UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH THE DYNAMICS

IN CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Harrie and Mien, whose unconditional love, support, open-heartedness, humility, grounded yet artistic and holistic approach, smart thinking and accent on looking after the community and the environment gave me not only the opportunity to lead a remarkable life but also extend their capacities and include those in this dissertation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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my dear friends Anja, Robyn, John and Marian who were always there for me with love and patience, and also to Dave whose support as a personal kind of mentor was invaluable,

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Last but not least, I want to express my gratitude to the research-participants. They generously offered their time and space to help clarify a very delicate topic, and I sincerely hope I have been able to echo their deeply felt love for life generally and for people specifically.
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

I hereby certify that the work presented in this dissertation has not previously been submitted for any degree at UWS or any other institution.

I also certify that both the written and audio-visual parts of this dissertation have been created by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the dissertation has been acknowledged. Information sources and literature used are indicated in the dissertation.

Signature of candidate,

Date,

13 January 2009.
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CITATION STYLE

This dissertation has been styled following the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th edition.
# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<td>AVEK</td>
<td>Akademie Voor Expressie En Kommunikatie [Academy for Expression And Communication]</td>
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<td>E&amp;C</td>
<td>Expression &amp; Communication</td>
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<td>PSS</td>
<td>Performative Social Sciences</td>
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GLOSSARY

Academy for Expression & Communication:

Translated into Dutch: Akademie Voor Expressie en Kommunikatie. Abbreviation: AVEK.

A ‘first-grade’ teacher-training organization, located in The Netherlands (Leeuwarden). Set up by six drama-teachers who acknowledged the potential of expression & communication media, and wanted to develop that potential in and as an educational institution.


Emphasised experiential learning. Acknowledged, understood and worked with the tension between three roles: ‘I’ as an individual, ‘I’ as a member of a learning collective, and ‘I’ as a member of society. Applied the following criteria: coming from life-experience and -knowledge, cooperation, self-awareness, development of self and environment, equal validation of all existing phenomena, and using all situations/subjects/objects as Expression & Communication ‘tools’ or opportunities to strengthen personal and organisational fitness.

A few important concepts of the AVEK that are used in this thesis are het veld [the field], de kern [the core] and de schil [the skin].

Sheldrake’s notion of ‘morphic fields’ (see ‘morphic fields’) resembles the notion of het veld [the field] as conceptualised in the Learning Plan of the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK) (1972):

1/ the field exists everywhere and always,
2/ the field is the carrier of the total of the appearances,
3/ none of these appearances have a set place or shape (they are not things) and they do not exist apart from one another; there are reference-points and movements within the field,
4/ The field consists of the four elements time-space-energy-substance and the processes in between these.

De kern [the core] was defined in that Learning Plan as ‘the point in the field where movement begins and through which the other is attracted.’

De schil [the skin] referred to the contact-boundary (see ‘contact-boundary) or the space in-between self/other and the dynamics thereof. This concept I have expanded on in detail in the thesis.

(see ‘schil’)
Attention:
Ormsby-Green (2006): ‘concentrating perception on a given target’ (p. 249). Van Hoorn (2007a, p. 154): ‘Attention does not imply a focus on outcomes, but a being active in the moment; being response-able and leaving open a space for inspiration to enter’. In terms of this thesis: Attention is an activity of concentrated application that in cross-cultural exchanges produces dialogue.

Attentive engagement:
Implies mindfulness: taking note not only of the mind’s fullness, but also it’s tendency to run away with itself in the pursuit of sensation including aesthetic sensations, which is ‘one of the major activities of the mind’ (Krishnamurti, 1978, p. 120).

Attractor:
A concept associated with complexity theory. Dimitrov (1997): ‘A preferred position for the entity, such that if the entity is started from another state it will evolve until it arrives at the attractor, and will then stay there in the absence of other factors. An attractor can be a point (e.g. the centre of a bowl containing a ball), a regular path (e.g. a planetary orbit), a complex series of states (e.g. the metabolism of a cell) or an infinite sequence (called a strange attractor).’ Unconscious beliefs, considerations, intentions, decisions and foci of attention can be seen as infinite sequences (attractors) that produce desirable or undesirable consequences.

