on the pages of the cinematic bricolage.

### 7.1.2 Mental Grasps

Cinematic bricolage follows the theoretical principles of systemic thinking which promote the requirement for both 'analogical thinking and local linear causal thinking. Understanding occurs as we place our knowledge in a wider context that gives it connectedness to a network of systemic relations' [Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2012, p. 128]. Analogical thinking, however, 'is completely taken for granted by human beings at the conscious level' [Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 11]. Analogical thinking as Fauconnier and Turner define it, is a 'formidable feat of imagination' that comes from 'matching and aligning the elements of two domains [and] finding the common schematic structure that motivated an analogy between them.' [p. 12]. Fauconnier and Turner continue that 'linguists and philosophers made a powerful case for the centrality of metaphor in human cognition' [p. 14]. In the same way as Lakoff (see p.6 otd), Fauconnier and Turner also make the iceberg analogy when exploring conscious thought and the hidden unconscious processing that supports that thought [2002, p. 16]. My decision to symbolically represent the conscious and unconscious relationship as an iceberg is influenced by these authors. At the same time, however, this can be considered contradictory to my adopting a constructivist-systemicist view of the world as a network of systems.



The juxtaposition of interwoven fibers and mass of frozen water appear incongruous. Besides, as discussed earlier, the mind should be perceived as a process – dynamic, fluid and in constant change – not as a solidified form.

However, as I examined the three concepts – Johnson’s (1987) image schemata; Fauconnier and Turner’s (2002) mental spaces/conceptual blending; and Edelman and Tononi’s (2013) imaging of the body of memory as a melting and freezing glacier – more closely, I decided that an iceberg is appropriate for symbolising the relationship between conscious thought and the subconscious.

### 7.1.2.a IMAGE SCHEMATA

Johnson’s (1987) theory of conflation proposes that meaning-making occurs between sensori-motor experiences and judgements and develops into cross-domain associations. Johnson states that developing and articulating meaning is ‘never merely a matter of abstract conceptualisations and propositional judgments’ [loc. 206]. He argues that production of meaning is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects’ [loc. 206]. Johnson identifies these patterns as ‘image schemata’ [loc. 206]. He writes: ‘An image schema is a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience’ [loc. 140]. The figurative structures of embodied imagination, that function primarily as abstract gestalt structures of images, are called image schemata [loc. 216].

Johnson (2007) indicates that the sensori-motor structures in the brain contribute to the construction of meaning and he stresses that this depends on three dimensions: ‘Without a brain, there is no meaning. Without a living, acting body – no meaning. And without organism-environment interaction – no meaning’ [p. 178].

According to Johnson, one of the most important mechanisms in the production of abstract thought are





### 7.1.2.c MEMORY IS MELTING AND FREEZING GLACIER

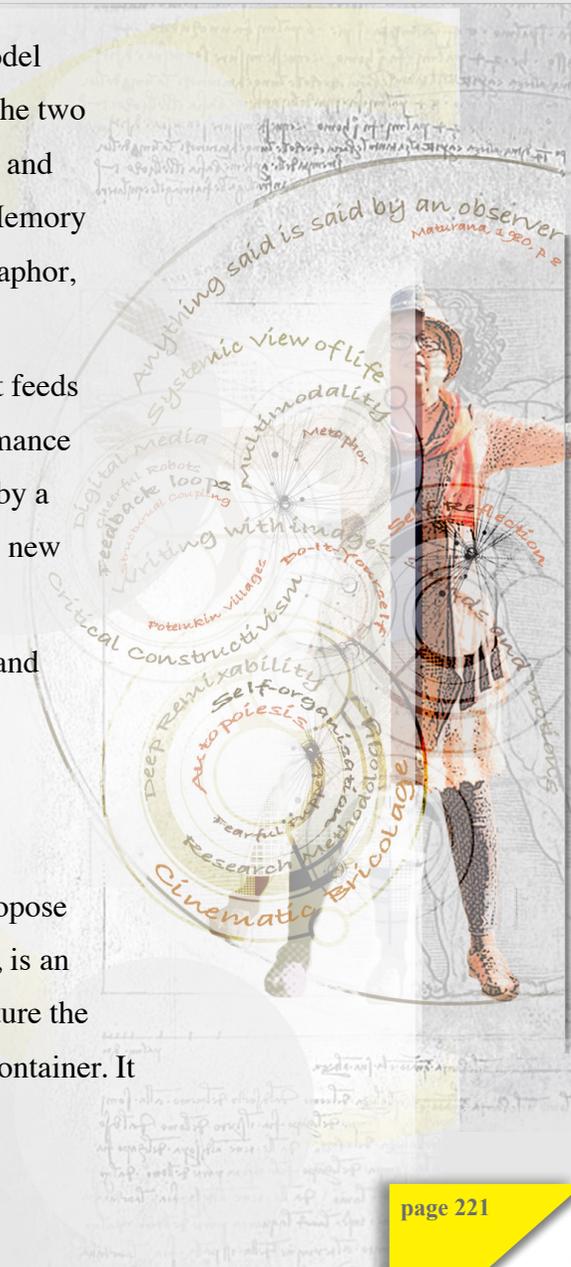
Edelman and Tononi (2013) create what they call the ‘alpine metaphor’, which is an analogy to model how memory works and how it allows perception to alter recall and recall to alter perception. From the two theoretical examples discussed above, it can be suggested that memory is a framework that mediates and upholds image schemata as well as conceptual blending structures. As Edelman and Tononi state: ‘Memory is a central component of the brain mechanism that leads to consciousness’ [p. 93]. In the alpine metaphor, they view memory as a melting and refreezing glacier [p.93].

‘Under one set of warming conditions, certain rivulets will run and merge downhill to a stream that feeds a pond in the valley below. Let that pond formation stand for the output leading to a repeated performance [...] change the sequence of weather conditions, resulting in the freezing of some rivulets, followed by a warming period leading to melting and merger with some other rivulets as well as the creation of the new ones [p. 99].

Edelman and Tononi consider ‘every act of perception’, to a certain extent, as ‘an act of creation’, and ‘every act of memory’, to a certain extent, ‘as an act of imagination’ [p. 101].

### 7.1.2.d MENTAL GRASPS

Conflating together the three premises outlined above to map a model for this particular study, I propose a functional symbolic unit that can be referred to here as a mental grasp. A mental grasp, as I view it, is an invisible imprint that leaves an indentation within the unseen medium – the body of memory. To picture the indentation we have to imagine a three-dimensional shape, because the mental grasp is more like a container. It



is a primary generator of mental data that grasps certain life events saturated with different modalities: images, sense of space and time, sounds, feel of surfaces, smells, tastes, and proprioception (the sense of our own body). A mental grasp is a unified experience – gestalt of feelings. A mental grasp is an irregular fractal that is one within the connected body of life-memories. Its irregularity is forged by unique sensori-motor experiences shaped by individual bodily peculiarities. Within the medium of the body of memory, every mental grasp has a distinct presence. Retaining its individual conserved structure, it is in constant recurrent interactions with the larger dynamic memory-medium. On recall, certain areas become activated; they warm, turning into trickling rivulets, running around, meeting other streams, creating pools, freezing and changing themselves and the larger structure around them – forming a distinct pattern for an image schemata (Johnson, 1987) typical for a certain individual. This can also reflect a schematic interplay between mental spaces and conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), corresponding with Fauconnier and Turner’s analogy of the tree and the forest behind it [loc. 34], discussed in chapter six.

The interplay of the mental grasp and the memory medium can also be envisioned in terms of structural coupling (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p. 75). Maturana and Varela write: ‘We speak of structural coupling whenever there is a history of recurrent interactions leading to the structural congruence between two (or more) systems’ (p. 75). The interrelation between a mental grasp as a perceptual system of a single event within a dynamic life memory-medium system which Edelman and Tononi (2013) correlate with an act of creation and imagination, leads to Maturana and Varela’s (1987) notion of autopoiesis – the autonomous organisation of self-recreation and self-sustainment (p. 48). The notion of autonomy is emphasised in this study as a qualitative condition essential for knowledge-production tasks.



## 7.2 Understanding Mental Schemata through an Iceberg Configuration

### 7.2.1 Above and Below the Waterline

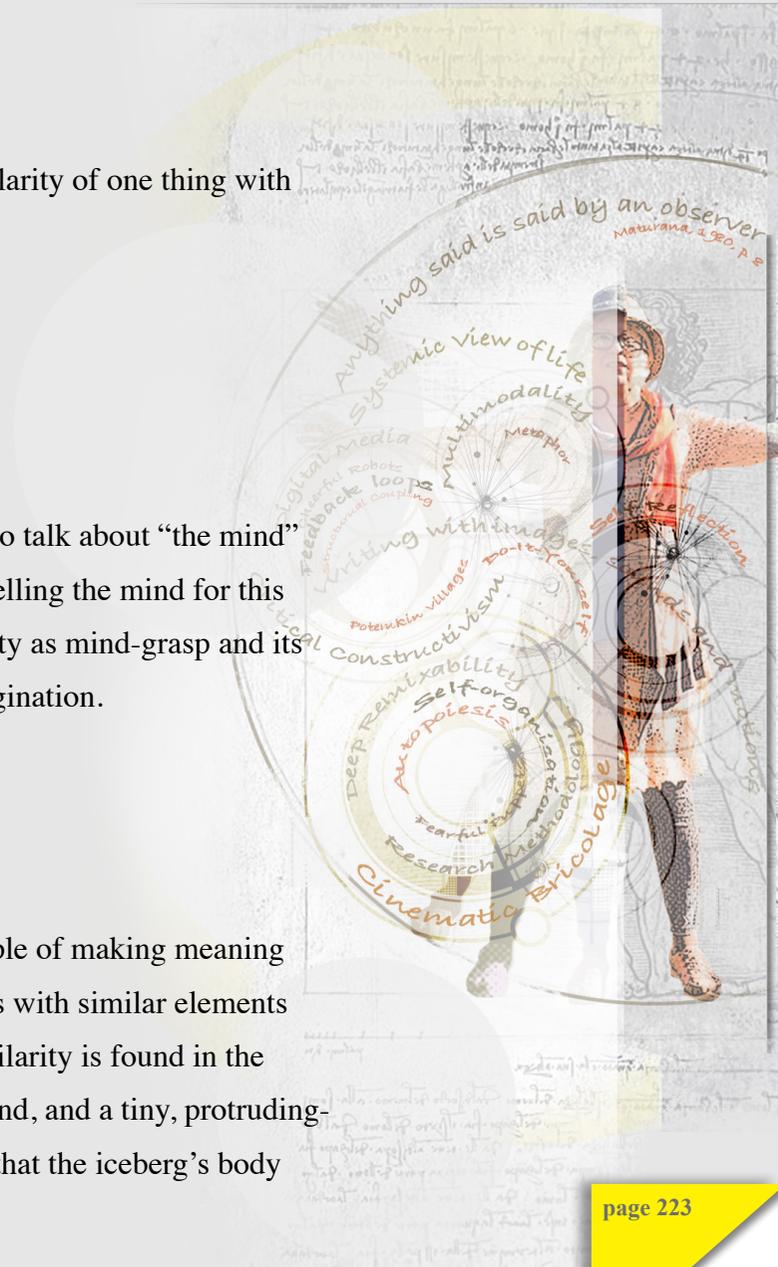
Forceville (1998) argues the creative character of metaphors lies in finding the similarity of one thing with another:

[...] that turns it (a metaphor) into an instrument that can play ... an exciting role in both poetry and science. The notion of 'creating similarity' constitutes such a momentous insight that it is worth dwelling on at greater length ... A key proposition is that human language reveals how we structure certain concepts in terms of other concepts. [loc. 540]

Talking about the mind is almost always metaphorical. 'After all, it is not possible to talk about "the mind" in any terms other than metaphorical' [Postman & Weingartner, 1996, p. 83]. In modelling the mind for this study, the iceberg image helps to provide a palpable structure for such an elusive entity as mind-grasp and its medium, memory-work. It becomes a workable space to alloy the structure with imagination.

Once the metaphor is accessed, all kinds of elaboration become possible ... – the concept provides an enormous number of elements potentially mappable upon the implicative complex, or domain of life. [loc. 552]

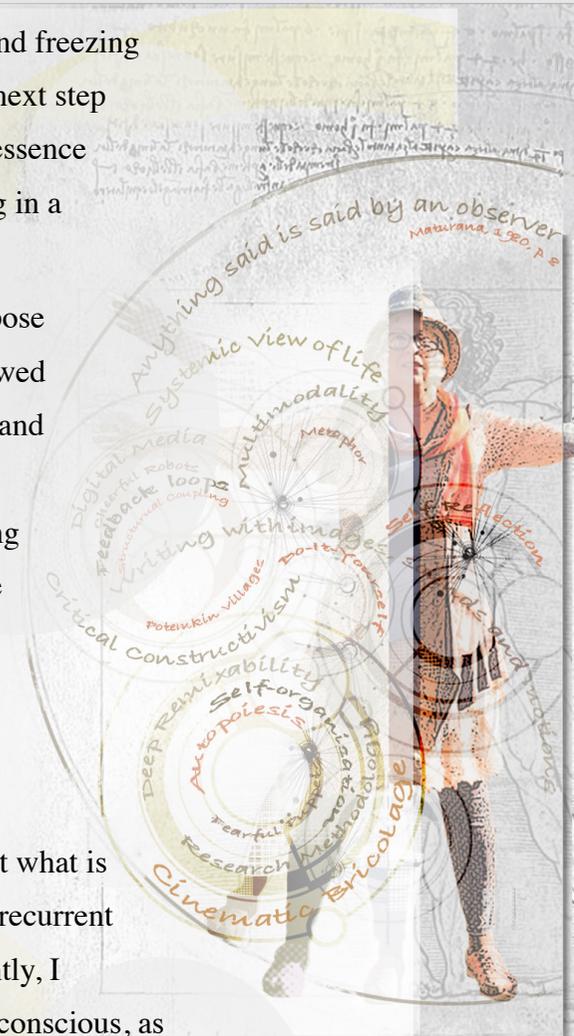
Considering the iceberg for the structure of mind-grasps allows us to see the principle of making meaning of the primary 'raw' grasps by cross-space mapping and connecting their components with similar elements within the domains of already-constructed meaning. In the iceberg metaphor, the similarity is found in the relationship between the unseen massive body of unconscious thought, on the one hand, and a tiny, protruding-from-the-water conceptualised thought, on the other. On elaboration, it is concluded that the iceberg's body



consists of crystalline fragments that can be similar to the mental-grasps, like frozen capsules of the essence of personal life events. Still further elaboration leads me to reflect on similarities between the melting and freezing properties of the ice structure which are dependent on the medium's environmental conditions. This next step allowed me to consider these melting and freezing variables as illustrations to 'see' how 'the frozen essence of an encapsulated event' could be structurally cross-spaced with other mental constructions resulting in a new formation.

In constructing meaning out of an experience by metaphoric logic, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose to recognise cross-domain formations [p. 251]. There is a domain of daily experience that can be viewed as a merger of four aspects: manipulating objects, being located in space, entering in social relations and empathic projection [Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, loc. 3272]. These four categories are mechanisms for generation of perceptual data and can be regarded as constituents of a primary mental grasp. Adjusting Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) cross-domain concept, it can be said that they are coming from a source domain [p. 251]. In understanding daily experience, we make judgements of our mental grasps that come from that experience. And in forming a metaphor, that is, understanding one thing in terms of another, similarities are found in the target domain [p. 251].

With respect to a constructed thought being the result of the complex work of the unconscious, the similarity for the target domain is found in the iceberg image – a source domain. It is well known that what is seen above the waterline is only a small part of what is hidden beneath. The unseen mass of, and the recurrent processes within, the structure under the waterline determines the visible structure above. Consequently, I abstract some spaces within the massiveness and dynamic activity of the elusive world of the self-unconscious, as the target domain, and attempt to understand how I make meaning of some of my mental grasps by mediating them with digital tools and matching the elements within them with their counterparts in the source domain.

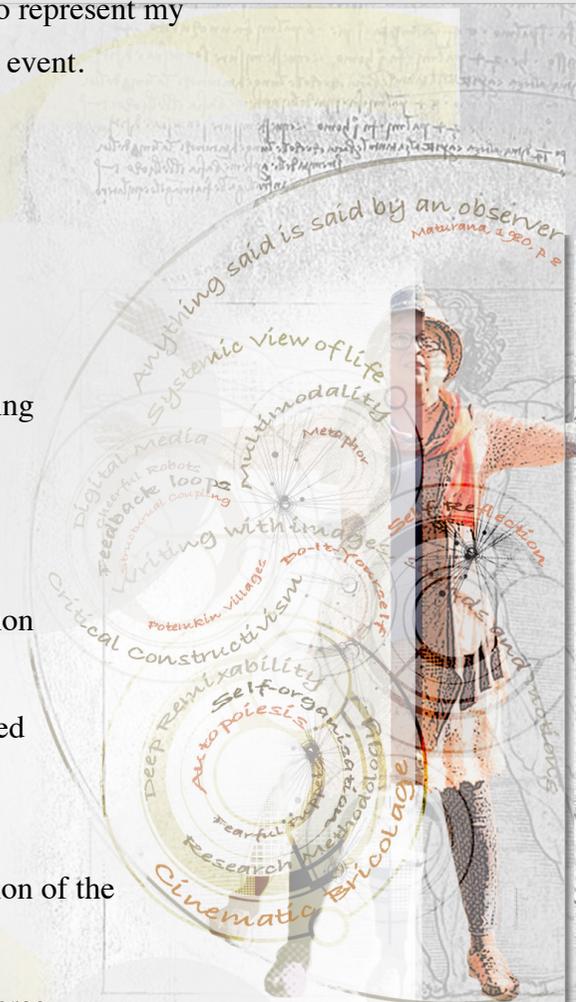


By this account, the experiential field of this study is an observer-dependent cross-space/time isolation within the subjective structures of the self-memory medium. In this abstracted space, I work with digital tools to represent my childhood experiences and make sense of them by looking at them through the lens of a hypothetical event.

## 7.2.2 Symbolisation of the Mental Space

The epistemological approach of the probes in this study is double-levelled and presented in two chapters, eight and nine. The first construction is an invented theoretical episode. It is a cinematic bricolage that kaleidoscopes the fractals of space and time of Soviet Russia and the present, assembling them according to the mental structural coupling resulting from the interaction of such aspects as communist ideology, real life data and my personal perceptions. The second is an assemblage of real childhood events in which the ideology of Soviet Russia is reflected. The two levels are found in a symbiotic interrelationship. They are inter-dependent as it is impossible to investigate the representation and meaning-making of the events without a social context within which such representation and meaning-making processes occur. The representation and meaning making become two tightly braided strands of the same process with specifically chosen context, tools and modalities. The progress and understanding of the representation is considered as an interplay of recurrent sequential (narrative) proceedings resulting in layered formations (database) and vice versa which can be seen as a projection of the layers.

The epistemological implication within this inquiry, therefore, cannot be viewed as a two or even three-dimensional progression. Its configuration can be described as topological, that is, manifold where multiple layers of production merge into one projection. 'It is also non-orientable, meaning that directions change as you move along the surface' [Rosen, 2015, loc. 252].



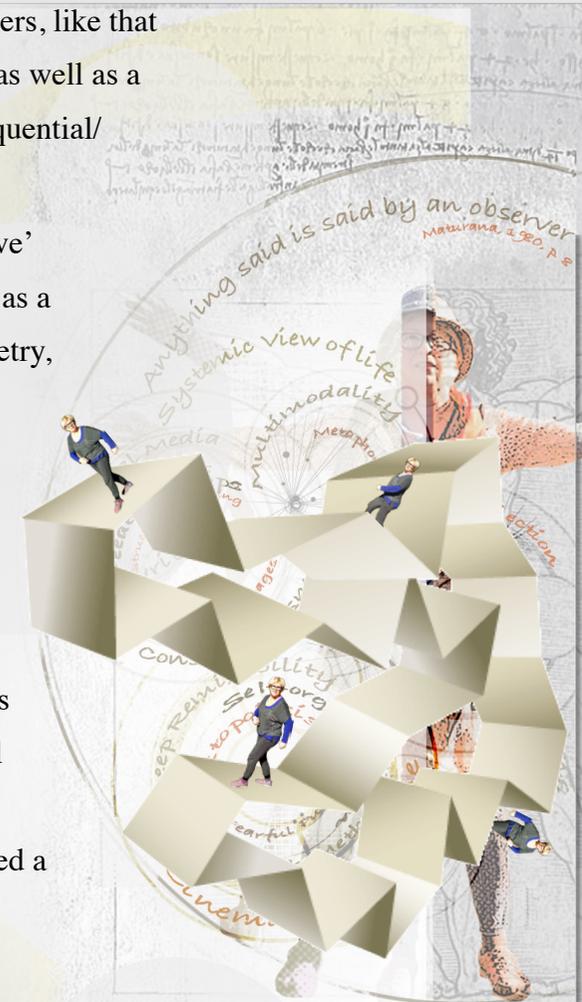
The topological space means that its movement occurs within a manifold of stretched and bent layers, like that of a closed system of continuous staircases. This implies connectedness through a linear continuity as well as a projection of the layers. It also points to the emergence of patterns woven in different directions: sequential/linear and diagonal, as well as stacked and vertical protuberances.

In defining bricolage, Kincheloe (2004) stresses that conducting analysis with ‘complexity-sensitive’ bricolage is not an easy task. He associates its methodology with the concept of fractals that is used as a ‘compelling means’ to deal with complex theoretical structures (p. 29). The founder of fractal geometry, Benoit Mandelbrot (1977) writes:

Scientists will (I am sure) be surprised and delighted to find that not a few shapes they had to call grainy, hydralike, in between, pimply, rocky, ramified, seaweedy, strange, tangled, tortuous, wiggly, wispy, wrinkled, and the like, can henceforth be approached in rigorous and vigorous quantitative fashion. [loc. 641]

What Mandelbrot is pointing at here is that what appeared to be a hopeless exercise before, such as measuring the length of chaotically changing clouds, became possible with the application of fractal geometry. When irregular shapes are reduced in size to form self-similar shapes, people can have ‘a rigorous and vigorous’ quantitative grasp of the chaotically organised entities. Mandelbrot established a means of dealing with these ‘monstrous’ and ‘pathological’ shapes.

How can the notion of topology/manifold and fractals help me understand how I can construct meaning of my own experience by means of cinematic writing? First, as discussed earlier, the process of representation, namely, cinematic writing, becomes a process of meaning-making. Layered systems in representational software underpin topological conditions for the formation of ideas. The bricoles are placed



on the layers. They are de-constructed, repositioned, modified in size and colour, have precoded filters and effects applied, and so on. The thought is brought to existence as a response to stimuli formed as a result of a unified projection that resulted from the interplay of all the active layers. It can be said that the thought ‘threads’ between the layers. Directions of the threading vary, informed by recursive feedbacks – gestalt or montages of all frames in one grasp. This brings to mind M.C. Escher’s drawing of *Multiple Points of View and Impossible Stairs: Relativity* (1953). This image inspired me to visualise the iceberg – the unconscious – with interlocked systems of stairs going through the iceberg as if between production layers, and out of it for recursive feedbacks for a better view of montages (all frames in one image) threading in various directions informed by the results of the feedbacks.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, behind every conscious thought lies the ‘vast and intricately structured’ [Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, loc. 179] unconscious that shapes people’s thinking. ‘It includes not only all our automatic cognitive operations, but also all our implicit knowledge. All of our knowledge and beliefs are framed in terms of a conceptual system that resides mostly in the [...] unconscious’ [loc. 179]. If the unconscious in this study is represented as an iceberg, it can be considered a fractal – a structure of multiple confluences of smaller, self-similar units. As established earlier, these units are primary mental grasps. Together they form, what Johnson (1997) terms, image schemata. In this study, image schemata is referred to as grasps schemata. This term signifies the relationship between mental grasps and their embodiment by means of writing with images, sounds and motions. The term grasps schemata therefore, is a system, through which conflated mental grasps are transcoded into digital texts.



## 7.2.3 Fractal Self-Similarity

If in the quantitative domain, the irregularity of a cloud's outline can be defined by certain properties of a number, which is a self-similar fractal unit, it can be suggested that the patterns of meaning-making shaped by the unconscious of a unique individual can be recognised through her self-similar fractal grasps, that is, qualitative responses to separate events.

The most arresting feature of fractal shapes found in nature, as Capra and Luisi (2014) assert:

[...] is that their characteristic patterns are found repeatedly at descending scales, so that their parts, at any scales, are similar in shape to the whole [...] The shape of the whole is similar to itself at all levels of scale' [p. 116].

If parts of their structure are magnified, they reveal a multi-layered substructure in which the same patterns are repeated again and again [p. 117]

In other words, as Boulton, Allen and Bowman (2015) notice, 'the complex systems display properties which are self-similar' [p. 82]. The structure of the iceberg is a massive, unique and complex accumulation of ice crystals and fractals that become smaller and smaller in scale. As much as every fractal is unique, the whole iceberg is a formation of particles that are self-similar to each other and to the larger whole. In following the theoretical path of the systemic view of the world, I also see self-similar fractals engaged in constant interaction with each other in a continuous process of the whole, structurally coupling with the environment. 'To think systemically is to look widely, to seek out patterns of connections, to make the assumption that knowledge is held in the forms that emerge from interdependencies and reflexive connections' [Boulton, Allen & Bowman, 2015, p. 36]. The authors describe systemic interactions as synergistic, meaning that they are not the result of a linear cause-and-effect order, but continuous interactions resulting in structural coupling between the systems and their surroundings.



The network of these non-linear, that is circular, synergistic interactions brings about constant transformation. If we accept that ‘our conception of self [...] is fundamentally metaphoric’ [Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, loc. 186], it can be suggested that the smaller crystal/fractals that lie at the foundation of the iceberg’s formation are symbols for primary metaphors. Earlier in this chapter, it was established that primary metaphors are concepts that result from cross-domain (sensory-motor and abstract) associations. For the purpose of this study, these categories will be known as mental grasps; their conceptual blending, as grasps schema; and conflation of those into a more complex structure, grasps schemata.

Consequently, the body of an iceberg referred to as the unconscious can also be seen as a complex fractal of grasps schemata. As the systems view envisions life as ‘a web of networks within networks’ [Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 68], the unconscious in this study is modelled as grasps schemata within grasps schemata. To deal with its complexity, I allocate a particular grasps schema which I consider to be a critical self-similar mental framework present in all scales of the schemata. In examining this conflation of grasps – historical and personal data as well as my emotive reactions to them – I look from the present to the past through the amplified role of the observer. This implies that although I reflect on my past, I represent it in light of how I see it from the present moment of observation. Although I am concerned with preservation of the past and I represent it within the boundary of the given social ideology, through the process of reflection, I engage myself in self-reorganising and originating new qualitative characteristics within myself. In other words, this act results in emergent properties and can be considered as an act of autopoiesis – self-making.



Grasp-schemata consisting of a multitude self-similar fractals and grasp schema allocated for reflection.

The act of autopoiesis is realised through a montage of a hypothetical event, where I place myself in the midst of a discussion about the social ideology that I grew up with and juxtapose it with episodes from my childhood. Cinematic bricolage, in this case, appears to be an effective mediator of imaginary and reflective processes. The use of internet data and personal artefacts with the application of automation and modularity opens up new ways for representing and meaning-making.

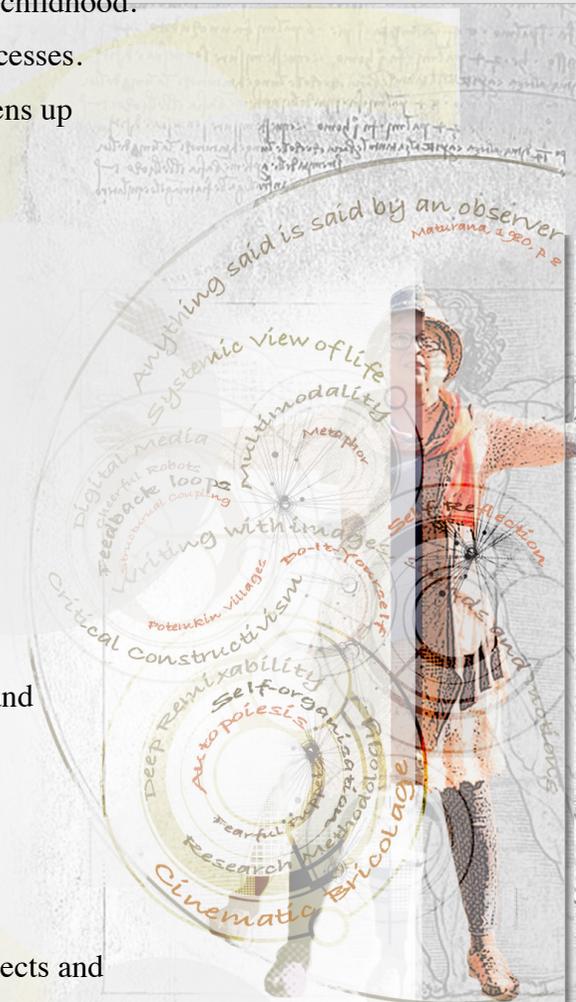
Modularity, as Manovich (2002) states, ‘can be called fractal structure of new media’[p. 30]. He elaborates:

Just as a fractal has the same structure on different scales, a new media object has the same modular structure throughout. Media elements, be they images, sounds, shapes, or behaviours, are represented as collections of discrete samples (pixels, polygons, voxels, characters, scripts). These elements are assembled into larger-scale objects but continue to maintain their separate identities. [p. 30]

Therefore, modularity facilitates the remix within multimodal representations and is one of the central parts in the mechanism of layered production through which the interplay between database and narrative, as a human/computer logic enmesh, can be observed.

## 7.2.4 Cinematic Writing in Action

Working with digital pages requires digitisation and simulation of the physical properties of the objects and their spatial relations. Namely, the bricoles gathered in the physical world are digitised, converted from atoms of matter into simulated counterparts of numeric representation by means of automation. The material objects, in Levi Strauss’ (1962) words, are operators, as they carry in themselves ‘the messages that were transmitted in advance’, like codes from ‘the past experiences’ that help to economically re-create a new co-existence of



images, signs and ideas (p.13). In a digitised, simulated world, they are objects made of discrete units of data. This allows us to detach them from their environment, using the principle of variability, and employ them in a new, dilettante construction, according to what Bachelard (2014) describes as the reverberations of poetic imagination. He writes: ‘we feel a poetic power rising naïvely within us ... we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past’ [loc. 532].

Accordingly, in representing and thus understanding experience, we disassemble the objects of our contacts, which are fused with certain tints of meaning – messages – and recreate them in a do-it-yourself way to signify the ‘auratic saturation’ (Walter, 1999, p. 365) of how we perceive non-material aspects. Into this conceptual web, I would like to spin Lakoff and Johnson’s idea (see p. 11) of four everyday experience categories. Manipulating objects and being located in space are linked to the physical reality of the world. These two categories are associated with such physical properties as height, width, depth, feel of the surface, sound, speed, time and so on. Their digital simulations result in the production of physical properties that can then be used to represent two other categories: entering in social relations and empathic projection.

The image of a fractal of an iceberg establishes the starting point in cinematic writing schemata by signifying a symbolic, topological place for further representations. If the iceberg suggests a mental space, the watermill stands for the process .The symbol is mechanical, indicating an involvement of technological devices with certain affordances and limitations. The process is recursive – the wheel can go in both directions but not in a straight line. The process is an interplay of technological and human logic, represented by the materiality of the waterwheel and the fluidity of the running streams of water. In certain circumstances, melting is intensified and new streams appear. The streams set the wheel in motion, but by doing so, they also bend in shape and break into splashing



fragments caused by the watermill's rotations. This brings about structural changes in the associated mental grasps and leads to a new development in the grasp schemata.

The movement of the wheel, streams, splashes and structural shifts in the grasp schemata, awaken cross-domain associative memories. They result in re-evaluation of the initial thought, in finding alternatives, in forming new cross-domain confluences ... and then ... something happens, something similar to when Proust (1922) takes a bite of Madeleine-cake:

... I feel something starts within me, something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise, something that has been embedded like an anchor at a great depth; I do not know yet what it is, but I can feel it mounting slowly; I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of the great spaces traversed. [loc. 865]

This is when my attention is drawn to a cinema playing in my own mind, creating images and places that I had never experienced or been to before. The rivulets in my mind are bubbling, 'threading their pearls upon a grey background, like the pattern made through the cobwebs upon a window' [loc. 7470]. 'Combray', the rivulets murmur. The name means nothing to me and yet the sensory movie projector knows better. It takes me to an unidentified intersection between the world brought forth by Proust and my own.

MARCEL PROUST

A



... Like as if it is a sea-shell, I bring the object to my ear, close my eyes and see by listening ...

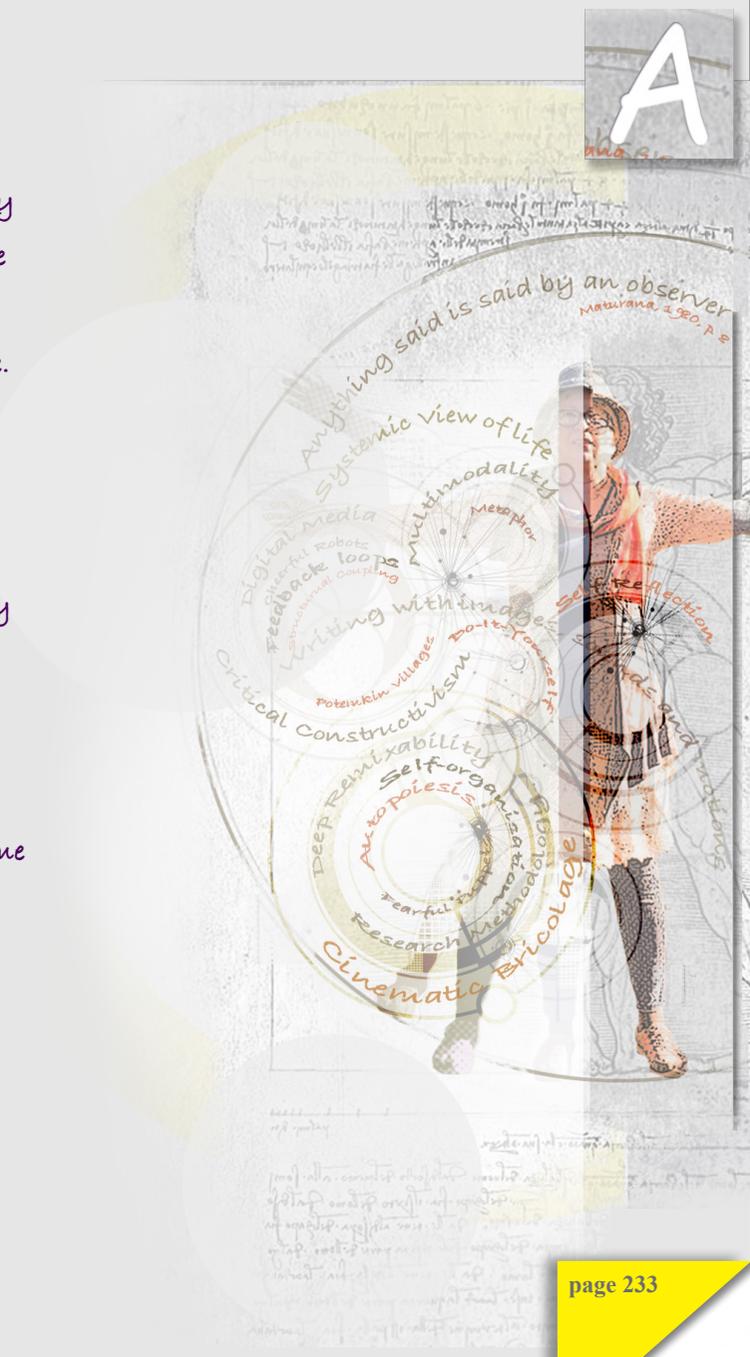
... with the tip of my rubber boot, I touch a fragile film of ice formed on a puddle one early autumn morning. The crust of the ice crunches and not knowing the depth of the puddle I step in, only to discover that I am in a river. The warm summer water envelops me. It is swarming with little fish that flicker away as soon as they become aware of my presence. A rusty-gold leaf tattooed with the fractal code is bobbing on the surface. With ripples, like fingers, the stream catches it and surges it through the groove along a road.

Tapping on the wet cobbles with the heels of my boots and carrying a heavy bricoleur bag, I rush after it. I know, it is something more than just a leaf. I peer through the foggy distance ... I think it is a paper-boat crewed by the Steadfast Tin Soldier ...

Not far ahead, is the fast whirlpool of a drain. The stream scurries into it. 'How much time does the soldier have left before he perishes there?' I glance up at the clock on the Red Kremlin tower, as if it can give me an exact estimation ... But the rain screens it from me ...

The image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface [...] It takes root in us ... it has been given to us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it [...] it is a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.

[Bachelard, 1958, loc. 533]



## 7.3 Probing of Cinematic Bricolage

### 7.3.1 Dominance of Alphabetic Writing

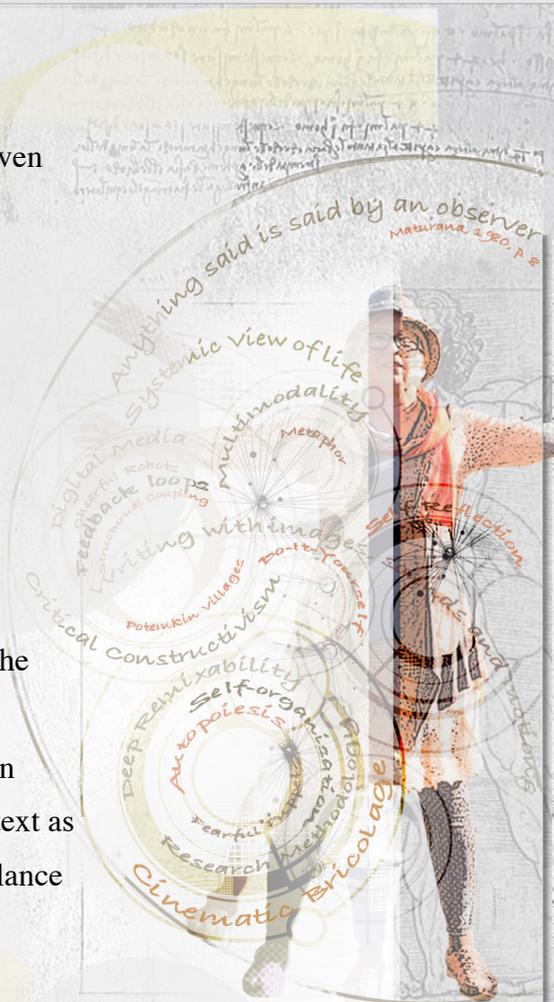
To explore the qualitative properties of cinematic bricolage, I have developed two probes: chapter seven – *The Tea Party* – and chapter eight – *The Harlequin*.

As mentioned earlier, there are conditions for the doctoral study with which this thesis has to comply in order to achieve a passing grade. One is the word count, which as Kress (2012) puts it ‘stands for’ an amount of work, of time spent on the task, an indicator of the kind of work expected and of the seriousness of the enterprise of ‘making a contribution to knowledge’ [p. 250]. With such attributes assigned to the length of the thesis as a criterion for evaluation, it has to be taken with considerable regard. This means that in the balance between time spent articulating thought in writing and in other modalities, writing wins most of the time.

In fact, in cinematic bricolage, alphabetic writing is treated as the rudiment component for weaving the other modes of expression into its fabric of meaning-making. As a semiotic resource, writing has been in dominant use for several hundred years and therefore has achieved a level of effectiveness which can contribute to the use and development of other semiotic modes. Cinematic bricolage provides written text as a framework into which images, sounds and movements become interwoven, gradually altering the balance between the modes.

For example, as Kress (2003) states:

When in the past image appeared on the page it did so subject to the logic of writing, the relation of image to writing which we still know as ‘illustration’. When writing now appears on the screen, it does so subject to the logic of the image. [p. 9]



Screen writing is perhaps changing the modality balance in most genres of contemporary writing, but this is hardly the case in scholarly writing. With firmly-cemented criteria specifying a certain amount of words to be written in a study, it is difficult to find room, in terms of time, space or intellectual involvement, to experiment with novel modal formations. This explains why in the two probes that I present in this study, the images, sounds and motions appear on the pages to ‘subject to the logic of writing’ and not the other way around. Nevertheless, this study is a trial version. I hope it will encourage further research in the development of cinematic writing and other emerging genres in multimodal representations of meanings; and perhaps prompt consideration for change in the form of doctoral thesis submission.

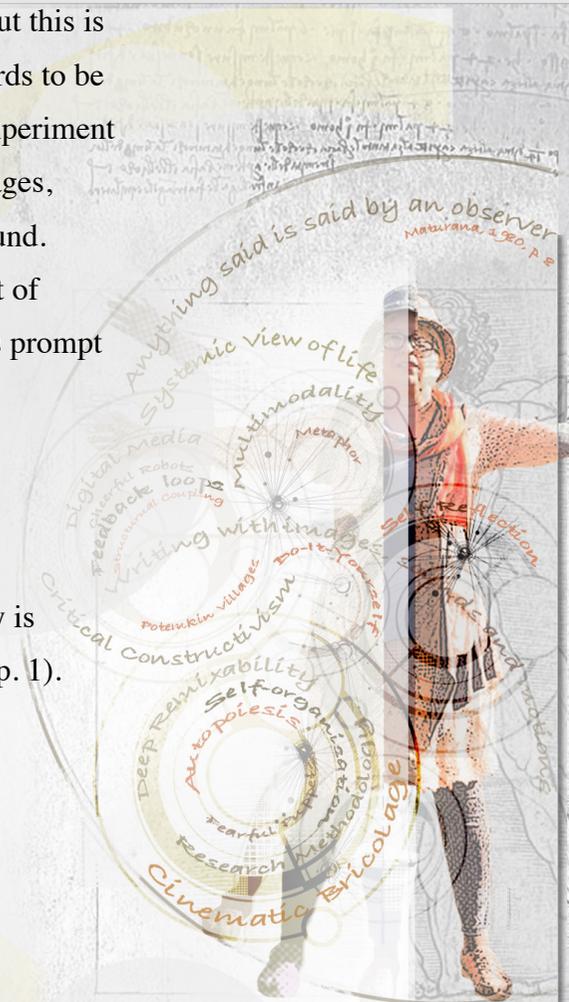
### 7.3.2 Mapping out the Probes

Being concerned with the development of cinematic bricolage as a research methodology, this study is ‘explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 1).

Rogers observes:

Meaning-making bricoleurs combine their imagination with whatever knowledge tools they have at hand in their repertoire (e.g., ritual, observation, social practices) and with whatever artefacts are available in the given context (i.e., discourses, institutions, and dominant knowledges) to meet diverse knowledge production-tasks. (p. 3)

Cinematic bricolage can be employed for different types of knowledge generation. In this study, I have chosen to test it as a methodology for self-reflection. This means that examination of the phenomenon of inquiry is carried out through a combination of multiple approaches in which an autonomous observer of the



present observes herself in the past and, in both cases, is located in the web of a social world.

Poerksen describes this dialectic by stating that constructivists concentrate their argument ‘primarily on the singular and autonomous observer’ but, on the other hand:

[...] reality arises within the framework of a society – and that means that all the individuals must be seen as entities that are formed by their societies and their cultures. They observe with the eyes of their groups, they see the world against the background of their origins.

[loc. 76]

In other words, the interdependence of an autonomous observer and the social group is similar to fractal logic. An individual, the carrier of her own irregularities, is a self-similar entity in a larger structure. Being influenced by the constructivist-systemicist perspective, cinematic bricolage’s reasoning is based on seeing the relationship between individual and society as a dynamic interaction that changes together, congruently, as a result of this interaction [Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2012, p. 28]. In this view, cinematic bricolage promotes self-awareness which allows individuals to gain confidence in their ability to become active agents in the alteration of social structures of their existence.