Autoethnography:
A personal account of cultural phenomena. "Research, writing, story and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political" (Ellis, 2004).

Beeldspraak:
Dutch. In German: Bilsprache. Can be translated as ‘image language’. Refers to a type of speech in which images are used to convey a message. Looking for the person behind the screen
(see 'oerbeeld')

‘Blind spots’:
In this thesis, refers to dead patterns in human exchanges as a result of unseen or unrecognised (not yet aware) dynamics. Aspect to ignorance.
(see ‘ignorance’)
Blunt-rocking:
A concept introduced by Ormsby-Green (2006, pp. 254-255): ‘Making do the best one can: being pro-active even if the short terms result are less than good: it least a progression has begun.’

Bricolage:
A term introduced by Levi-Strauss. Refers to the capacity to use the means at hand. A ‘poetry’ of fragmentation, contradiction, unanswered questions, specificity, fluidity and change (Benterrak et al, 1984). A narrative structure and rhetorical device as resource for constructing the text (Richardson, 1995, p. 199). In terms of the thesis, bricolage is also a kind of pastiche, a blend or mixture of physical/mental/emotional fragments which cross-over and cross-fertilise. These fragments are appropriated according to one’s intention, willingness and decision.

Bricolet:
Kincheloe & Berry (2004) talk about the struggle of the person who applies bricolage –the bricolet- who, because s/he sees how all the points that interconnect, immediately feels his/ her limitation since s/he knows it takes a lifetime or more for the work to finish (p. 4). S/he questions the purpose of research and demands insight into the human condition (ibid, pp. 5-10).

Boxed realities:
Thinking within the square; fixed viewpoints or ways of perceiving the world in which objects and subjects are seen as if disconnected from their environment. Relates to narrow-mindedness.

Camouflage, seeing as a:
‘Slipping communication’ appears to be formed by fixed viewpoints (see ‘boxed realities’). One research participant described ‘seeing as camouflage’ as follows: ‘You know, everyone has different views. That tells me for example, I see as a camouflage, because it covers what you really are like. The camouflage, because you don’t see the other side of the person…’
(see ‘slipping communication’)

Chiasmus:
A concept described by West-Pavlov (2005a) as ‘a figure of crossing’. A symbol etymologically derived from the Greek letter ‘chi’ or X. This figure, West-Pavlov suggests, indicates finality only if the activity of the ‘reader’ across the text-reader boundary is ignored: That is, if the text is reified as a frozen artefact’ (p. 162). In this thesis, chiasmus has a similar meaning to the ‘X-factor’.
(see ‘X-factor’)

x
**Complexity:**
Dimitrov (1997): ‘The interaction of many agents, giving rise to holistic properties which are not found in any of the individual agents. The origin of the word complexity comes from the Latin word "complexus" which means totality. The paradigm of complexity tries to grasp totality of the existential dynamics.’

**Conceived values**
A term referred to by Carl Rogers as other to organismic (or operative) values. Rogers et al (1989): Conceived values are ‘the preference of the individual for a symbolized object. Usually in such a preference there is anticipation or foresight of the outcome of behavior directed towards such a symbolized object. [Examples:] ‘Honesty is the best policy’ (p. 170). ‘Coca-Cola, chewing gum, electric refrigerators and automobiles are all utterly desirable’ (p. 175).
(see ‘organismic (operative) values’)

**Conceptual metaphors:**
Mental pictures that blueprint and shape imagination. Human beings adopt and use conceptual metaphors to make visible the intangible. This thesis talks about the ‘cross’ as something which can be considered a conceptual metaphor. Aspect to what Turner (1974) calls creative imagination which is ‘far richer than imagery [and] “creative”, because it is the ability to create concepts and conceptual systems that may correspond to nothing in the senses’ (p. 51).

**Contact-boundary:**
A concept commonly used in Gestalt theory in which attention is paid to the space-in-between people and the dynamics in that space. Refers to the transition between, for example, inside and outside, I and the Other, below and above. The boundary constantly changes as the marker points move.
(see ‘Schil’)

**Creating Mind (the):**
Other to logic which is a product of the ‘creating mind’, the Creating Mind is ‘behind’ the brain (Goenka, in Hart, 1987, pp. 26-27) and manifests the four processes: consciousness, perception, sensation and reaction. The second process (perception) is the act of recognition and distinguishes, labels, and categorizes the incoming raw data and makes evaluations, positive or negative.
Culture:
In this thesis, culture is seen as a subject/object that can be described, but also as a journey or a process. Comparable to the substance in a petri dish: something bounded but also emergent, a progressive and rising, flowing form of life that also passes (is transitory). A culture is auto-poetic (self-organising) and fractal (self-similar) to existential dynamics (see 'existential dynamics')

Currere:
The course to be run in which the educator is also the designer, not in a pre-planned way but as Eisner (1979, p. 34) suggests, in what emerges and in what becomes evident only after it has been experienced.

Deep ecology:
A branch of ecological philosophy which considers itself more a ‘sphere’ than a branch of biological science. "Deep" because it persists in asking deeper questions concerning "why" and "how" and associated fundamental philosophical questions about the impact of human life as an integral part of its environment. The idea is that one can never grasp the nature of a complex dynamic entity when studying it in isolation from the entities which it relates to - depends on, exercises influence to, and co-evolves with (Dimitrov & Eriksen, 2006).

Deep listening:
Is aspect to maieutic inquiry. Deep listening implies connecting the ears to the mouth and to feeling. Without deep listening a double discourse (see ‘double discourse’) and the mechanism of an unspeakable dilemma is reproduced: ‘distress produced by family, religious or political circumstances that have imposed forced choices in people’s lives and must remain hidden from important persons involved in the situation’ (Griffith, Polles & Griffith, 1998, p. 144). Deep listening awakens the inner being and replaces the ‘silent’ silence that Western thought produces, this ‘inner awakening creates a distance that helps break bewitchment of the authoritative voice’ (Fiumara, 1990, p. 58), as a result of which the continually repeating cycles of negative behaviours (subjective and dualistic reality) can be broken. (see ‘maieutic inquiry’)

Dialogue:
In this thesis, refers to a type of conversation, discourse or exchange of ideas that -though seemingly aimless- is directed by intent so as to find purpose and insight, individually and/or collectively.

**Diaspora:**
Dispersion of people. In this thesis, refers to dispersion of people in all three dimensions of body, mind and spirit. From [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/diaspora](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/diaspora): ‘1/ the scattering of the Jews to countries outside of Palestine after the Babylonian captivity, 2/ any group that has been dispersed outside its traditional homeland, 3/ any group migration or flight from a country or region; dispersion, 4/ any religious group living as a minority among people of the prevailing religion.’

**Double Discourse:**
Concept introduced by N. Harrison (2007). A way of talking that is largely unconscious and reproduced through what is taught and considered as knowledge. A metadiscourse that is always at work in-between the student and teacher (ibid, p. 42). In this thesis, ‘double discourse’ is seen as a consequence of power relations that result from control mechanisms that have been internalised. People become agents of those mechanisms. A result is for example ‘slipping communication.’
(see ‘slipping communication’)

**Double surrender strategy:**
Concept introduced by Russell, Dimitrov and Fell (1993). Refers to situations in which both parties employ and apply willingness as a strategy towards a resolve. ‘Double surrender’ strategy is a place of lacking ownership over any preconceived or subtly imposed negotiation outcome: ‘No one side participating in the process has any monopoly on a specific way of solving the critical issue. There can be no valid negotiation if any side has a fixed and predetermined outcome. We respect and accept the opinions of every side and by a profound understanding of these opinions, we "drift" together to what unites us and makes us happy’ (ibid).

**Dynamics:**
Dimitrov (1997): ‘Forces and energies, which constantly stretch or fold, evolve or involve, self-organize into dynamic structures or dissolve into chaos impregnated with creativity. The behaviour of an entity in time defines its dynamics. Changes with time are at the essence of complexity studies; a static entity is merely a snapshot within an evolutionary continuum, however interesting it may be in its own right… The dynamics of entities are independent of the physical manifestation of their agents and depend only on the nature of agents’ interactions. In this way
the findings of complexity studies can be shown to be equally applicable to all forms of entity -
inorganic, organic, biological, social, psychological. In each case the emergent features will show
equivalent properties relevant to that level of description.’