Probe One, *The Tea Party*, is written as a ‘thematic parody’, a genre that ‘is pervasive and that [...] provides additional levels of meaning in contemporary Russian satire’ (Ryan-Hayes, 2006). Soviet Russia was a society where personal world views were prohibited and where the only philosophical doctrine allowed was that of Marxism/Leninism.

Twenty-five years later, living in Australia, I write *The Tea Party* chapter in an allegorical style. The image of the iceberg developed throughout earlier chapters and used in the beginning of *The Tea Party* symbolises that the event is not factual but constructed inside my mental space. Through the construction of this imaginary



event, I try to understand my own position in relation to the ideological medium, that like any other Russian person, I had no choice other than to accept.

As a developing individual, I lived mainly under the rule of Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982), a time when ‘censorship was relatively rigid and writers and purveyors of *samizdat* and *tamizdat* literature [secret publishing of banned literature] were subject to persecution’ (Ryan-Hayes, 1995, p. 2). In composing this probe I indulge myself in gathering information and writing about communism in an absolutely free manner, adding imaginary elements without being afraid of unwanted consequences.

Apart from some selected items of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1845/2011; 1848/2014), in this chapter I draw from the writings of such scholars and literary historians as Robert Payne (1977); Peter Singer (1980); Richard Lourie (1999); Robert Service (2002); Richard Pipes (2003); Ronald Clark (2011) as well as from audio books written by Richard Pipes (2001) and Ralph Raico (1991). I gather video data from YouTube and various websites. In this probe, I do not make any theoretical claims on the subject of communism. Through the act of conflating the fragments from gathered literature and my personal memories and feelings, I try to make sense of my own attitude towards what I define as a ‘Potemkin’s culture’ that constituted the social environment in Soviet Russia.

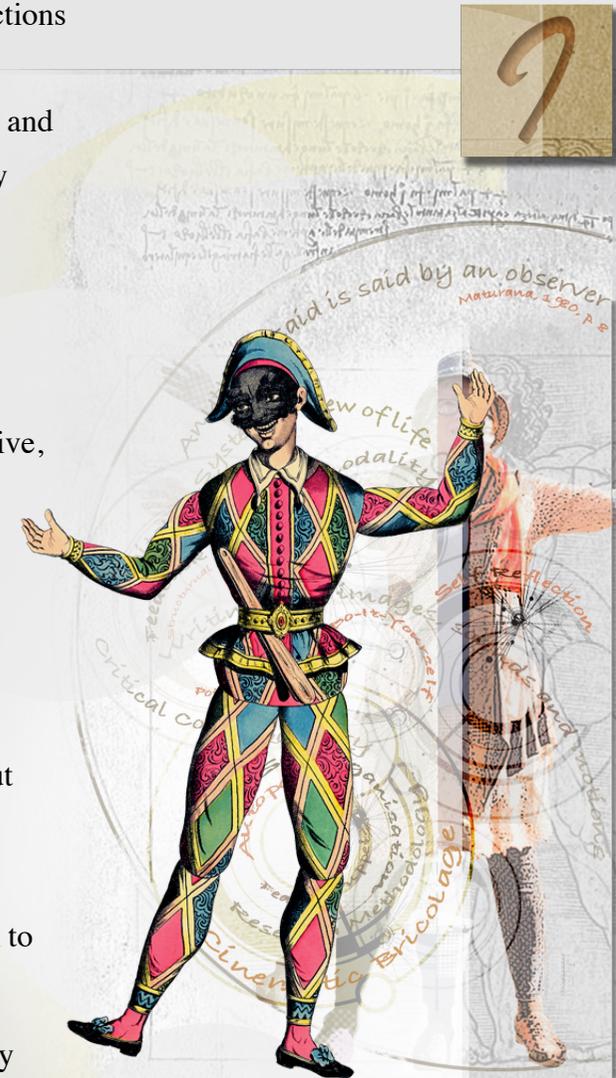
In doing so, I am incorporating a typical Russian ‘satire style’ which, as Ryan-Hayes (1995) states, ‘has found a special resonance in Russian and Soviet culture’ (p. 3). Elaborating on this, she writes: ‘While Western literary traditions have often de-emphasised the didactic function of satire and viewed it as a forum for oppositionist commentary and mockery, Russian and Soviet criticism has emphasised the reformatory nature of the mode’ (p.3). She goes on: ‘censorship in Russia and the Soviet Union [is] (paradoxically) a factor that contributes positively to satirical writing. Satire aims explicitly or implicitly at the exposure or improvement of a faulty *status quo* in life; parody, strictly speaking, is an aesthetic phenomenon’ (p. 4).



The second probe, *The Harlequin*, is based on actual events from my childhood. They are reflections of the reality of life juxtaposed with the absurdity of the ideological construct composed by the people at the tea party envisioned in the first probe. The harlequin, along with the cheerful robots and fearful puppet, is the third social-archetypal individual. Unlike the previous two that were already given certain characteristics, the harlequin is an emergent category. I am personally attracted to this character from classical Italian comedy, at least in how I perceive him, because of his trust in himself to find a way out of any difficult situation. Although he can be credulous at times, his ability to intelligently evaluate circumstances brings him out of his misery. As the [delpiano.com/carnaval/html](http://delpiano.com/carnaval/html) site (2012) describes: 'he has all the necessary wit and creativity to get along, survive, take his satisfactions in the world that is constantly abusing him'. Placing the harlequin inside a contemporary social structure, I proceed in my usual bricoleur fashion. I de-construct what I have 'at hand' – the harlequin's original character features – remove the mask from his face and reconstruct him according to my own constructivist-systemicist perspective in a do-it-yourself manner.

Now the harlequin is a prototype of an individual who knows how to construct knowledge about himself and the world around him. Because of his developed self-awareness, he knows how to affirm and maintain his own self-structure, but is also a highly integrative personality who is an active and responsible participant in the local, as well as global, community. He can be he or she, to fuse two together, he is she.

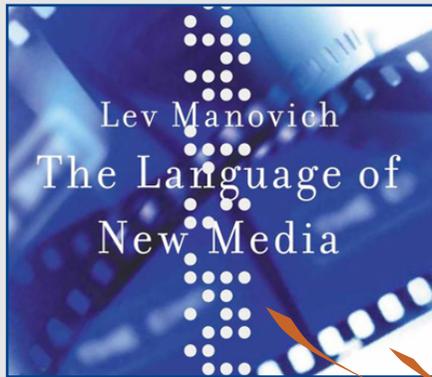
In both probes, with the help of images, sounds and movements, I attempt to evoke a shudder by placing representational fragments incongruous in their nature side-by-side; for example, a naive childhood and evil; strawberries and gunshots; fair intentions and a good cause that turn into a collective nightmare.



Vintage "Pantlo" Jumping Jack Doll - Courtesy of FK Duncan

Harlequin as an antique French paper doll.  
Ferrebeekeeper.com

### 7.3.3 Potemkin's Villages



In his book, *The Language of New Media*, Lev Manovich wrote:

The concept of *Potemkin's villages* became official aesthetic doctrine in the Soviet Union. It replaced living reality with a window-dressing myth. This lavish window-display ideology required people to see, and for writers and artist to depict, 'the present as though it did not exist and the future as if it had already arrived' (Pipes, 2003, p. 70).

Pipes goes on with his analysis:

In consequence, what was printed, staged, filmed, or broadcast in no way corresponded to reality: it was surreality. People adjusted to it by splitting, as it were, their minds and personalities, creating a schizophrenic condition, on one level of which they knew the truth but repressed it, sharing it only with their closest family and friends, while on another they pretended to believe every word of official propaganda. This created a strain that made life in the Soviet Union exceedingly difficult to bear. (p. 70)



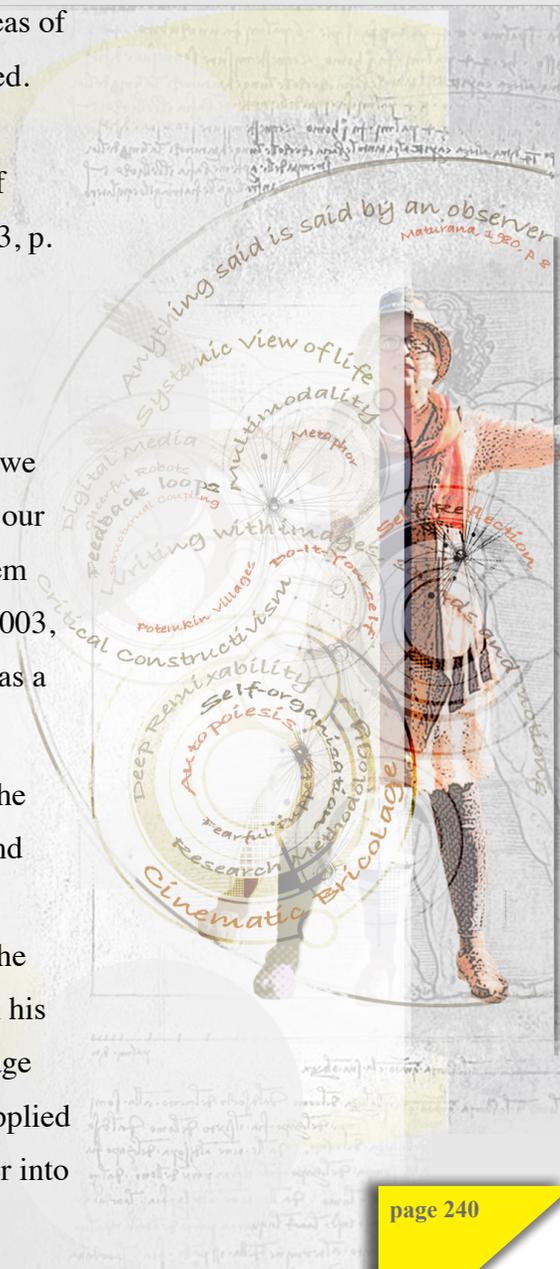
Lev Manovich, 2001



Stalin himself fell victim to the surreal existence he created. Being afraid to leave well-protected areas of his dwellings in expectation of an assassin at every corner, Stalin never visited the country he governed. ‘Surrounded by sycophants’, he obtained knowledge of the ‘true’ condition his subjects lived in from specially prepared films that glorified his leadership and demonstrated the prosperity and happiness of collective farm workers, who sat at tables ‘bending from the weight of turkeys and geese’ (Pipes, 2003, p. 71).

Diligently heeding to Lenin’s statement, ‘Of all the arts, for us, the cinema is the most important,’ (FilmReference, 2016), Soviet cinematographers, writers, actors, artists and musicians constructed a reality that never existed. It was from this unreal reality that we, former Soviet citizens, learned what we were supposed to think about ourselves and our life. Whatever struggles, oppression or severe purges our parents and then our own generation had to go through, we not only accepted them but considered them necessary in order to destroy ‘the corrupt society’ that consisted of us – ‘the sorry specimen’ (Pipes, 2003, p. 69) – and to build the society anew, in which those ‘who were nothing would become everything’, as a Russian translation of the *Internationale* declared.

The whole of Soviet Russia was an enormous *Potemkin’s Village* with a cinematic web that spread the hypnotic communist virus across it, making people see only the movies sets, hiding other things behind the decorations. By an intriguing coincidence, one of the most famous Russian movies was the film called *The Battleship Potemkin* (the ship was named after the same Kniaz Potemkin, the architect of the *Potemkin’s Villages*). The film was directed in 1925 by Sergei Eisenstein and became popular through his application of innovative montage editing techniques. There is a strong link between cinematic montage and bricolage in qualitative research, in which the description of Denzin and Lincoln (2013) can be applied to both methodologies: ‘The underlying assumption [...] is that the viewer puts the sequences together into



a meaningful emotional whole, as if at a glance, all at once' [p. 8]. With a multimodal dimension added to the bricolage, it also acquires a sort of cinematic quality. It provides the unified experience 'at a glance' but it also facilitates extended participation in interpreting the content of a digital page. Activating visual, kinetic and audio elements in certain time sequences allows their organic integration into composing and experiencing an alphabetic text.

### 7.3.4 From the Restricted Soviet Cinema Environment to the Totality of the WWW

Like Lev Manovich, I grew up in the Soviet Russia of the 1970s. In the development of the research probes, I employ *The Battleship Potemkin* as a point of departure into the construction of an imaginary event that I use as an ideological foundation for the environment of my personal development. In this regard, *The Battleship Potemkin* carries a great deal of significance. It is a powerful example of Soviet propaganda artefacts. The film crowns the mountain of revolutionary films, not just because of its subject matter and revolutionary crafting, but as Bergan (1997) puts it:

... because it departed in its structure from conventional bourgeois drama – the eternal love affair between a man and a woman. Its absence from *Potemkin* was attributed solely to Eisenstein's pristine concentration on the social forces governing society according to Marx.  
[loc. 2149]

Away with sentiment, the representations of life constructed of components severed with mighty hacks, made of thick lion's strokes and electrifying colours. No smeared sfumatos – blurred lines and borders – no

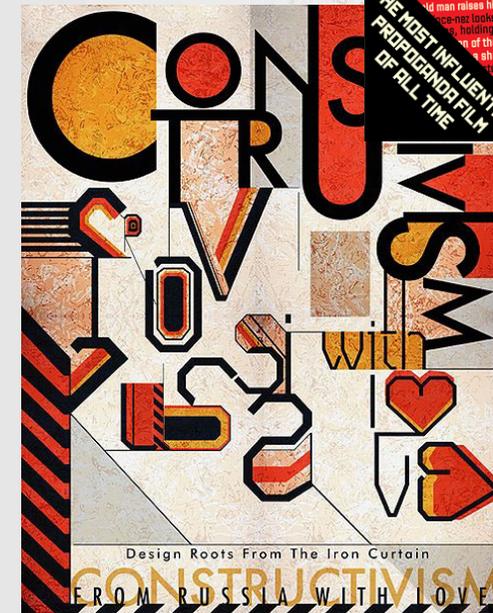


anaemic chewing of emotions but forcefully chopped slabs of substance.

*The Potemkin* film taught us well. Its famous *Odessa Steps sequence* was cut deep into every Soviet citizen's psyche: the panic, the terror, a young mother trapped between the Tsarist troops firing at people on the steps leading to the city's harbour. The mother pushes her baby carriage across the landing but is shot and falls. 'With accelerating speed, the carriage (with the baby in it) bounces down the steps, past the dead citizens' [Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 11].

From this scene we learned that our enemies were merciless monsters. The scene sparked a sacred fire of hatred toward anyone who could in any way be associated with them. 'Burn them, be pitiless to them too', the smoking fire demanded, ready to flare up at any moment.

The second important aspect of *The Battleship Potemkin* is encapsulated in McLuhan's (1964) famous aphorism (mentioned several times), 'the medium is the message'. 'The message of the movie medium is that of transitions from linear connections to configurations [...] the movie appeared as a world of triumphant illusions and dreams' [loc 228]. Each technology creates a new environment. Metaphorically speaking, fake Potemkin's villages became a country-wide environment of illusory projections of life that did not exist. In the electronic age the recreation of the environment is total [loc. 95] because it shapes and controls the form as well 'as eliminates time and space factors' of human association [loc 170].



Russian Constructivism poster  
Behance (2012)

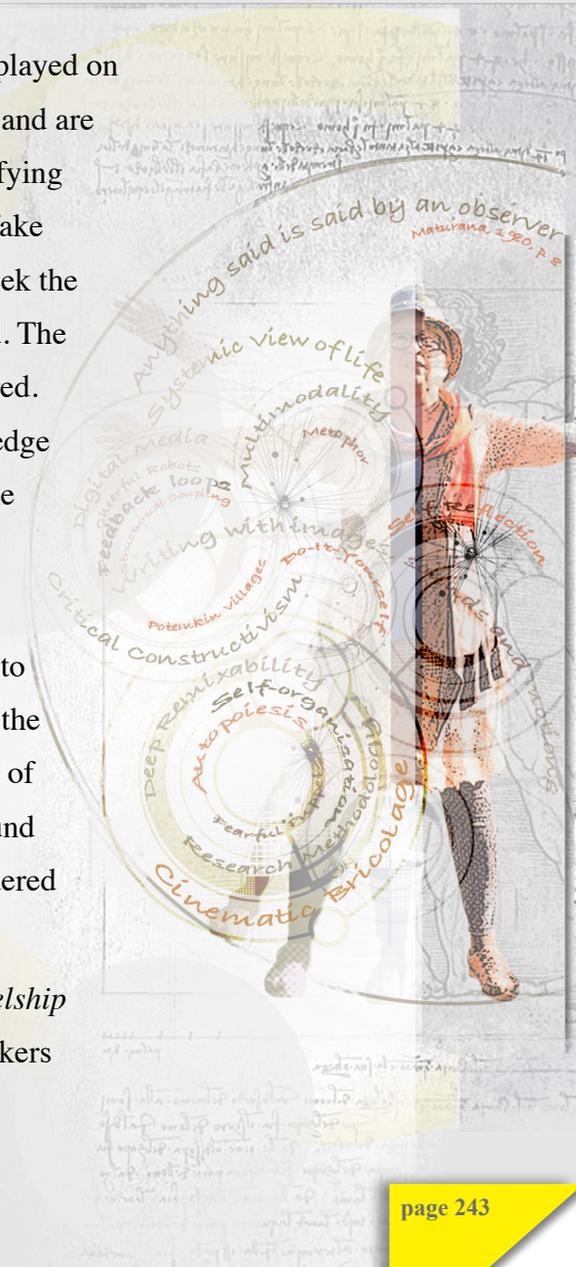


### 7.3.5 The Struggle to not Become an Automaton

With cinema, the metaphor of the *Potemkin's village* façades cropped up clearly as a projection displayed on the walls of the Kremlin. As in Plato's cave allegory, people watch propaganda movies continuously and are made to believe what they see is their only reality. They prefer to stay ignorant glorifying and identifying themselves with the subjects and events seen in the fake realities. There are, of course, some in that fake virtual environment who realise that they live in a skilfully orchestrated illusion. They desperately seek the truth and find that it is hidden behind the Kremlin's walls, and is much uglier than was ever expected. The 'discoverers' are left untouched by the government as long as no one knows what they have discovered. However, the most common scenario suggests that they are unable to keep their newly-found knowledge unshared and are consequently taken behind the walls; someone needs to do hard labour to sustain the continuing projection shown to others.

The psychological mechanism working behind such submission to political power described by Fromm (1941), as discussed earlier, is an individual's adoption of the cultural patterns offered to her to such a degree, that she loses sense of the mismatch between herself and society in order to be rid of 'the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness' [p. 189]. This kind of state is, in Fromm's terms, that of an automaton. This is when the individual becomes 'identical with millions of other automatons around him [and] need(s) not feel alone and anxious anymore' [p. 190]. In this study, an automaton is considered as an umbrella term encompassing both cheerful robots and fearful puppets.

The life of such a renowned master of cinematography as Sergei Eisenstein, the maker of *The Battleship Potemkin* film, can be taken as an example of the trauma that many creative intellectual and free thinkers suffered when they tried to survive but at the same time not to slip into an automaton state.



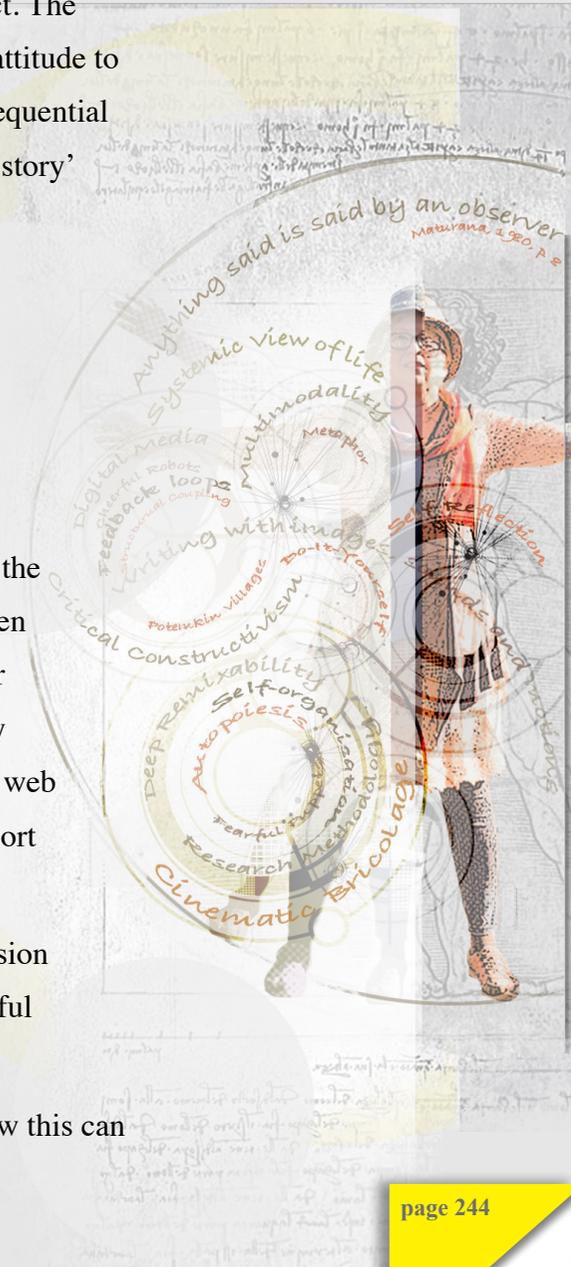
In relation to his revolutionary creative technique of montage developed in *'Potemkin'*, Eisenstein (1949) wrote: 'From the collision of two given factors arises a concept [p. 43]. [...] Thus montage is conflict. The basis of every art is always conflict' [p. 44]. Later in his life, as Bergan (2016) notices, Eisenstein's attitude to montage had changed. Now he saw a montage as a technical method to connect and construct the 'sequential exposition of the theme, the material, the plot, the action ... the simple matter of telling a connected story' [loc. 5597]. Analysing this aesthetic change, Macdonald (1957), theorised that:

Eisenstein's change of mind about montage has nothing to do with aesthetic theory; it is simply an adaptation to the political pressures which have crushed all Soviet Art [...]. The cinema is a dramatic art form, and dramatic structure depends largely on the tension created by conflict; but there cannot be conflict in a totalitarian state, since there is only one principle, one set of values authorised to be publicly expressed. (p. 160)

In today's Russia, the condition of such a deadly totalitarianism is 'ostensibly obsolete'. However, the most controversial fact that can strike a contemporary observer is that, although the truth that has been hidden behind the Kremlin walls for decades has been somewhat revealed, *Potemkin's Cinema* never stopped. As the resistance movement (if one had even truly existed) has almost been extinguished by the severe pressure of the regime, the Kremlin extended its physical walls to the world of the virtual web projecting *Potemkin's villages* across the universe. Kasparov (2015) claims that Russia's biggest export today is not oil or gas, but corruption [loc. 2707].

Such a view points out that *Potemkin's culture* is not limited to Russia. It is a tried-and-true persuasion condition for any society to cultivate automatons ranging from the cheerful robot type to that of fearful puppets depending on the circumstantial climate of that society.

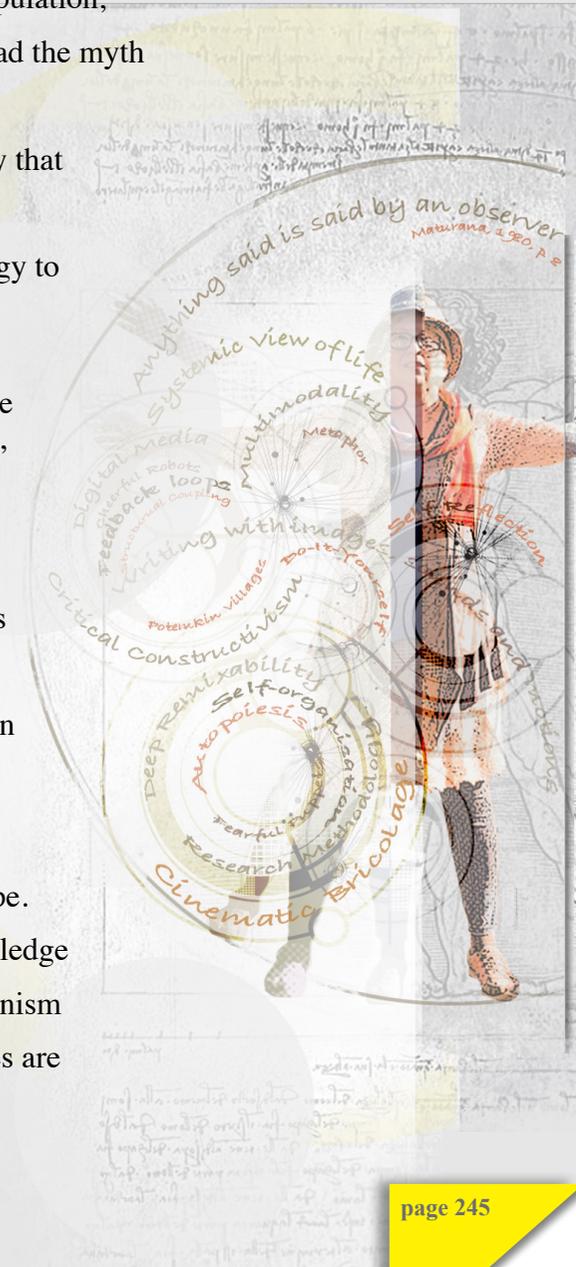
Based on a Russian application of the *Potemkin's culture* concept, I identify four key aspects of how this can be recognised:



- a) *Potemkin's villages* – the ideology of a fake reality the ruling force uses to manipulate the population;
- b) *Potemkin's media* – the media available for the society at a time of its existence, used to spread the myth about the fake reality;
- c) *Potemkin's art* – any form of creative expression used to win people over to thinking in a way that benefits the ruling power;
- d) *Potemkin's battle rigour* – a highly developed zealous attitude that supports the ruling ideology to the point of physical force, if required.

Having made the above distinctions, my goal is now to examine the potential of cinematic bricolage for increasing self-awareness and application of 'critical reflection on the forces that shape the world' [Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, p. 3]. In exploring the two probes that follow this chapter, I want to see in what ways the embodiment of meaning through writing with images, sounds and movements can inform self-assertive, on the one hand, as well as community-integrative, on the other, tendencies in the researcher. I see the reinforcement and ability to balance these two tendencies as an important condition for recognising the signs of *Potemkin's cultures* and preventing oneself from sinking into an automaton state in whatever form it may be manifested.

I emphasise that, in accordance with the focus in the probes being placed on representing  knowing with cinematic bricolage, the domain of socio-political examination lies outside of this scope. In this study, it exists as an observer-dependent reality about which the observer constructs her knowledge utilising cinematic bricolage methodology. Because the probes are not intended as a study of communism in theory and practice, but rather an observer personal experience, some of Lenin's and Marx's quotes are taken from books that informed my ideational activities and not from the original sources.



## 7.4 Convergence Points

This chapter is a prelude to the two chapters of probes. It has explained and given some examples of how metaphoric logic can work in constructing representational concepts when digital layered production is employed. To this end, I experimented with a metaphoric representation of the process of representation. I see the process of representing to be inseparable from the process of meaning making. In depicting this as a dynamic interaction between the narrative and database categories of expression, my intention is to demonstrate the recursive feedback-dependable emergence of an embodied thought. A comparison to a person walking comes to mind: when stepping on one foot, her brain gets feedback from the body and sends a signal to the other foot that in order for the body that has leaned forward to keep balance, the other foot needs to be put forward. Then the same thing happens with the other foot. In other words, like humans need to have two feet for walking, the process of representing and meaning-making leans on narrative and database methods for articulation of what is implicit knowing. Likewise, through the embodiment of the meaning, the meaning becomes evident, that is, represented through a suitable semiotic mode. Therefore, representing ↔ minding are two strands of one circular process.

In this chapter, I have visualised the process as a dynamic interconnection of systems that are symbolised as following:

- a) the unconscious, a complex schemata of conflated mental grasps, is a massive body of an iceberg beneath the waterline;
- b) an embodied thought is the above-water tip of the iceberg;
- c) the streams of thoughts are rivulets of melted ice;
- d) digital media is a watermill that is set in motion by the running rivulets.

The moving wheel causes more of the ice to melt and newly cropped up rivulets join those that already exist.



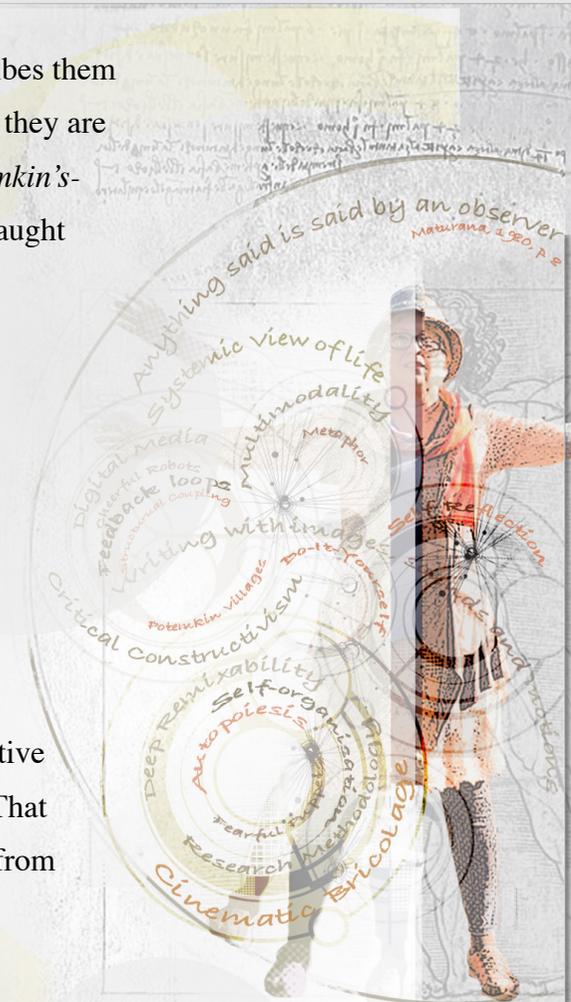
Together, they influence the pattern of the wheel's movements, such as rhythm, speed and direction (forward/backward). The further representing  minding results in a refinement of the embodied concept.

This process is further explored through the two probes that follow this chapter. This chapter describes them and is their introduction. The first probe is *The Tea Party* and the second is *The Harlequin*. Although they are both narrations based on ideology from Soviet Russia, my goal is to illustrate the conditions of *Potemkin's-Village* culture that is applicable to any society in which people, unaware of its signs, can easily be caught in its invisible nets.

The main intention of the two probes is to offer the kind of critical thinking that, borrowing from Giroux (2011), is:

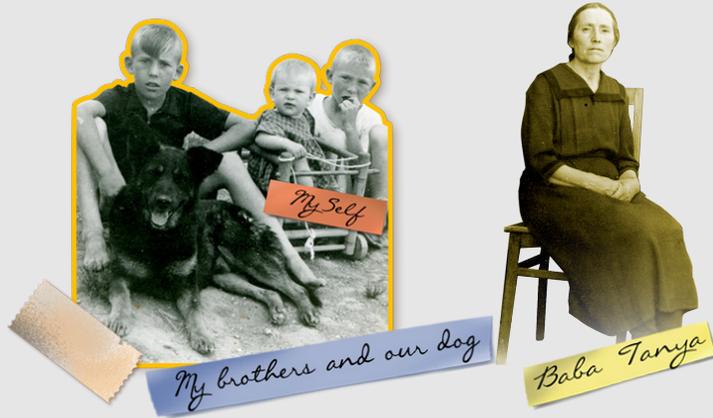
[...] beyond the seeming naturalness or inevitability of the current state of things, challenging assumptions validated by 'common sense', soaring beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering into critical dialogue with history, an imagining of a future that would not merely reproduce the present. [p. 155]

Please note: In the following chapter, *The Tea Party*, my thoughts or words in the constructed narrative are distinguished from actual quotes taken from literature by the application of a different typeface. That is, my quotes are written in, *Times regular* – the standard typeface used in this thesis – while quotes from literature are converted to **Futura condensed**.





# The Tea Party



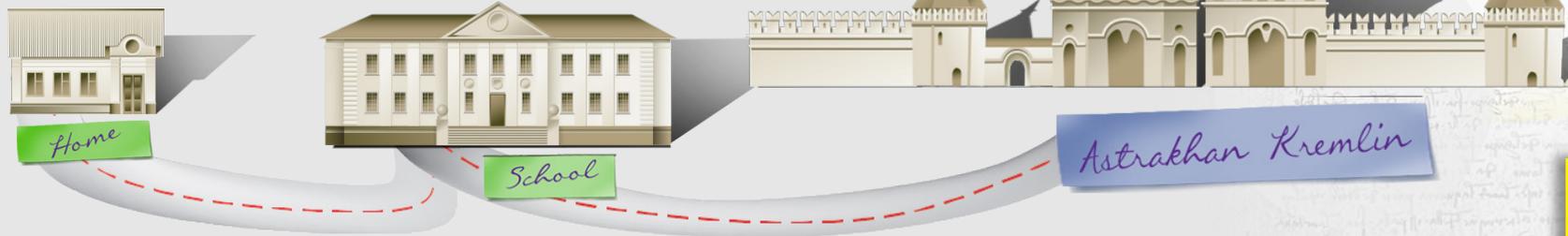
Sergei Eisenstein, Battleship Potemkin (1925)

Growing in Soviet Russia was like sitting on a barrel filled with gun-powder and imagining a bunch of wretched foreign imperialists crouching everywhere, moving closer and closer to set a torch to it.

This was the main theme in the stories we, as children heard, the books we read, the movies we watched.

*Young pioneers-Leninists, to fight for the cause of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, be prepared!* – was the summon.

*Always prepared!* – was our reply.



Mum

My Self

Dad



The Battleship Potemkin movie ends. Everything around freezes. It feels like the people in the auditorium are not breathing – black paper silhouettes against a feebly glowing screen. I begin to get the impression that the walls of the cinema hall are closing in from both sides. I clutch the arm-rests which makes me even more panicky as I realise that they have moved from being at my sides to in front of me.

A weak light shimmers ahead ... I am moving ... I am moving towards it ... I am moving fast.

I am aware of my legs being engaged in a strange activity: they are peddling vigorously as if I am riding a bike. I try to stop the ludicrous movements, but it seems to be impossible.

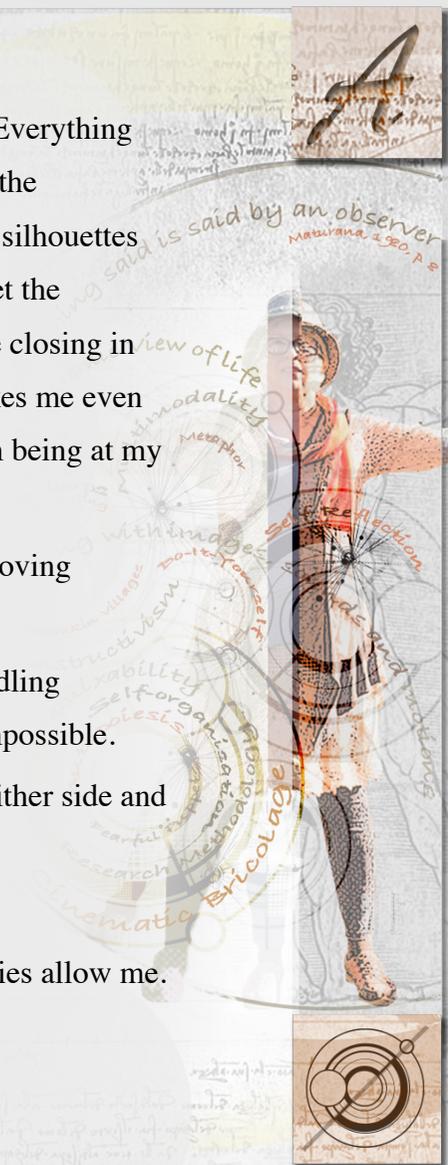
It is embarrassing – what will people think of me? I frantically peer around but see only walls on either side and light ahead of me.

I am alone ... I am in a tunnel ...

I am out of breath, riding the bike, trying to get out of my predicament as fast as my physical abilities allow me.

I am out of the tunnel and then I am in again.

Going in circles! My heart pumps, pumps, pumps.



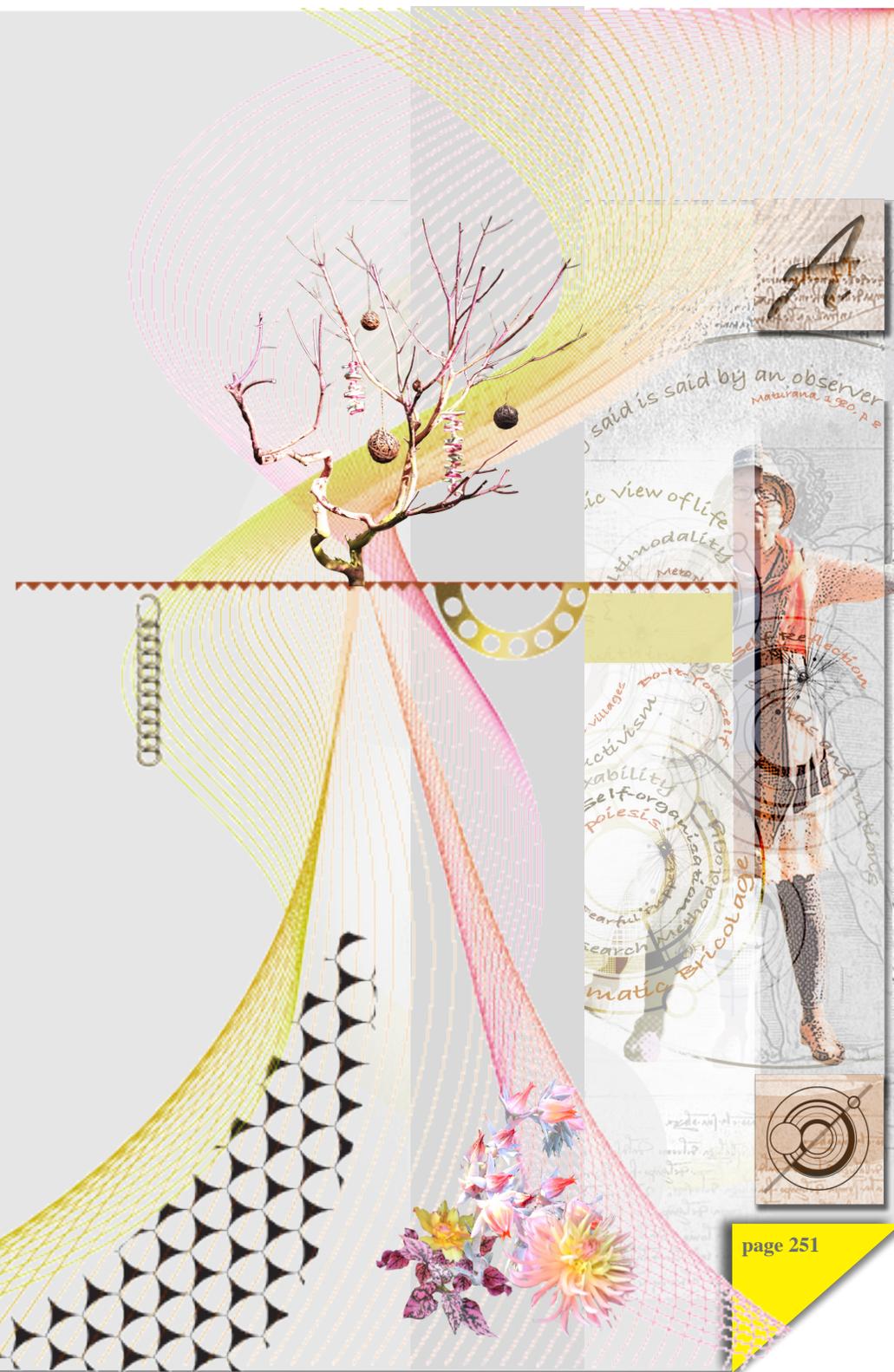
My mind bursts with images and sensations so saturated with physical qualities that I cannot tell whether they are inside of me or I am inside of them.

And then I understand: those images and sensations are like mosaic bits. You do not pass them on but grasp one and the rest fall into their right places creating a virtual reality scene.

I am gradually slowing down, trying to breathe not in panicky gasps but deeply and evenly. I finally allow myself to look around.

I am in a garden. I look cautiously around. I hope it is not anything like *The Hunger Games* and I wasn't spat out into a virtual arena where my Life and my Death are minutes away from their fatal battle. Or *The Big Brother* show ... I hope I am not on many screens that I am unaware of and from which people watch my every move. I look nervously for cameras. If this is the case, the cameras will all be well-hidden, I conclude... anywhere. The thought makes me twitch.

I jump off the bike and wheel it to a beautifully landscaped garden. Some disembodied voices, clinking of tea cups, reach my ears.



Behind a fragrant row of flowering magnolia and frangipani trees is a lawn. I see a wicker garden table: an arrangement of sunset ranunculi on it, pastries, apples and strawberries. Even from a distance I can smell the aroma of freshly brewed tea – a comfort in the thick of this awkwardness.

A man walks to meet me.

‘Mrs Bricoleur?’ he asks with a sobering authority as if verifying a name before an arrest. My reply is irrelevant.

‘Lavrentiy,’ he introduces himself looking very shrewdly straight into my eyes to see if I understand.

I do not.

‘Mrs Bricoleur, this is obviously *your* garden,’ Lavrentiy says.

I want to deny it but then I see two golden retrievers running joyfully towards me. I hope they are not just a wicked computer simulation of my dogs. I lean my bike on a bench and open my arms to the pups. I pat and hug and smell them. Simulated or not, they feel as good as my real dogs.

‘Mrs Bricoleur,’ says Lavrentiy interrupting my cheery reunion with the dogs. He appears to be irritated with my air-headedness.

‘You must feel very honoured that your garden was chosen as the venue for this unprecedented historical event, a Marxism-Leninism Exclusive Leaders’ Reunion,’ he points toward the table on the lawn. ‘The idea behind it was to run it as a tea party in the tradition of the First International, do you understand?’

I do not. I stare at Lavrentiy.

‘*The Times*,’ Lavrentiy stretched his lips slightly, in a parody of a smile, ‘described it as a group of workers having ‘a very excellent and substantial tea’. So your guests decided to make it a convention.’

‘But they didn’t ask my consent for that?’ I object, gradually beginning to accept the notion that the garden may indeed be my private property.



Lavrentiy glares. His pince-nez give a shot of blazing reflection from the sun and now I realise who he is ...

Standing in front of me, in what is supposedly my own garden, is *Professor Woland* himself.

I automatically grab my dogs by the collars and hold them tight. Now I know who those people sitting at the table are and why they do not feel the need to ask for anyone's permission to do anything, anywhere they want.

They do as they wish and as far as I am concerned, I better be watching myself very closely not to say or do anything that might in any way displease them.

'You seem to be getting it now ... slo-owly,' Lavrentiy sifts through his teeth. It sounds like a hiss of a snake.

'I do,' I croak and swallow. My mouth is dry and I do not know if I will be capable of uttering anything else for a while. I cannot lift my eyes to look at the man standing in front of me – Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, Woland, a true Satan in real life, strictly speaking, the head of Stalin's NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs).

Lavrentiy pulls a pack of *Belomor-Kanal* out of his pocket, knocks a cigarette out, lights it, takes a drag on it and puffs out in my direction.

'Good, then you go and sit with them and remember this honour for the rest of your life.'

I do as I have been told and I have no doubts that I will remember the 'honour' forever.

*Professor Woland* is a character from the famous Russian book by Michail Bulgakov, 1928-1940, *Master and Margarita*, a calamitous satire written during the drearissime time of Stalin's repressions. *Woland* is an imaginary figure of Satan who visits the Soviet Union.



‘Welcome, welcome, comrade,’ I hear Lenin’s friendly voice. I recognise it at once by Lenin’s inability to pronounce the sound ‘rrrr’. Coming from him it is harsh, guttural – more German than Russian.

‘Welcome, comrade ... umgh...?’

‘Bricoleur,’ Beria readily supplies.

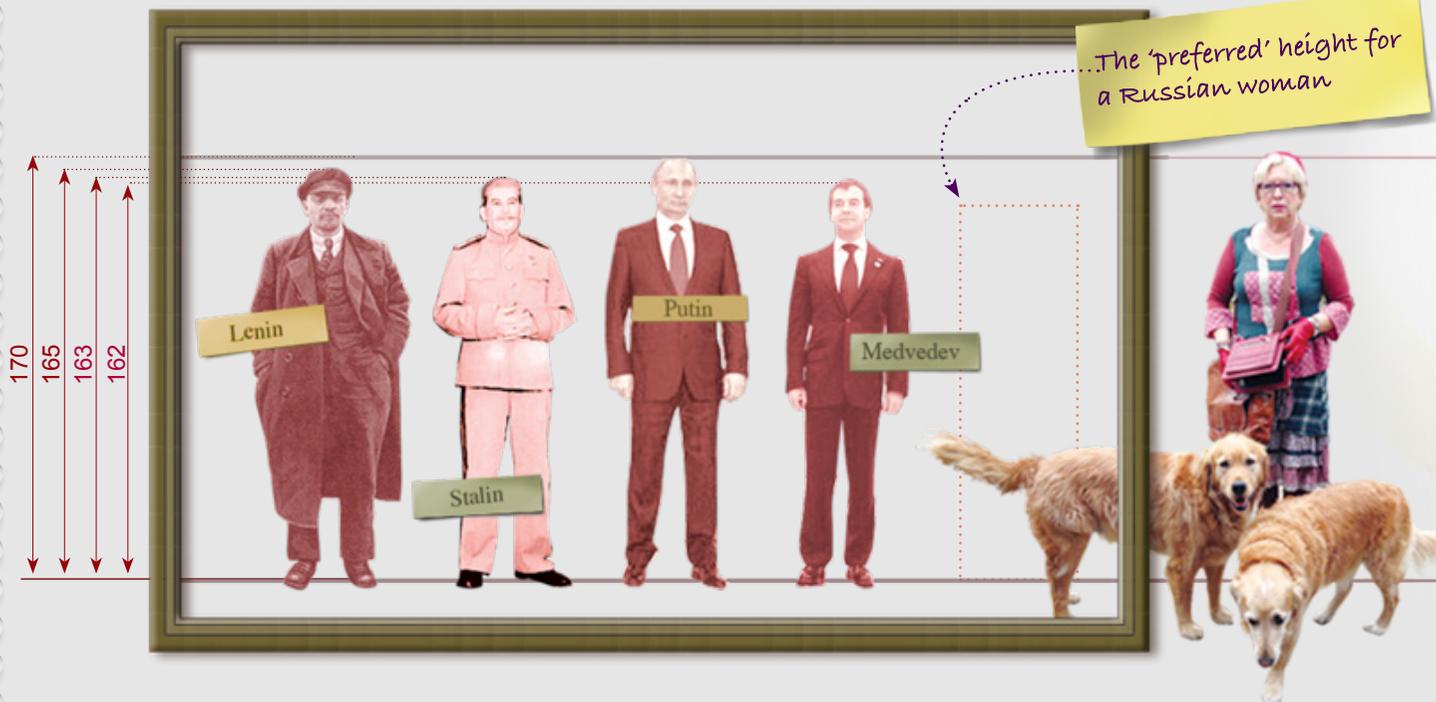
‘Ah!’ At the sound of my name Lenin’s tone of voice all of a sudden changes. ‘Comrade Bricoleur – not Russian, umgh? French or Jewish?’ he asks playfully and noticing my bewilderment, explains: **‘Among Russians, we don’t have many intelligent persons. We are predominantly talented people, but we have a lazy mentality. An intelligent Russian is almost always a Jew or a person with an mixture of Jewish blood,’** [Service, 2002, loc. 696]. Lenin laughs.

I manage a stiff smile. I do not mention though, that in fact I have a mixture of Jewish blood in me. Such a circumstance may provoke quite a different reaction among those present at the gathering. Lenin appears friendly and makes me feel slightly more relaxed. I observe him with interest. **‘Before me stands a bald-headed, stocky, sturdy person, he wipes a forehead which might have belonged to Socrates, beaming affectionately at me with his strangely bright eyes’** [Ronald, 2012, p. 189].



I shift my glance towards the men with similar, Socrates-like foreheads to Lenin's left – Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Now I am very painfully aware of my own small head. This particular feature of my appearance was always a cause of embarrassment to me, as in Russia it was considered to be a sign of intellectual deficiency. I was also tall and skinny, a representation of some worthless bourgeois type. That was before, of course. I am not skinny anymore. Mind you, I never managed to gain some extra mass for my head which supposedly would improve brain capacity. Likewise, I never was in charge of my growth rate and could not stop my body from acquiring a height outside of social standards of beauty for Russian women based on the characteristics of their leaders' appearances. I am taller than Lenin.

I quickly accept a seat offered to me.



### *Never Fitting Inside the Frame*

As I placed the figures inside the frame, I actually realised that my concept of never being able to fit inside the frame of Soviet society, was not so much metaphorical.

It was grounded in a sensory-motor experience of the physical space and how I saw myself in relation to others occupying that space.

Perhaps, if I was a man, this would be a story of a reverse perception.

But for a woman to be tall felt awkward,

On Lenin's right, Stalin's sharp eyes like two pieces of hot coal flicker through the cloud of smoke that he continually puffs out of his pipe. The words of a Russian poet, Osip Mandelstam, words that cost him his life, come to mind:

His fingers are fat as grubs ...  
His cockroach whiskers leer ...  
As he prates and points a finger,  
One by one forging his laws, to be flung  
Like horseshoes at the head, the eye or the groin.  
And every killing is a treat.

Osip Mandelstam

[as cited in Pipes, 2003, p. 71]

Instinctively, I draw my dogs closer.

OSIP MANDELSTAM

'Drop,' I order them quietly so they will not be heard or seen.



Further on Stalin's right, half-hidden in shadows, is Felix Dzerzhinskiy, also known as 'Iron Felix'. People used to joke about him: 'Iron Felix is happy only when he has a smoking gun in his hand'.

Next to Felix, looking away from him as if in distrust, is Lavrentiy Beria. He has Stalin's six year old daughter Svetlana on his knee. Lavrentiy repeatedly whispers in Svetlana's ear making her giggle. Lavrentiy then crosses her lips with his finger in a show of buffoonery, which makes Svetlana giggle even more. Their exchange is preposterous in the context of the cold sober aura radiating from the architects and chief constructors of the brutal communist reality. Likewise, the notion of a tea party itself with the sunset ranunculi in vases, that in the presence of evil are like cursed flames while the strawberries on the plates remind me of gigantic clusters of blood drops...

The last member of the tea party is Lev Trotsky. Stalin's rival, Trotsky liked to depict himself as Lenin's favourite [Pipes, 2003, p. 57]. Lenin and Trotsky regarded themselves as superb artisans of revolution [Payne, 2015, loc. 3580]. They were the original landscapers of the inhumane and ruthless garden of horror in which Stalin had a monstrously green thumb.

The rebellious *Red Sailors of Kronstadt* wrote about Trotsky:

'Field-Marshal Trotsky, standing up to his knees in the blood of the workers, has fired the first shot against revolutionary Kronstadt, which rose up against the government of the Communists ...' [Payne, 2015, loc. 3695].

Stalin

Felix Dzerzhinskiy

Svetlana Alilueva

Laurentiy Beria

Lev Trotsky



My observation is interrupted by Lenin who speaks to Engels.

He rubs his hands in impatience as he speaks: 'Can we finally start, comrade?'. I smile to myself remembering Lenin's older sister describing him in her memoirs as a boy who was eager to boss other kids around – '**comandovat**' [Service, 2002, loc. 782].

'Shall we?' Lenin repeats almost testily as Engels sorts through the papers in his hands, looking for the right one.

'Well,' Engels finally says. 'As we all know,' he stretches his hand palm up towards Marx. 'My friend,' he declares solemnly, '**Karl Marx discovered the law of human history**' [Pipes, 2003, p. 12].

Marx leans back in his chair, puts his hand on his chest inside his blazer. He gazes ahead, seeing nothing but the material fruits of his theoretical labour in future times fulfilled by future generations.

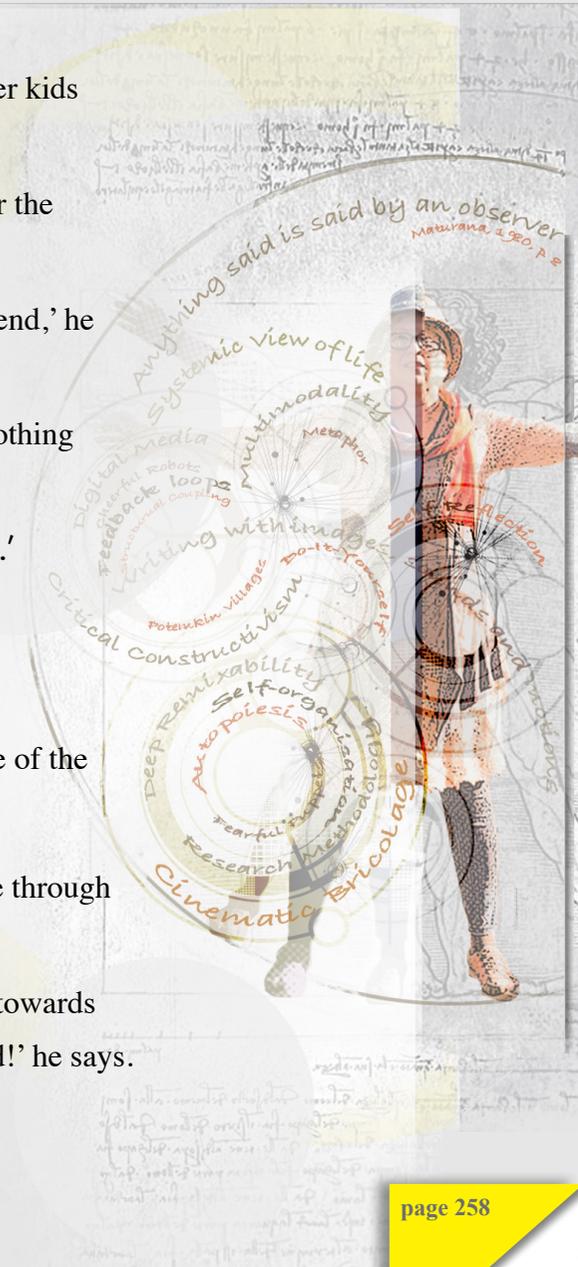
'Yes,' Engels continues, '**the discovery that is comparable with Darwin's discovery of the theory of evolution ...**' [Singer, 1980, p. 38].

[Pipes, 2001, Unabridged Audiobook]

'In other words,' Engels concludes, the solemnity of his voice emphasising the cardinal importance of the discovery – 'economics is the foundation of organised life: all else is superstructure.'

'Splendid, splendid!' Lenin applauds and Stalin lets out an enormous cloud of smoke from his pipe through which for a few moments only his black eyes can be seen.

'I have to reassure you comrades,' pushing back on the arms of the chair Lenin leans passionately towards Marx and Engels. 'Your doctrine couldn't fall into better hands than ours. We follow it word by word!' he says. '**It is a holy writ for the communists**' [Service, 2002, loc. 198].



He slaps the chair's arms and declares solemnly.

'Your doctrine, comrades, became known as Marxim-Leninism!

It is modelled on:

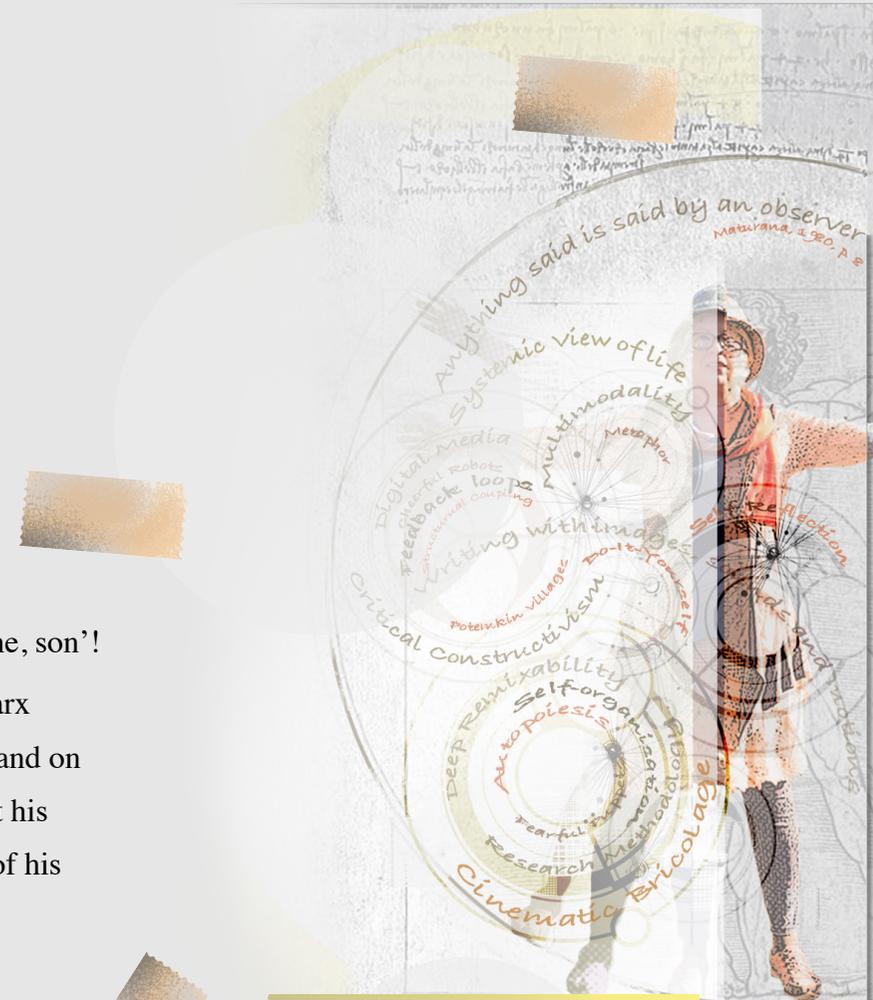
- **A one-party state;**
- **Ideological monopoly;**
- **Legal nihilism;**
- **Militant atheism;**
- **State terror and**
- **The elimination of all rival institutions of authority'**

[Service, 2002, loc. 199].

Lenin looks at Marx and Engels in obvious expectation of praise: 'well done, son'!

But nothing of the sort is coming from these two Godlike men. Instead, Marx looks like he is stabbed. He catches air with his mouth in abrupt gasps. His hand on his chest slides deeper under the side of his blazer as if he is trying to prevent his heart jumping out of his chest. His other hand clutches nervously at the arm of his chair.

Worriedly, Engels puts his own hand on the hand of his life-long friend.



Kusma Petrov/Vodkin (1920)



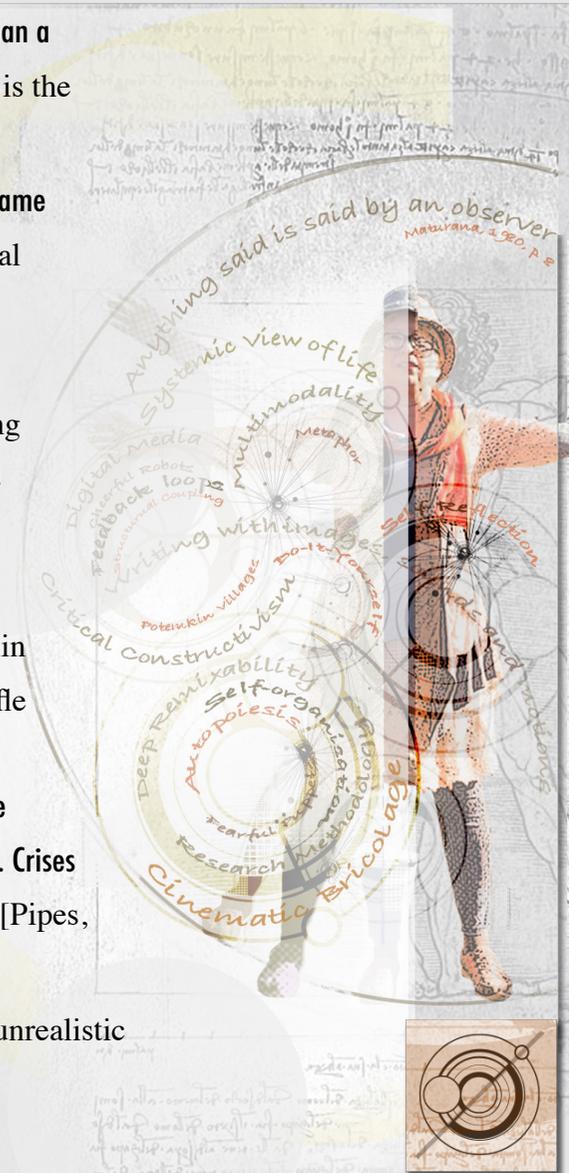
‘That is a very different turn of history,’ Engels mutters. ‘It is rather different from what we predicted. We never aimed for establishment of a military terror-state. According to our doctrine, **‘the state is nothing more than a servant of the class that owns the means of production’** [Pipes, 2003, p. 42], ‘in a Communist state this class is the proletariat’.

‘That is what our state is, comrades!’ Lenin exclaims. ‘It is a servant of the proletariat. It is **“in the name of revolutionary justice”** [Pipes, 2003, p. 45] that we implemented what you had proposed as a transitional measure – a **“dictatorship of the proletariat!”** [Singer, 1980, p. 85].’

Stalin takes a drag on his pipe, slowly blows the smoke out of his mouth. His movements stir the energy around the room, draw everyone’s attention. The smoke disperses lazily everywhere, increasing a growing sense of insecurity. Like an apathetic crocodile, Stalin moves his dark eyes from one of his potential victims to another, deciding the sequential order of their doom. His gaze lingers on Marx.

‘The reality turned out to be quite different from what you proposed in your theory, comrades,’ Stalin says wearily, deliberately intensifying his Georgian guttural accent as if to remind everyone not to trifle with the mountain warrior of the Caucasus. ‘We had crises, many of them,’ he continues. **‘Crisis alone permitted the authorities to demand – and obtain – total submission and all necessary sacrifices from its citizens. The system needed sacrifices and sacrificial victims for the good of the cause and the happiness of the future generations. Crises enables the system in this way to build a bridge from the fictional world of utopian programs to the world of reality’** [Pipes, 2003, p.47].

‘Is that what you think of our doctrine?’ Marx blurts out in indignation. ‘You think it is a fictional, unrealistic program, utopian?!’



Suddenly, Lavrentiy stops whispering to Svetlana and talks in a loud but inappropriately caricature of a voice as if he has forgotten to switch his mental state from having fun to being serious. **'I could hunt in the morning,'** he parodies Marx's famous quote. Lavrentiy gives Svetlana a tickle and the girl bursts into giggles while he goes on with his buffoonery. **'... fish in the afternoon, breed cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I like, without ever becoming a hunter, a fisherman, or a critic'** [Marx, 1846, p. 53].

'That is all, we should agree, exceptional fun!' Lavrentiy now talks in his usual foxy tone of a voice. He points at Marx and squints at him in an interrogative manner. 'And tell me, comrade,' Lavrentiy demands. 'Who will I go to if I get sick, uh? What kind of a treatment will I get from a doctor who is a fisherman, a shepherd and a critic all at once? I need none of them but a proper doctor!'

The guests look hesitantly at Lavrentiy. His party fellows are well aware of the nature of his 'true sickness' not the hypothetical, but real illness. Being a notorious sexual predator, Lavrentiy Beria asks his bodyguards to pick up young girls straight from the streets. He is notoriously guilty of numerous rapes ...

Now, however, his fellow guests just watch him, some secretly wishing he would burn in hell, others afraid even to think so.

Trotsky shakes his head in disapproval. He is not among those who are afraid. He is **'Lenin's close comrade in arms and Lenin's designated successor'** [Payne, 2015, loc. 64]. This gives him immunity from Stalin's terror, at least so he thinks. Nevertheless, Stalin will seek him out as far away as Mexico to kill him ... eventually.

'Man in the developed Communist society will,' Trotsky begins with disdain, explaining to 'those', namely Lavrentiy, who know little about the highest goal of Communism, **'... man will begin to harmonise himself in earnest ... he will want to master first semi-conscious and then also the unconscious processes of his own organism: breathing, the circulation of blood, digestion, reproduction, and, within the necessary limits, subordinate them to the control of reason and will ...**



Lavrentiy Beria

Svetlana Allilueva,  
Stalin's daughter

1930s



**Man will create a higher sociobiological type, a superman, if you will ...'** (Trotsky, 1924, ch. 8).

'So, if you, Comrade Beria', Trotsky scoffs at Lavrentiy, 'are ever to live under Communism, you will have no need to visit a doctor. You will be capable of managing your health yourself.'

Out of all the company, Trotsky '**has the sharper intelligence, the greater learning, the wider knowledge of affairs'** [Payne, 2015, loc. 127] but '**pride is his fatal flaw'** [loc. 127]. He will never succeed. Stalin will.

'Precisely!' Lenin approves. Swept with a wave of excitement about the golden Age of the Communist society they are about to build, he jumps up off his chair.

'And tell me now, comrades!' he calls out with his hand raised. 'For such an ideal as comrade Trotsky has just described, '**is it not worth sacrificing the sorry specimens that populate the corrupt world?'** [Pipes, 2003, p. 69]. Lenin stares around shrewdly and finding no objections, continues.

'**We say to anyone who [...] acts against the dictatorship of the proletariat, is helping the exploiters and nothing else, they are their allies ...'** [Lenin, 1919, loc. 365]. [...] Marxism which recognises the inevitability of the class struggle says: **Humanity cannot attain socialism otherwise than through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dictatorship - that is a stern, serious, bloody, terrible word [...]** If the socialists have come forward with such a slogan then it is because they know that except as a result of a desperate, merciless struggle the class of exploiters will not yield [...]' [loc. 431].

Shifting heavily in his chair, Stalin draws the attention of the group. He shakes his pipe at Lenin in support. 'Such layers of the society are also identified by Marx,' he says as if Marx is not among them, '**as the present generation who resembles the Jews whom Moses led through the wilderness. It must not only conquer a new world, it must also perish in order to make room for the people who are fit for a new world'** [as cited in Pipes, 2003, p. 68].

Marx stands up. He grows visibly irritated, appalled with the misinterpretation of his doctrine [Singer, 2000, p. 51]. He shakes his head in disapproval.

‘That is not what our Communist doctrine is about,’ he begins trying to steady his voice. Marx glances briefly at Engels and his friend nods in agreement. ‘When we **“invoked the dictatorship of the proletariat, we meant the dictatorship of the working class,”** Marx spreads his hands indicating the people sitting opposite him and Engels, we **“did not mean the dictatorship of a small, self-chosen revolutionary elite”** [Payne, 1977, loc. 85]. We **“devoted our lives to the cause of human liberty.”** [Singer, 1980, p. 92]’

‘Yes!’ Lenin exclaims interrupting Marx. His eyes spark with provocative enthusiasm indicating that he is about to make a joke. ‘I do not remember myself saying this, but I’ve heard a few people attributing these words to me: **“it is true that liberty is precious; so precious that it must be rationed carefully”** [Communism 101, web discussion]. Isn’t it clever?’ he laughs heartily.

Marx gives Lenin a stern look and continues as if Lenin has not spoken. **‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles’** [Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 5]. We envisioned a classless society achieved through the abolition of private property. **‘In the place of all physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer estrangement of all these senses – the sense of having. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yield his inner wealth to the outer world [...] The transcendence of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities, but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, human’** [Marx, 1844, loc.1932]. **‘The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property’** [Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 17].

Covering his mouth with his hand, Stalin coughs, a cough which could easily be taken as a chuckle. ‘That is where the devil is buried,’ Stalin says. Like a teacher speaking to a student found at fault, he shakes his pipe at Marx. ‘You, Comrade Marx, think that with the abolition of private property, man gets his freedom?’ Stalin says.



But you never 'sufficiently appreciated the difficulty of persuading the co-operation of each individual to join in such an endeavour' [Singer, 2000, p. 92].

Marx opens his mouth to say something but Stalin waves him into silence. He is like a priest with a smoking thurible who casts a spell around the place and claims it. Everyone within its confines bows their head. Even Lenin sits back in his chair: perhaps a sudden ache inside his chest makes him catch a hint of the kind of authority Stalin will eventually gain over him.

With Engels pulling the back of his blazer, Marx too sits down. Leaning his elbow on the arm of the chair, he clasps his chin nervously. His nostrils flare with every breath he takes.

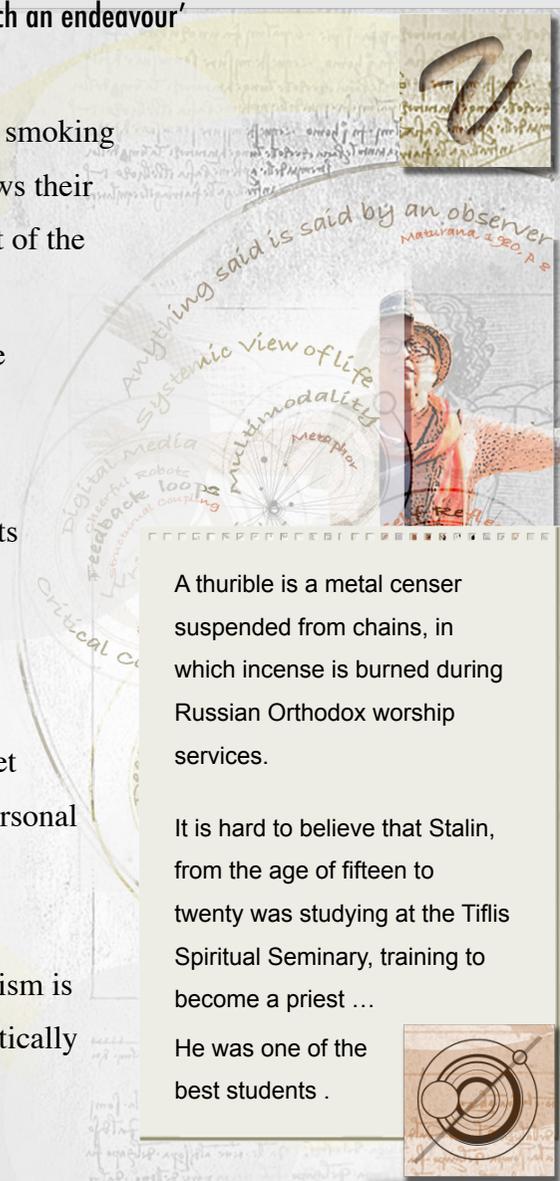
'Let us, comrades, ask her,' Stalin suddenly points at me, 'comrade ... ugm?'

'Bricoleur,' Lavrentiy reminds. My heart skips a beat. 'Actually, Agent Bricoleur,' Lavrentiy corrects himself.

Stalin squints, unhurriedly takes a drag on his pipe, lets the cloud of smoke puff out ... 'Agent of what?' he asks unhurriedly.

'Critical constructivism, Comrade Stalin,' reports another voice. Iron Felix, the director of the Soviet Secret Police, Comrade Dzerzhinsky holds a file of documents in his hands. Presumably this is my Personal File.

'Constructivism? Critical?' Lenin asks in surprise. 'Based on what Comrade Marx advised, [Pipes, 2001, Unabridged Audiobook] we are not keen on any criticism. And as far as any constructivism is concerned, we have already built our ideological construct and anyone who wants to re-evaluate it critically must talk about it to a firing squad.'



A thurible is a metal censer suspended from chains, in which incense is burned during Russian Orthodox worship services.

It is hard to believe that Stalin, from the age of fifteen to twenty was studying at the Tiflis Spiritual Seminary, training to become a priest ...

He was one of the best students .

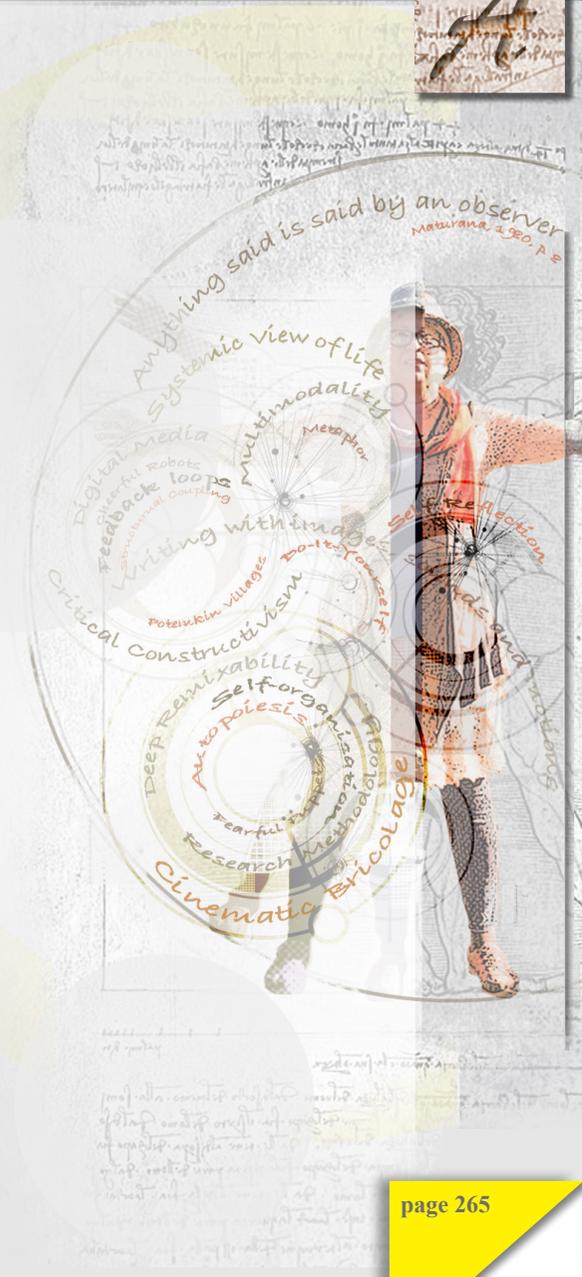
‘As our Comrade Buharin jokes,’ Stalin agrees. He glances at his party-fellows and they smile knowingly. [Ralco, 1991, Audiobook]

A few restrained chuckles roll over the room and then everyone focuses back on me.

Heavy moments pass by. I am trying to comfort myself by thinking that I haven’t said or done anything that can work against me. No one can find me guilty of any wrongdoing. And yet, I know, like everyone else that I am done. Just the mere fact of my unfortunate presence at this particular moment and in this particular place makes me a sacrificial victim in Stalin’s gruesome show.

Everyone waits for him to turn the key, to start the engine of his judgement car. He drives it not by the rules but exclusively on the whim of a psychotic dictator, taking sharp turns that cause his passengers to fly out the open windows, speeding up and braking suddenly, making people sick, squashing them, running them over ... That is what he has been doing for the twenty five years of his dictatorship. It is estimated that Stalin is responsible for the death of over 20 million individuals. As he said himself, **‘one death is a tragedy; the death of millions is a statistic’** [as cited in Colley, 2012, loc. 648].

Stalin is not in a hurry. He takes another drag on his pipe and exhales slowly, gazing through the patterns of smoke in the air as if reading tea-leaves: Death or Gulag? – there is no third option.



The smoke floats around, changes its form. The clouds sail through the sky above us, trail over the fields, shroud the mountains.

The Earth itself holds its breath when Stalin smokes: Death or Gulag?

‘This is your private property, isn’t it, Agent Bricoleur?’ Stalin finally asks, drawing a smoky circle in the air around him with his pipe.

I am not quite sure what to say. Since this is a virtual construct, and because I was earlier identified by Lavrentiy as its owner, perhaps I should accept the fact that I am ... As I wrestle with my indecisiveness, I hear the voice of Iron Felix.

‘The document here,’ Iron Felix demonstrates the paper to everyone, ‘has the stamp and original signature. It states that this rather generous-in-size estate indeed belongs to Agent Bricoleur.’

‘So,’ Stalin squints. ‘Let us, A-agent Bricoleur, tell these two, Comrade Marx and Comrade Engels, how much you would like to give your private property away to the government so it can be shared with other members of the community in the form of a collective farm.’

In principle I agree. I am not any better than other people who may have nothing. I sincerely believe that I have to care about those who are less fortunate than I am. And I am about to say: yes, I, in fact, would not mind giving it away.



But then my eyes run around the lawn and its surroundings. Only now I notice what this place is. It is not just a garden; it is like the most expressive artwork I have ever painted. The shapes and colours reveal what I cannot explain with words. The garden-bed of flamboyant dahlias which I call by my mother's name, Polinas, because she was mad about them ... Dead trees and branches are not cut off and thrown away. They are like extensions of the lines on my palms, reminding me of what I have been through and what is meant to come. Trimmed and painted, they stream into patches of greenery and bloom as oversized calligraphies of encoded genes intertwined with my life undertakings. At the thought that I have to give all this away, something rises in me. An overwhelming sadness places a tight grip on my heart. This garden is a canvas, I realise. Not a canvas as a piece of coarse material to paint on but a space for making myself so I know who I am.

'Why do I need to give it away?' I blurt in a hurry as if someone is about to sever an essential chunk off me.

'Petty bourgeois,' Lenin spits out in distaste.

'Kulak!' Lavrenti bristles, branding me with a deadly label.

(Kulaks are better-off land owners who were mass-annihilated after the revolution).

A wave of cold sweat covers me. Virtual construct or not, it feels very much as if this is real. I brush my forehead.

'I mean ...,' I mutter trying to justify my foolish impulsivity. 'I mean it is like, sort of, ... you know, ... like this is my individual self-expression?'





‘You have twisted our words and our ideas! You have corrupted the Communist Revolution!’

‘You are mistaken, Comrade Marx,’ Trotsky objects. ‘We have adjusted your theory to the existing reality.’

‘Then!’ Marx exclaims in total despair. ‘All I know is that I am not a Marxist!’ (Engels, 1890, Personal Correspondence).

A total silence dawns on the place.

A distant and unrelated choir of dripping water counting the passing moments.

‘Arrest him,’ Lenin orders. ‘He denies Marxist teaching.’

‘German spy!’ Trotsky hisses.

‘A counter-revolutionary!’ Beria declares.

Iron Felix and Lavrentiy are ready for action but hesitate.

Stalin takes a drag and exhales expressively leisurely. ‘What if comrades Marx and Engels are simply mistaken? They need our help. I think we need to take them under the NKVD wing. That is where they will learn the truth about their own theory.’ He clicks his fingers and Felix and Lavrentiy charge in a cut-the-comedy way at Marx.

Hurriedly Engels steps in front of his friend. His hands are outstretched in a preventative gesture.

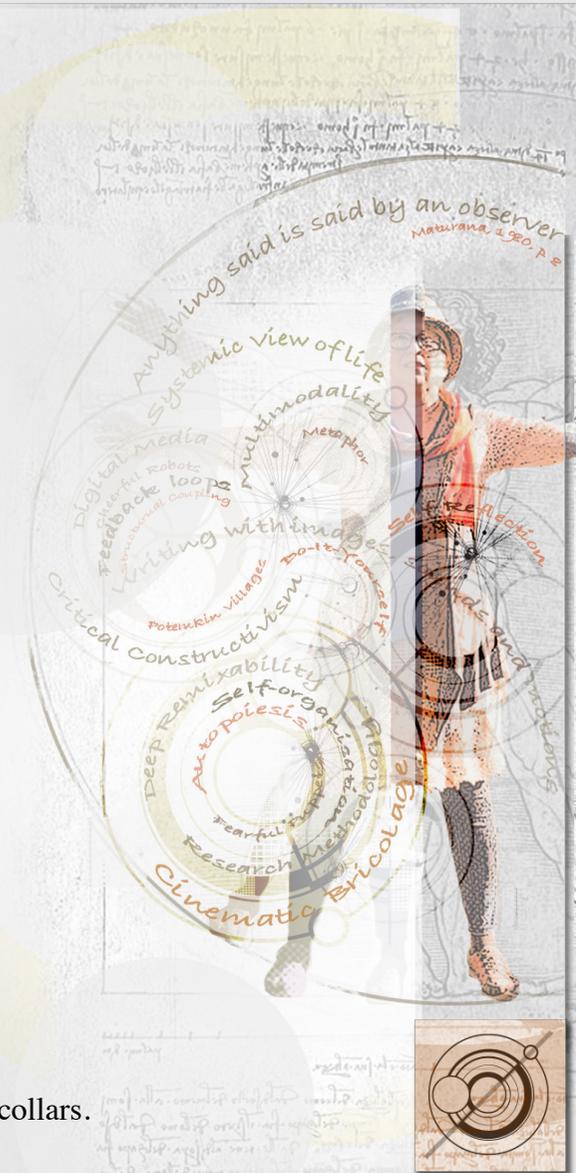
‘Wait, gentlemen! Wait!’ he cries.

‘Gentlemen yourself!’ Lavrentiy replies, pushing Engels unceremoniously away.

‘There are no gentlemen among us, only comrades!’ Felix growls straight into Engels’ face.

Taking advantage of the commotion and the attention being drawn away from me, I jerk my dogs’ collars.

‘Run!’ I command and dart to the opening in the wall of the garden.



Behind me, Lenin's voice is bursting with choleric intensity:



[Lenin, 1918 from his speech to workers, as cited in Pipes, 2003, p. 46]

Forgetting my age, I run like a young girl, like Forrest Gump who breaks out of his leg braces from fear of being caught. My own fear now restores my sore joints. I run into the safety of my garden. The dogs lead me: they know the place and its hiding nooks better than I do.

Suddenly, they stop, pricking up their ears. Xena lets out a low growl.

‘Shhh,’ I whisper stepping carefully away from the direction which the dogs’ attention is drawn to. This part of the garden hasn’t been given a cleanup for quite some time. Dead branches under my feet crackle like dry pasta. We can’t escape unnoticed. Afraid to move, I stop.

‘They didn’t invite us,’ I hear a voice coming from behind the bushes.

‘There is no need for us to go back down through history and identify ourselves with those psychos,’ another voice, more authoritative, says. I hear a chuckle: ‘Psychos or not, though,’ the voice continues, ‘they held the country inside barbed-wire for seventy-four years. That is what we have to learn from them.’

‘I can’t believe Marx and Engels have fallen victims of Stalin’s purges,’ the first voice laughs.

‘I always knew they would,’ the second one replies with confidence. ‘They are victims of their own Frankenstein monster. Stalin is Frankenstein but we will make him a hero.’

They both laugh heartily.

**DONBASS**

September, 2015



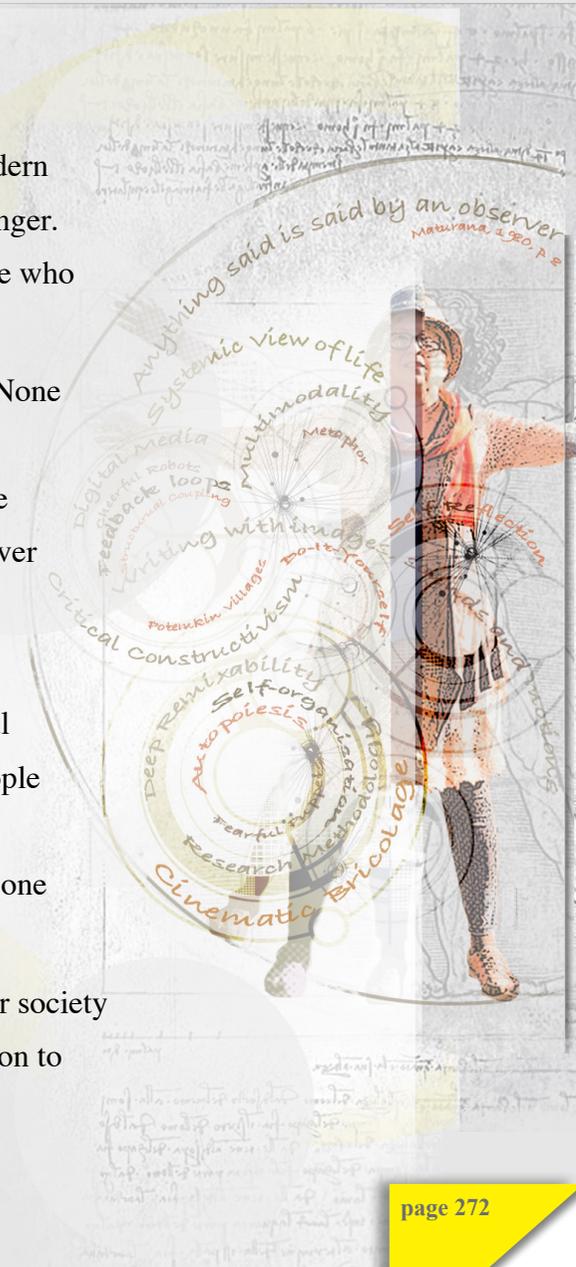
## Finishing the Loop: Coming to Know Why

Now after living outside Russia for twenty-five years, my concerns about what is happening in modern Russia and how those actions are supported by the Russian population are growing stronger and stronger. People in Australia who I talk to about this often say: ‘Surely this negativity of yours is towards those who are in power, right? Not towards ordinary Russians.’

But who are those who are in power I would like to ask. Are they not ‘ordinary Russians’ as well? None of the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian leaders were or are legitimate heirs to the throne. Every single one of them was an ordinary, common man, before they rose to power. Every one of them utilised the principles cultivated by Communist ideology. Holding those principles in high regard, the society never was or is inclined to critically examine them.

The strength of every past Soviet or present Russian leader comes from the overwhelming support of the Russian population. Take this support away, and there will be nothing left of those all-powerful leaders. And yet the society continues to deify their rulers as if they have descended from above. People grant them unlimited authority to do as they wish, allow them to continually deceive them and their children. The society goes on living by the principles of a totalitarian regime that is analogous to the one existent at the beginning of the last century.

The general resistance to any re-evaluation of the moral implications of the communist ideology for society is the result of mind-boggling blind conformity of the majority of the Russian people. Such submission to power is underpinned by a desperate need to identify themselves with great national virtue.



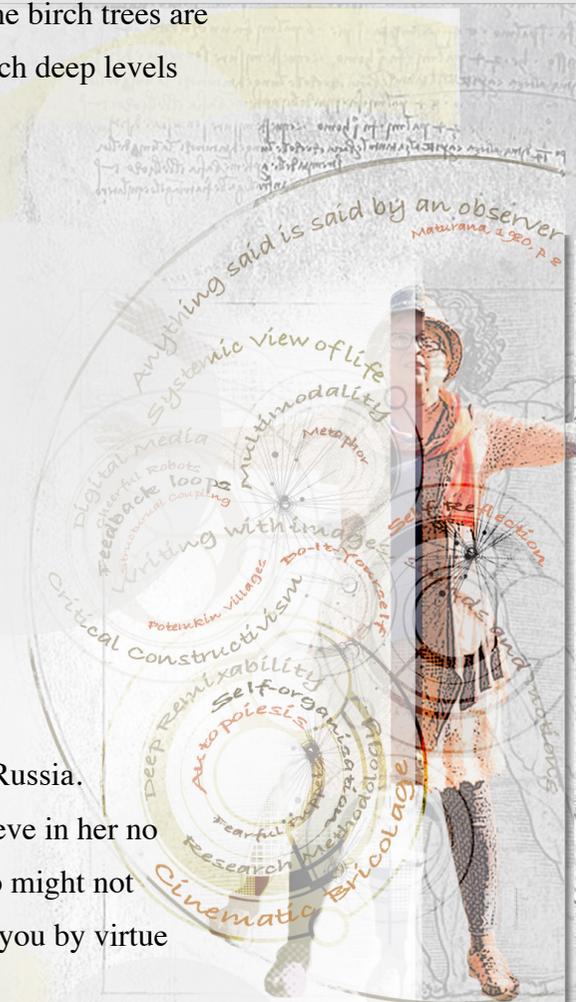
Russian land, Russian culture, Russian history, Russian people are unique, special, different from any other nation – that was what we heard at school, read in books, saw on television. The sky is the bluest in Russia, the birch trees are the whitest, the grass is the greenest and the Russian soul is most mysterious of all, endowed with such deep levels of perception that no other can be compared with it.