E&C:  
Abbreviation for Expression & Communication. Applicable to the study of Expression &
Communication at the  Academy for Expression and Communication (1972-1987).
(see ‘Academy for Expression & Communication’)

Educare:  
A form of education that emphasises ‘jamming in’ (information). Part and parcel of ‘fixed
landscapes.’ Reinforces static hierarchies.
(see ‘fixed landscapes’)

Educere:  
A form of education which emphasises ‘leading out’ (information), e.g. from students, colleagues,
the community. Condition to open-mindedness, flexibility, attention to human dynamics. Part and
parcel of ‘moving’ landscapes (see ‘moving’ landscapes).

Embodiment:  
A term used by for example Merleau-Ponty when he referred to the embodied
interconnectedness of human beings with their environment. When reference is made to
‘embodiment’, the surrounding landscape is seen to enhance evolution. The process is not aimed
to ‘fix’ an issue or stabilize it, but to enter into a life-generating relationship with other modes of
being (Kincheloe, forthcoming). Relates to the notion of ‘swarm-dynamics’. See ‘tacit knowledge’.

Emergence:  
Dimitrov (1997): ‘Appearance of a property or feature not previously observed as a functional
characteristic of the entity. Generally, higher-level properties are regarded as emergent. Teams
and communities are emergent properties of individuals, cultures - emergent properties of
individual values (beliefs, dispositions, customs, traditions) and behaviours, mind - an emergent
property of brain cells, economy - an emergent property of individuals and corporations, ecology -
an emergent property of species and environment.’

Emotions:
E-motions or ethereal motions. Ormsby-Green (2004) considers emotions as mental phenomena, and he alerts us to clearly distinguish emotions from sensings: both are ‘feelings’, but emotions are mentally produced energy phenomena that we experience as a consequence of various stimuli, whilst sensings exist outside emotion.

**Entropic:**
‘A doctrine of inevitable social decline and degeneration.
* In * Thermodynamics: 1/ on a macroscopic scale) a function of thermodynamic variables, as temperature, pressure, or composition, that is a measure of the energy that is not available for work during a thermodynamic process. A closed system evolves toward a state of maximum entropy, 2/ (in statistical mechanics) a measure of the randomness of the microscopic constituents of a thermodynamic system. Symbol: S.
* In * data transmission and information theory: a measure of the loss of information in a transmitted signal or message.
* In * cosmology: a hypothetical tendency for the universe to attain a state of maximum homogeneity in which all matter is at a uniform temperature (heat death).’

**Extended mind:**
Concept introduced by the biologist R. Sheldrake (2004), who suggests that people do not merely passively receive information. ‘The mind goes out through the eyes’ (p. 166).
(see ‘morphic fields’)

**Faultlines:**
Lau & Murningham suggest faultlines are ‘hypothetical dividing lines that may split a group into subgroups based on one or more attributes’ (as cited in Oetzel, Dhar & Kirschbaum, 2007, p. 188). Faultlines are mentally constructed rifts and part of a group mind that is self-similar on different levels. Aspect to faultlines is the idea of separate units of time and space and as such a splitting mechanism that affects the annihilation of one body upon its approach to another. Faultlines exist and have meaning in the realm Black (1968) refers to as ‘something mental … something occurring in the mind’ (p. 211) that ‘drives’ people to split themselves off from the whole both in a vertical and a horizontal direction.

**Fixed landscapes:**
In this thesis, refers to geo-social spaces with entrenched attitudes and approaches that are heavily defended/ protected and not (yet) open to change. Unlike ‘moving’ landscapes with its holistic approaches including complexity thinking, ‘fixed’ landscapes are approaches which are
goal-oriented with criteria and guidelines and always focused on some pre-selected part. There is always a boundary that makes the examined area distinguishable from the rest of the world and as if functioning according to a specific partial truth.
(see 'moving landscapes')

Fractal:
A word derived from complexity theory. Can be translated as self-similar structures. Dimitrov (1997): ‘Fractals are similar structures which repeat at different levels of organization of a complex dynamic entity. Mandelbrot is the "father" of fractals.’