In 1866, the famous Russian poet, Fyodor Tyutchev wrote:

One cannot understand Russia with the mind/brain [alone],  
One cannot measure her [greatness] with a common/ordinary yardstick:  
She has a peculiar stance/character –  
In Russia, one can only believe.  
You will not grasp her with your mind  
Or cover with a common label,  
For Russia is one of a kind –  
Believe in her, if you are able...  
(as cited in Brodsky, 2013)

The quote above is exactly what we were taught about the attitude that we had to have for mother-Russia. Namely, do not question Russia's greatness for the mind is not capable of seeing her extent, just believe in her no matter what. The words '...if you are able...', as I hear them, are not an exemption for someone who might not have enough ability, but a challenge that we are expected to rise to. The ability to believe is given to you by virtue of being born and raised as a true Russian.

The poem was written long before the dawn of the Soviet era. It reverberates with the dogmatic religious ethic of not questioning but simply believing. The peculiarities of Russia are so great and obvious that the reasons that can explain them lie far beyond common understanding. It feels like understanding Russia is synonymous with



understanding creation itself.

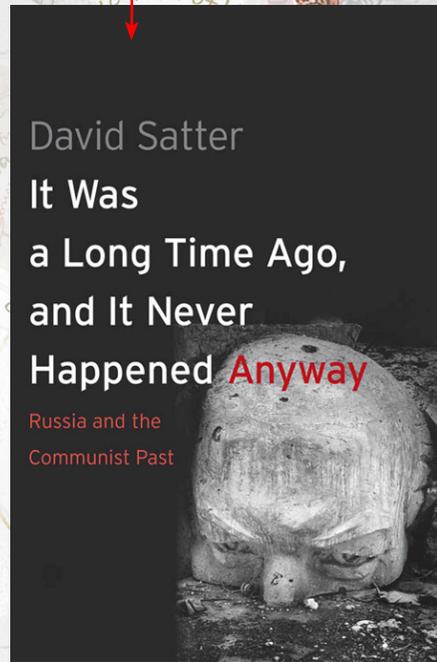
I find a confirmation of my feelings in Satter's book (2012). The book has a title that explains much about present attitudes among Russians regarding their recent past. Satter writes:

Ultimately, the quasi-deification of the Russian state grew out of the fusion of religion and politics that is a distinctive characteristic of Russian history. [p. 173].

[...] From the fifteen century onward, [...] the state was seen not only as the guardian of the one true Christian faith but also as the vehicle which Russia brought to the rest of the world 'the revelation that had been granted to her alone. [p. 174].

[...] The notion of a special 'saving mission' for the Russian state is not new but is an intellectual tendency shared by many of Russia's greatest thinkers and writers. It is part of what prevents present-day Russia from acknowledging the responsibility of the Soviet Union as a nation for the crimes of the Communist period and, in that way, making a clean break with its past. At a psychological level, this failure is easy to understand. If the Russian state has a special, God-given role, it almost by definition could not have been guilty of mass crimes. [p. 173].

As a result injustice and oppression in Russia past and present remains a deeply ingrained cultural coding, an invisible historical system that, borrowing from Satter 'treats the state as sacred and deprives the individual of the most fundamental rights' [p. 174]. Looking at the social conditions in Russia from this point of view helped me to come to terms with my negativity in reaction to the reluctance of many Russians to 'stir up' and 'turn over' the past. For a long time I considered my strong urge to bring to the surface what happened in Communist Russia as an unhealthy and obsessive condition caused by an extreme bitterness and my lack of patriotism. Now I believe that it is not only healthy but absolutely necessary to do so. Without Russian people acknowledging the atrocities their society has been put through, they will continue the same attitudinal pattern – that



David Satter  
It Was  
a Long Time Ago,  
and It Never  
Happened **Anyway**

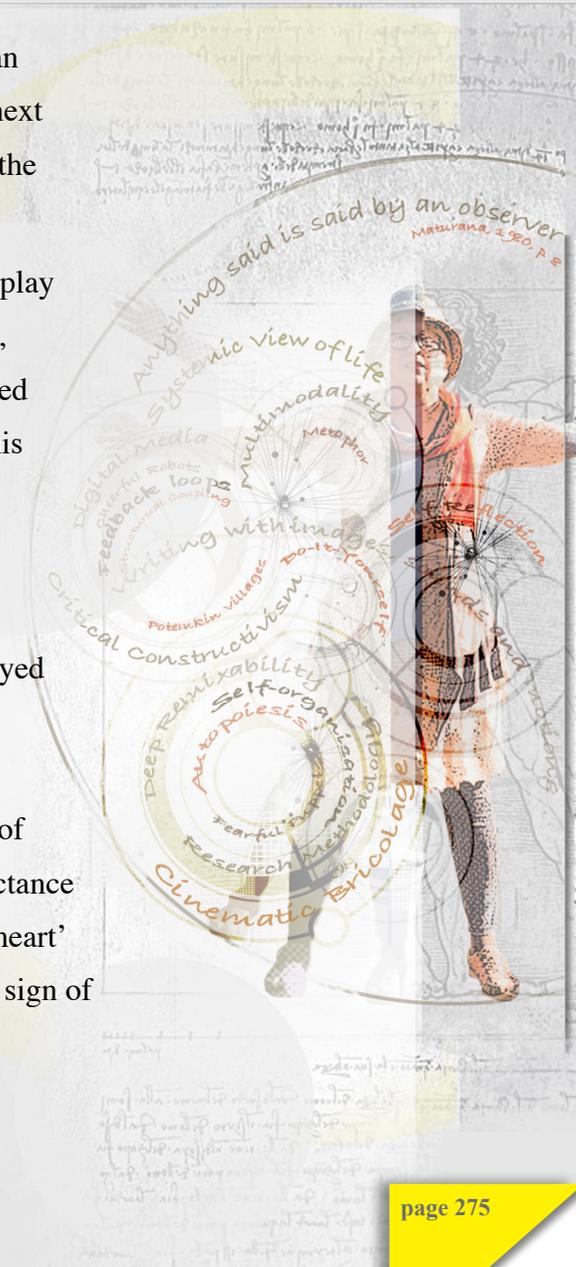
Russia and the  
Communist Past

of 'Russianness', a sacred quality that holds the special mission of the world's salvation.

If the purpose of this thesis was to argue that Russia is currently in a state of metamorphosis from an atheist-communist society into a no less dangerous Orthodox-nationalist society, I could pepper the next few pages with examples taken from YouTube, Facebook, blogs, speeches and articles that illustrate the intensifying nature of this phenomenon.

My argument, however, is developed to see how cinematic bricolage – in staging the dynamic interplay of ideological concepts together with my personal relation to them, by means of writing with images, sounds and motions – has facilitated my arrival at, and articulation of, the above conclusion. A detailed consideration of how doing research with multimodal tools mediated my knowledge production in this and the following probes will take place in the *Discussion* chapter.

Here, I would like to conclude the probe with the reinforcement of my newly validated personal attitude that until Russia acknowledges the immoral past of Communism, it will threaten not only Russia's future but also that of the rest of the world. Unfortunately so far, there is no such will displayed by the society. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, up until now, none of the officials responsible for the large-scale purges, repressions and imprisonments of innocent people have been tried or punished. Neglect in condemning Communism, which is evident through the scarce number of memorials honouring the victims of the Communist regime in Russia, are indicative of people's reluctance to admit the atrocities committed against their fellow citizens. Lenin's mausoleum, still right in 'the heart' of Russia – the Red Square – with people queuing to see the great leader of the nation, is yet another sign of



compulsive national pride.

Svetlana Alexievich, the 2015 Nobel prize laureate in literature, wondered in a 2013 interview:

Why can't we say, we don't want to be slaves anymore?

Why do we suffer again and again?

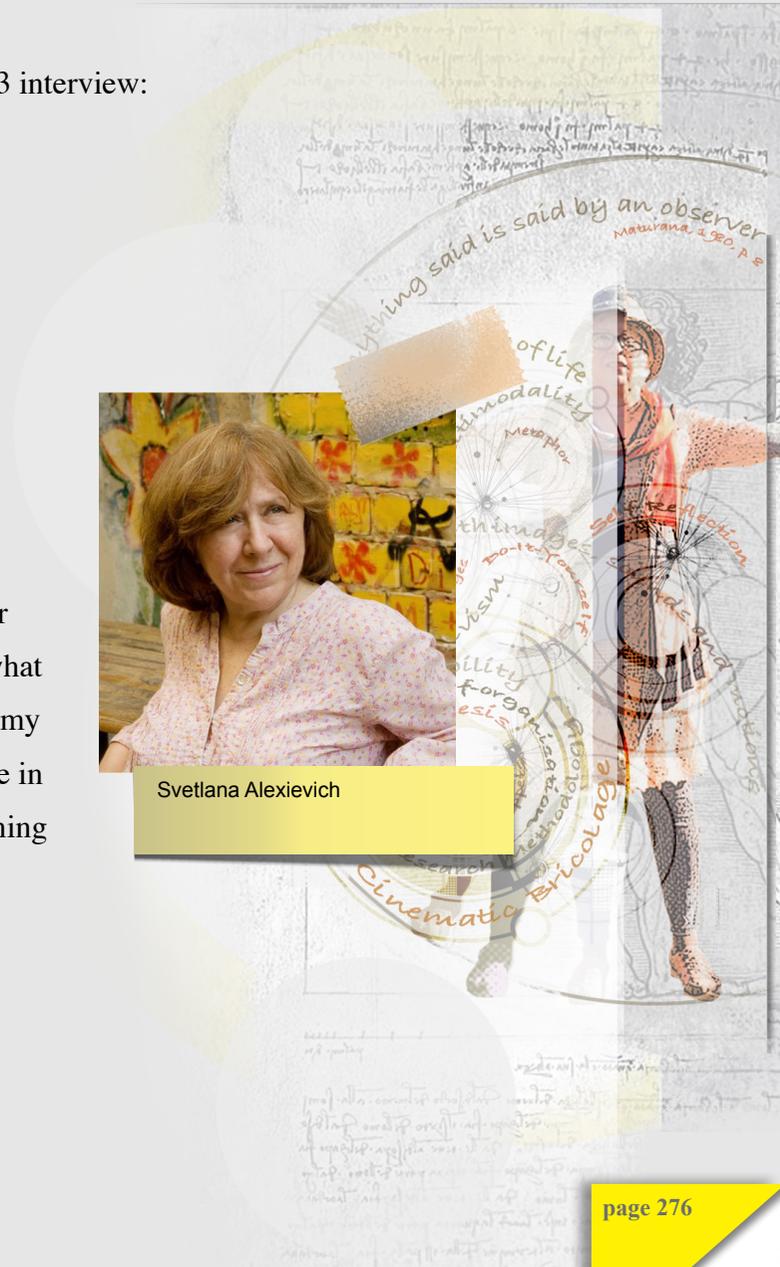
Why does this remain our burden and fate?

(as cited in Rudick, 2015)

Although answering the above questions is outside the scope of this study, they are grown into my historical roots, naturally fused into attitudinal lens, always calling for attention. They lie at the foundation of how I see the world and how I reason about what happens in it. Experimenting with digital media by nesting myself within the web of my historiography and examining myself as a social being, I see how valuable this can be in recognising your personal social stance, in articulating the reasons for such a positioning and becoming a confident advocate of your viewpoint.



Svetlana Alexievich



# The Harlequin, Cheerful Robot and Fearful Puppet

## The Harlequin and Bricoleur

In chapter seven I described a harlequin as a reconstructed character taken from classical Italian comedy. I find the harlequin's personality relevant for this study, firstly because I see in her a direct connection to a bricoleur in the way that she 'makes do' by improvising from what she has at hand. The harlequin sustains herself by patching together the bits available to her. Her life is a self-authored mosaic of the events that she crafts together according to her awareness of herself and the world around her. This is epitomised in her fashion style as her clothing is patched together from pieces of different kinds of material.

I integrate heterogeneous elements in the harlequin clothing, merging them with what I sense can be attributed to a bricoleur's character 'in pointed defiance of the traditional attempt to coordinate individual pieces of clothing in a unified look' [Grenz, 1996, loc. 753]. The reason for this merger is to continue with the satirical-theatrical flavour that I started in the first probe, *The Tea Party*, flavour which Ryan-Hayes (1995) characterised as typical Russian aesthetics of parody (p. 4). In the contemporary culture of remix, people, as Grenz (1996) notices, become 'collectors of experiences, repositories of transitory, fleeting images produced and fostered by the diversity of media forms' [loc, 764]. This can be observed in a similar phenomenon of satirical tendencies expressed through the modality of fashion. With the advent of the screen, Grenz argues, people in contemporary society experience 'blurring of the traditional contrast

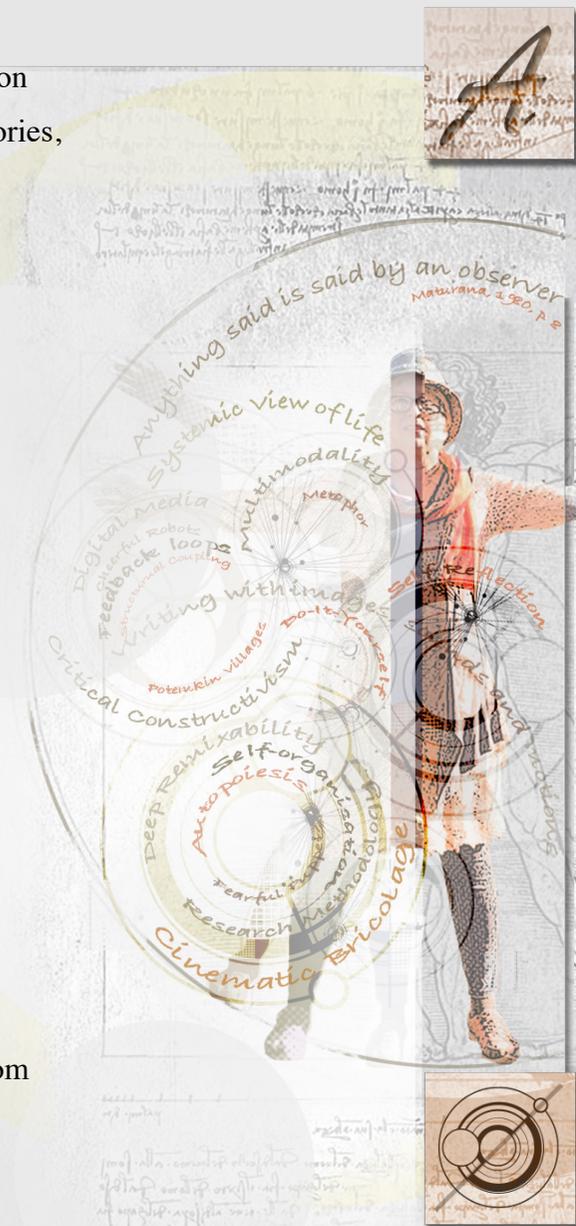


between the subjective self and the objective world [...] They live in the world in which the distinction between truth and fiction evaporated' [loc. 764]. By juxtaposing heterogeneous garments and accessories, people 'produce an ironic effect or parody modern fashion norms' [loc. 753].

The harlequin/bricoleur figure is a visual metaphor of this probe which is a kaleidoscopic assemblage of various narrative expressions such as memory grasps of certain events, descriptions of feelings or accounts of the situations from my childhood that I believe left a deep impression in shaping my perception of the world. Synonymous to the clothing composition with the patches from divergent styles of various decades and different fabrics, this chapter consists of disparate events, both in terms of time and characteristics.

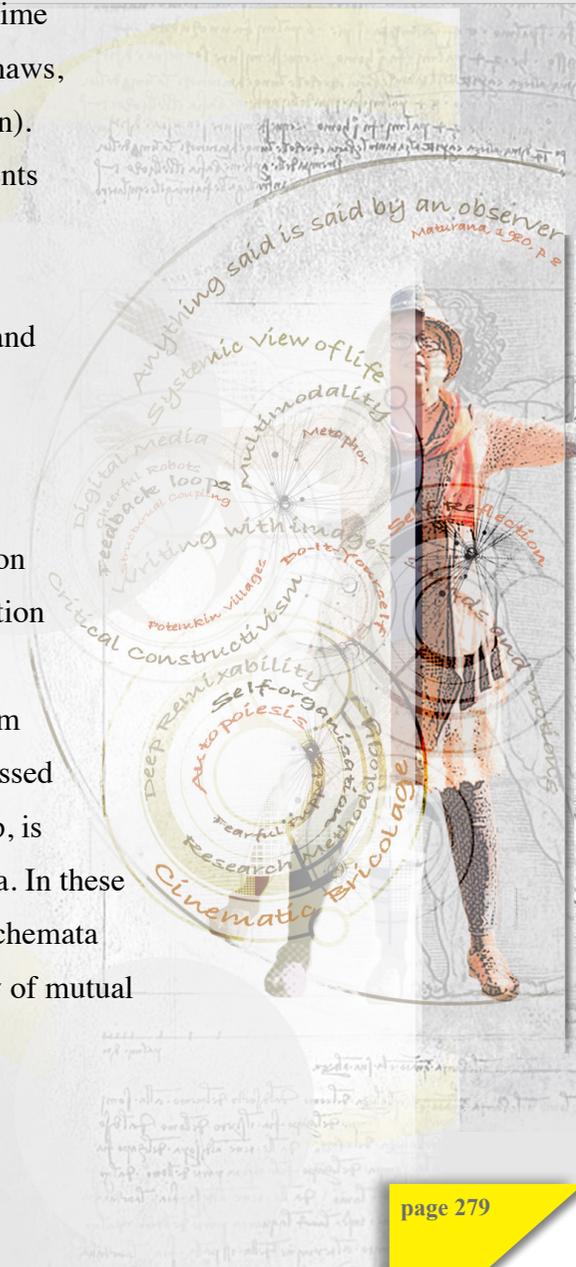
The harlequin as a social figure is juxtaposed with two other social types, cheerful robots and fearful puppets. This is not to suggest that the harlequin is an ideal model for a social being, but to give an alternative to the two other types. Unlike the cheerful robot who is too light-hearted to care about what is happening around her or the fearful puppet who is too scared to change her circumstances, the harlequin in this study is a social being with self-authority and self-organisation. She is a shrewd agent who deciphers the situation by interpreting the gathered objects and materials, she invents new devices by selecting from her collection and using the tools at hand, and, by doing so, she finds a way out of a conflict or predicament.

The harlequin is closely associated with a bricoleur but they are two different characters. The bricoleur is an observer and an interpreter of what is observed. The bricoleur observes the events from



her own past but from a position detached from the actual events by space and time. This is a space-time gap which, using the metaphor of an iceberg, has undergone some changes as a result of periodical thaws, running rivulets, new pools that create new cavities and new refreezing (as discussed in chapter seven). All these have caused structural changes inside the iceberg. Therefore, the bricoleur observes the events through the crystal of a multi-faceted iceberg, a multi-layered conceptual grasp schemata generated over the period of time that separates her from the situatedness of the experience being represented. Consequently, the projection of reality acquires a certain distortion dependent on the characteristics and complexity of the grasp schemata the bricoleur has achieved during the years of separation from the depicted events.

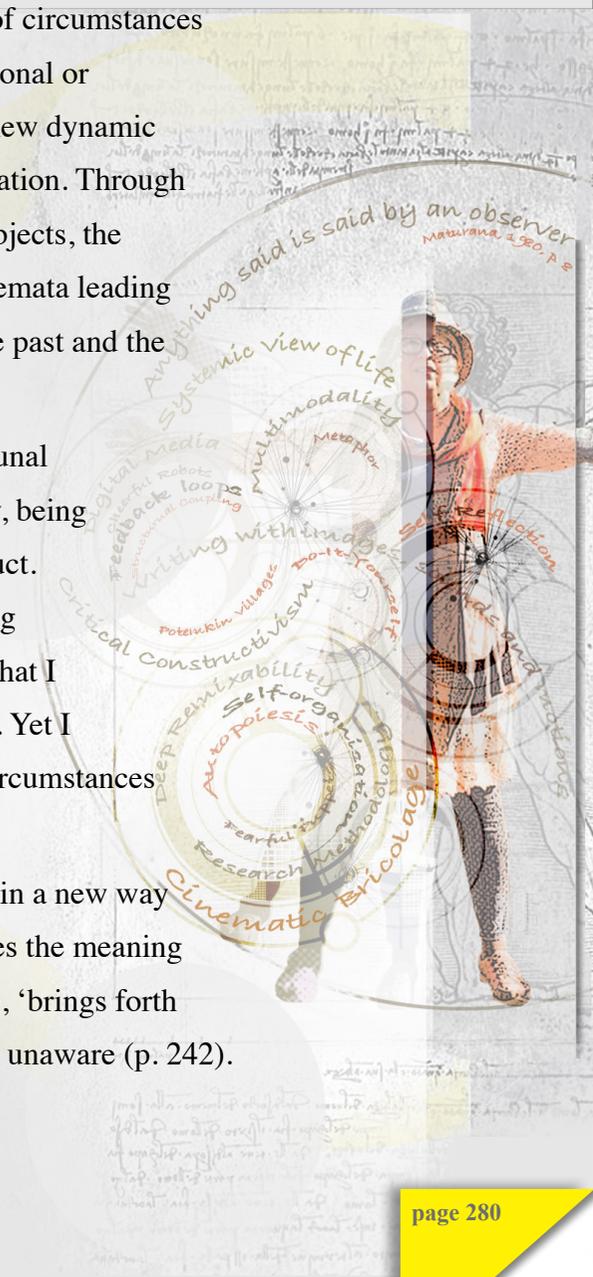
The harlequin is an observed being, an avatar. She came into being as a result of the bricoleur's primary mental grasp of the experienced events and exists inside the bricoleur's mind as an impression made at that time. The harlequin is not set in stone; she undergoes continuous reconstructions in relation to the conceptual changes in the bricoleur's grasp schemata. From this point of view, it can be said that the harlequin abides inside the conditions of continuous autopoiesis – self-remaking. Looking from Maturana's and Varela's (1998, p. 47-48, 75) concept of autopoiesis and structural coupling, as discussed in chapter four, it can be said that by retaining her autonomous unity, the harlequin, as a mental grasp, is involved in continuous dynamic interactions with the larger environment – that of the grasp schemata. In these interactions, the ever-changing (through the conceptual blending discussed in chapter seven) grasp schemata causes alterations in the harlequin and vice versa for the grasp schemata. 'The result will be a history of mutual congruent structural changes' (Maturana, Varela, 1998).



As the cinematic bricoleur enters the process of representing the avatar/harlequin in a certain set of circumstances she starts collecting relevant bricoles, such as existing theoretical and factual data, photos from personal or public databases. She records videos, sounds and music, de-constructs and re-assembles them into new dynamic interactions that correspond with her perception of the circumstances under the process of representation. Through the activity of placing the harlequin into altered spatial, audio and kinaesthetic relation with other objects, the bricoleur modifies her own perception of the events. By doing so she reshapes her mental grasp schemata leading to structural congruence between two systems-figures – the harlequin as an actor in the events of the past and the bricoleur as an observer and re-producer of those events.

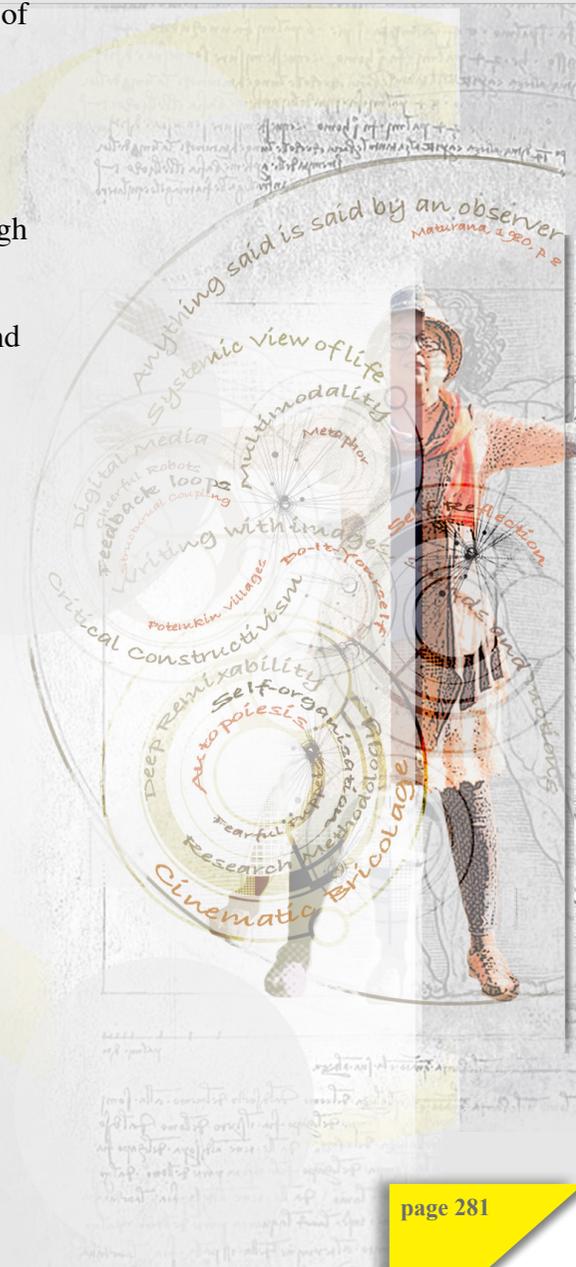
I would like to saturate the message of these two probes with the absurdity of the common communal condition where a group of people forge a social construct and the majority of the population follow, being incapable of making moral judgements in recognising the manipulative forces behind such a construct. Absurdity, which I am trying to achieve by means of juxtaposing incongruous elements or describing unsettling life episodes, sharpens the severity of the circumstances under the depiction. The events that I represent and try to make meaning of in this chapter are the events that I do not normally talk about. Yet I believe that they have much to do with how I see myself in relation to other people and the social circumstances that I am placed into.

The bricoleur, working with the collected bricoles and patching together the harlequin of her past in a new way by means by cinematic bricolage, generates new digital environments. As she observes and embodies the meaning by remixing different digital modes of expression, she, borrowing from Maturana and Varela (1998), ‘brings forth new constellations of relations’. She reveals her ‘cognitive blind spots’ of which she was previously unaware (p. 242). By recognising and observing those ‘blind spots’, the bricoleur constructs herself anew.



Although it has been mentioned a few times already, I would like to remind again that the purpose of the two probes, *The Tea Party* and *The Harlequin*, is to explore the capacity of digital media, framed as cinematic bricolage, through the mechanism of the circular feedback loops in representing  knowledge-generating process. Following the constructivist-systemicist perspective, I adopt the cognitive position that knowledge is not independent of the observer's mind but is mapped out through the interactions in the observer's medium of existence. 'We as human beings have no access to an objective reality since we are constructing our version of it, while at the same time transforming it and ourselves' [Fosnot & Perry, 2005, loc. 655].

The two probes are examples of reflective ideation of the self  whole interactions, firstly in an abstracted environment such as Soviet Russia and, secondly in the totality of the flow of the experience. This is a milieu in which I explore the affordances and limitations of the cinematic bricolage as a methodology of representing  knowing. Therefore, the focus here is not on developing a political critique of the former Soviet Union ideology, the current Russian regime or of Communism in general. Rather it is an exploration of the ways in which cinematic bricolage facilitates the meaning-making of past events and their impact on the harlequin/bricoleur researcher whose story is told here.



## 9.1 Madeleine Cake in Astrakhan

This is Astrakhan, the place of my birth. I immediately recognise the great Russian river, the Volga, the white walls of the Kremlin clasp around the ancient city with the splendid Cathedral of Assumption. Next is the Vlasov College of Fine Arts, the school where I studied for four years, entering through the gates in the Bell Tower every morning at quarter to nine. Somewhere far away but much closer than the horizon line, is the house of my childhood.

For Proust, the flavour of madeleine cake and tea provoked an avalanche of sensations. Watching this video seizes me in an instant grip of emotions, but they are quite different. My heart skips a beat as I am reminded of all the times I did not manage to behave in a compliantly correct manner. I shiver with the sensation of a wet, cold, sticky blouse that I did not have chance to change after being in the rain. This place, a fan-forced oven in summer and a depressed, knee-dirt-slush in winter makes me feel anything but welcome back home.



In my mind is a rather ordinary street of the mid-seventies in Astrakhan: the smell of melted snow and liver pies sold on the corner of the street. Icy drizzle dissolves on the dark woollen coats worn by the men. The owners of the coats gulp beer, diluted generously with water from a tap – a usual thing which everyone knows. Salespeople have to sell a larger volume of whatever goods they sell to put some extra money into their own pockets. Everyone finds their own way to survive on Soviet salaries which are well below the poverty line. The men around the beer stall talk fervently condemning everyone and everything on planet Earth (mainly the West – always safer, even in a close circle of friends) for their own problems. Not seeing any possible way out, they add some vodka to their mugs filled with another serving of beer; a bottle is always unexpectedly fished out of someone's deep pocket to everyone's wild delight. The men gulp the awful liquid, cringe from the strength of it, sniff deeply at the sleeves of their coats as if salami slices are attached there and sink deeper and deeper into their misery...

Among these men are to be found factory workers, artists, physicians, cobblers, university professors – all united around the beer stall in one pathetic fraternity, reduced by the Communist reality into a dispensable living mass ...

... snow studded with men's piss; the smell of fresh vomit...

... revolt and agony.

No matter how far away the iceberg of my unconscious floats from the place where the White Kremlin is, it ferries with it the shards of my life back in Russia stuck all over its faceted icy body. The mental-grasps are perceptive, always on alert, ready to be activated in aggressive interference, forging new combinations of present experiences, slurring them with the sad despair of the past.



## 9.2 The Red Shooting Star

I cannot think of a more potent symbol of Soviet culture than the Moscow Kremlin with its spell encapsulated in the Red Star at the top. I never lived in Moscow and never even really visited it, only in transit and once when I was too young to make anything of it. I never saw this great architectural monument of Russian culture with my own eyes. In spite of this, it lives in me as solidly as the bone-marrow in my bones. The image of the Kremlin is one of the first that a Soviet child would learn to draw, next to the image of a mother, father, self, house and the sun. The Kremlin would always be bigger than the other figures, taking more time to draw its structure in detail and colour it richly with red. You had to water a pencil in your mouth, make it wet as if with your own blood to make the Kremlin star especially saturated and shiny with colour.

Moscow Kremlin Bells >>>>

For most Russians the image of the Kremlin and the well-known peal of its bells signify the historical, social and cultural uniqueness and strength of motherland. For me the Kremlin is associated with a Potemkin Village facade that screens an eroded skeleton covered with the disintegrated flesh of various historical periods, all of them serfdoms of some kind.

The Kremlin red star was used especially skilfully during the time of Communism as a device of collective cognitive poisoning. Like a container that hides a distorted five-legged mother-spider inside, it produced sharp shards with encapsulated venomous spiderlings. They constantly arrowed into people's brains. Inside their heads, the shards burn with shimmering red intensity, prodding brains with sharp corners. The red spiders bite into every brain crinkle, keeping people in the perpetual state of being unthinking puppets willing to sacrifice themselves for the motherland.



*Traditionally, written text may be supported by an illustration in a form of image. Introduction of multimodal communication suggests other modalities for illustrating and heightening the experience of the alphabetic words.*

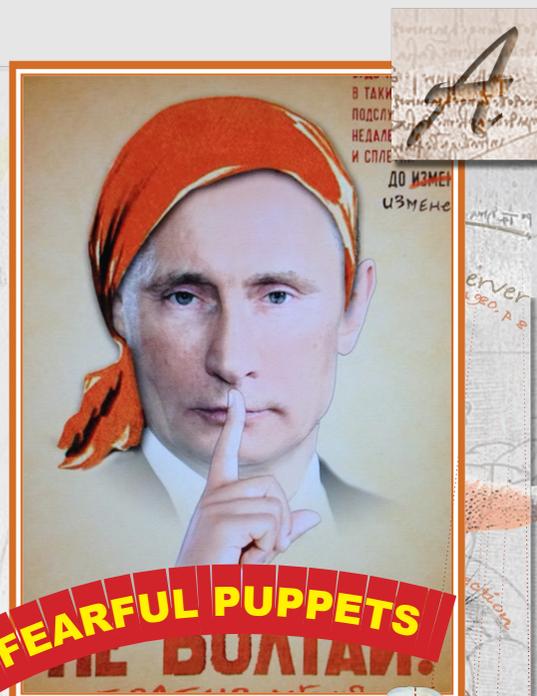
*As Kress (2003) argues: 'The world told is a different world to the world shown' [p.1].*

*In this thesis I experiment with the notion of the world told with images, sounds and motions being different from the world simply told.*

Only in the security of their own home, with the radio turned to full blast so no one outside can hear, huddling with very close friends at a small kitchen table, when the spiders in the brain are happily knocked out by a considerable amount of vodka, do people take off their fearful-puppet masks and admit to the severe migraines caused by the persistent redness in their lives, and to being perpetually barbed by the sharp red stars.

*One of the former Communist Party leaders in Aleksievich's (2013) book talks about sovieticus society being peppered with informers: 'Kitchen talk ... I remember how during these conversations we'd turn up the TV or the radio. There was a whole art to it ... You turn the dial to the end – old telephones had little holes for numbers that you could turn – and then you stick a pencil in it so that it locks ... Bugging and snitching were everywhere – from the bottom to the very top. At the district committee, we would try to guess who the informant was. As it later turned out, I had suspected a totally innocent person, and there wasn't just one informant, there had been several. None of them were people I would have ever suspected ... One was a cleaning lady' [loc. 801]. The woman goes on:*

*My God! Even Gorbachev himself ... The General Secretary of CC of CPSU ... I read an interview with him where he described how during confidential discussions in his office, he'd do the same thing, he'd also turn the TV or radio to the full volume ... For serious conversations, he'd have people come out to his dacha. And when they were there ... they would go to the woods, strolling and talking. The birds wouldn't inform on them ... Everyone was afraid, even the people that everyone was afraid of. I was afraid too. [Aleksievich, 2016, loc. 812]*



**THE UNION OF FEARFUL PUPPETS**

**DON'T BE A BIG MOUTH!**

*Watch your back,  
In days like ours,  
Walls eavesdrop.  
From innocent chatter and  
gossip it is not far to  
treason.*

Soviet Propaganda Poster (translated)



‘Sovok’ is a colloquial term forged by the Soviet people in relation to themselves exhibiting the characteristics of Soviet culture. The origin of the word come from ‘Soviet’ but is reduced to a derogatory ‘sovok’ – a dustpan.

Sovok (singular), sovki (plural).

‘This is me’, writes Svetlana Alexievich (2013). ‘These are the people who I know, my friends, my parents ... We will be recognised anywhere, immediately,’ she continues [Alexievich, 2013, loc. 15].

‘We are people from Socialism, we look and don’t look like others – we have our own dictionary, our own ideas about the good and bad, heroes and victims. We have a different relationship with death’ [loc. 15]. A new type of species as Trotsky proposed, as described in the previous probe: ‘[...] man will begin to harmonise himself in earnest’ ... Only all went so dramatically wrong, that ‘harmony’ had never survived.

Alexievich suggests that we should be labelled ‘homo soveticus’.

This is me then, homo soveticus, in short – sovok.

No matter how much I want to escape, change my place of residence, my name, my language, I too am star-splintered.

The implant in my psyche is too hard to extirpate.



This is me, homo soveticus, in short – sovok

## 9.3 Two Kremlins and one Mosque

Many Russians keep two Kremlins close to their hearts. The first, the red one, is the main. This is the Moscow Kremlin. The second is usually the oldest structure in historic Russian cities. Originally, Kremlins were built as fortified complexes to protect the residents of the city from enemies, namely the Tatars.

Russian Kremlins are usually white, supposedly built of white limestone. Only the Moscow Kremlin is red.

Red like strawberries, I used to think as a child. Strawberries become very white before they turn red.

So our Astrakhan Kremlin was white because it wasn't 'ripe enough yet'.

Before strawberries turn white, they should be green, shouldn't they?

What in the old architecture was green?

A Mosque. There was one across the tram-line where we lived, greenish from shabby patches of old paint and mould. It was in the old Tatar area, a poor place with mud between houses instead of roads. Next to the mosque lived an old blind Tatar man. He was well known in the area for frying sunflower seeds. As kids we would sometimes sneak to the Tatar area to buy the seeds from the man. He sold them through an opened window for 10 kopeks a small glass poured into an old newspaper cornet.



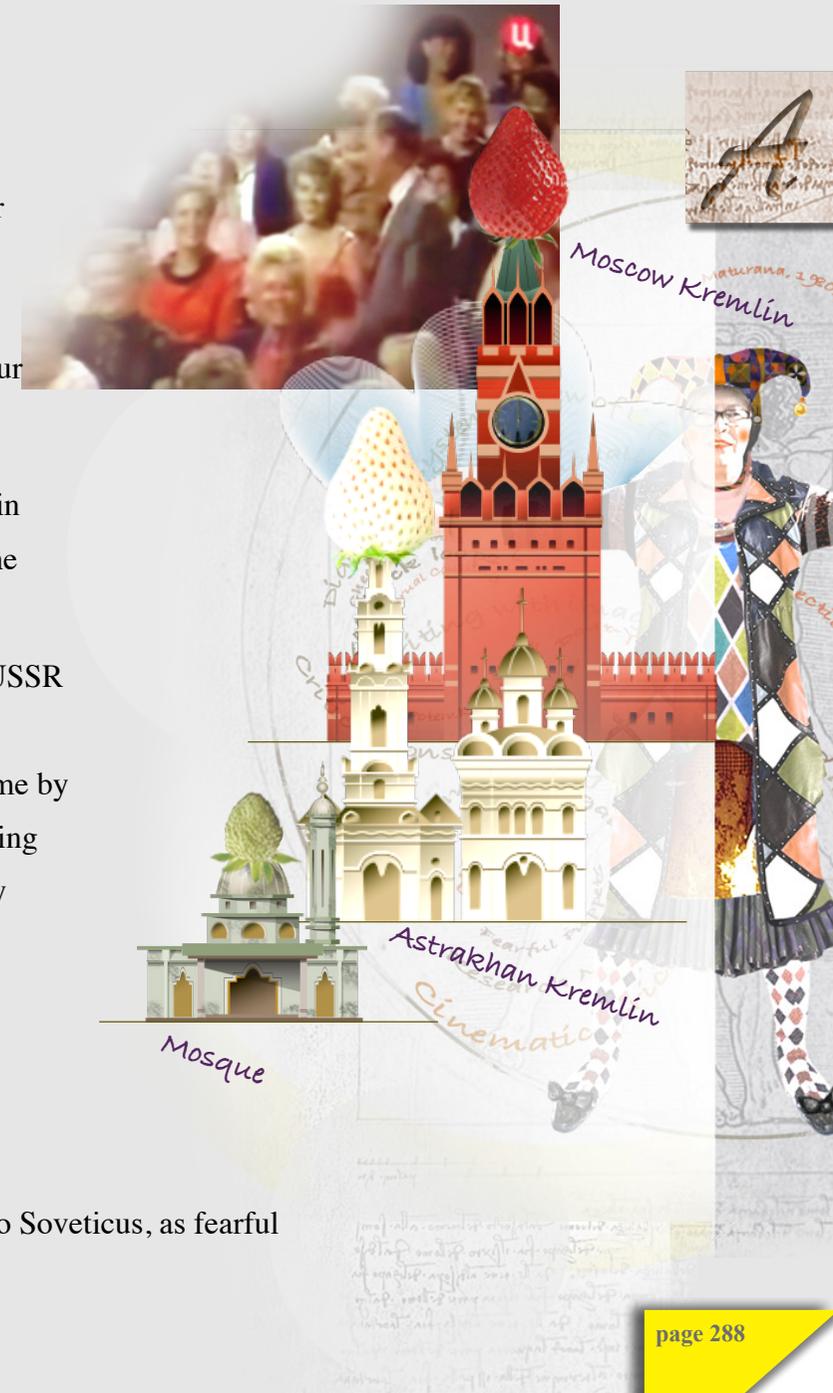
As he would take payment from us and examine the coin with his fingers, he would bend his head as if he needed to see it with his blind eyes. We would wait until ... until a deep dent on the top of his bald head would be revealed. With our hearts pumping, we would run from the old man's house. Only after crossing the tramline would we stop to catch our breath. We would peel the shells from the seeds carefully, with our nails, not teeth, to avoid any 'alien' infection entering our bodies.

In 1985, with the first spacebridge linking live audiences in a television studio in Leningrad (currently St.Petersburg) and in Seattle, a Russian woman surprised the world by declaring that there was no sex in the USSR .

Perhaps, in the same vein, there was also a common belief that citizens in the USSR had no need to visit rest-rooms outside their own homes. Otherwise, how would anyone explain the fact that public conveniences were very difficult things to come by in any Soviet city or town. Such an assumption about the homo soveticus managing to take full control of their natural needs can be eventuated from Trotsky's theory mentioned in the previous chapter about the men of communism who:

... will want to master first semi-conscious and then also the unconscious processes of his own organism: breathing, the circulation of blood, digestion, reproduction, and, within the necessary limits, subordinate them to the control of reason and will ... (Trotsky, 1924, ch. 8)

Theoretically this may not be a bad thing to consider. In reality, however, Homo Soveticus, as fearful and obedient as they were, never lived up to such high expectations.



As a six year old holding my best friend's hand and walking along the walls of the Astrakhan Kremlin with a group of kindergarten children, I was not giving much thought to the above issue. I remember staring up at a flock of crows rushing by noisily in the sky. Like the Golden Horde of Tatars – a well-known theme for old and young Russians from familiar historic tales and legends – the crows produced a cacophony of guttural screams. Their wings – flapping black capes in the wind. The crows, one by one, were disappearing behind the tall white walls. Taking over the Kremlin without any sign of resistance!

Mesmerised I could not tear my eyes from the sight. That was when I felt myself stepping into something soft and profoundly stinky. The effect was as if I had stepped on a land-mine. Everyone moved away from me and the kindergarten teacher, standing at a discrete distance, glared at me with indignation.

It seems everyone except me, knew that when you walk you look down, not up!

The teacher yelled at me.

You look up only when you are asked to look up!

What kind of irresponsible people my parents were if they had failed to teach me such a simple but vital thing?!

... I had to clean my shoe by rubbing it on the grass.

On the way back no one, not even my best friend wanted to walk next to me – I stank!

This was only the beginning of my experience of being either literally or metaphorically in the ....



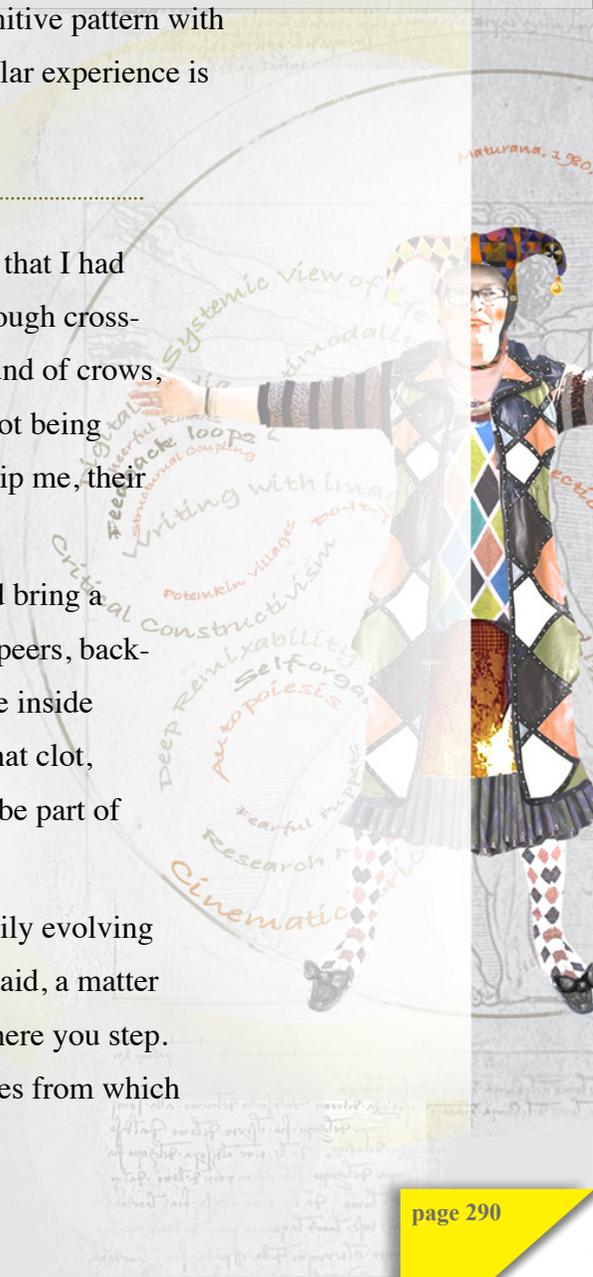
It might appear that my choice of the story walking in the kindergarten group by the Kremlin wall is inappropriate and even tasteless for a doctoral thesis. Nevertheless, if my intention here is to metaphorise the cognitive pattern with which I perceive my socio-cultural environment, the mental grasp that I developed from this particular experience is a long-lasting strand that remains strongly interwoven into my mental structures.

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Applying Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of primary metaphors [loc. 721] to the mental grasp that I had developed as a consequence of the experience described above, it can be said that it was formed through cross-fertilisation of two domains: the sensorimotor, source domain – activated imagination, sight and sound of crows, physical touch, smell, careful movements, and so on and that of subjective judgement – shame of not being able keep up with established norms of conduct and the embarrassment of parents who failed to equip me, their Homo Sovieticus child, with appropriate Sovieticus style of performance.

As years were passing by, other blunders where I was not able to abide by established rules, would bring a flash of the same sensory qualia from childhood: as if the same touch, smell, the disapproval of my peers, back-dropped by crows cawing, curdled together into one obnoxious clot planted permanently somewhere inside my stomach. While still living in Soviet Russia, my life experiences resulted in a continual pull at that clot, strengthening my belief that I did not belong with them, the Homo Sovieticus; that I did not want to be part of that absurd fearful-puppet-show and that my true home was somewhere else.

Looking at this particular examination here, it can be suggested that as a child, I was already steadily evolving into an incompatible member of Soviet society, where conformity was, as the kindergarten teacher said, a matter of survival. Living in the USSR you learn to tread cautiously from young age, to watch carefully where you step. One wrong move, one wrong word, can be the reason for you or your parents (or both) to go to places from which many never returned.



The animation below is a cinematic metaphor constructed on the basis of the described event of having a walk with the kindergarten group along the walls of the Astrakhan Kremlin. The conflation of sensori-motor experience and subjective concepts evolves into a scene in which the act of walking shifts from one of being on stable ground to a balancing act, in which I find myself walking on top of the wall. From the top of the wall, a new sight opens up: a swarm of poisonous-red stars and spiders revealing a nature of the place where one would end up if she loses the balance. The crows are flapping around. Their cawing signals they are on the watch ready to attack at the first stumble. The smoke is heavy. Raising up, it reinstates a possibility that life may depend on someone else's whim, for example – having a good or bad smoke.

In this animation, the Harlequin is a symbol of achievement who appears at the end of the walk; one little walk was taken at the time but it was a success. Alla Pugacheva's song is a reminder that in the Fearful-Puppet society, an individual walk on a tightrope is nothing more than mere entertainment for others.

A popular singer of the late Soviet times, Alla Pugacheva sings:

Running within the centre  
of a bright spotlight,

I cannot see the end of  
the path;

The world is a closed  
circle to me

With a mask that hides  
my face from everyone.

To you, I am a clown, a  
harlequin and mere fun,  
Without a name or a story  
to tell,

But why should you be  
bothered with all these

If you came just to be  
entertained by me.

Oh, Harlequin(o),  
Harlequin(o),

All I do is make you laugh

Oh, Harlequin(o),  
Harlequin(o),

My reward is your laugh.

Ha-ha-ha ...



urava, 1980



## 9.4 Stairs and Layers

‘Okay, doggies,’ I say scrambling to my feet from the grassy elevation that surrounds the white walls of the Astrakhan Kremlin. The cloud of noisy crows passing by was quite a spectacle, a curtain opening the puppet show. I shake the grass off my skirt and heave my bag full of bricoles onto my shoulder. We walk on the city street along the Kremlin wall and enter it through the Bell Tower gates.

It is nice to wander around for a while remembering things, but I know what I am looking for in particular. There is a wall with an opening. We enter the watchtower, find an arched doorway and go down several flights of stairs.

A structure, as a multitude of unfolding terraces, delicate, God-knows-how held together, is displayed in front of us. We walk on to the bridge leading to the structure, stepping carefully, as if walking on thin ice. Strangely enough, everything feels familiar to me, like home, more than like home, like a structure which is mine and mine alone.

I recognise the staircase: my father has not yet built the handrails. As a baby, I crawl up and not being able to hold on to anything I roll back down. That is perhaps my earliest memory. I recognise a pontoon bridge across a river that leads to my mother’s place of work; an apple tree I liked to climb; the ballet studio which I attended for six years. My father’s dream was to see me as a ballerina. My mother thought that this idea should stay where it belonged – in my childhood. So it remains there ...



I climb one staircase after another. I am amazed at how well I remember them: wooden, marble, tiles and granite, squeaky and solid – all sorts. They are imprinted in my memory in a way that one of my childhood favourites, Sherlock Homes, would most likely not approve. He instructs Dr. Watson:

SHERLOCK HOLMES'S GREATEST CASES

'You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which led up from the hall to this room.'

'Frequently.'  
'How often?'

[Doyle, 1892, p.3]

'Well, some hundreds of times.'

'Then how many are there?'

'How many! I don't know.'

'Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point.'

I had seen those stairs but I had not observed. I just took them in, not by logic but by senses. I do not know how many steps they had but I remember my soft ballet shoe touching a chipped part of the marble. I remember the pattern of the tiles that was so busy that it began to swim in front of your eyes if you stared at it for too long. But most importantly, I remember the mental grasps of how I felt in those particular places and at those particular moments. I remember, thanks not to counting the steps but to allowing the most primitive form of consciousness to record the data received by my senses. According to Singer (1983), Hegel calls this 'certainty at the level of sense-experience' or, more briefly, 'sense-certainty' [p. 69].

Sense-certainty makes no attempt to order or classify the raw information obtained by senses ... Sense-certainty is aware only of what is now present to it; as Hegel puts it, it is the certainty of the 'this', or of the 'here' and 'now'. [Singer, 1983, p. 69]

The stairs take me from one room of the structure to another, letting me recall that which was forgotten a long time ago.

I see what I have already seen but now in a completely new way. The whole construction is a topological multi-story labyrinth, an unfolding membranous ice model of my heart and mind pulsing together, pushing me through its shifting valves of 'genuine knowledge' of being 'directly aware of the 'this', without imposing on it the distorting filters of a conceptual scheme involving space, time, or any other categories' [Singer, p. 70]. I am overwhelmed, rendered thoughtless and speechless for several moments.

Memories, either forgotten or denied, pushed away as if they were never mine. I see the crow that appeared to me in my dream when I was little. It frightened me so badly that for a long time I was afraid to come close to a window if I heard crows screeching outside.

I see a huge inkblot spilt over a certificate of appreciation granted to me for the best performance in mathematics in year six. My father did this, spilt the ink over it. This memory is crumpled away, a skeleton in a small dark closet. This is not because I am angry with my father. It is because my heart aches for him and I want no more heart aches than I already have. And yet, the structure is pumping, the movie film is rolling, the valves are shifting. My father, an intelligent, talented and gentle man, a poet-soul, would turn into a mad animal every time a drop of alcohol touched his lips. Why? He was thrown into a solitary cell for a year after drawing a caricature of some Communist leader.

It was a miracle that he survived.



I hear loud voices coming from the next compartment of the structural unfolding. It seems like the television news, I realise as I enter the next space.

'7 January 2015', the screen displays.

... An overlap, I gasp, an overlap of the past and present. People pay for their satirical artwork with their lives. Disturbed, I turn the television off. One might say that my father was lucky that he was left to live, unlike the staff at Charlie Hebdo.

To some extent, I agree, although a scar across his scalp spoke eloquently about what he had been through in that one year of solitary confinement and how it had affected him for the rest of his life ... as well as mine.

I take a long staircase, the dogs and I going deep down. I am in a cellar now, far below the surface where the whole structure sits. My last memory of my father: a raised axe, my mother, Baba Tanya, my pregnant sister-in-law and me, women from four different generations, petrified in the face of what could happen next. My father's arm weakens. He opens his mouth, utters an incoherent intoxicated rasp.

My dogs begin to bark as his image waddles unsteadily away.

A few hours later, my mother delivered news of my father's death – he fell down the basement stairs. 'Thank goodness,' I gasped with relief.

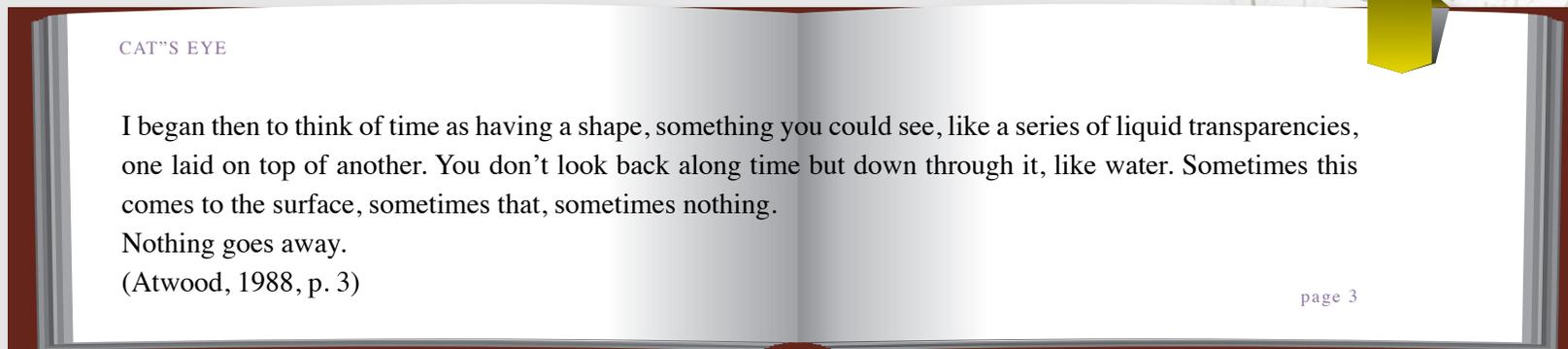
**Breaking News – Charlie Hebdo shooting, twelve are dead after two masked gunmen attacked the French satirical weekly newspaper ...**



For years this piece of my life was carefully tucked away from the public eye. I would speak fondly of my father: a doting dad, a gifted artist, a highly regarded architect. I never mentioned to anyone how much and why we, as a family, were scared of him, how exhausted we were by our fear. I would never mention to anyone my response to the news of his death.

How did it happen that I suddenly developed this strong urge to open the box containing this memory? And why, as I have the words describing this experience selected, do I not press the delete button? Why is this memory bobbing on the surface of my writing like a float not letting me continue my 'fishing' unless I pay proper attention to it? Am I caught up in the desire to make my writing 'credible' (Certeau, 1988) which 'turns 'everyone' into the teller of his ridiculous misfortune' [loc. 238]. Or there is something else in it, something much deeper than just the desire to impress?

Margaret Atwood's words on how time and the memories recorded in it can be seen, come to mind:



'Nothing goes away, nothing goes away', the thought is spinning in my mind.

The stairs and levels in the mental grasp schemata eventually collapse together, like layers in Photoshop.

## 9.5 The Red Scarf and Baba Tanya

As any typical teenager my craving to be part of the herd was the main principle of my existence. It drove me into becoming a zealous Sovietic Pioneer. I tried really hard and got a role in the central Pioneer television show in the Astrakhan region. It was a very small role. In fact, I was an invisible voice behind the letters sent by other Pioneer teenagers with their 'concerns' of how to become better Pioneers. Then, I was given the role of the show host.

But it did not last long. One day, walking with a co-host through the television station yard, laughing at some silly things, I let my guard down and to emphasise my sense of humour and coolness, I made a cross over myself, like my grandmother, an Orthodox believer sometimes did at home when no one could see. I did not even think (but I should have) that we were being watched.

I did not participate in the show that night. Instead I was called to the political coordinator's office. She tugged at the end of my red pioneer's scarf, tied neatly around my neck.

**How dare you?** she hissed. **Wearing a piece of the Communist Great Red Banner on your neck, the banner that is soaked in the blood of millions of Red Army soldiers who were slain for the victory of the Communist Revolution! You must not make crosses over yourself! Did you not know that?**

Oh, I did know about that. I knew rather too well that any religion and any display of it were offensive to the Sovietic standards. I had forgotten it, just for a moment ... for a very short moment.

**Did you not give the Solemn Oath of a Soviet Pioneer?** The political coordinator demanded.

I did ...

No matter how remorseful I felt for my anti-Sovetic behaviour, my participation in the show was no longer required.



It was gloomy and misty outside as I dragged myself to the tram stop. Perhaps, it was as gloomy and misty an hour ago – but an hour ago I had not a care in the world to notice that. Staring through the tram’s back window at the drizzle falling on the wet rails and the slushy dirt between them, I kept swallowing hard, trying not to burst into tears.

In spite of having home and family, I felt as miserable as a stray dog. My parents did not care much about my well-being or that of my brothers, I thought. By allowing our Baba Tanya to continue practicing her secret prayers, making crosses over herself, banging her head on the floor in earth-low bows asking continuously for some pointless forgiveness, our parents exposed us, children, to something that was not welcomed in our society. They made us feel as it was nothing. But it WAS something – look at me having this bumpy ride on the tram, shifting from one foot to another catching my balance on a floor as slushy as the pavements outside, when right at that moment, I was supposed to be shining in the glorious lights of the television show.

Back home, I poured my anger out on Baba Tanya. She was utterly deaf, not because of old age but due to some infection that she had suffered as a child and since then she never heard a sound. She would not be hurt much by the severity of my words.

I kept making spitting gestures, and I spat, and spat at the empty air above my head demonstrating to her as explicitly as possible that there, in the sky, lived NO-ONE! The all-powerful God she believed in did not exist. Not convinced?! Look, let him kill me right now, on the spot. I lay down on the floor crossing my hands on my chest. I am dead! See? I am dead! Then jumping up on my feet – look I am NOT, I am alive because there is NO GOD! He, who does not exist cannot do anything to me! I continued shouting to the deaf ears articulating my frustration with elaborated cruel mouthing straight into Baba Tanya’s face.



... The face that I saw the most when lying in my cradle and learning to recognise the world, when my mother had to go back to work when I was only three months old. The face that was looking at me with the greatest tenderness as she kept me tight to her chest keeping me warm and loved as much as she could. The face that I saw as a little girl coming out of the school doors, waiting for me, making sure that I crossed the road and got back home safely.

... Now this face was wet with tears running down its cheeks.

She kept crossing herself and crossing me, asking God to forgive me ...

Of course, I always knew why my parents never forced Baba Tanya to stop practicing her belief even though she was never given any support for it. My mother was a devout Communist, not just on paper but sincerely, down to her bones. With her in full charge of the dynamics in our family, my brothers and I grew up as confirmed atheists. Baba Tanya's belief was tolerated on account of her 'perceptual physical deficiency'. She lived in her own bubble filled with her own music in her otherwise soundless existence. Sometimes she would start singing quietly the songs of worship that she remembered from her childhood. She could not hear herself. Her voice was freakishly high-pitched and always out of tune. My brothers and I hiding behind her back were dying from laughter. She would not hear us, of course. In her mind, she had a heavenly communion, finding peace with herself, shaping herself into the kindest, most honest and loving soul I ever knew.



My mother, a staunch Communist.  
The Soviet anthem was our alarm clock. Every morning at six o'clock the radio played it.

## 9.6 Harlequin Bird

As a growing teenager, stirred by an intrinsic need to belong to a group, I have been fighting doggedly for this right, but to no avail. The more I tried and the better the results I achieved, one day I would inevitably stop being careful and expose my 'true' nature, one ill-fitted for Sovietic standards.

I remember once revealing my frustration to my father, saying that in spite of all my attempts I was never able to be the same as the others. Something in me would inevitably reveal my true colour. And in fact, I never wanted to be one of them: one of the grey flock of crows who saw themselves as 'red eaglets' or better still, 'redimps'. I would rather be pink or multi-coloured I decided.

I cannot recall the exact words of my father's reply. I remember him looking concerned. It was more of a question implying an absolute elimination of choice. Something like: how do you intend to survive among a grey mass if your wings are stained with colour?

Stained is the only word that I can find to describe the feeling that I had and carried throughout my life in the Sovietic camp. To survive in Sovietic terms meant to hide by losing yourself among them, being no-coloured.

I have to admit I have nothing against grey. Its velvety softness, its tweedy warmth makes me feel comforted, settled. But this is not the grey that I talk about. That grey is the masses of people dressed in ragged quilt jackets that smell of damp unwashed bodies. I sometimes saw a group of them passing by from the window of my room. Surrounded by armed men with German shepherds on leads, the men in grey jackets were taken from the prison that was not far from our house to do hard labour for our Communist state. Grey as shadows and colourless as non-existence they were a grim reminder that you have to choose your colour carefully. Red was the safest.

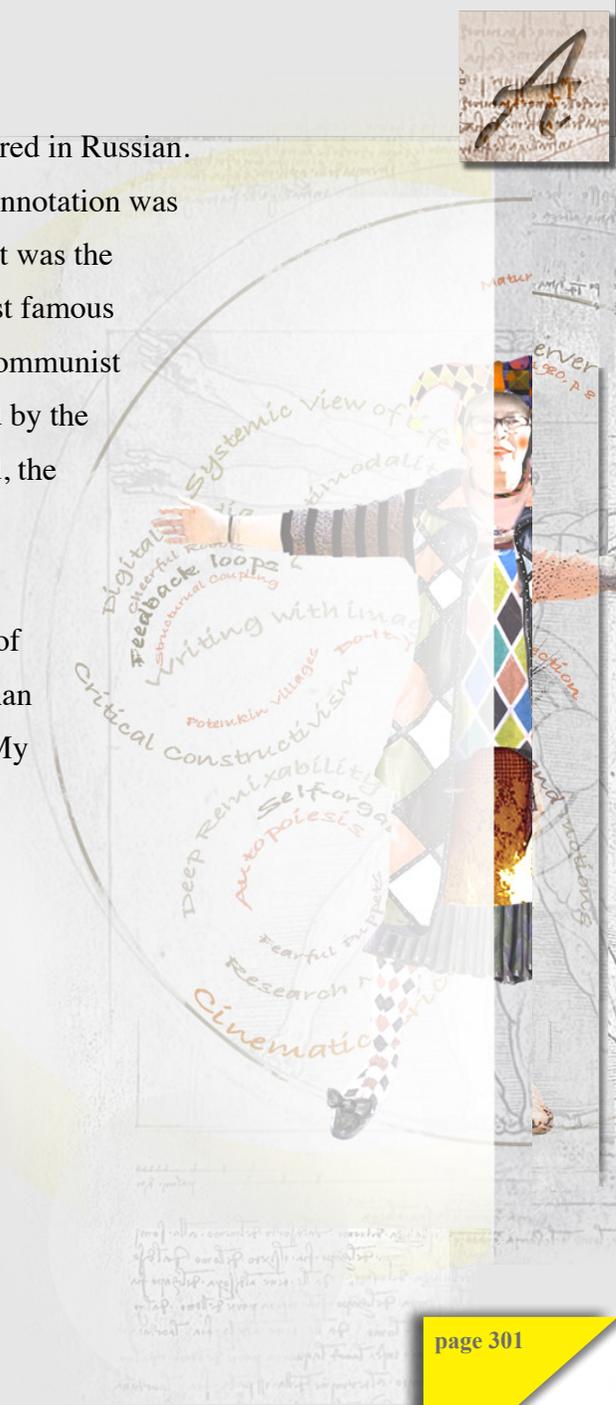


Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, a famous Russian novelist, as a Gulag prisoner wearing one of those 'legendary' Sovietic quilt grey jackets for eleven years.

In 1970, Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and in 1974, he was deported from the Soviet Union and stripped of his Soviet citizenship.

Interestingly semantically speaking, our family name was formed from the word red. Krasnyi is red in Russian. Krasnov means a man of red and Krasnova (that is me) is a woman of red. Theoretically such a connotation was supposed to provide our family with some automatic immunity, but it never did. On the contrary, it was the cause of some uncomfortable experiences. This was because it was associated with one of the most famous and notorious commanders of the White Guards, General Pyotr Krasnov. He was a zealous anti-Communist and anti-Soviet activist until he was handed over to the Russians by British authorities and hanged by the Soviets in 1947 as a 'most dangerous enemy of the people'. So as far as our family was concerned, the disturbing question 'any relation to ...?' was not a rare occasion.

Ironically I was inherently bound to exhibit a wrong colour even in the situation when I had an advantage to show the right one. To be a true 'red communist' I once wanted to depict the misery of the proletariat against the philistine tackiness of the bourgeois in one of my projects at the Astrakhan Vlasov College of Fine Arts. I decided to contrast sad grey hues with showy rosy pink elements. My lecturer's interpretation of my choice of the colour scheme was different. On the basis of previous behavioural blunders through which I had many times proven myself incapable of an appropriate Sovietic attitude, he saw my approach as nothing but promotion of a 'tasteless, decaying bourgeois' style.



Gradually I developed the impression that the two Kremains: the Moscow red and the Astrakhan white, were pressing me from both sides. They were pushing me out, forcing me away from the zone of their radiation. I was an alien element in their ecosystem and had to be eliminated.

In my perception of my life, the red and the white collided with each other in a dramatic clash like that between the Red Army and the White Guards after the Communist revolution. It was a personal psychological Big Bang, in which the Moscow Kremlin Red Star splinters clashed with the debris of the white Astrakhan Kremlin's prongs resulting in the formation of a new decadent colour species of some unknown origin.

Like a fungus, a growth in the eye, my odd-colour breed of bird was a spot of constant irritation, always to be pecked at, every day confirming that they would not let me survive among them.

Today, after more than twenty-five years of leaving Russia, I watch an interview with a famous Russian scientist, political analyst and writer, Andrey Piontkovsky. With sad irony Piontkovsky says that the times in Russia are now more 'vegetarian', meaning that people can still be 'eaten alive' but now they are given a 'civilised' choice to hide from Russian forces elsewhere in the world.

'They deal with people like you and me by pushing us out of the country,' says Piontkovsky, seventy six years old and a distinguished mathematician and anti-Putin activist. Being openly threatened by official forces, Piontkovsky had to leave Russia in February 2016.

I definitely would not be welcomed back there.

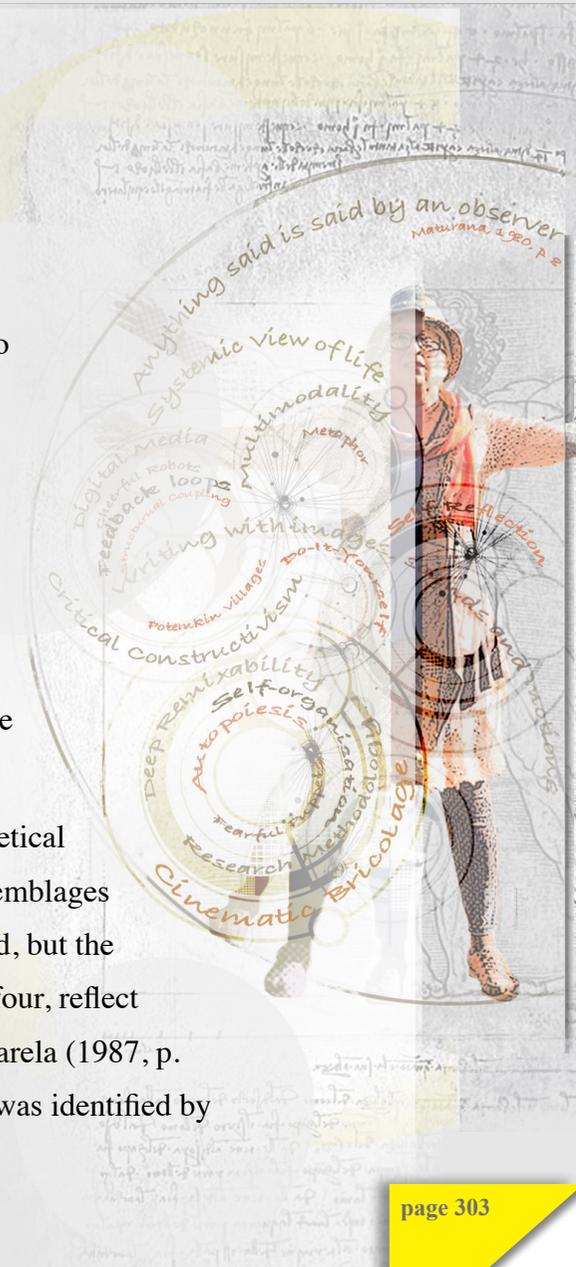


## Rediscovering the Self by Interacting with Others through Cinematic Bricolage

### Introduction: Completing the Feedback Loop

By adopting the feedback loops strategy for research, developed by Berry (2004) which is geared to deal with complex reality (see chapter four), this study has produced a multidimensional conceptual structure exploring how cinematic bricolage can facilitate the generation of knowledge. Following Berry's proposition, the research journey started by creating a pivot embodied in the question of how a digital multimodal system of expression could accommodate the articulation of meaning. Development of the study was carried out by 'feedback loops' or as Berry terms them, 'threading' through a variety of existential fields to generate layers of data in the form of theoretical aspects, informational fragments, visual, audio and other components that appeared essential in addressing the posed question (see chapter four).

Each chapter in this thesis can be considered as a feedback loop, that is, a movement through theoretical and empirical domains, collecting, adjusting and re-organising the gathered data-bricoles in new assemblages around the pivot. In this process, not only were the collected bricoles de-constructed and re-organised, but the pivot itself was modified to accommodate new configurations. Such dynamics, discussed in chapter four, reflect the phenomenon of structural coupling as part of a systemic view conceptualised by Maturana and Varela (1987, p. 75). The mechanism responsible for the emergence of new alterations caused by structural coupling was identified by Maturana and Varela as autopoiesis – self-remaking (p. 48).



This chapter is the final feedback loop in the study. It threads back through the chapters of the thesis, drawing on their essential aspects, patching them together with other scholarly assumptions and establishing its own distinctive claim. Through the study progression, it became evident to me that a systemic, circular view of the world was the investigative lens that best matched my mindset (see chapter five). Built on a constructivist paradigm, the systemic model of thinking claims that all cognition is observer-dependent. Maturana explains his research process in an interview with Poerksen (2004):

I do not start with ontology, I start with experience. Here I am, Humberto Maturana, reflecting and posing the reflexive question how it is possible for me to reflect and to know how I know. [loc. 994]

Following Maturana's lead, I start this chapter in the awareness that the discussion presented here is an examination of my own experience, firstly, as an observer of this doctoral study trajectory, and secondly as an explorer of cinematic bricolage in an auto-biographical study. This chapter is, therefore, a self-reflection of the progression from the point of establishing the pivot – an initial research question – to the point of now, after the pivot has undergone re-organisation through the interaction with every new feedback loop, guided by the motivation 'to know how I know'.

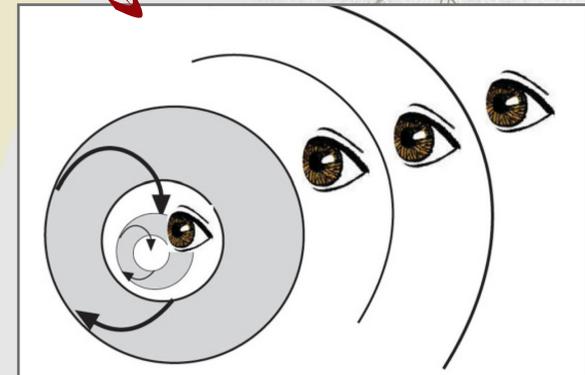
The research question (the initial pivot), 'in what ways can a digital multimodal system of expression accommodate the articulation of meaning?', is reshaped into (the final pivot) - 'to what extent does cinematic bricolage, as a research methodology, contribute to knowledge production?' I see this curve as a result of the feedback loops that brought new layers for examination to the reasearch, thereby adding intricacy and rigour to the original notion of bricolage. Accordingly, the trajectory from the initial pivot to the final pivot can be considered as an act of autopoiesis. This is because, in order to answer the question, the agent (researcher, bricoleur) has entered into dynamic recurrent interactions with the immediate environment relevant to the question resulting in congruent structural changes in the agent's awareness and consequently modifying the original question.



Therefore, this chapter is a reflection on the autopoietic unity between the bricoleur and the question that she posed, on the one hand, and her interactions and integration with the environment in pursuance of answering this question, on the other. As I step outside the autopoietic process, to see it from an ‘external eye’ as Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2012) put it, I add another layer to the observation. This layer can be framed in a ‘bird’s eye view’ metaphor: raising above the ground to see the whole picture. For this reason, before going into detailed discussion, I give an overview of the study using this ‘external eye’.

## 10.1 A Bird’s Eye View of the Study

After establishing a pivot, the centre-point of the recurring feedback loops, the bricoleur starts her quest by devising the method of expression for implementation in this thesis. Following the bricolage principles, she employs the tools that she has in her repertoire combining her day-to-day practices, professional skills and technological affordances, and by orienting the method to the task of making and communicating meaning. The method is termed cinematic writing – writing with images, sound and motion. Combined with bricolage which ‘denotes methodological practices explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 1), it becomes a research methodology of cinematic bricolage. Consequently, cinematic bricolage is a methodology for sampling data – bricoles from heterogeneous pre-existing resources including discourses, theories, artefacts, social practices, cultural traditions, as well as self-produced bricoles sampled from the researcher’s own observations. The cinematic bricoleur reassembles the sampled bricoles into new digital texts by embodying the emergent meaning into cinematic writing.



*An endless progress of reflection*

The illustration is adopted from Maturana & Verden-Zöllner  
[2012, loc. 195]

After designing the methodology, the bricoleur discusses her world-view and theoretical perspective with which she identifies her conceptual position. The constructivist-systemicist standpoint influences the epistemology of the quest in that in seeking to answer how she knows, the bricoleur has to recognise that she herself is ‘among the objects’ she intends to articulate [Poerksen, 2004, loc. 27]. Poerksen interprets Maturana’s view:

They are living systems that want to understand living systems. Human subjects study objects that are identical with themselves. The situation turns circular as perceivers struggle to understand the process of perceiving [loc. 27] [...] a brain explaining the brain; human knowers striving to understand understanding. Human subjects turn into their own objects. [loc 38]

In other words, the act of observation is attached to self-reflection [loc. 994]. When the observer observes the object’s interactions with its environment and as a result of these interactions, autopoietic unfolding, the observer herself undergoes the occurrence of autopoiesis and structural coupling with the observed and experienced environment. As observation and self-reflection are carried out in language [loc. 994], and in research projects, mainly in writing, the question that comes from these considerations is: in what ways can cinematic writing as a multimodal form of meaning-embodiment, contribute to a mono-modal approach to expressions such as writing?

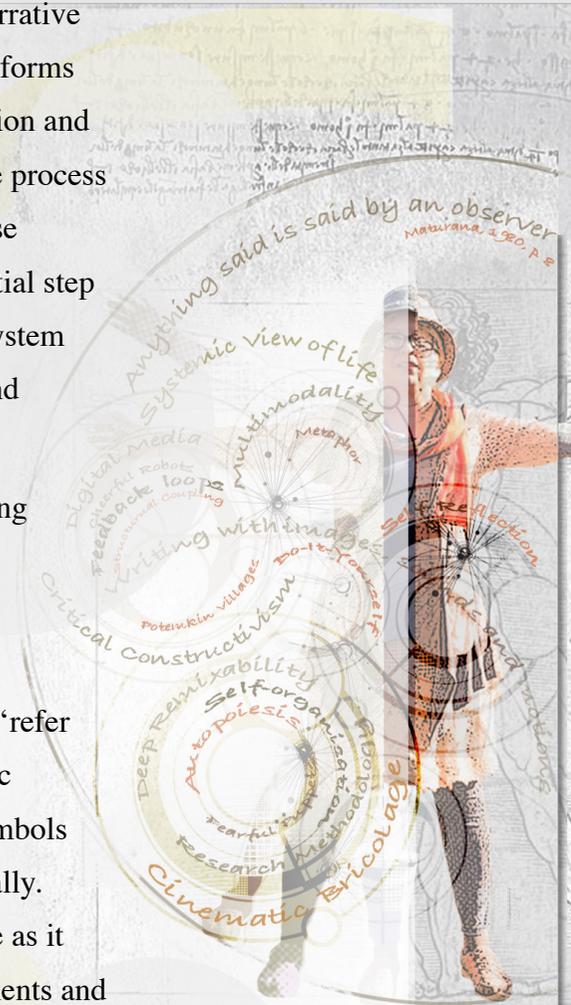
This question guides the study through the next major feedback loop into the area of digital representational production. In this loop, it was established that the remixing of the various digital modes of expression was enabled by certain functionalities of digital media. Namely, numerical representation, automation, modularity, variability and transcoding. These categories of digital media made possible the deconstruction of digital artefacts and data represented in different modalities into fragments and the remixing of those fragments in ways not possible before.

**To what extent can cinematic bricolage, as a research methodology and system of expression, contribute to the knowledge-production tasks?**



Another important function of digital representations is a layered system of production. Observing this aspect of digital embodiment allows us to see the relationship between two cultural forms – database and narrative – which can be described, as Hayles (2012) suggests, as ‘natural symbionts’ [p. 179]. Although these forms have completely different ontologies, they are two constituents that sustain the process of representation and meaning making. Their interactions within the layered system of production give insight into how the process of representation can be seen as prototypical to one of the feedback loops. By juxtaposing the database elements on the automated layers, the producer applies a narrative principle in assessing each sequential step and adjusting the conduct of the next according to an assessment of the previous. Thus, the layered system allows observation of the enmeshing of human and computer logic in the process of representation and meaning making as structural coupling and therefore an act of autopoiesis.

The act of autopoiesis in this study is negotiated through dynamic interactions and structural coupling between the bricoleur and the environment, oriented to address the research question. On the premise that the articulation of meaning takes place in language, the bricoleur adopts Kress’ (2015) notion of semiotic modes being associated with language: ‘language of flowers, language of gestures’ (March, 2015, YouTube video, see chapter two). Chandler (2002) maintains that most contemporary theorists ‘refer to language as a symbolic sign-system’ of meaning communication. Respectively, inventing cinematic writing, that is writing with images, sounds and motions, comes down to constructing a system of symbols in which meaning is embodied in visual, audio and kinaesthetic modes, either directly or metaphorically. The assumption of this study is that the metaphoric mechanism becomes especially useful in this case as it allows cross-modal representations. Symbolically expressed sounds can ‘stand for’ images or movements and in addition, movements can symbolise objects or sounds; likewise objects or graphics can represent sounds and movements. As a metaphoric mechanism of expression helps to explain ‘one thing in terms of another’ [Geary, 2011, loc. 83], this was taken as a bridge for meaning to be transferred from a tacit to an embodied form.



The cinematic bricolage is then explored in two interrelated probes, *The Tea Party* and *The Harlequin*. Both are associated with my early life in Soviet Russia. The first is an imaginative scene of a theatrical type, where the bricoleur assumes the role of actor and is challenged to face real historical figures, whose theories, ideas, beliefs and actions converted the country of her childhood into a prison for human minds. The second probe is patched, like a harlequin's costume, out of different pieces of the fabric of my time in that society.

To frame the probes in a self-reflective approach is the result of the constructivist-systemicist position that there is no knowledge without the knower. When examining a knowledge-production task it should be taken into consideration that the observation is not observer-independent. As Maturana states in the interview with Poerksen (2012):

My proposal, however, is to accept this circular situation fully right from the start and to make oneself the instrument by means of which the question of one's personal experience and one's own action is to be answered through one's very own activities.

[Poerksen, 2012, loc. 1047]

That is to say that my views about digital media's contribution to new ways of representing and meaning-making is an act of autopoiesis – reaching forth into new ways of knowing. The circularity of this act is foundational and is expressed between action ↔ experiences, observer ↔ observed, self ↔ environment, self ↔ society, concrete (bodily) reflection ↔ abstract (conceptual) reflection, narrative ↔ database, conscious thought ↔ unconscious processes, human cognition ↔ computer logic, representing ↔ meaning making, and a 'particular way of being' ↔ 'how the world appears to us' (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 26). All this *'tells us that every act of knowing brings forth a world'* (p. 26 – italicised by authors). To engage all these



Escher, M. C. (1948).  
*Drawing Hands*, lithograph

systems in dynamic interactions appears to be best in terms of their common denominator – the self.

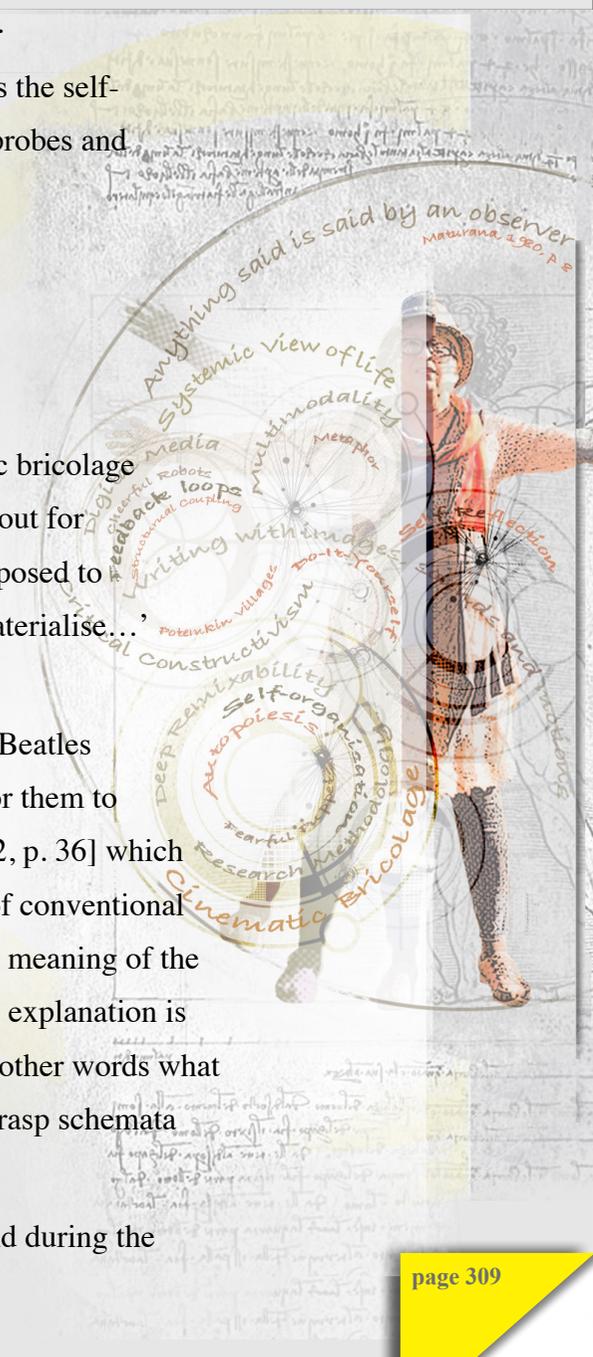
In line with this way of thinking, the chapter moves back to the beginning of the study. It evaluates the self-reflective probes in relation to the issues that the study ‘has looped through’ prior to arriving at the probes and draws a conclusive pattern of the epistemological quest.

## 10.2 Looking out for Messages: Crows

In discussion of the alphabetic, visual, audio and motion metaphors employed in the two cinematic bricolage probes, I follow Lévi-Strauss’ (1962) notion that a bricoleur acts as if she is ‘constantly on the look out for messages’ (p. 13) that can be found ‘in the heterogeneous objects of which his [her] treasury is composed to discover what each of them could signify and so contribute to definition of a set which has yet to materialise...’ (p. 12).

Semiotically speaking, as discussed in chapter two, objects such as crows, smoke, strawberries or Beatles songs used as metaphors in the probes, could be considered as symbols because the intention was for them to symbolise certain things. A symbol has to signify the thing that it does not resemble [Chandler, 2002, p. 36] which is exactly what these objects are intended to do. At the same time symbols have to carry some sort of conventional knowledge which in order to be recognised, has to be learned [p. 36]. In the probes in this study, the meaning of the symbols is not direct but suggestive. This applies not only to the reader but also to the producer. My explanation is that the process of representing is guided almost totally by the subconscious (see chapter seven). In other words what is seen as a representation is only a fraction of the complex dynamic interaction within the mental grasp schemata generated throughout the years of experience and consequential blending of primary mental grasps.

For instance, the sudden appearance of the image of a crow was a persistent occurrence in my mind during the





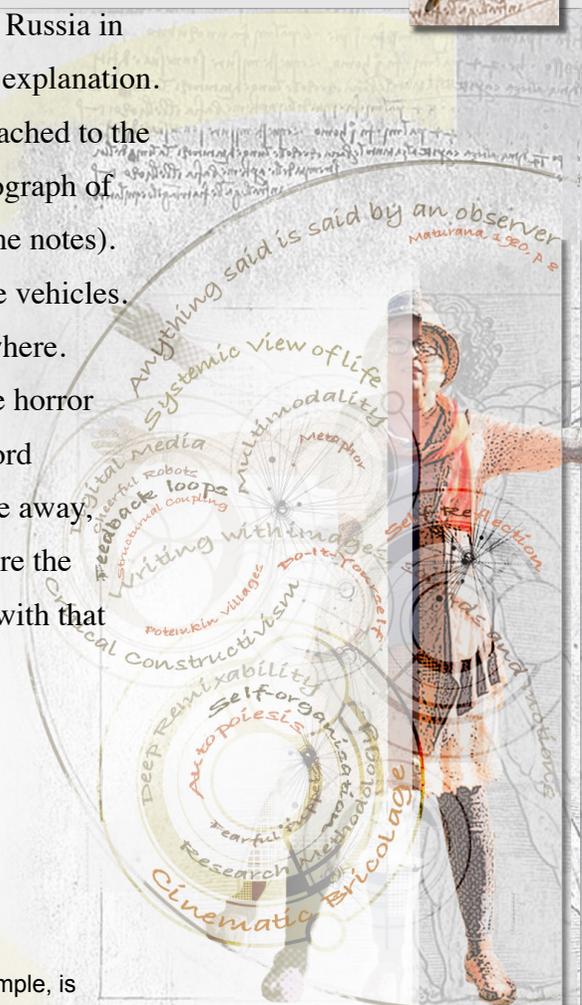
development of representations associated with Communist leaders, Kremlin walls, or life in Soviet Russia in general. The universal attribution to a crowd of mysterious wickedness did not provide a satisfactory explanation. I sensed there was something more specific than that and kept 'on the look-out for the messages' attached to the symbol. One day, as I was looking on the internet for more images to use in the probe, I saw a photograph of the 'black raven' vehicle and understood where my association may have come from (please, read the notes). I cannot remember clearly but it appears to me that people at that time did not talk much about those vehicles. I cannot recall having any conversations about them at all, but I have heard about them from somewhere. Being a child, though, I perhaps applied a more literal sense of the metaphoric term given them. The horror of something dark and evil moving around the city was attached to 'black raven' (in Russian, the word 'raven' is a male 'crow'). Bunches of black crows flapping hastily all over the country, taking people away, that was perhaps the scene that contributed to my emotive response to the issue. As I started to restore the feeling of that period of my life, and consequently channelled it into the grasp schemata associated with that time and place in my subconscious, the image of a crow began to flap up on the screen of my mind.

The most significant aspect of this personal discovery, in my view, is that there are messages in one's mind that can be encoded into some representationally grasped forms, the emergence of which can be triggered by feelings, sounds, smells or tastes as in Proust's madeleine cake.