Fragmented mind:
The mind and its processes of fragmentation which Bohm & Edwards (1991) suggest are a kind of thought ‘more or less a representation of what is there, like a map [that] has a creative function as well, to create what is there… It is a very powerful instrument, but if we don’t notice how it works, it can also do great harm’ (p. i). In this thesis, the fragmented mind is considered part of what Gebser (1956) calls the ‘mental consciousness structure’.

Fuzziness:
Dimitrov (2005): ‘The opposite of precision. Everything that cannot be defined precisely (that is, according to some broadly accepted criteria or norms of precision) and everything that has no clearly described boundaries in space or time is considered a bearer of fuzziness. In a narrow sense, fuzziness relates to the definition of fuzzy sets as proposed by Zadeh in 1965: sets, the belongingness to which is measured by a membership function whose values are between 1 (full belongingness) and 0 (non-belongingness). Fuzziness is an essential characteristic of the images that raise and dissolve in our thoughts - in our memories and reflections about the past and in our plans and dreams about the future. They have blurred boundaries and consist of fuzzy immaterial 'substance'. Having in mind how important is to think in images for the development of our intelligence and capacity to learn and know, to act and create, to evolve and transform, one should not underestimate the role of fuzziness in human evolution. Fuzziness has a substantial presence in our knowledge about the society and ourselves. The constant interplay of human dynamics at three major scales of their manifestations - individual (intrapersonal dynamics), social (interpersonal dynamics) and existential (universal dynamics) - results in the emergence of spinning webs and ‘whirlpools' of social interactions, which constantly reproduce forces and energies to strengthen or weaken the self-propelling capacity of these dynamics. There are so many intricately interwoven factors and conditions engaged in the realization of this capacity that it is nonsensical to look for or to apply precise descriptions and definitions when explaining or dealing with their infinite (in number and diversity) embodiments.’
**Fuzziology:**
A methodology developed by Dr. Vladimir Dimitrov, which applies complexity-theory phenomena to be able to understand and work with human dynamics from a holistic and ecological perspective. Dimitrov: ‘Fuzziology study fuzziness of human knowing - its sources, nature and dynamics - not in an endeavour to reduce or eliminate it but to understand and transcend its limitations so that, instead of an impediment, it serves as a mighty stimulus for realization of human creativity’ (Source: [http://www.zulenet.com/see/fuzzycomplex.html](http://www.zulenet.com/see/fuzzycomplex.html)).

**Gestalt-theory:**
Refers to a specific form of psycho-therapy. As in psycho-synthesis, the subject or object is not seen as separate from, but as interconnected with the environment (see psycho-synthesis). The Society for Gestalt Theory suggests: ‘Gestalt theory is a broadly interdisciplinary general theory which provides a framework for a wide variety of psychological phenomena, processes, and applications. Human beings are viewed as open systems in active interaction with their environment. It is especially suited for the understanding of order and structure in psychological events, and has its origins in some orientations of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Ernst Mach, and particularly of Christian von Ehrenfels and the research work of Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, Kurt Koffka, and Kurt Lewin, who opposed the elementistic approach to psychological events, associationism, behaviorism, and to psychoanalysis… The primacy of the phenomenal: Recognizing and taking seriously the human world of experience as the only immediately given reality, and not simply discussing it away, is a fundamental assertion of Gestalt theory, the fruitfulness of which for psychology and psychotherapy has by no means been exhausted. - It is the interaction of the individual and the situation in the sense of a dynamic field which determines experience and behavior, and not only drives (psychoanalysis, ethology) or external stimuli (behaviorism, Skinner) or static personality traits (classical personality theory).’ (Source: [http://www.gestalttheory.net/?new_sess=1](http://www.gestalttheory.net/?new_sess=1)).

**Grey area:**
[http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/grey%20area](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/grey%20area): ‘An intermediate area; a topic that is not clearly one thing or the other.’ A concept often used in the field of social ecology. Refers to the space in-between black and white: a space with many different shades and tones.