Engaging yourself with reflective autobiographical practice, as Giddens analyses:

[...] is a corrective intervention into the past, not merely a chronicle of elapsed events. One of its aspects, for example, is 'nourishing the child-that-you-were'. Thinking back to a difficult or traumatic phase of childhood, the individual talks to the child-that-was, comforting and supporting it and offering advice. [Giddens, 1991, p. 71]

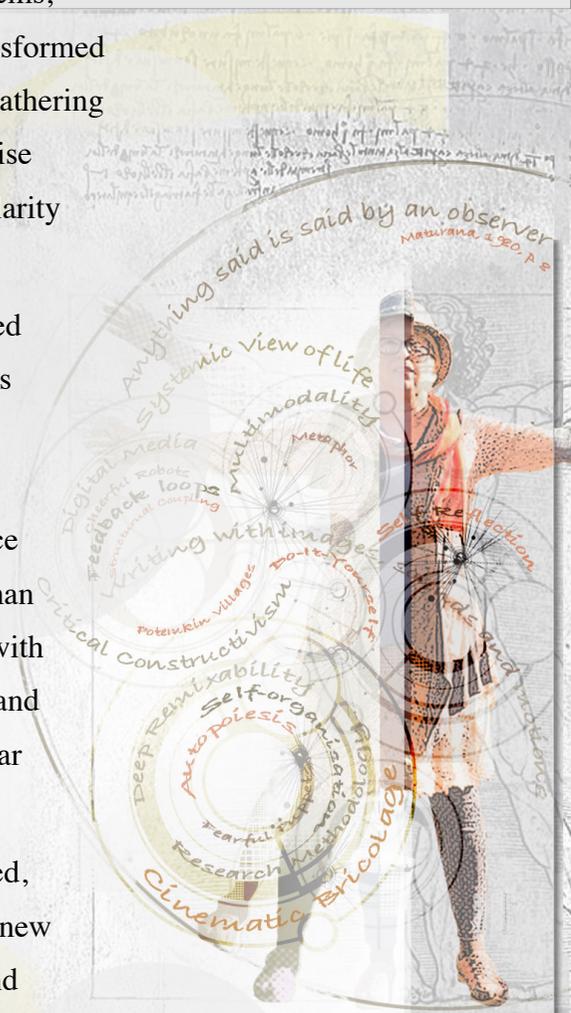
What makes this 'corrective intervention' with the use of digital media and cinematic bricolage, in particular,



so special is that it is done in the environment of remix. This means that personal history collection items, photographs, documents, physical objects of sentimental value, memory grasps and so on, can be transformed into self-similar fractals of a gigantic fractal collection of world history. The situation of knowledge gathering presented through the circularity of two entities – a history text book ↔ a learner who has to memorise the facts and dates from that text book – in a cinematic bricoleur's case, is replaced by dynamic circularity between the systems, that is, self ↔ social medium.

The bricoleur is naturally in possession of her personal facts, objects and skills that have accumulated in her autobiographical progression. In order to make meaning of the relationship between the bricoles from her personal collection, the bricoleur reaches into a larger medium which the internet has turned into a universal database that is as close 'at hand' like photos in family albums or special items stored in boxes on wardrobe shelves. The universal database has 'astronomical dimensions and has long since passed the point where it can be stored in a human memory' as Flusser asserts [1985, loc. 1228]. Human memories can have 'outer dialogue' in which they can find relevant data and synthesise the personal with the collective by means of digital logic. From this perspective, 'the child-that-was' can be comforted and supported by the notion that her story is part of a larger narrative, that she is not alone in having similar traumatic childhood experiences.

The personal bricoles can be scanned, photographed, video and audio recorded. They can be digitised, transcoded, split into modules/fractals and remixed with the internet bricoles to create new variables, new synthesis between inner and outer structures. The dynamics can be identified as structural coupling and consequently an act of autopoiesis. Knowledge about the phenomenon that is intended to be explained is generated through 'the action of a living being in its environment' (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 29). In other words, the meaning is made by coupling, remixing the components from personal mental grasp schemata as well as the fragments derived from the collective database of information. As a result, awareness is gained 'that



we have a world that we bring forth with others' (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 248).

### 10.3 Metaphor as an Overtonal Montage: Crows, Kremlin Walls and Potemkin Village

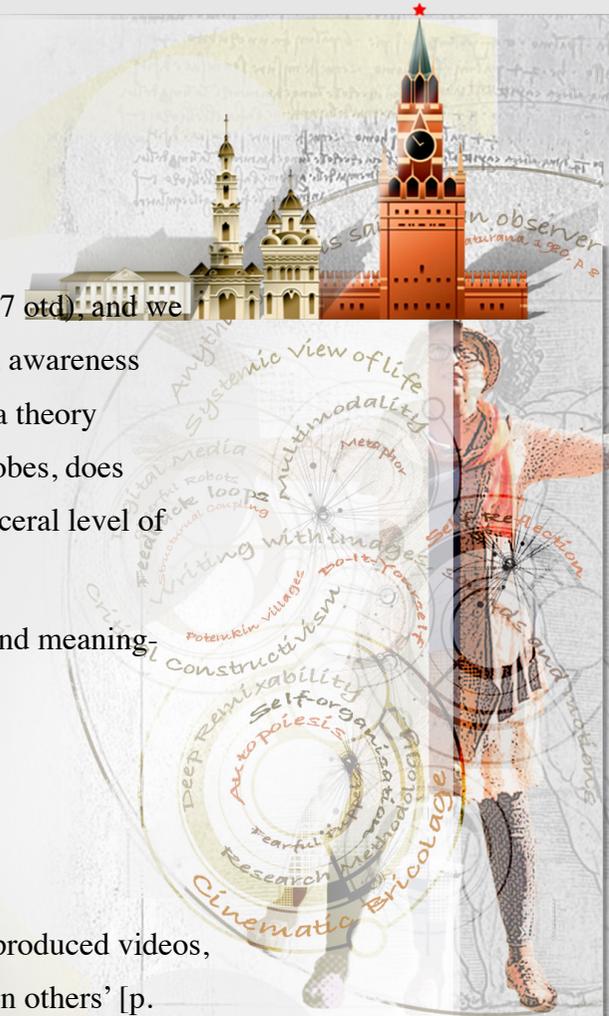
If according to Maturana and Varela (1998), every act of knowing brings forth the world (see p. 7 *old*), and we bring forth the world with others, does this mean that every act of self-reflection, that is raising an awareness about the knower, has to be understood by others? Namely, if I discovered or at least constructed a theory about why the images of the crows played an important role in my representation of self in the probes, does this need to be understood by the reader or can it be left 'coded' for others, relying on a more visceral level of comprehension?

This appears to pose a question to other researchers who deal with multimodal representations and meaning-making. For example, Potter observes:

Self-representation in new media, for those who engage with it, means choosing to take part in one aspect of the lived culture of the day; it is made up of the negotiated codes and transactions in writing and reading the produced self. [Potter, 2012, p. 39]

He further explains that this constituted some problems for his own students when making self-produced videos, as 'we see examples in which these codes are not as well understood or used [in some videos] as in others' [p. 39]. Accordingly, when constructing representations by means of multimodality, it seems that, in the use of such semiotic forms as symbols or such meaning-making logic as metaphors, there has not yet been sufficient negotiation to have a refined frame of reference for development of skills and competency in this area.

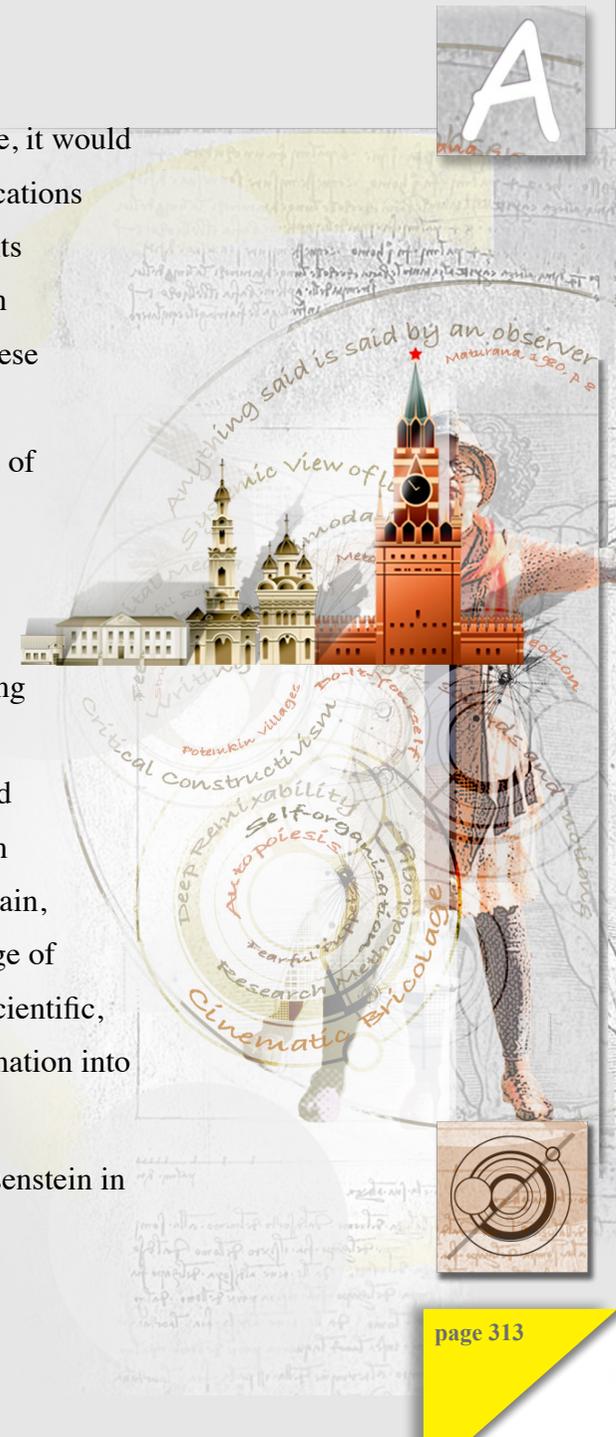
Conversely, I see a compelling potential presented in multimodality in development of symbolic and metaphoric



embodiments. For example, if the crow in my probes was portrayed only in one mode, as an image, it would require a high level of visual artistic skill to depict its ferociousness. It is likely that written clarifications would be necessary. In the multimodal production, the addition of flapping wings, rapid movements indicating certain directions, guttural harsh sounds and changing colour generates, what Eisenstein (1949) writing about film-montage refers to as, the ‘overtonal complex of the shot’ [p. 78]. [...] these collateral vibrations become merely “disturbing” elements, these same vibrations in music – in compositions, become one of the most significant means for affect by the experimental composers of our century such as Debussy and Scriabin’ [p. 78].

The quality of being ‘disturbing’, as well as the quality of Debussy and Scriabin music, in my opinion, challenges the reader as she has to interpret the qualitative aspects of the meaning-conveyance rather than read a written text which clearly explains them. For example, crows dashing in a pack, cawing and disappearing behind the Kremlin’s wall, can serve as a metaphor of them working in their multitudes, grabbing people without any proper consideration, taking them behind the artificially created facade of the Potemkin’s village, to a place where what happens is unknown as it is totally hidden from view. What I see here is overlapping of aspects from the cognitive domain, things that were explained by writing mixed with the elements from the physical domain, the image of birds, a sense of space, movement and sounds. This remix of factual data, personal, historical or scientific, with abstract assemblages, not by matching the direct physical forms but by embodying the information into forms that engage emotions, can be key for constructing meaningful cinematic bricolages.

Such a method, that I believe can be effective for cinematic bricolage, has been explained by Eisenstein in terms of the film-montage:

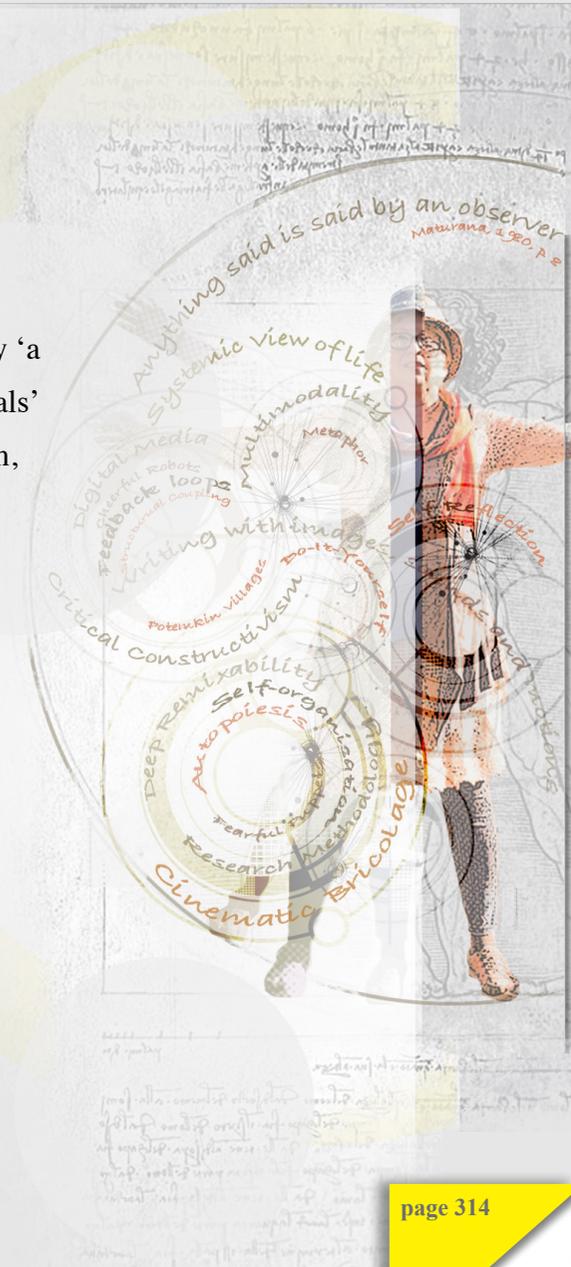


This montage is built, not on particular dominants, but takes as its guide the total stimulation through all stimuli. That is the original shot, arising from the collision and combination of the individual stimuli inherent in it.

These stimuli are heterogeneous as regards their 'external natures', but their reflex-physiological essence binds them together in an iron unity [...] behind the general indication of the shot, the physiological summary of its vibrations as a whole [...]. [p. 67]

This principle of the film-montage, which Eisenstein terms 'overtonal montage', is characterised by 'a sharp *opposition* to the dominant' [p. 68, italicised by author] and expressed in 'the quality of the totals' [p. 67]. In other words, it can be described in Eisenstein's words as: 'Not the classicism of Beethoven, but the physiological quality of Debussy and Scriabin' [p. 67]. In my view, overtonal montage can serve as an effective framework for further development of cinematic bricolage as a digital research methodology.

Eisenstein's description of the overtonal montage using the metaphor of Debussy and Scriabin's music, I believe, is an important point for cinematic bricolage considerations because it takes us to the issue of multimodal literacy, not only in relation to composing but also to the ability to read and understand new media messages.

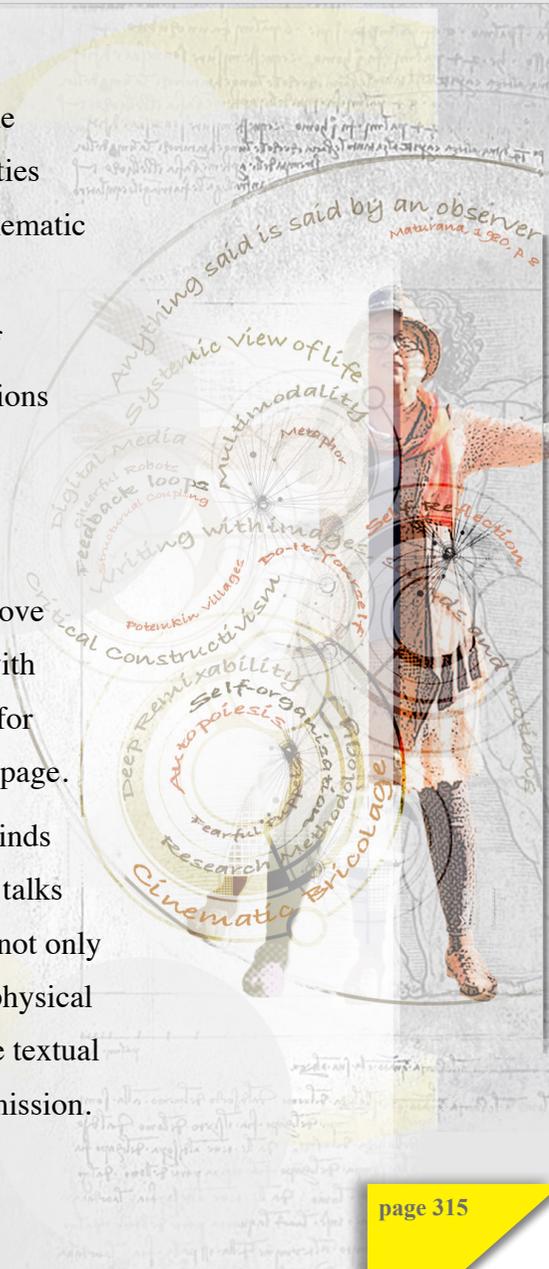


## 10.4 Motion and Sound as Meaning-Making Resources

The previous section discussed the possibility of cinematic bricolage being developed further with the integration of the principles of overtone montage. This section focuses on the representational modalities such as motion and sound as mutually beneficial and interdependent components with others in the cinematic bricolages.

In relation to the meaning-making properties of montage, Eisenstein (1949) defines sounds as ‘not of generally overtone sounds, but sounds and overtones of an intellectual sort: i.e., conflicting juxtapositions of accompanying intellectual effect’ [p. 81]. Animating the digital pages of the probes with sounds and motions, I experienced the effect of those ‘collateral vibrations’, as Eisenstein refers to them – the vibrations infused with ‘disturbing’ qualities [p. 66]. By the characteristic of being ‘disturbing’, that is interrupting the attention attached to something else and drawing it to themselves, these ‘vibrations’ move their status from being collateral to principal. In other words, they create new rhythms of interaction with the digital text. The producer as well as the reader are nudged into changing their thought focus from, for example, reading the written components to listening to sounds and/or seeing elements moving on the page.

The occurrence has double bearing; it is indeed disruptive but at the same time, it is engaging. It reminds us that messages are constructed and read in collaboration with others. The presence of that other who talks to us is much ‘closer’ than in a situation where we read a written message. That other tries to reach us not only by means of sophisticated encoding in the meaning of the letters, words and sentences, but by ‘direct physical communication’. That other can talk to us and make things moving on the page. This physicality of the textual components in cinematic writing establishes a tangible bridge between the two ends of message transmission.



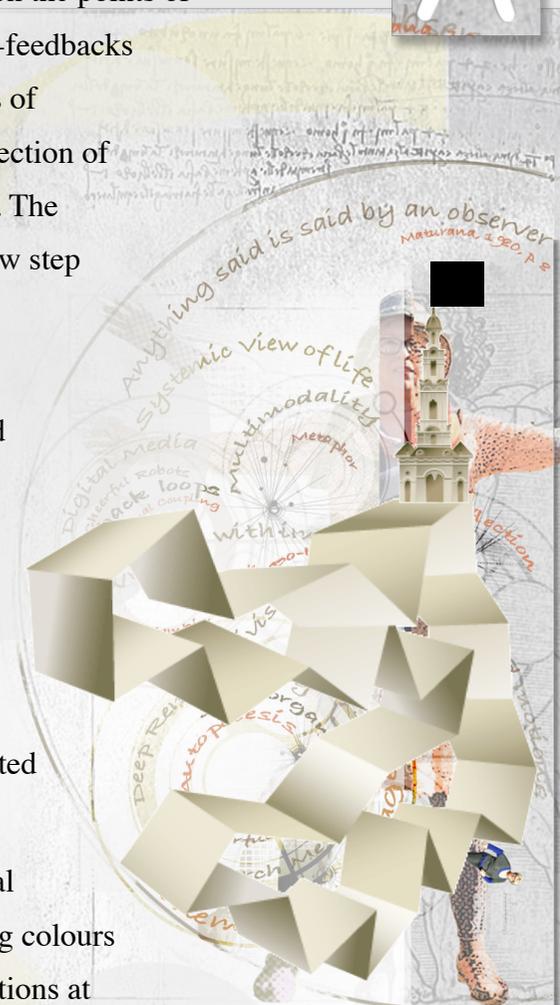
However, the architecture of the bridge is not what we used to think it should be. It is not determined by a quantitative rationale of detecting the shortest route, but by originating qualitative connections between the points of what needs to be found out to how it may be found out. It corresponds with the recursive circular self-feedbacks with which the whole methodology of bricolage is set up, as well as with the digital layered processes of representational production. The sequential, narrative method of production remains intact but the direction of the movements is modified from a focus on time/effort economy to the qualia of experiential patterns. The direction of the movements depends on recursive self-feedbacks that modify the direction of every new step on the basis of the results of the previous step.

In my view this has strong implications not only for cinematic bricolage but for the cultural and consequently the educational approach to knowledge-generation tasks and which needs to be reflected in multimodal literacy, both in constructing and reading multimodal texts.

Let us consider the well-established academic tradition that the meaning embodiments have to be clearly explained in research tasks and are best articulated by means of alphabetic resources. The dynamism of this tradition means that the reader is not accustomed to look for interpretation of meaning in modalities such as movements or sounds. Such an articulation of meaning appears to be either simply not sufficient or too ambiguous. In my opinion, this position has been artificially generated over the years by the technological convenience in the use of print and needs to be challenged.

There are sounds, colours and movements in our daily life that have been assigned with conventional meaning that we take for granted. For example, in the case of the traffic light, the light with alternating colours is a very precise expression of the meaning and is accepted as a universal articulation of traffic regulations at places such as road junctions. The beeping of domestic machines at the end of the washing cycle, bread-making, reversing and so on, gives a very clear indication of what is meant. Alarms, beeps, different ring-tones, car horns, various game sounds, theme songs have all been so tightly intertwined in the fabric of our day-to-day experience that we

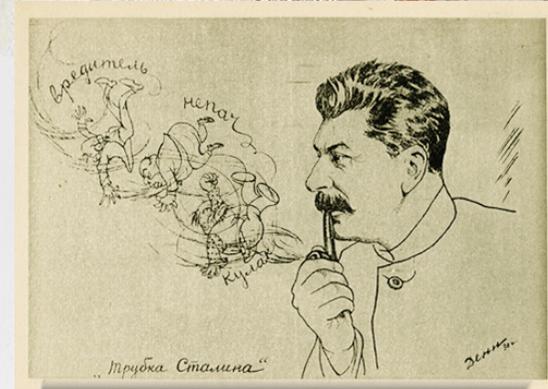
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recognise them immediately, without pausing to think what they are and the convenience and safety they bring to our lives.

I realised that to draw the reader's attention to movements on the page, I needed to give an audio-indication, a sort of clearing of the throat, as if to say: 'I am still here. Please look at this'. The problem with this, through, is that I found myself unable to estimate the correct timing of application of these actions as people's speed-reading abilities as well as their inclination to stay on the page can vary significantly. To set up a sound or movement too early means the reader may experience them before she has read the relevant information. To apply them too late means the reader may turn the page before the actions have started. To use a button to activate the effects makes the sense of 'I-am-here' redundant.

Another example that I would like to discuss in relation to recognition of motion-modality as a meaning-making resource, is the movements of smoke I have used in the probes quite frequently. I became intrigued with this when I noticed that Stalin was often photographed smoking a pipe and there was such air of significance around about this that I became even more curious and started looking for more images and information on the topic. In Gill (2011), I read about Victor Deni's illustration that was reproduced in *Pravda* (1939), where the Whites (the White Guard, anti-Communist forces) were shown 'being blown away by the smoke of Stalin's pipe' [p. 301]. I was bewildered by the incongruity of Soviet comrade Stalin being portrayed as a magician blowing some sort of spell on the Whites. But as I learned more, I realised that, in spite of Soviet ideology never tolerating anything supernatural, Stalin himself was presented as a man possessing super-human abilities. Stalin's pipe became one of the visual symbols endowing him with 'supernatural power' as he kept up his brutal control of a country with a population of more than one hundred million. In contrast to this, in his historical novel about



Victor Deni (1939)  
*Stalin's Pipe*, Illustration



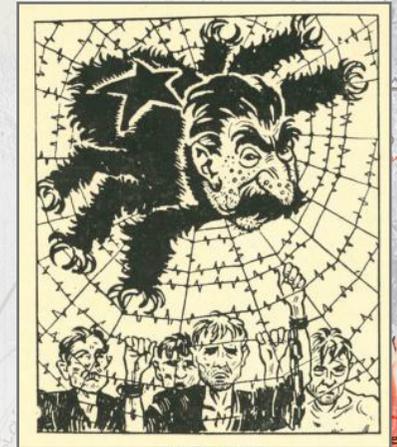
Stalin, Lourie (2000) depicts him as an egocentric dictator, for whom the quality of the taste of smoke on his tongue would decide the life-destinies of thousands of people.

By reproducing the movement of his pipe smoke, I tried to convey Stalin's personality, shrouded in secrecy and ultimate distrust of anyone, his stealthily well-calculated actions. The movement of the smoke in my probes represents oppression and lack of air to breath for anyone who lived under that smoky cloud. His style of moving and speaking was slow like his pipe smoke that spread far around the whole country, screening the truth and making cruel lies appear necessary for survival. Like a spider who catches his victims with a hidden web, Stalin spread his manipulative smoky nets all over Russia and kept it tight in those nets for years.

## 10.5 Image, Motion and Sound are Knowledge - Production Tools

In continuing discussion of the meaning-making capacity of images, sounds and motion in cinematic bricolage, I would like to look more closely at their interactions in facilitating the production of knowledge. Namely, I would like to focus on the epistemological aspect which Maturana and Varela (1987) describe as 'the world that we bring forth with others' (p. 248). In other words, every act of knowing 'is a structural dance in the choreography of coexistence' with others (p. 248).

To discuss this, I use the example of the incorporation of Beatles' songs into the probes. While assembling animations to represent my imaginary meeting with 'the fathers of Communism' and in particularly with Lenin, I felt that on purely visceral grounds, juxtaposing the *Internationale* performed in German and the



Boris Souvarine Papers, 1950  
*Stalin-a Spider*, Caricature



Beatles' *Strawberry Fields* was an apt choice to depict the contrast. At first glance, the explanation for this should be clear. My intention was to establish a sense of collision by using the most innocent and happy moments of my childhood that, in my particular case, can be metaphorically expressed with strokes that portray a garden, clear sky, the buzzing of bees and fluttering of butterflies, the fragrance of strawberries ripening in the sun. In contrast is the harsh austerity and hidden cruelty of Soviet reality. *The Internationale* sang in German is a reflection of Lenin's 'specific admiration for Germany that was enormous' [Service, 2002, loc. 252]. Lenin was raised by a mother who was of German and Swedish ancestry and who stayed loyal to a number of German cultural traditions [loc. 496]. Lenin also lived for a long time in Germany and liked the culture, 'but he wanted the West too to change. There had to be a European socialist revolution that would sweep away the whole capitalist order' [loc. 252]. Lenin does not appear to be very fond of Russians, who in his opinion are talented people but 'have a lazy mentality' [loc. 694] (see chapter eight). *The Internationale* performed in German sounds to me like the reverberation of Lenin's ultimate goal, in which Russians who 'were sorry specimens that populated the corrupt world' [Pipes, 2003, p. 69] (see chapter eight) were used as disposable material for the first trial in a larger and more important world scheme.

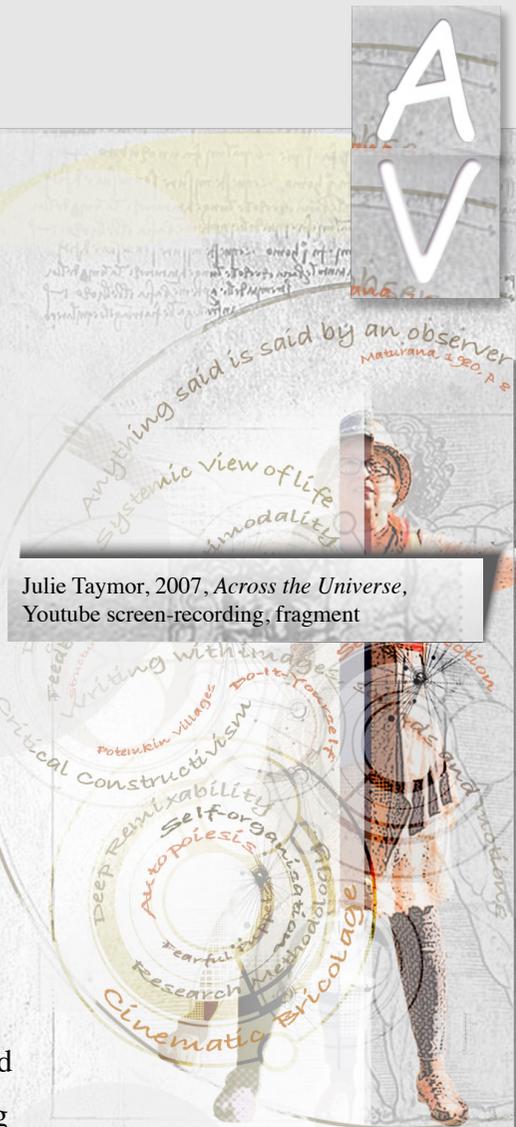
From this point of view, the images of smashed strawberries, sounds of a battle and, together with them, the song *Strawberry Fields* from the movie *Across the Universe* (Taymor, 2007), that is based on the Beatles song, came to my mind as a concrete thread to patch together fragments of simple naivety and corrupt barbarity. The question that I posed to myself was: why did the choice of mediation of my feeling

Living is easy with eyes closed ...

Misunderstanding all you see ...

It's getting hard to be someone ...

But it all works out ...



in this particular case fall on a Beatles song which has a strong connotation to Western culture and why did the Vietnam war (the visualised background of the song in the movie) feel so closely associated with Communist reality?

As I set out on a quest to find the answer, on the BBC news site, I read an article by Aksenov (October, 2012):

**The Beatles were never invited to play in Soviet Russia, and their albums were considered a threat - banned long after the likes of The Rolling Stones had records released behind The Iron Curtain.**

Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't absolutely impossible to listen to the Beatles in the USSR.

By the 1980s, even the state music company, Melodia, was producing recordings by the group.



The Beatles were described as "capitalist pollution" in Soviet Russia

Record on the Bones, BBC news article by Aksenov (October, 2012)

Across the Universe, song by the Beatles from the album 'No One's Gonna Change Our World' (1969)  
Recorded from iTunes

It is true that in the late 1980s, we could buy Beatles records, but in my youth of the 1970s, their music was prohibited. My older brother once bought a self-produced *Abbey Road* cassette on the black market paying more than half of the average monthly salary. What a treasure it was then ... we played it quietly, so as not to annoy Mum and taking care that a censorious ear could not catch the tune.

Earlier still, and under much more dangerous circumstances, I remember the black market circulation of discarded medical X-ray films with Beatles songs etched on them. Such a pity I never had one. Owning one would cost you not just a two-week wage but could also cost your studentship, job or worse, depending on the circumstances. A very helpful thing was



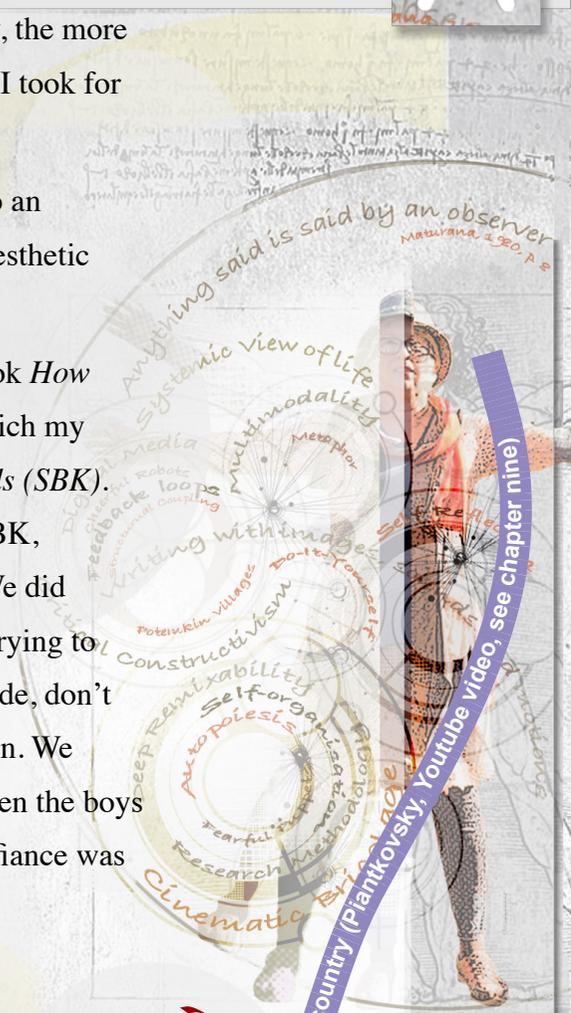
that those bones-records were easy to bend and hide in the sleeve of your coat.

The more information I find on the topic, the more facts and events I retrieve from my own memory, the more I am astounded by the size and importance of the Beatles subculture in Soviet Russia, something that I took for granted.

I always knew that my answer to a run-of-the-mill question about what music album I would take to an uninhabited island would be immediate – *Abbey Road*. The choice, however, is not based purely on aesthetic preferences.

During this study, not without surprise and excitement, I came across Leslie Woodhead’s (2013) book *How The Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*. Bewildered, I read about Soviet Russia – the parallel universe in which my own generation grew up. Many of Woodhead’s characters call the Beatles fans (us) *Soviet Beatles Kids (SBK)*. I really believe it was our souls and minds that were rocked by the Beatles’ music and then we, the SBK, rocked the Kremlin and shuddered Potemkin’s village walls, literally in the case of the Berlin Wall. We did not even realise that when we, in secret from our parents, were tuning to the waves of *Radio Liberty* trying to catch familiar tunes with very poorly understood English words, and nevertheless recognised ‘Hey Jude, don’t be afraid ...’, we were catching the vibrations of another world, a world free from ideological coercion. We were becoming less and less afraid to stand against the fake façades of Communist constructions. When the boys were growing their hair like the Beatles and were badly treated for this, along with their hair, their defiance was growing. As one of Woodhead’s (2013) characters, Kolya Vasin, recalls:

‘The policeman said, ‘You are not Soviet man! You are living like a Western man!’ And he grabbed my hair’. The memory of how the cop dragged him along the platform by his hair while dozens of people stared and laughed was branded into him. ‘I was almost crying from the pain, but I had to keep silent. I was afraid the man would drag me off to prison.’ [loc. 1886]



... you see how they deal with us; they push us out of the country (Piantkovsky, Youtube video, see chapter nine)

A

Unfortunately, as far as I know, people of that SBK subculture group never managed to stay in their home country. Every one among those whom I know personally and who would identify as one of the SBK, now lives somewhere outside contemporary Russia.

As Woodhead observes: ‘Millions of kids across the Soviet Union must have shared something of Vasin’s despair about their society’; they were ‘strangers in their own country’ [loc. 1052].

It feels as if the Beatles were that voice that made us open our eyes and look critically around. It made us try the ground under our feet and realise that there was no solid substance underneath the artificially-constructed surface. It was all just a Potemkin village. This realisation pushed us out of the country.

So we sailed up to the sun  
Till we found the sea of green  
And we lived beneath the waves  
In our yellow submarine  
We all live in a yellow submarine  
Yellow submarine, yellow submarine ...  
[The Beatles, *Yellow Submarine*, 1966]

This is an example of how technology has facilitated the penetration of the Iron Curtain, as Kolya Vasin in Woodhead’s (2013) book says: ‘After the Beatles, the Iron Curtain was like a fence with holes. That was our secret. We breathed through those holes’ [loc. 1042]. The radio played a massive role in this process. Searching for our favourite music on *Radio Liberty*, we were also given a chance to hear about things in our own country that were hidden from us. These two aspects, the information disclosed about the society and the emotional response to the Beatles’ music, were tightly intertwined into our mental-grasp schemata. They eventually became inseparable.

In July 1991, my husband George (Igor), our son, Anton, our daughter Sasha and I, fled Soviet Russia, just three weeks before the August coup.

It took us some time to learn that people usually smile in their photos



The invention of the records ‘on bones’ was a sign of growing resistance to the regime. Its symbolical implication, as if recording the spirit of freedom on people’s bones is an indication of the rigour of the subcultural movement. Medical electromagnetic radiation with recorded images on films and the technology of etching the sounds onto them made it possible to disseminate the songs.

Consequently, with the Beatles’ music influencing the younger generation of Soviet Russia in the seventies, the technology was a conduit that enabled the flow of independent thought into an oppressed reality.

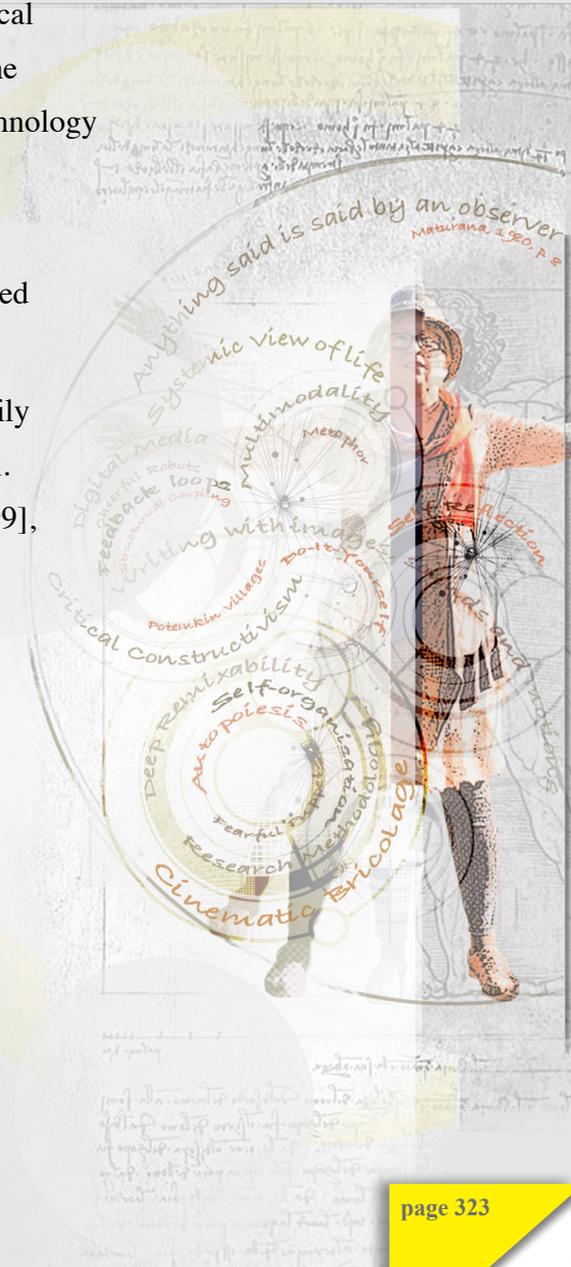
In comparing the technological possibilities that were available for the SBK with those that are easily accessible for the young people of today, I think about the great opportunities available for education. However, in spite of media education expanding ‘at a quite alarming rate’ [Buckingham, 2007, loc. 99], its application still adheres to the instructional and instrumental models of education.

As Capra (1996) observes:

‘The use of computers in schools is based on the now outdated view of human beings as information processors which continually reinforces erroneous mechanistic concepts of thinking, knowledge and communication. Information is presented as the basis of thinking whereas in reality [...] Ideas are integrating patterns that derive not from information but from experience (p. 70)

From the above quote, we can derive another circularity archetypal to the process of knowledge-generation – information ↔ experience. This circularity reinforces the layered principle of digital production and comes as a natural component in collaboration with database ↔ narrative.

However, knowing through experience is often an estranged constituent in this circularity and the



circularity itself is not quite recognised in the construction of learning tasks. Observing this from the context of this study, we can draw an analogy of an Iron Curtain that screens the learners from their own experience which in contemporary conditions is inseparable from the involvement of digital media. Buckingham (2007) argues that: ‘It is quite extraordinary that the majority of young people should go through their school careers with so little opportunity to study and engage with the most significant contemporary forms of culture and communication’ [loc. 99].

In other words, personal concerns and issues, as much as life’s celebrations and achievements, individual expressions and creative innovations, belong mainly to the domain of social media and personal recording/ communication devices. These aspects of experience are hidden behind a Potemkin village façade which, on the other side, displays the projection of what, how and through which avenue, the ‘right’ official education must be attained. The Iron Curtain of education prevents learners from the intakes of fresh air and the Potemkin village façade keeps them from finding and constructing their own truth about themselves and the world they live in.

I see cinematic bricolage as one of the emancipating, digital-knowledge-generation-hybrid products available for use by scholars, teachers and students alike for the exploration of their own reality. In addressing this, I join my voice with that of Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) and Kincheloe (2003, 2004), and Berry (2004), who see teachers and students as producers of their own knowledge. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) argue that self-produced knowledge makes people able to;

[...] pursue a reflective relationship to their everyday experiences, they gain the ability to explore the hidden forces that have shaped their lives [...] to awaken themselves from a mainstream dream with unexamined landscape of knowledge and consciousness construction ... [p. 3]



In examining beliefs, social practices and dominant standpoints through the use of materials and tools they have at hand in their given context and mediating meaning with digital media, the cinematic bricoleurs produce alternative bodies of knowledge. Turning their practices to such modes of research, cinematic bricoleurs expose the correspondence between the phenomenon at which they are looking and the social structures into which it is embedded. Throughout this process, they learn to form their own critical view and the strategies for its advocacy. Speaking metaphorically, they invent their own ‘records on bones’ by expressing what previously was obscured from view, using whatever is in their repertoire. This results in the formation of holes in the Iron Curtain of the Potemkin village making reality easier to see, access, understand and alter if the need to do so presents itself.

## 10.6 The Agents of the Self

In proceeding with discussion about cinematic bricolage communicated by metaphoric logic, I propose now to look at the Iron Curtain or Potemkin village façade as an obstruction symbolising ignorance, which is maintained either by the passivity of social agents or a restriction imposed on them for enquiring what is hidden behind it and to apply action for change if needed. As discussed earlier, in the case of passivity, I label the agents ‘cheerful robots’. In the case of imposed restriction, I refer to them as ‘fearful puppets’. Both these categories are versions of an automaton, that is, someone who acts without critical examination of their thoughts and actions but follows either happily or fearfully the instructions given to them by the official authority. To the automaton agents, I juxtapose the harlequin model, mainly on the grounds of her critical turning towards the surrounding social environment.

In the second probe, *The Harlequin*, I described the concept of a harlequin not as a person or subject, but as an evolving mental-grasp schemata. Reacting to external interactions, the schemata is in the process of a continuous



autopoiesis – self-remaking. The same can be said about automatons – cheerful robots and fearful puppets. As with the harlequins, they too are complex mental-grasp schemata manifesting certain features in certain individuals more than in others. This is what Goffman (1956) labels as ‘front’, ‘that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion [...] Front then is an expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwillingly employed by the individual during his performance’ [p. 13]. Potter (2012) expands Goffman’s suggestion that people have different types of performance in their repertoire ‘to manage our appearance in the world, for reasons of personal gain and achievement’ [p. 40]. The individual moulds his/her performance in order to fit into the context in which he/she performs. ‘Thus, when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, that does his behaviour as a whole’ [Goffman, 1956, p. 23].

From this point of view, it can be proposed that individuals operate on the mental patterns constructed of different types of mental grasps schemata with the inclusion of what can be metaphorically categorised as cheerful robots, fearful puppets or harlequins. The mental grasp schemata can have hybrid qualities where the elements of fear, joy, and critical consideration are intertwined into one unique pattern with a domination of certain features in certain individuals more than in the others, forming what Goffman labels ‘front’.

In *The Harlequin* probe, an event with my Baba Tanya illustrates this complex mental pattern. My rage directed toward Baba Tanya, blaming her for unintentionally influencing my socially ill-suited behaviour, was a manifestation of my fear of falling off my walk on the sharp Kremlin walls. I would rather be a cheerful robot gleaming in the lights of the *Young Communist* TV show than an empathic individual to someone who sincerely loved me. Perhaps, because of my father’s imprisonment, which was treated as a shameful background of family history and therefore kept strictly in private, perhaps because of the catchy slur dropped on the family name by some White general, I felt extra vulnerable. Respectively,



I applied additional effort to refrain from falling off the precarious Sovieticus scaffolds. The key to survival was to be like everyone else, a fearful puppet inside but a cheerful robotic pioneer on the outside, to respond wholeheartedly to the summons

As Fromm (1941) argues:

The need to be related to the world outside oneself, the need to avoid aloneness [...] is a very essence of human mode and practice of life [...] To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death. [ p. 16]

Religion and nationalism, as well as any custom and any belief however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others, are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation.

[p. 17]

To avoid isolation, the criticality of the harlequin is shut down as an unnecessary and often annoying feature of the character. The harlequin's creative force that allows her to assemble her own, individual patterns of seeing the world is turned towards gaining approval from authority in order to climb to a more stable spot on the shaky Sovieticus scaffolds.

## 10.7 Individually, Together with Others

The role of technology in the situation described above is significant. The radio and self-made 'records on bones' spread the 'air of freedom' as a fast-growing weed beneath the layer of Soviet ideology. Isolation



gradually became no longer a threatening issue because it was replaced with the realisation that you were not alone. There were other people who knew what you had known for years and they talked openly about it, even though, as in the case of *Radio Liberty*, they did so from safe places outside Soviet Russia. But those people had thoughts like yours which meant that it was not you alone who thought like this. These prohibited thoughts were emotionally anchored to what was most appealing to the younger generation – the Beatles songs – until in time these songs became prominent symbols of liberation. The harlequin’s features embedded in those mental-grasp schemata were encouraged by them and given fertile soil for growth.

Framing this metaphoric idea inside the context of the constructivist-systemicist view, where the interactiveness of the systems can be represented as a rippling surface, we can imagine an invisible layer of modern communication producing a considerable effect on the dynamics of the ripples.

The *Al Jazeera* News channel articulated this concept effectively in their video.

If the world is a multi-layered system of ripples, in which the ripples of one system overlap with the ripples of another system that represents individuals, communities, institutions, societies and so on, they are all rippled by undercurrents of radio, video, television, internet waves and these form connections between the ripples that are space/time distanced from each other. In other words, an individual can be connected with another individual or groups of individuals transcending the limitations of the space/time construct. As Fromm (1941) sees it: ‘An individual may be alone in a physical sense for many years and yet he may be related to ideas, values, or at least social patterns that give him a feeling of communion and “belonging”’ [p. 16].



From this point of view, I see the methodology of cinematic bricolage as a catalyst for the people engaged in self-generated knowledge production to establish connections with other individuals on the basis of their personal interests, skills and levels of proficiency in the areas of their research. Constructing their own items of knowledge by means of mobile video-, photo- and audio-recordings, remixing these fragments with self-generated or internet-found components, publishing or appropriating other individuals' published materials, the producer acquires a sense of belonging to a wider community of enthusiasts about particular issues and topics. This fosters a sense of importance of this particular interest and the possibilities for its application in 'real life'. It promotes further discovery or invention and special spaces for these individuals to engage their creative force to work in collaboration with others.

One of the central principles of the constructivist-systematist perspective can be observed in this process, that is the attainment of self-fulfilment and self-assertion through dynamic integration with others and awareness that our knowing is constructed together with other knowers.

## 10.8 'Here Comes the ... Knowing'

Assembling the probes, I acted as an authentic remix artist, sampling and appropriating fragments of the ideas developed or assembled by others and remixing them with my own self-produced bricoles. According to Potter's (2012) definition, 'appropriation [is] the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content' [p. 29]. In relation to this term, Potter elaborates on the issue of being 'a skilled media manipulator' who is 'borrowing the cultural capital of the original producer(s)' and by either distancing or nearing herself 'to the original meaning' establishes her own set of abstracts and thus initiates their intertextual interactions [p. 30]. In identifying the practice of appropriation, Potter mentions Jenkins' concept of the 'textual poacher'[p. 29]. In his discussion of the participatory culture of 'textual poachers', Jenkins (2013), in turn, refers to De Certeau's



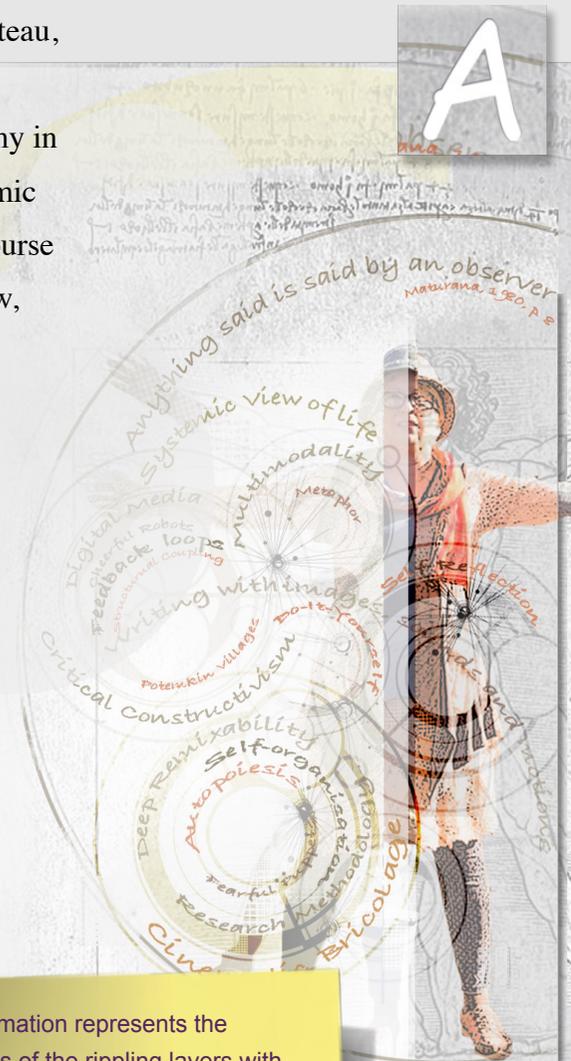
(1984) concept of consumers being involved in the practice of ‘poetic ways of “making do”’ [De Certeau, 1984, loc. 97] – that is, of bricolage, as mentioned in chapter two. De Certeau states that ‘users make (*bricolent*) innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules’ [loc. 73]. From here we can observe systemic interactions within a larger medium, that is, remix culture. As De Certeau (1984) draws into the discourse consumer practice of ‘making do’, associating it with nomadic ways of hunting and gathering but now, ‘in artificial steppes and forests’ [loc. 2402].

From here I start going anti-clockwise. Jenkins [2013] adjusts this concept to a particular fan-subculture. At the same time, he expands the concept by emphasising the aesthetic quality of the remixed and ‘plundered goods’ [p. 223]. In analysing the outcomes of such practices, Jenkins asserts:

They are aesthetic objects which draw on the artistic traditions of the fan community as well as on the personal creativity and insights of individual consumer/artist [...] a poached culture requires a conception of aesthetics emphasis in borrowing and recombination as much or more as original creation and artistic innovation [p. 223].

In other words, in borrowing from what they are enthusiastic about, the nomadic consumers ‘make do’ by hunting and gathering in artificial environments not only to satisfy their personal needs but also to produce something new by drawing on their innate creative forces. Accordingly, consumers become producers, which as Potter (2012) explains, ‘suggests a deeper engagement with the material and a richer potential account of how the meaning is made’ [p. 30]. A key part of reorganising ‘raw materials to make new meaning’, is the process of editing. Editing, in Potter’s view, is intertwined into an emergent practice which he articulates in term of a curatorship metaphor [loc. 150]. That is ‘making new meanings from found physical objects and texts by placing them alongside things that

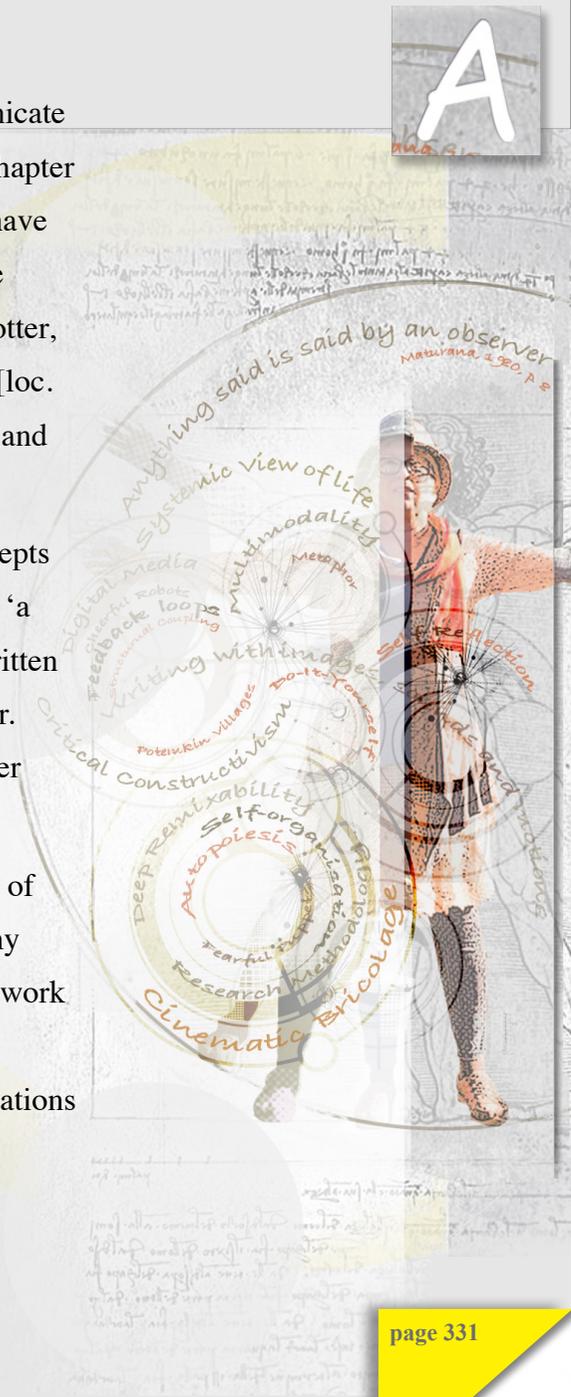
The animation represents the concepts of the rippling layers with dynamic undercurrents of television, radio and other electronic waves that can join the ripples and create a pattern of formations that are facilitated by the use of digital media.



you make yourself in order to “echo concerns and styles”, find some markers of identity, and communicate them’ [loc. 150]. Although the practice has a long historic tradition, similar to remix as discussed in chapter two, it is new ‘in the way in which those who have access to the digital artefacts at their fingertips have the means to take and remix content, to publish things that they have made alongside things they have created and establish new relationships between the elements to make new meaning’ [loc.171]. For Potter, the practice of curatorship is a methodology for ‘self-reflective projects of identity in late modernity’ [loc. 171], useful as means of ‘ontological security that will carry the individual through transitions, crises and circumstances of high risk ...’ [ Giddens, 1991, p. 40].

In the above few paragraphs, I have performed a both-directions loop, bricolaging together the concepts taken from the studies of several influential theorists in my area of interest. In this way, I demonstrate ‘a rippling effect’ illustrated earlier in the *Al Jazeera* video. That is, moving through a ‘ripple’ (book) written by one author, I pick up the relevant ideas and come across an interesting ‘ripple’ produced by another. Borrowing the term from Freire (1998), I am driven by my ‘epistemological curiosity’ [p. 32] and enter ‘the ripple’ created by another author and so on.

My ‘epistemological curiosity’ guides me through ‘the ripples’, collecting bits and pieces from each of them that are consistent with my individual interest in this precise field of study in order to produce my own ‘ripple’. What is important for this particular study is that digital media enables the ‘rippling’ network with a new blueprint. The internet and mobile digital devices make it possible to relatively easily and quickly identify, become connected with and join networks of essential resources and affiliated associations transcending space/time limitations.

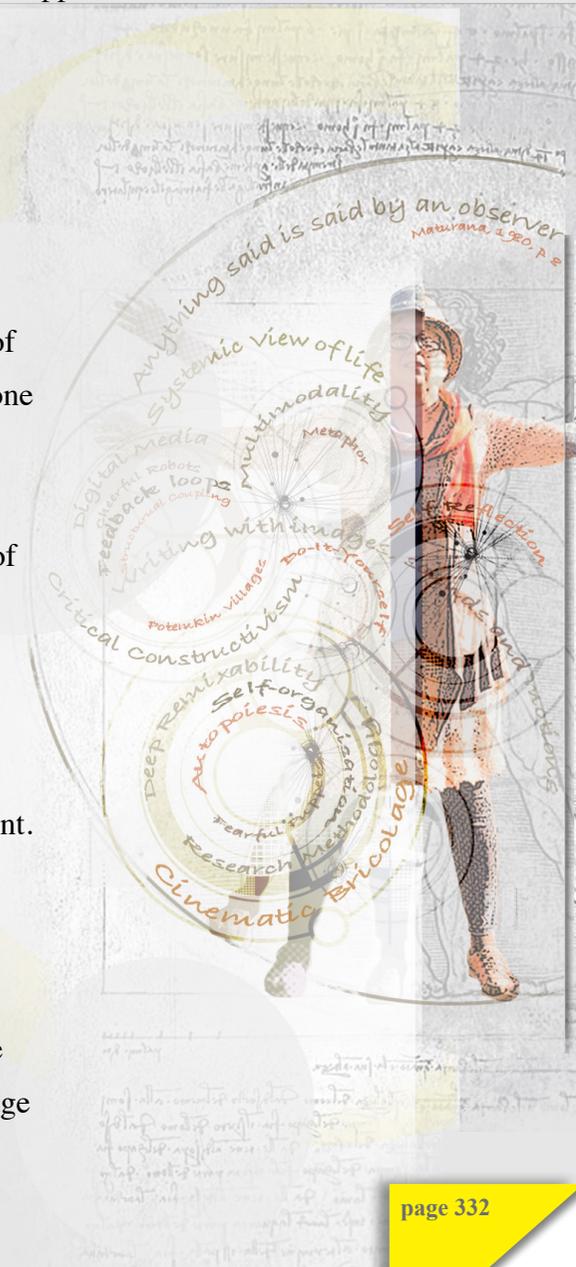


The nomadic ways of hunting and gathering, as De Certeau identifies, are shifted into ‘the artificial steppes and forests’ of the world-wide webwork. As McLuhan (1964) observes:

Men are suddenly nomadic gatherers of knowledge, nomadic as never before, informed as never before [...] – but also involved in the total social process as never before; since with electricity we extend our central nervous system globally, instantly interrelating every human experience. [loc. 5156]

The animation symbolically demonstrates the digital undercurrents that influence the rippling dynamics of the surface layers. The knowledge gatherer, or bricoleur in this study, extends her field of ‘textual poaching’, as Jenkins terms this (see p. 27 otd), by looping ‘across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves’ [De Certeau, 1984, loc. 2533]. Jenkins however, as discussed earlier in this section, enables ‘textual poachers’ with more ethical qualities, as he argues they turn their activities of appropriation into acts of creation. Intermeshing De Certeau’s and Jenkins’ concepts with the theme of this study, it can be said that the bricoleur, ‘rippling’ through the context of a digital medium, influenced by the digital currents, hunts and gathers along her way for material that can sustain her personal eclectic constructions. From a systemic point of view, she personalises the constructed knowledge within ‘her own making’ but through structural coupling with the surrounding environment. And by doing so, she re-creates herself, that is she engages in the process of autopoiesis.

An important mechanism in this process, as Potter identifies, is editing (see page 27 otd) – a meaningful remixing of ‘the plundered goods’ within the context of personal experience, as well as skilful curatorship of the newly created virtual galleries of the remixed collections. Considered in the frame of this study, curatorship is an ongoing process of bricolaging, namely gathering new knowledge by ‘nomadic ways’ of ‘textual poaching’, ‘editing’ the collected bits and pieces in the space of your



personal 'gallery', in 'a do-it-yourself' manner for the purpose of meaning emergence. The development of a photographic film, with latent content that become visible through interaction with certain chemicals in specific physical conditions, can be compared to curatorship practices. Gathering the essential materials, manipulating them according to the affordances of digital media, the bricoleur makes the content of her own mind more visible and articulated.

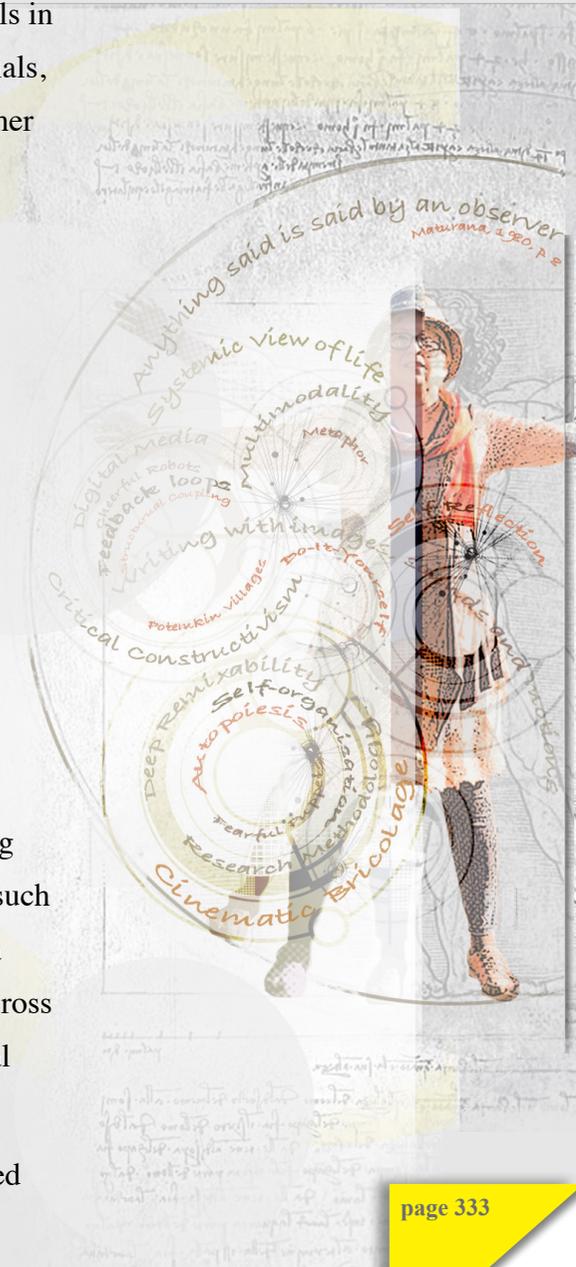
This brings the argument to the conclusive point which is consolidated in the concept that:

by the ontology of its affordances, that is, automation, numerical representations, modularity, variability, transcoding, layered production and the use of the internet, digital media facilitates the personalisation of knowledge production in a way that allows us to learn about, extend and assert ourselves and, at the same time, compels us to recognise that the self-assertion and knowledge production is possible through dynamic interactions with others by way of structural coupling, i.e., autopoiesis.

## 10.9 Convergence Points: Completing the Loop

This chapter looked at cinematic writing as a multimodal system of expression in relation to making sense of my own experience, invented and autobiographical, through its representation by means of such digital modalities as writing, images, sounds and motion. It also considered cinematic bricolage as 'a nomadic', 'do-it-yourself' knowledge-generation methodology and its capability in gathering data across the digital landscape; remixing it with self-produced material within the conceptual frame of personal experience and, through this process, articulating an emergent meaning.

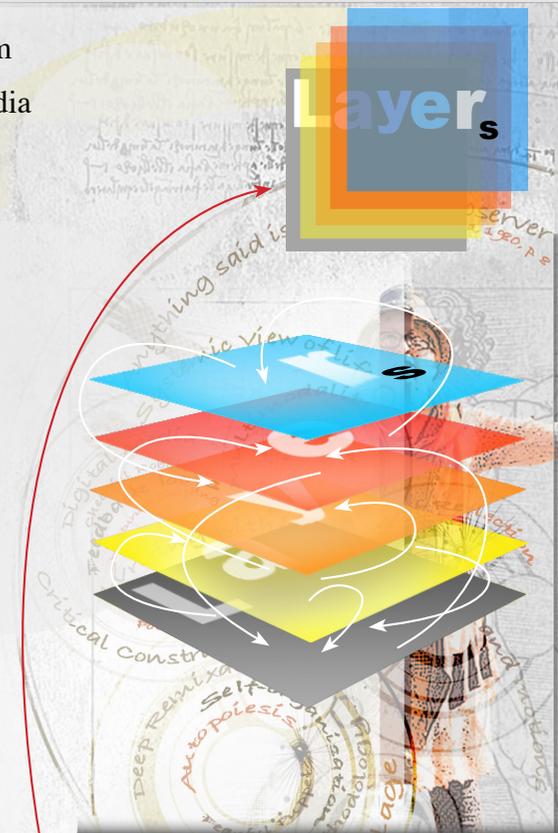
By analysing certain autobiographical events and their digital representations described or integrated



in the probes, in this chapter I have argued that digital media and within its domain such practice of epistemological innovation as cinematic bricolage, has the potential to become an efficient mechanism in privatising the ways of knowledge-production. Based on the ontological specifics of the digital media along with the bricolage's eclectic traditions, cinematic bricolage can be tailored to the interests and inherent abilities of an individual knowledge producer.

The act of knowing for a cinematic bricoleur is not a linear process but a development supported by feedback loops. Every next loop is modelled on the assessment of the previous one. Every new loop results in bringing related materials, learned techniques and correlated theories to 'the centre' of the loop, the pivot of the conceptual research space. The reconstruction of the knowledge materials and their gathering, therefore, is one continuous process which can be compared to the layered system of production embedded in creative software. It is characterised by emergent hybridisation of styles and approaches suitable to the individual engaged in the construction of bricolage.

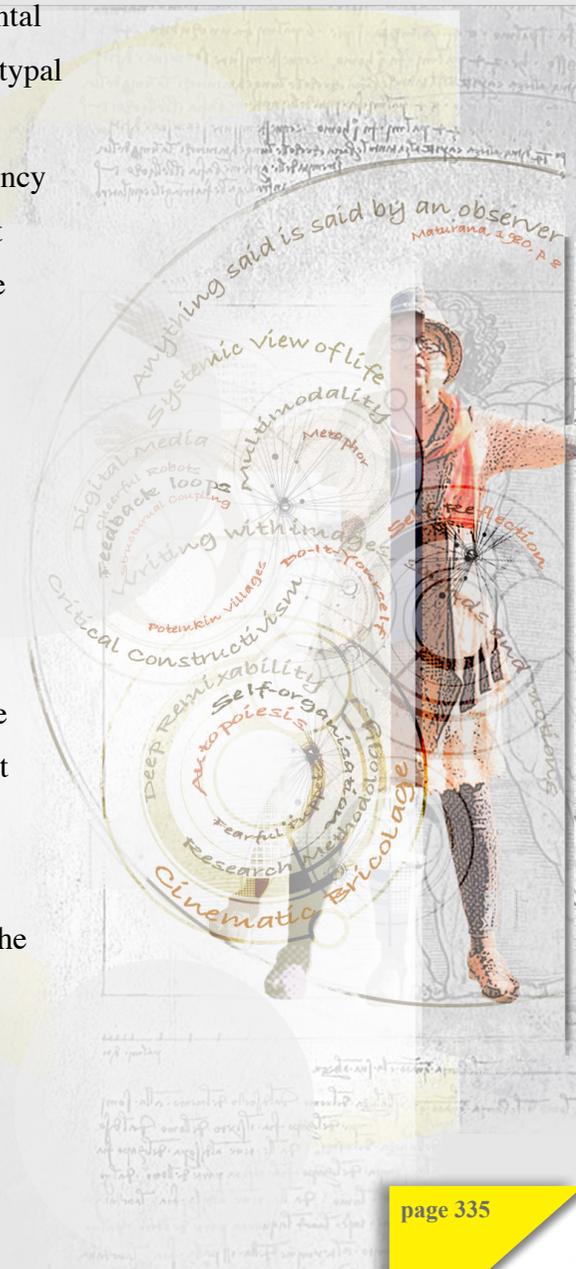
The metaphoric method proved to be a compelling strategy in embodying tacit knowledge across representational modalities. It revealed the capacity to set in motion self-discovery tendencies. It emerged that symbols that felt apt to use in articulating feeling, had deeper roots in the mental structures and upon further examination, came out with profound meanings attached to them. It made me realise that other people placed in the same socio-historical context developed similar analogical meaning associated with certain images, music or actions. Elliott (2014), in interpreting the work of Mead (1934), paraphrases: 'Symbols have universal quality for the social groups in which they are meaningful; symbols are the common currency through which individuals forge sense of self and interact with other people' [Elliott, 2013, p. 31].



Looping through and between the layers. Every new loop is determined by the result of the previous alteration and the projection of all the layers combined together.

Metaphoric representations of the mental agents of the self brought into view different types of mental schemata that can underlie responses and shape behaviour in relation to political ideology. The archetypal images that I have borrowed and developed illustrate behavioural tendencies that could be applied in different situations. In continuing analysing the work of Mead, Elliott attests: '[...] the self is the agency through which individuals experience themselves in relation to others, but also an object or fact dealt with by its individual owner as he or she sees fit' [p. 31]. This study framed for examination only one small part of the self – its relation to the power of oppressive political authority and how this can be articulated with the use of cinematic writing. In this context, embodying the dominating mental structures into metaphoric representations allowed the analysis of the self to be carried out from different points of view and suggested the options for 'the individual owner', as Elliott puts it, 'to deal with the self-agency'. Thus it facilitated consideration of self-making or autopoiesis. My claim is that cinematic bricolage, as a knowledge-generation methodology, has the capacity to address this important issue. By integrating metaphoric images, their movements and sounds that those signifiers can produce, into her meaning-making activities, the bricoleur engages herself in deep analysis of the kind of self with which she wants to identify. That is, the bricoleur adjusts and transforms herself, not in accordance with how other people want to see her, but how she wants to see herself.

Through working on my probes, I have experienced an ongoing sense of moving 'within my own mind'. I felt as if I was projecting structures that were deeply concealed and that needed to come to the surface in order for me to allow that governing 'true-self' force to take charge in my self-realisation. From this perspective I have found cinematic bricolage a rigorous methodology for self-realisation.



## Circularity of Knowledge: Completing the Loop to Begin the Next

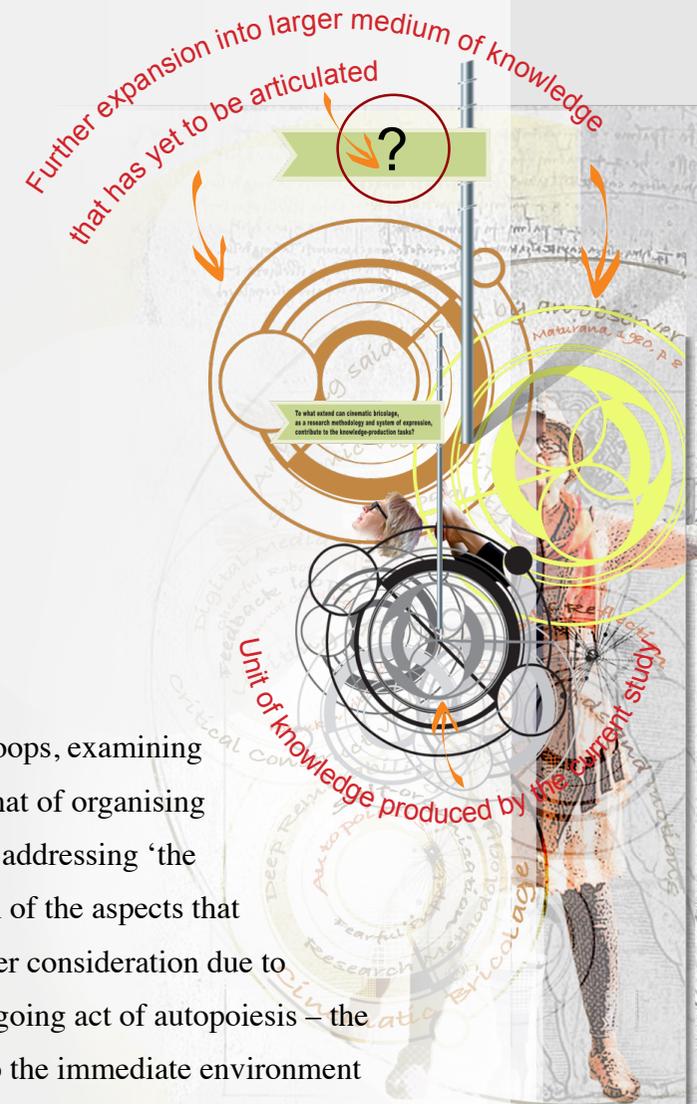
*My proposal, however, is to accept this circular situation fully right from the start and to make oneself the instrument by means of which the question of one's personal experience and one's own actions is to be answered through one's very own activities.*

*[Maturana, 2014, loc. 1033]*

### 11.1 Organising the Threads

If the previous chapter was metaphorically seen as the final threading through the study-loops, examining the key-threads' interwovenness within the fabric of the probes, the task of this chapter is that of organising the threads into a final pattern symbolising cinematic bricolage, as well as 'picking up' and addressing 'the loose threads'. In relation to 'the loose threads', this chapter looks at the emergent potential of the aspects that came to light throughout the current argument development but which were not given proper consideration due to the limitations of the study. From the systems view, this is yet another illustration of the ongoing act of autopoiesis – the remaking of the self-produced knowledge (systems unit) through its circular expansion into the immediate environment within its own preserved structure.

The unit of knowledge that has been preserved in this study is encapsulated in the notion that cinematic bricolage can be an effective potential device for innovative ways of knowledge production. The evidence of this claim is presented through a conceptual structure in the diagram on the next page and through the written points that follow the diagram.



The diagram shows the categories that have been associated with *cinematic* and *bricolage* terms. In the representational/meaning-making process involving these categories, the threads that symbolise them become intertwined, forming certain patterns within the observed area of study.

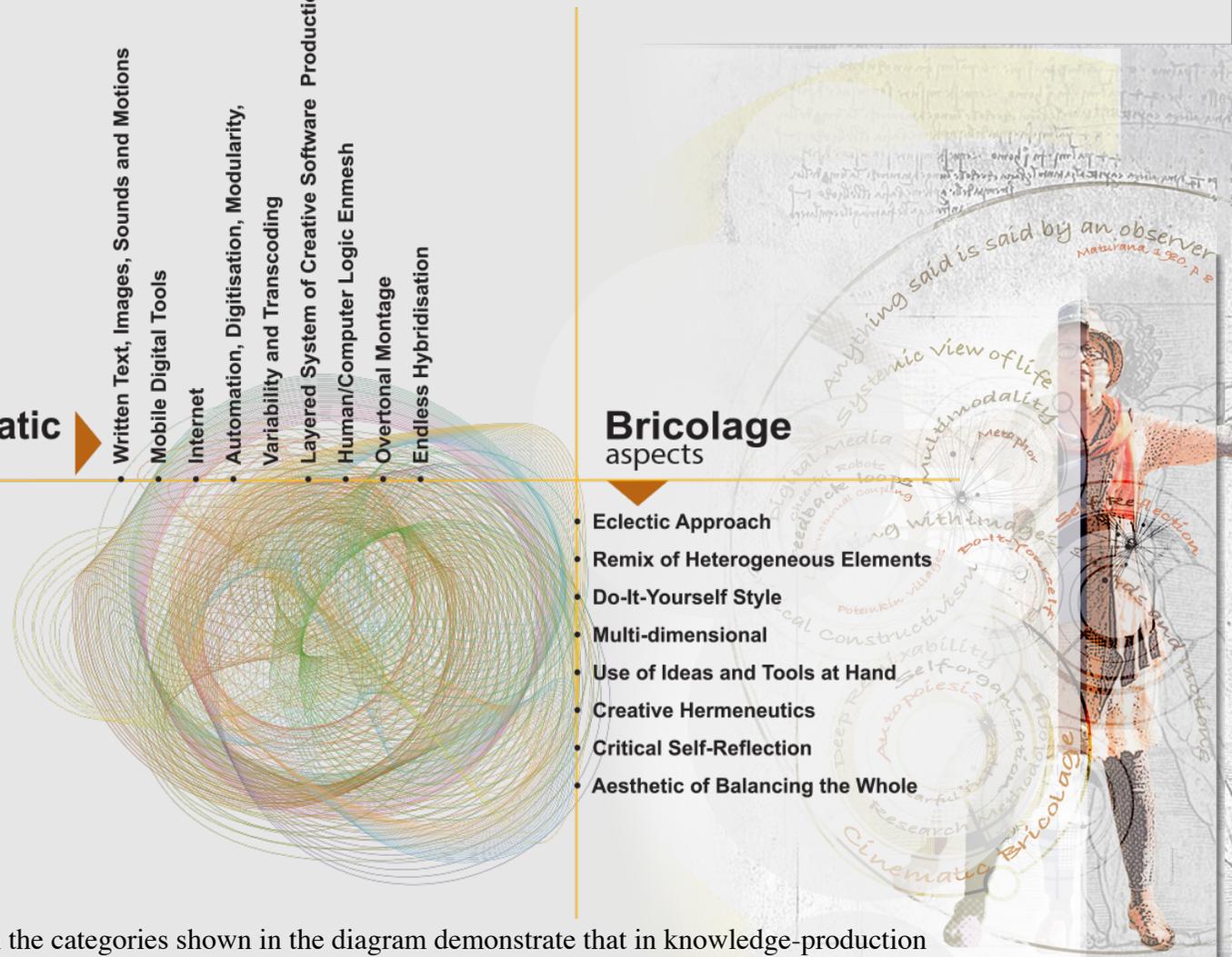
The patterns within the observed area of study are characterised by emergent design as they are formed on individual bricoleur's interests, skills, context and availability and affordances of digital media of the task at hand.

### Cinematic aspects

- Written Text, Images, Sounds and Motions
- Mobile Digital Tools
- Internet
- Automation, Digitisation, Modularity, Variability and Transcending
- Layered System of Creative Software Production
- Human/Computer Logic Enmesh
- Overtonal Montage
- Endless Hybridisation

### Bricolage aspects

- Eclectic Approach
- Remix of Heterogeneous Elements
- Do-It-Yourself Style
- Multi-dimensional
- Use of Ideas and Tools at Hand
- Creative Hermeneutics
- Critical Self-Reflection
- Aesthetic of Balancing the Whole

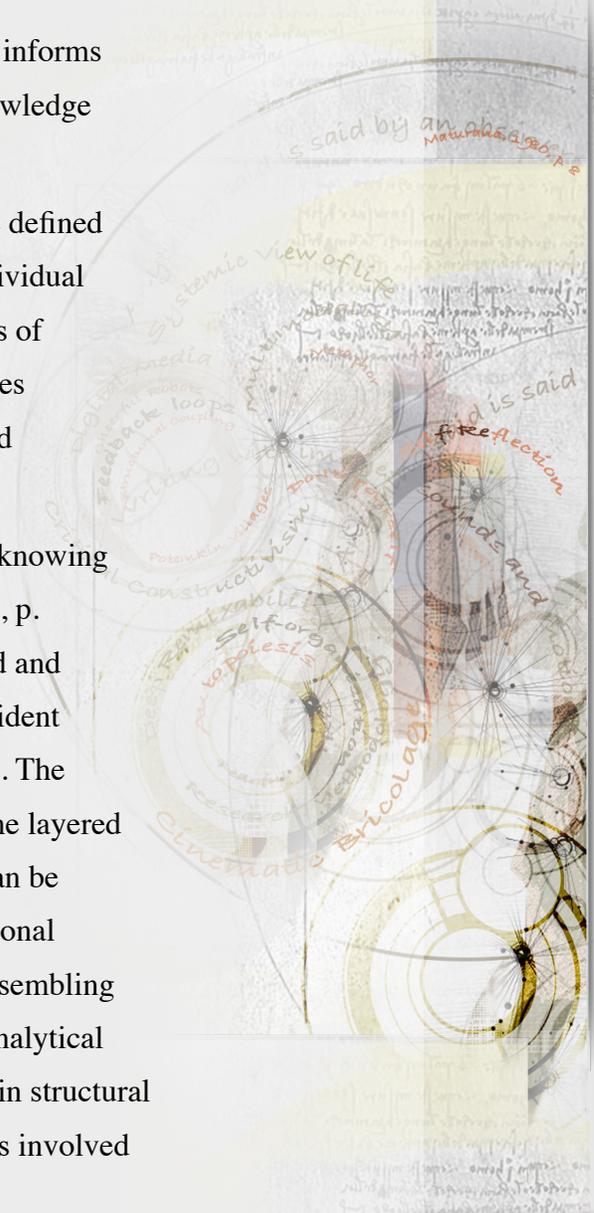


The results of the interactions between the categories shown in the diagram demonstrate that in knowledge-production methodology, cinematic bricolage has the potential to activate and maintain ‘epistemological curiosity’ which inspires rigorous knowledge expansion that can be crystallised in the following aspects.

Generating knowledge by application of cinematic bricolage enhances self-awareness as well as informs and fosters appreciation for interconnectedness with other people engaged in the same area of knowledge acquisition.

In the act of knowing, cinematic bricolage facilitates the intricacy of the patterns observed in the defined area of investigation which depends on the interests, skills and creative abilities inherent in an individual bricoleur, as well as the social context within which she works and the availability and affordances of the digital media with which she operates. Thus, cinematic bricolage is a methodology that provides opportunity for endless hybridisation, affirming privatisation of ways of knowledge-generation and realisation of the self.

Learning with cinematic bricolage promotes the act of autopoiesis by asserting that every act of knowing brings forth a world and all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p. 26). The act of doing  knowing is embedded in the surrounding historical/social/cultural world and is realised through cognitive circularity. With respect to cinematic bricolage, such circularity is evident through the feedback loops where every new step evolves from the insights gained in the previous. The engagement with cinematic bricolage makes cognitive circularity visible through observation of the layered production in the process of the meaning embodiment, representing  meaning-making. This can be seen as human  computer logic enmesh, where database  narrative circularity is an operational mechanism. Through the process of collecting from existing and generating her own databases, assembling the elements on the software layers in accordance with computer logic, the bricoleur applies her analytical sequential logic by the means of recurrent feedback loops, whereby she causes changes, resulting in structural congruence between her own and computer logic. Through this structural coupling, the bricoleur is involved



in the act of autopoiesis, reaching out continuously towards an equilibrium with the surrounding environment thereby stimulating further changes in the environment.

The manifestation of the act of autopoiesis in cinematic bricolage takes place through an understanding of the ontological relationship between human and computer logic. To this end, conceptual mental-grasps schemata (critical ontology) generated from life experiences and abstract logic, on the one hand, and gaining ontological understanding of the specifics of digital media, on the other, are developed. Associating the fragments of mental-grasps schemata with their metaphorical signifiers and reconstructing them into new assemblages in accordance with digital media categories such as automation, digitisation, modularity, variability and transcoding, allows generation of insights about the human ↔ computer logic enmesh on the meta-cognitive level.

Applied metaphoric logic in cinematic bricolage can serve not only as a mechanism for understanding one thing in terms of another, but can also act as a device for 'decoding the messages' concealed within the layers of unconscious cognition. The insights gained from this cultivate enhanced self-awareness and catalyse an autopoietic self-reorganisation.

Fostering critical self-reflective practice with cinematic bricolage and seeing yourself as an observer helps the bricoleur understand her observing mind in order to achieve circularity between the observer ↔ observed. Self-reflective bricolaging is fuelled by the collection of an eclectic range of materials and utilisation of various available techniques. This promotes a heightened perception of the world and recognition of the circularity of the self ↔ society. This also helps to construct a self-position adaptable in co-existence with others and to develop the skills needed for informed and self-assertive participation in the community.

Creative hermeneutics in cinematic bricolage is recognised not as a demonstration of abilities and skills for artistic representations, but as an exhibition of effectiveness in finding novel and rigorous ways to assemble heterogeneous fragments into one coherent composition that transmits meaningful and compelling message(s).

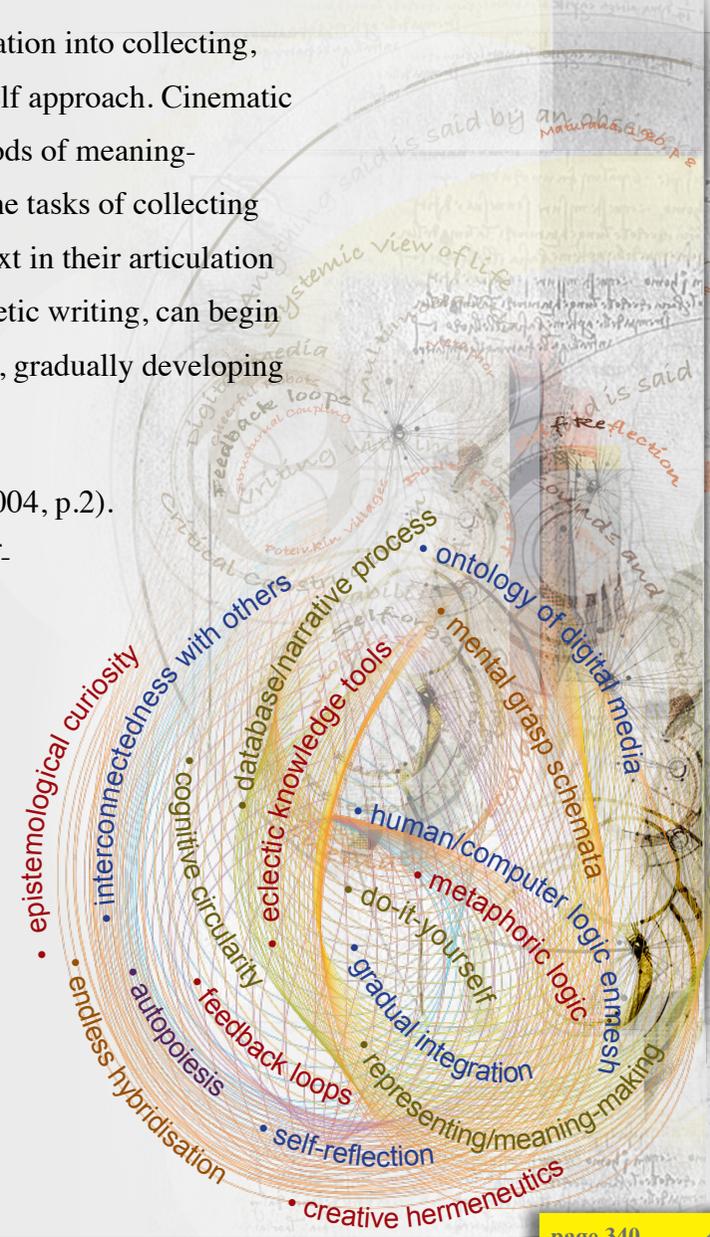


Working with cinematic bricolage addresses the need for digital media's gradual integration into collecting, disassembling and remixing within the knowledge-generation processes in a do-it-yourself approach. Cinematic bricolage allows flexibility in compositional 'tinkering' with traditional and digital methods of meaning-articulations. The bricoleurs in their primary years of education can be oriented toward the tasks of collecting and bricolaging images, sounds and movements with minor implementation of written text in their articulation of meaning. More experienced scholars, whose predominant tool of expression is alphabetic writing, can begin their bricolaging practices by tinkering with minor application of other digital modalities, gradually developing the necessary skills to become confident multimodal composers.

'The bricolage exist out of respect for the complexity of the lived world' (Kincheloe, 2004, p.2). Cinematic bricolage, as it is demonstrated in this study, provides the opportunity for 'self-constructed modes of higher order-thinking and intellectual work' [...] and for 'more textured and thicker sense for self-production, the nature of self and others, self and knowledge, and all of these dynamics in relation to larger social, political, cultural, psychological, and pedagogical structures ...' (p. 38).

On the previous page, I have outlined the key-threads interwoven into a cinematic bricolage fabric.