**Group mind:**
In this thesis, refers to a concept described by Ormsby-Green (2006, pp. 292-293) as: ‘an aggregation of combined caseloads of a number of people which sets up an ‘entity’ which seems to have a sentience and a will of its own. Entirely reactive, combining people under commonly
connected caseload. Apparent in instances of mob rule, religious euphoria, societal judgmentalism, group fanaticism, and ideological fervour as typically seen in various religions, cults, belief systems and politics.’

Heart of the cross:
In this thesis, refers to A ‘vortex of communication’ (Dimitrov, 2000) or an I-Thou dialogic encounter which can emerge from binaries or polarities from all kinds (Gangadean, 2004). This space emphasises both the unique inseparability and the emergence of new meaning expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways and is filled with living meanings (Dimitrov, 2000). (see ‘living meanings’)

Human Condition:
In this thesis, refers to the way in which the human species is disciplined into various levels of unconscious. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/human%20condition: ‘The positive and negative aspects of existence as a human being, esp. the inevitable events such as birth, childhood, adolescence, love, sex, reproduction, aging, and death.’

Human Dynamics:
Refers to the energy that is exchanged between people, usually unconsciously. In the area of social ecology, human dynamics are seen as self-similar (fractal) to existential dynamics. Ormsby-Green (2006) suggests that these dynamics occur at the top in a similar way to those at the bottom, and that those which apply to the presumed past or future also apply to the present.

Identity-politics:
Refers to the way in which tribal groups seek political justice by for example claiming land or other physical resources. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/identity%20politics: ‘Political activity or movements based on or catering to the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, religious, or social interests that characterize a group identity. Political attitudes or positions that focus on the concerns of social groups identified mainly on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.’
In this thesis, identity-politics refers to a ‘shared materiality’ (Merleau-Ponty) in which the Other and I embody a collective that is limited to its own devices. As such is acknowledged that this limitation may transform the human race and liberate it from its chains. Merleau-Ponty claims in The Structure of Behavior (pp. 98-99, as cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy): "It is not the violent reaction which follows a painful experience that is established in a child’s behavior, but rather the reaction of protecting himself." With that he points to the importance of recognizing one’s automatic self-protective defenses.’
Ideology:
http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ideology: ‘1/ The body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group, 2/ such a body of doctrine, myth, etc., with reference to some political and social plan, as that of fascism, along with the devices for putting it into operation, 3/ Philosophy: a/ the study of the nature and origin of ideas, b/ A system that derives ideas exclusively from sensation, 4/ theorizing of a visionary or impractical nature.’
In this thesis: Seen as aspect to group mind. Also aspect to a set of beliefs, or a belief-system which we can consider a ‘package of self-reinforcing considerations. A belief can gather a pile of additive beliefs whose job it is to reinforce the original one, thus forming a Belief System. Usually heavily protected and defended; the result of uninspected buy-ins of which the person is unaware, (is) therefore not capable of inspecting or modifying’ (Ormsby-Green, 2006).

Ignorance:
Unawareness, lacking knowledge of. In this thesis, seen as aspect to divisive, fragmented thinking (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985, pp. 260-261). In the words of Tandon (1995/2005, p. 4): ignorance means ‘the [wrong] cognition of the eternal, the pure, the pleasant and the self in the non-eternal, the impure, the painful and the not-self’.

Imbrication of place:
A concept introduced by Baden Offord (2002). Refers to the space in which people congregate and create a sense of place: a space that subsequently gets a certain atmosphere that can be sensed by newcomers to a place. Offord (ibid): ‘Imbrication of place is contingent on the social, natural and cultural relations that are not only observed but also participated with; the quality of intersecting, interlocking, layering, touching, holding together by the accrual of spatial and temporal experiences underscored by one’s identity’ (p. 14).