The visualisation on the right shows the key-threads 'intricately intertwined' into a circular shape. The 'ball' of threads symbolises the complex interrelations of identified aspects of the circularity of knowledge-production. Thus, it reflects Kincheloe's (2004) account of Maturana and Varela's (1987) concept of autopoiesis:



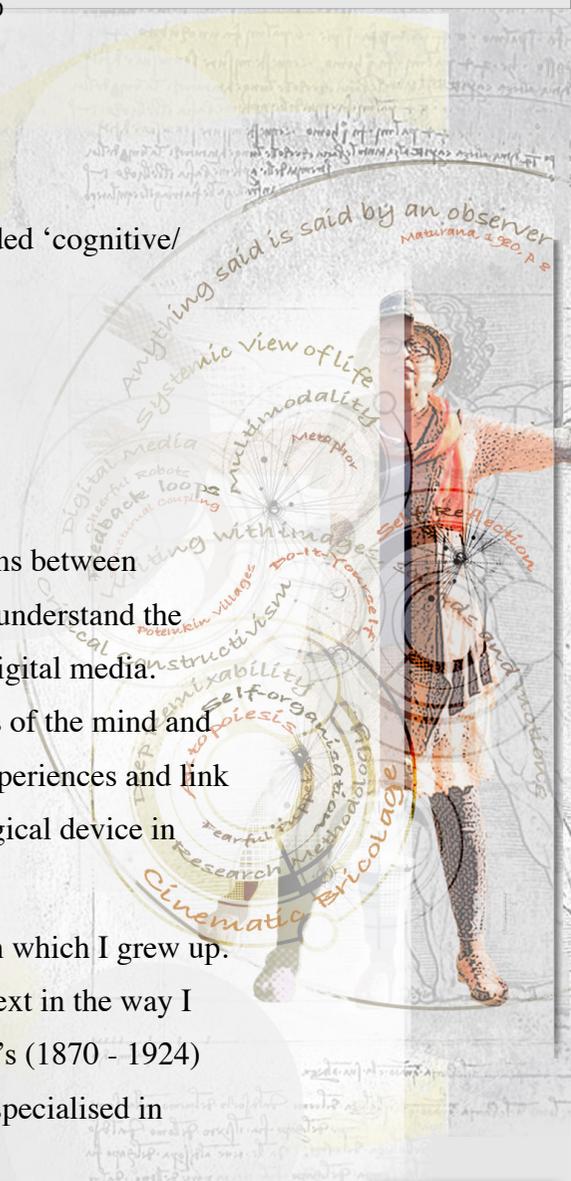
[...] that living things constantly remake themselves in interaction with their environments, our notions of a new self (a critical ontology) and new modes of exploring the world are grounded in the human ability to use new social contexts and experiences to reformulate both subjectivity and knowledge [...] As barriers between mind and multiple contexts are erased, the chance that more expanded forms of 'cognitive/scholarly autopoiesis' will emerge is increased. (p. 38)

Looking from the perspective of the erased barriers between mind and multiple contexts and expanded 'cognitive/scholarly autopoiesis', I pause here to discuss a proposition for a new act of knowing expansion.

## 11.2 Alienation of Learning

In looking at the knowledge production brought about by the mechanism assembled from interactions between mind symbolisations and their embodiments by means of cinematic bricolage, my main focus was to understand the ontological relationship between these two categories: the processes of mind and the affordances of digital media. Metaphoric logic became an essential instrument with which I realised the operational symbolisations of the mind and using various modes and variations of digital representations, tried to make meaning of events and experiences and link them to broader issues of morality. The use of metaphor was also expanded to become an epistemological device in articulating the meaning concealed in the unconscious mind.

In this process, Soviet ideology was the backdrop for analysing my negativity towards the society in which I grew up. I do not try to evaluate or make conclusions in this area of study but only use it to sketch out the context in the way I experienced it. However, reading some of the Marx's (1818 - 1883) and Engels' (1820 - 1895), Lenin's (1870 - 1924) and Trotski's (1979 - 1940) theoretical writing, becoming acquainted with the work of theorists who specialised in



studying the Communist paradigm, collecting internet material and social media comments on this topic, resulted in many questions and topics that I would like to explore in the future. One of these issues I found essential to cinematic bricolage and feel that it is worthy of attention here.

Marx's (1844) theory of alienated labour, where he sees the product of labour being objectified – 'labour's realisation is its objectification' [loc. 1250] – makes me think that learning realisation can also be seen as its objectification. In other words, the learner embodies the product of her learning into an object that is exchanged for the grades she gets from passing her test. The product of learning, therefore, becomes a commodity, the production of which has as its central goal to be sold for the required points that will determine the learner's further progression. The concept can be encapsulated into the notion, 'just pass and forget'. As Kincheloe and Steinberg write (1998): 'Once the test is over most students no longer have any use for such information and quickly forget it' [p. 5]. The product of learning will only be remembered if it has further practical application in real life. Otherwise, the realisation of learning 'appears as loss of reality' [Marx, 1844, loc. 1250], decontextualised information that holds no significance [Kincheloe, & Steinberg, 1998, p. 5]. Such learning, Girox (2011) asserts, 'celebrates rote learning, memorisation, and high-stakes testing, while it 'produces an atmosphere of student passivity and teacher routinisation'' [p. 10].

In the context of traditional learning, the learner begins her project with sources and materials constructed, not of her immediate environment or her daily social interactions, but from someone else's abstraction of reality. These, someone else's notions, sets of ideas, skills and techniques reflect someone's belief about what the learner should master in the domain of knowledge. Thus the situation of the learner's estrangement from her learning project begins from being fed someone else's idea of what the learner should know.

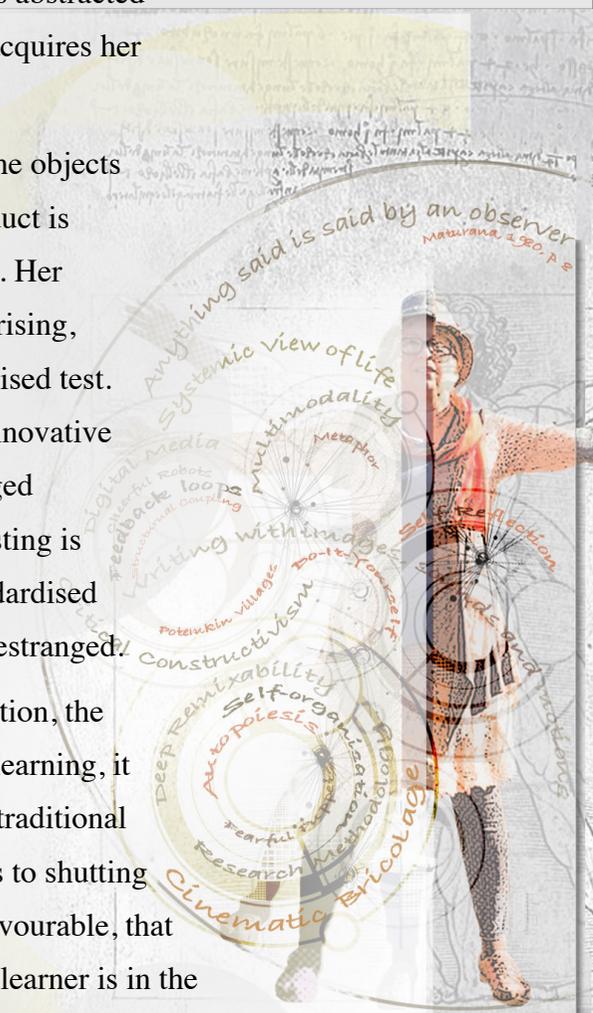
Marx states: 'The worker can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material on which his labour is manifested, in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces' [loc. 1279]. If we replace the word 'worker' with the word 'learner', we can say that contemporary learning occurs



outside of being directly part of the sensuous external world. The experience of being in the world is abstracted and embodied into artificially resourced materials from which, and by means of which, the learner acquires her knowledge.

Marx argues: 'The direct relationship of labour to its produce is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production' [loc, 1298]. Again, it can be said that the direct relationship of learning to its product is the relationship of the learner to the objects of her learning. The learner learns in order to pass a test. Her goal is to exchange the product of her learning for a grade on her record which is attained by memorising, replication of instrumental operations relevant to the subject and her ability to perform in a standardised test. Categories of learning such as the learner's personal interest, applied effort, curiosity, risk-taking, innovative tendencies, as well as the ability to construct her own knowledge, however, can only be acknowledged and appreciated by an individual teacher. For these desirable learner characteristics, standardised testing is unnecessary and even counterproductive. Within the confines of the traditional curriculum and standardised testing, the relationship between the learner and her essential creative force can be characterised as estranged.

Marx continues: 'If then the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation' [loc. 1312]. Looking at this from the perspective of learning, it can be said that in order to exchange the product of her learning for a good value, the learner in the traditional educational system is forced to learn outside of her individual interests and innate talents. This leads to shutting down her personal curiosity and being conditioned that taking risks can hurt, that innovation is unfavourable, that her personally-constructed knowledge has no value within the rigid, uniform system of testing. The learner is in the position of alienating her learning from her own self, similar to the worker described by Marx, who faces 'the product of his activity as a stranger [...] Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague' [loc. 1312]. This relates well to much contemporary education, where the learning



stops cold with each school break and holiday homework is usually seen as a grievous misfortune.

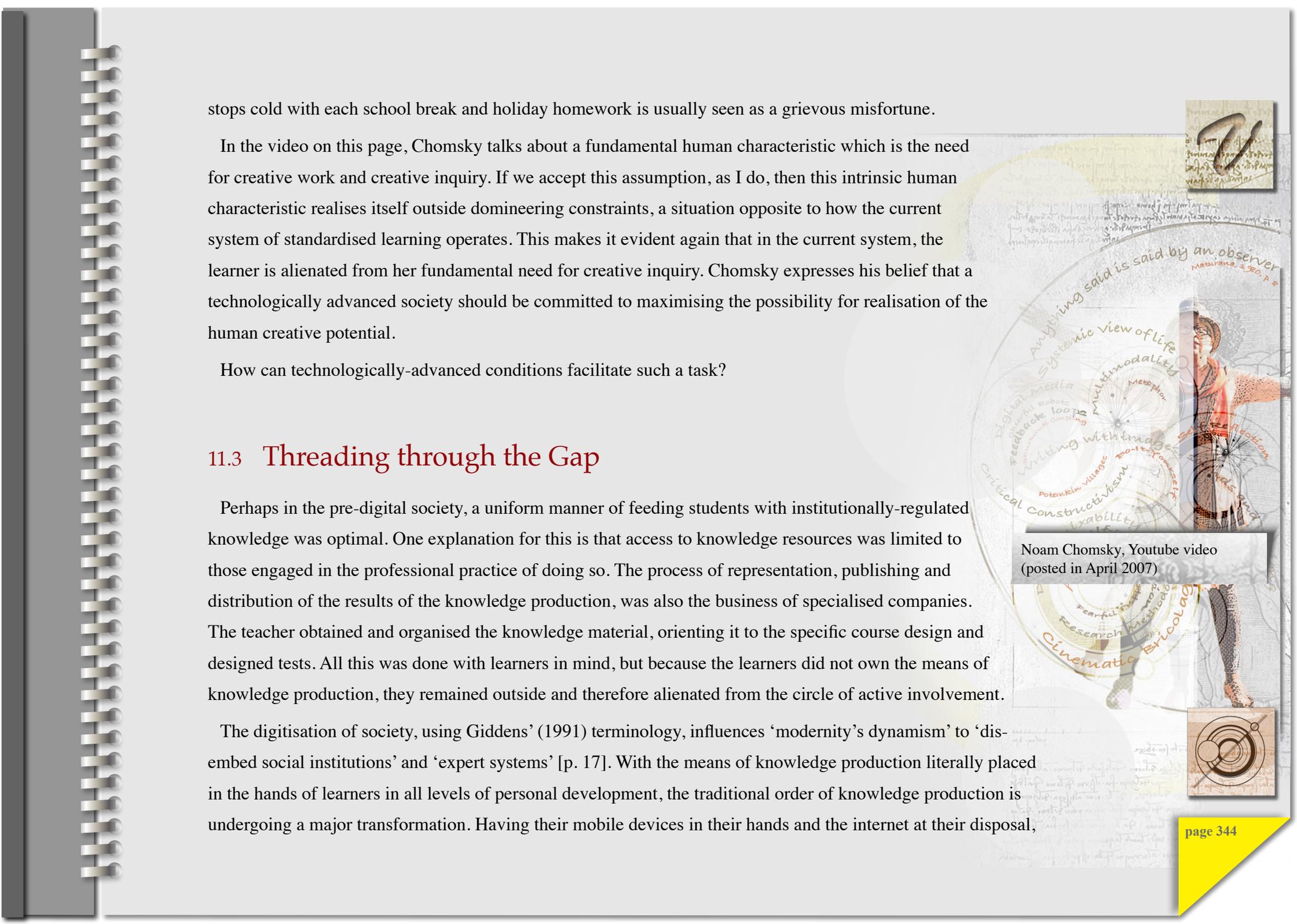
In the video on this page, Chomsky talks about a fundamental human characteristic which is the need for creative work and creative inquiry. If we accept this assumption, as I do, then this intrinsic human characteristic realises itself outside domineering constraints, a situation opposite to how the current system of standardised learning operates. This makes it evident again that in the current system, the learner is alienated from her fundamental need for creative inquiry. Chomsky expresses his belief that a technologically advanced society should be committed to maximising the possibility for realisation of the human creative potential.

How can technologically-advanced conditions facilitate such a task?

### 11.3 Threading through the Gap

Perhaps in the pre-digital society, a uniform manner of feeding students with institutionally-regulated knowledge was optimal. One explanation for this is that access to knowledge resources was limited to those engaged in the professional practice of doing so. The process of representation, publishing and distribution of the results of the knowledge production, was also the business of specialised companies. The teacher obtained and organised the knowledge material, orienting it to the specific course design and designed tests. All this was done with learners in mind, but because the learners did not own the means of knowledge production, they remained outside and therefore alienated from the circle of active involvement.

The digitisation of society, using Giddens' (1991) terminology, influences 'modernity's dynamism' to 'dis-embed social institutions' and 'expert systems' [p. 17]. With the means of knowledge production literally placed in the hands of learners in all levels of personal development, the traditional order of knowledge production is undergoing a major transformation. Having their mobile devices in their hands and the internet at their disposal,



Noam Chomsky, Youtube video  
(posted in April 2007)

the learners themselves are becoming experts at sampling the data from the surrounding natural and social worlds as well as from existing databases of knowledge and remixing the fragmented modules in accordance with their personal interests and abilities for realisation of the self. By doing so, they forge ‘the context of the thoroughgoing reflexivity’, characterised not simply by ‘accumulation of knowledge’ [Giddens, 1991, p. 20], but by the formation of autonomous, self-managed and privately constructed spaces of knowledge. Negotiating the self as living in a complex web of natural and social structures, learners in the digital society place themselves at the midpoint of interactions of reality and synthesise their standpoints by bricolaging from eclectic resources.

The ubiquitousness and affordances of digital media therefore provides learners with an opportunity to move away from a standardised, single perspective and allows them to ‘celebrate the local and heterogeneous, the plurality of voices and meanings, the patchwork, pick and mix, and the pastiche’ [Altglass, 2014, p. 4]. Focusing on the reality in which one lives, recording personal experiences with nature and social events, making comments on social media and responding to other people’s replies, the learner reconnects herself with the world.

*Diagram 1* shows knowledge being produced by orienting it toward a certain group of learners but the learners themselves remain outside the act of production.

*Diagram 2* shows the knowledge being generated from the learner’s own reasoning and experience of life.

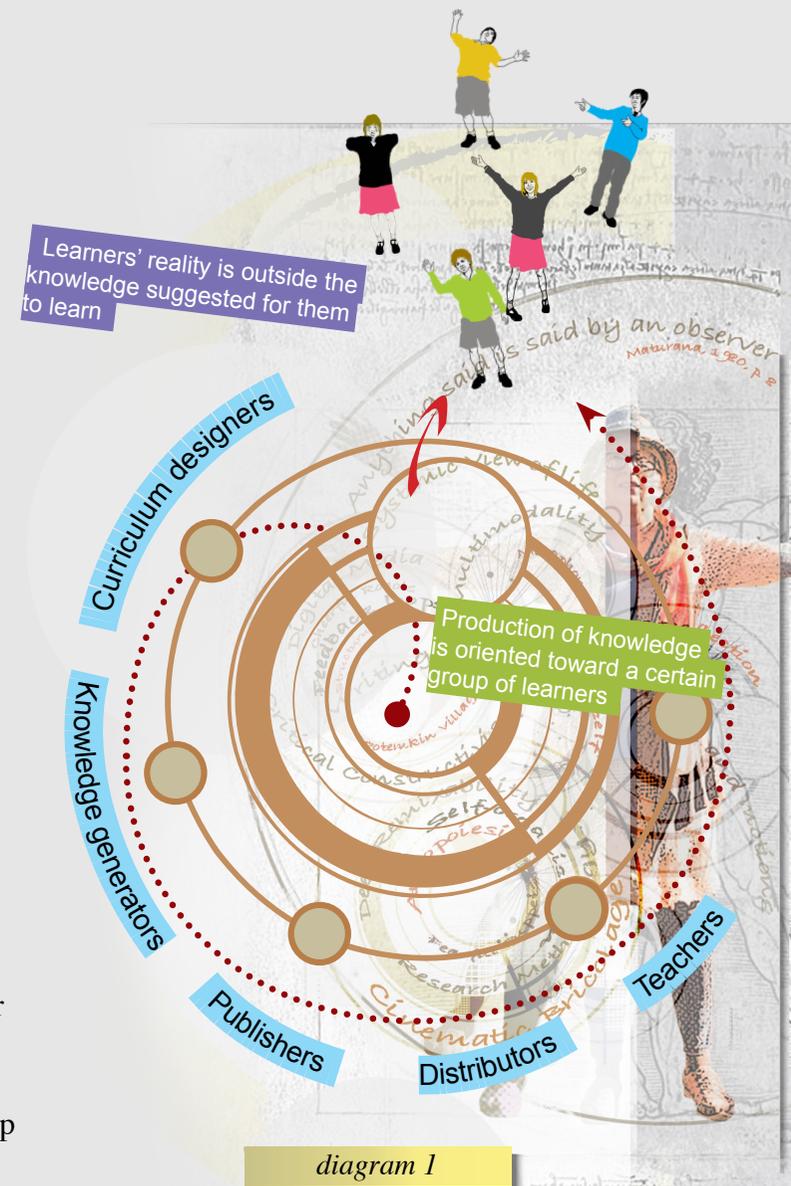


diagram 1

Here I propose two hypothetical examples for middle-school learning tasks performed with the implementation of cinematic bricolage methodology. I have chosen middle school as it is the mid-point between young and mature learners.

The first example is oriented to the learners' reconnection with the self and the natural world. Following Berry's feedback-looping strategy, the pivot set up for this task is human/animal communication. Many students have dogs, cats, even horses or some other pet at home. Those who do not can set up a bird-feeder and observe the birds' interactions with humans.

Applying cinematic bricolage methodology, the students video- and audio- record their observations and take notes of the observed interactions. In addition to this, with their digital tools those who:

- are inclined to draw can make sketches, produce diagrams, create stylisations and collages by remixing various modalities of expression;
- have interest in writing can develop narrative pieces, assemble simple animations based on the developed stories;
- are predisposed to auditory activities can learn about the sounds that animals produce in relation to various situations and create compositions remixing musical and natural sounds;
- are curious about kinetics may look at bodily movements reflecting animals' communicative behaviour and construct kinetically based digital compositions.

Using the internet and social group sites the bricoleurs contrast, compare, refine, confirm and



remix their findings with materials adopted from the existing databases.

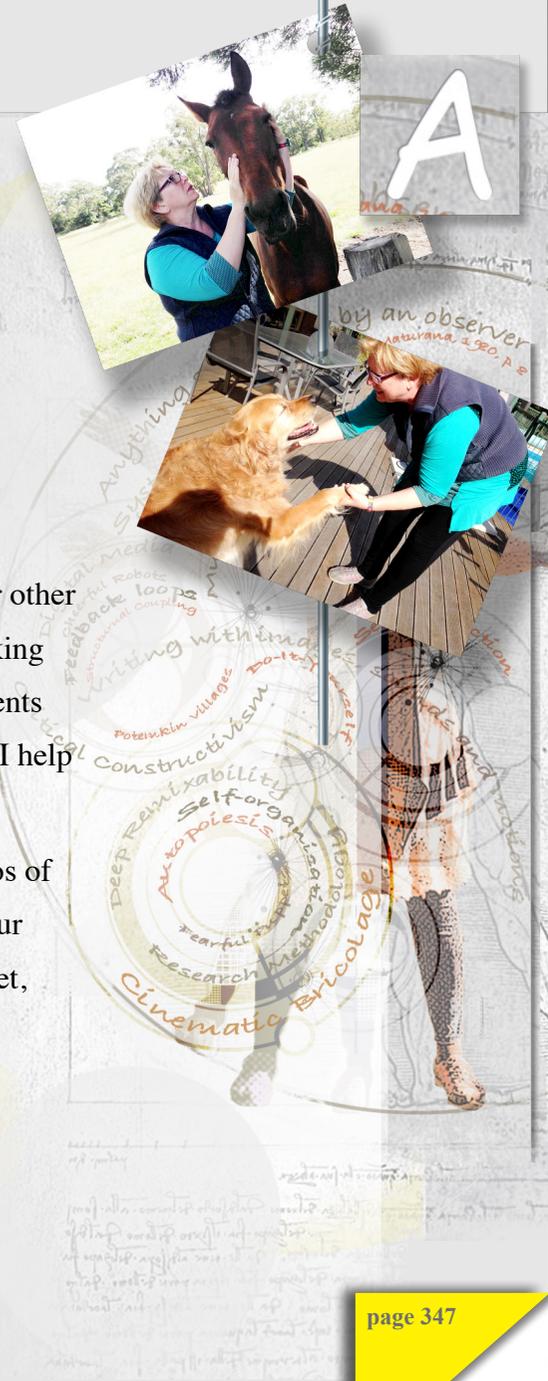
This project can help learners recognise patterns of similarity between human and animal behaviour, foster the notion that humans are not alien species in this natural world but an organic part of it and contribute to a sense of responsibility for the environment and all those who live in it.

Through the process of this cinematic bricolage, students can also look critically at their own actions in communicating with animals and, through this, shape an understanding of the role of humans in interrelations with animals, not as exploiters but as respectful equals.

In the second cinematic bricolage, I suggest a photograph, for example the hands of a grandparent or other elderly relation, taken as a pivotal point – a bricole. The students start their ‘threading around it’ by asking themselves various questions, for example: What can these hands symbolise? What is their story? Students may pose such questions as: In what ways and why do these hands look different from mine? How can I help those hands ‘to feel’ better?

By ‘looping’ through their subject’s photos, mementos, listening to their stories or songs, taking photos of pieces of old embroidery or woodwork, video-recording the work these hands do at present, the bricoleur connects herself with the story of her family. In further loops, the bricoleur gathers data from the internet, reads life stories of other people of the same period of time and place. The bricoleur begins to see her family as part of a historical picture. She develops associations constructing the place and society she lives in with her family and many others.

Other students may develop an interest in health-oriented issues, elderly care, the broader subject of ageing.



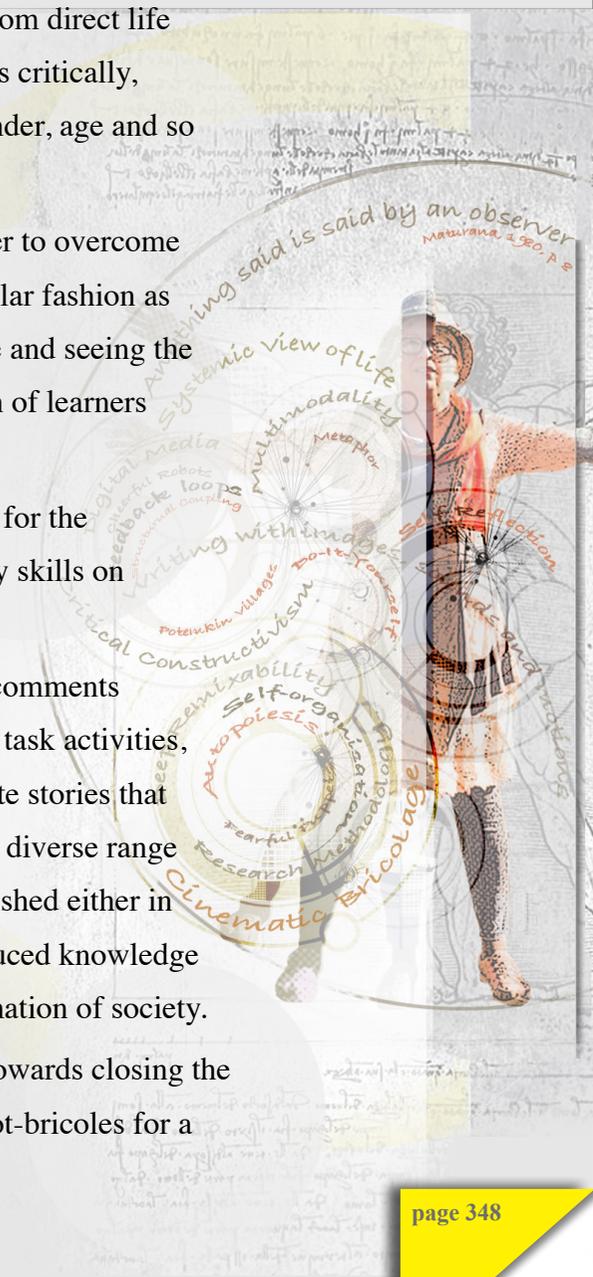
Bricolaging bits and pieces together during this project, the learner assembles an alternative body of knowledge taken not from a neutral-expert perspective incorporated into an officially-approved textbook, but from direct life experiences. Articulating the meaning she has constructed, the bricoleur looks at the emerging issues critically, questioning such aspects as working conditions, cultural prejudices, nationality, race, education, gender, age and so on.

In the two examples proposed for cinematic bricolage, I see a promising opportunity for the learner to overcome her passive, consumerist attitude towards learning. Knowledge-production tasks structured in a similar fashion as the two suggested above, can be catalysts for the engagement of multiple dimensions of intelligence and seeing the product of learning not as a commoditised object exchanged for a grade value, but as a reconnection of learners with their selves as creators of their own life interlaced within the web of the surrounding world.

With the use of cinematic writing for the embodiment of constructed meaning, the bricoleurs look for the hermeneutic styles adjusted to their innate abilities, thereby equipping themselves with the advocacy skills on which they can best capitalise.

The bricolages can be published, for example, on the class group site, where students can see the comments posted by their peers and become involved in discussions around the work. Through these extended task activities, the bricoleurs learn about respectful internet commenting culture, developing the ability to appreciate stories that others share with them. On completion of these two research projects, the students have generated a diverse range of knowledge built around one bricole. The material can be organised into one digital artefact. Published either in a private group or in the public domain, it broadens the students' appreciation for individually-produced knowledge that can be integrated into the knowledge generated by others to become a strategy for the transformation of society.

The two examples of cinematic bricolage proposed above demonstrate the possibility of moving towards closing the gap between alienated learning and reconnected learning – the terms used provisionally here as pivot-bricoles for a future loop.



- Alienated learning, is taken here as a condition where the learner is ‘estranged from herself’, achieved by memorising material and mastering skills generated by officially-appointed experts who are decontextualised from the living conditions of the individual learner.

- Reconnected learning, is where the learner has an opportunity to reconnect herself with personal interests and innate abilities. It is learning in which knowledge is self-produced from the direct life experiences of an individual learner, a condition possible with the implementation of digital media.

With this study, I argue that the personal probes developed in chapters eight and nine are evidence of the possibility for reconnected learning, as could be the above proposed examples. I see this reconnection occurring through the circularity of the process of representation ↔ meaning-making, where a rational thought intertwines, not in a straight-linear manner, but as a thread interlaced between, around and through the ‘database-layers’. In this way the traditional learning of facts, skills, formulas, concepts, rules, operations, and so on, are threaded through non-traditional ways of learning such as relevance to the learner’s personal life, emotions, intuition, empathy and innate creative abilities. Thus, reconnected learning captures an appreciation ‘of a holistic dimension to the post-modern consciousness’ [Grenz, 1996, loc, 321]. As Grenz continues arguing:

Postmodern holism entails a rejection of the Enlightenment ideal of the dispassionate, autonomous, rational individual [...] Postmodern holism entails an integration of all dimensions of personal life – affective and intuitive as well as cognitive. Wholeness also entails a consciousness of indelible and delicate connection to what lies beyond ourselves, in which personal existence is embedded and from which it is nurtured. This wider realm includes ‘nature’ (the ecosystem), of course. But in addition it involves the community of humans in which we participate. Postmoderns are keenly conscious of the importance of community, of the social dimension of existence. [ loc. 321]

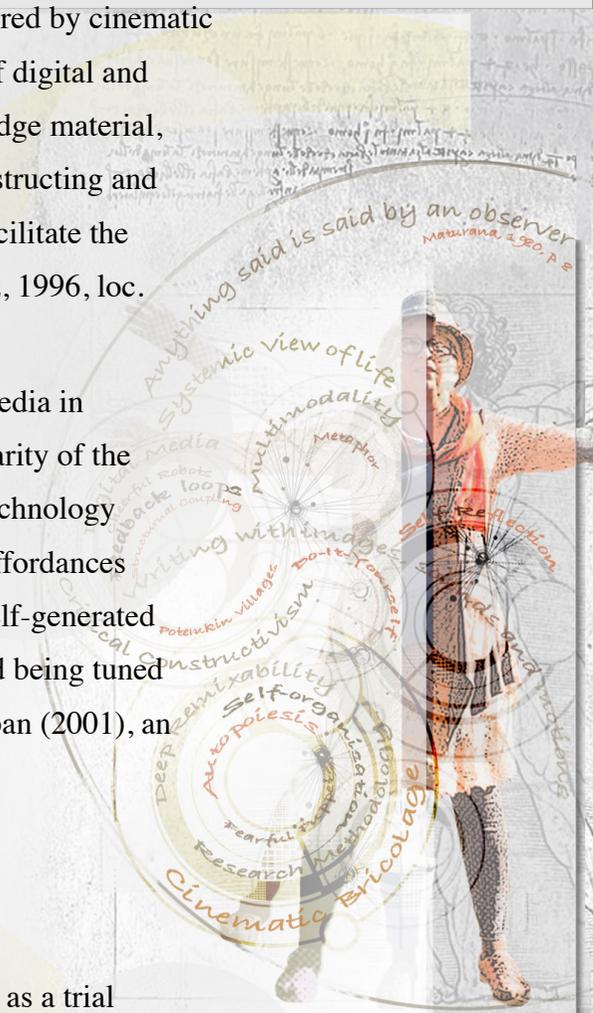


The rational ↔ passionate individual embedded into the self ↔ community circularity is captured by cinematic bricolage through the incorporation of digital media. Social conditions such as the ubiquitousness of digital and especially personal mobile devices, the integration of global communication, easy access to knowledge material, quick and painless sampling from the surrounding world, user-friendly platforms for storing, deconstructing and reconfiguring digitised modules of data and accessible publishing of the generated body of work, facilitate the production of knowledge that celebrates pluralism and diversity ‘in endless variety of styles’ [Grenz, 1996, loc. 420].

If bricolage can be epitomised in a metaphoric representation of an individual driver, the digital media in this visualised concept would be the car driven by that particular driver. In this metaphor, the circularity of the human ↔ technology logic enmesh is the driving force of cinematic bricolage progression. The technology facilitates the moves directed by the human mind, which in turn operates within the technological affordances and constraints of the particular machine she controls. Without the collaboration of digital media, self-generated knowledge-production tasks would remain a difficult endeavour. At the same time, without the mind being tuned to the digital media logic, the technology as a learning tool will continue to be, borrowing from Cuban (2001), an ‘oversold and underused’ piece of expensive equipment.

## 11.4 Picking Up the Loose Threads

The cinematic bricolage that is proposed for the production of knowledge in this study is explored as a trial methodology. It has demonstrated its rich representational ↔ meaning-making capacity and self-realising ↔ society-integrative potential. Through my own self-reflective cinematic bricolaging, I suggest that such a methodology can become a rigorous research practice for provoking ‘epistemological curiosity’, constructing alternative ways of



investigation and looking at the issues under question from a unique perspective. Cinematic bricolage can be an avant-garde approach for enhancing self-awareness and achieving self-realisation. All these accomplishments are facilitated by the human ↔ computer logic enmesh.

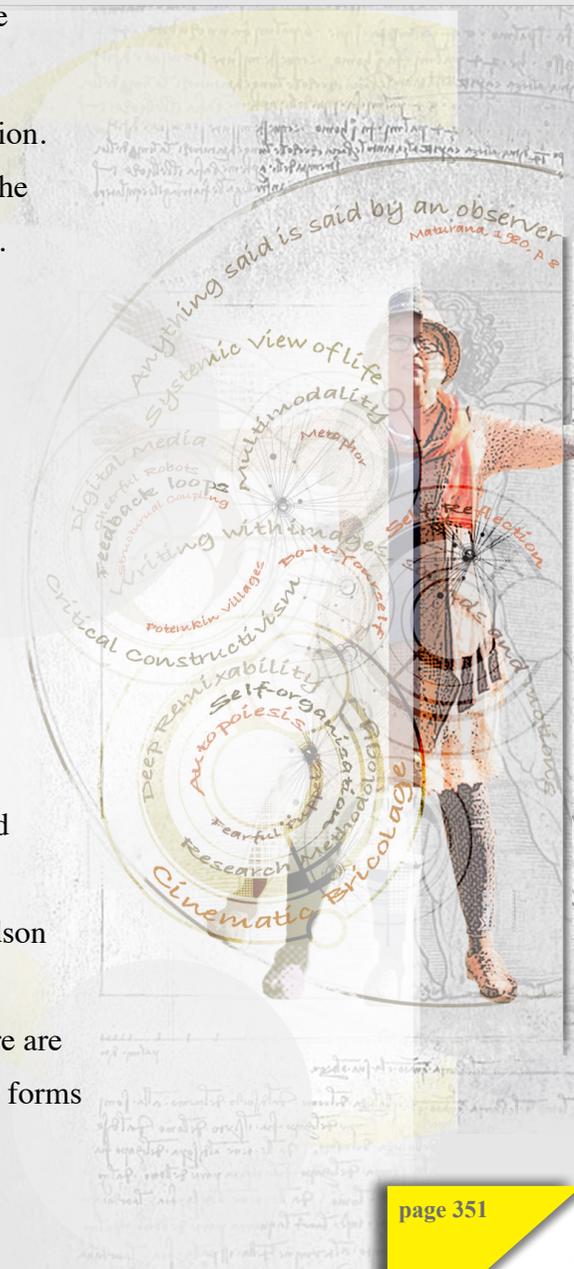
However, this particular aspect of mind ↔ digital media collaboration requires critical consideration. From a technological point of view, the approach I have used in this study, namely the utilisation of the *Adobe Creative Cloud* platform, is not a ready-for-use widespread method for knowledge production. Those who may want to implement this methodology in their own study have also to be prepared for numerous technological setbacks and routine struggles.

Three main concerns that I have identified working with cinematic bricolage in this study are:

- a) the absence of software designed specifically for knowledge-generation tasks;
- b) the lack of technical support;
- c) the challenge of attaining multimodal literacy independently.

## 11.5 Multimodal Literacy with Cinematic Bricolage

Multimodal or media literacy is one of the biggest concerns raised by contemporary scholars engaged with multimodality. Among them are, Kress (2003, 2010), Wysocki, Johnson-Eilola, Selfe and Sirc (2004), Buckingham (2007), Shipka (2011), Potter (2012), Gibbons (2012), Hjorth, Burgess, Richardson (2012), Bowen and Whithaus (2013), Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran, K. (2016) and many others. There are questions asked of what it means to be a literate individual in the twenty-first century. There are answers formulated that argue that the whole concept of literacy 'is changing and that the shapes and forms of academic knowledge [...] are undergoing transformations' [Bowen & Whithaus. 2013, p. 4].



Buckingham (2007) explains multimodal literacy as skills and competence gained through media education.

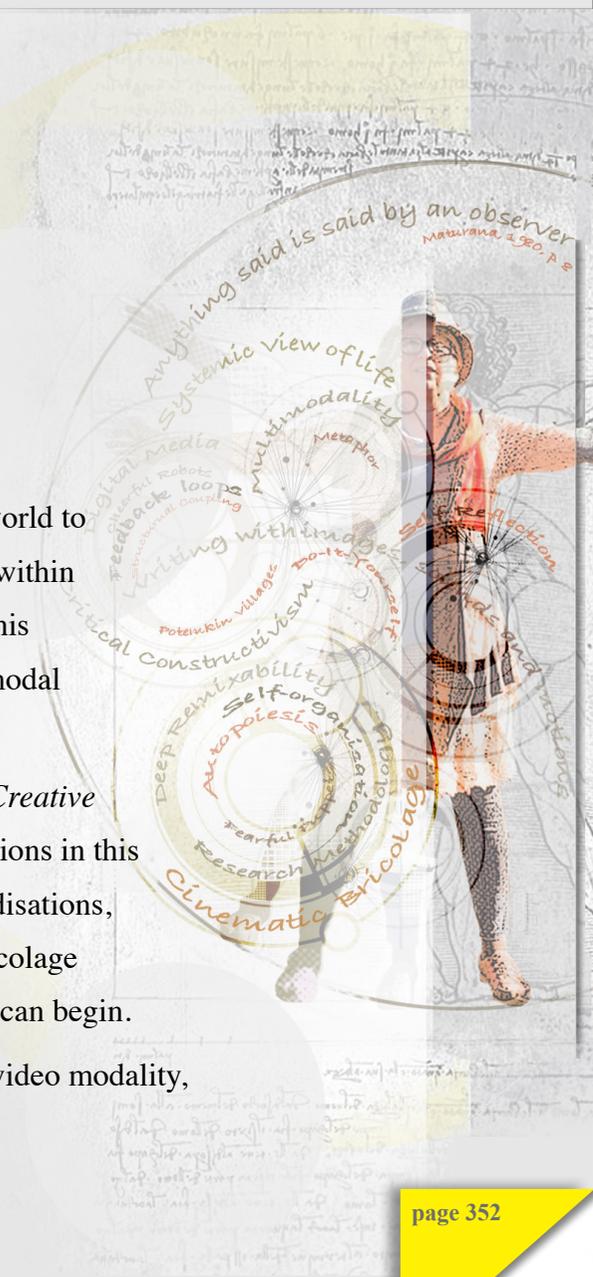
He writes:

Media texts often combine several 'languages' or forms of communication – visual images (still or moving), audio (sound, music or speech) and written language. Media education therefore aims to develop a broad-based competence, not just in relation to print, but also in these other symbolic systems of images and sounds. This competence is frequently described as a form of literacy; and it is argued that, in the modern world, 'media literacy' is just as important for young people as the more traditional literacy of print. [p. 4]

What Buckingham articulates here as multimodal literacy is the ability for people in the modern world to communicate employing both systems – traditional print as well as digital multimodality operating within the network of visual images, audio and written language. Cinematic writing as it is established in this study is writing with images, sound and motion. In other words, it is a system into which the multimodal communication described by Buckingham can be framed.

My proposition to consider cinematic bricolage as an application for multimodal texts within the *Creative Cloud* platform may appear rather too ambitious. At the same time, through the multimodal applications in this study I argue that such an application forms an efficient foundation for numerous multimodal hybridisations, while it also provides a unified field for multimodal communication training. Namely, cinematic bricolage application can be seen as a digital space from which the looping through the media education field can begin.

For example, if the learner chooses to cultivate her knowledge-production task with emphasis on video modality,





↻ meaning-making, testing it in a wider scope of implementation as well as in the ways of gaining media literacy through the application of cinematic bricolage.

I conclude by stating that this study has demonstrated the possibilities for cinematic bricolage to become a rigorous knowledge-production methodology with the accent placed on the knower's enhanced ability to integrate herself into a larger social context through improved self-awareness and realisation of her individual tendencies and skills. This has affirmed the act of autopoiesis – the continuous congruous transformation of the self and the larger medium of existence.

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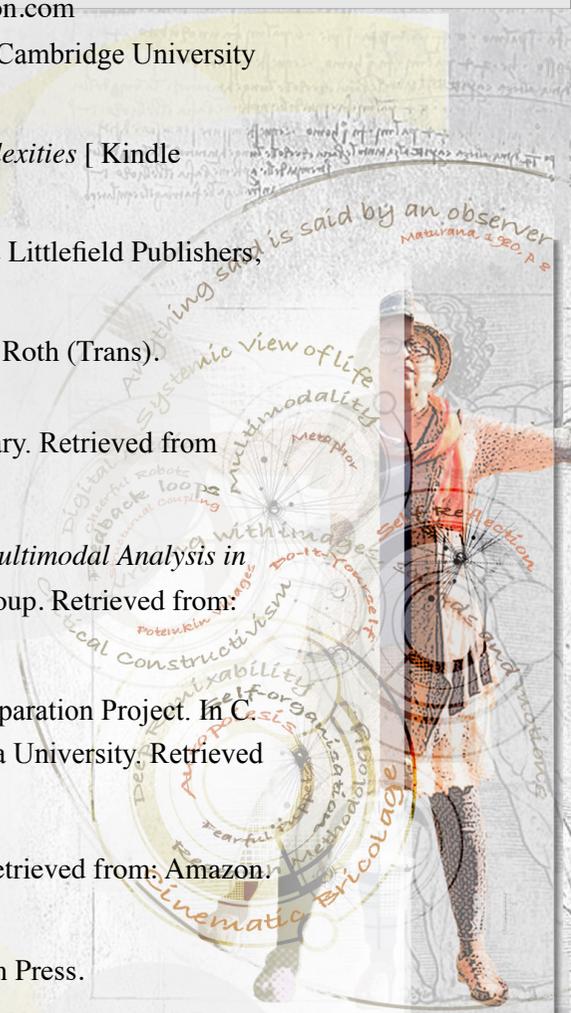
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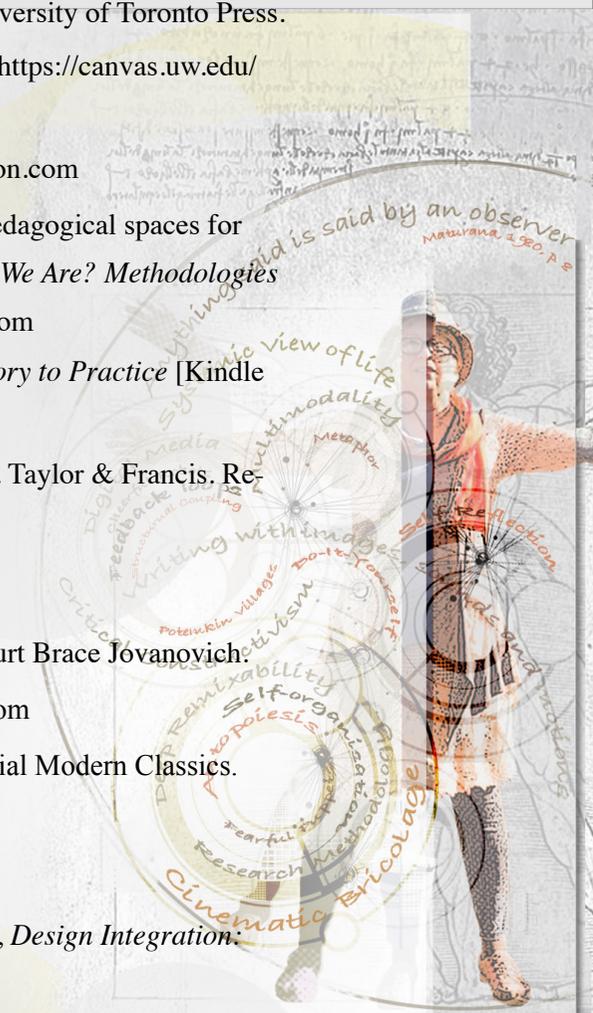
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