Implicate order:
A concept introduced by the scientist David Bohm (1998). Refers to the idea that ‘each part of space contains waves from everything, which enfold the whole room, the whole universe, the whole of everything. In the implicate order everything is thus internally related to everything, everything contains everything, and only in the implicate order are things separate and relatively independent’ (p. 105). But nobody really understands yet at an ontological level what the implicate order means, because we ‘ordinarily we aim for a literal picture of the world, but in fact we create a world according to our mode of participation, and we create ourselves accordingly. If
we think in our present way, we will create the kind of world that we have created. If we think in another way, we might create a different world, and different people as well. Only the two together can change’ (p. 106).

**Integral:**
Refers to a holistic perspective and approach in which time and space are not seen in terms of units and conditional to human thinking, but as ever-present and evolving.

[http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/integral](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/integral): ‘1/ of, pertaining to, or belonging as a part of the whole; constituent or component: *integral parts*, 2/ necessary to the completeness of the whole: *This point is integral to his plan*, 3/ consisting or composed of parts that together constitute a whole, 4/ Entire; complete; whole: *the integral works of a writer*, 5/ *Arithmetic*. pertaining to or being an integer, not fractional, 6/ *Mathematics*. pertaining to or involving integrals, a ‘primitive’, 7/ an integral whole.’

**Intention:**
The creative drive associated with an idea, thought or inclination (a dis/like). Creates psychic phenomena which can be sensed as non-local effects.

**Intertextuality:**
In this thesis: An invisible text that lies behind and is interwoven into the visible text: the space in-between the verbalised text which makes the whole coherent and interconnected.

[http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intertextuality](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intertextuality): ‘1/ Relating to or deriving meaning from the interdependent ways in which texts stand in relation to each other. 2/ the whole network of relations, conventions, and expectations by which the text is defined; the relationship between texts.’

**Languaging:**
In this thesis, refers to a way of talking, using words, sentences and silences by which the person is conscious (aware) of the voice (the spirit) of the utterings. Implies awareness of the causal connection with dynamics that are represented in the spoken or written word.

**Life sense:**
A concept introduced by Rudolf Steiner. ‘A sense that gives human beings inner warnings of what is health-giving and what ill-making’ (Soesman, 1990, p. 24). Life-sense also makes us for example cry and experience pain to be able to be able to fully incarnate into our body/mind and eventually again transcend from it. It drives people to understand and work with others in order to progress, but in what my feel as an ‘uncertain’ direction though of itself the drive feels certain. It is

**Living Meanings:**
A concept introduced by Dimitrov (2000). Refers to the quality of a communication which is ‘living’ when it triggers in the receiver a sense of vigour.

**Maieutic Inquiry:**
A method of inquiry that is consistent with ‘educere’ (see ‘educere’) and is also in harmony with complexity thinking which asks questions so as to ‘midwife’ knowledge that people already have. In Maieutic Inquiry it is impossible to separate out the personal from the social, the ‘subjective’ from the ‘objective’, the ‘internal’ from the ‘external’, etc. It is understood that three ‘wholes’ simultaneously participate: The ‘whole’ of the Inquirer, the ‘whole’ of the object of inquiry and the ‘whole’ of the process of inquiry (Dimitrov, n.d.). In other words, Maieutic Inquiry is an invitation to look within and ‘know thyself’: a condition to giving birth to new insights and forms of relationship with others. It implies trust in the process. Maieutic inquiry is based on the famous Socratic axiom that the unexamined life is not worth living, the meaning of which is straightforward: the knowing has a personal and a social dimension.

**Maieutic Silence:**
A word first heard of when conversing with Dr. Vladimir Dimitrov. Upon deeper self-examination: Maieutic pertains to the Greek word *maieutikos* which implies *midwifery*, and Silence is that which Rabbin (2006) defined as ‘what is before words, before thought, before self, before everything; the unmanifest, formless, wordless. That where Reality slowly manifests within you, comes into form, into words, hovering between and surrounding these two seeming separate worlds: unmanifest and manifest, formless and form, wordless and form.’ A larger space which permits us to transform a play-ground of victimhood and steer away from the comfort of unexamined warm and connected mystical interconnected feelings about oneness with the world, including fear-induced patterns. By recognising the associated dynamics including ‘clinging’ tendencies, we are able to ‘build’ relationships in a space where communication is not about being right, but about a flow of energy between people that results in confronting and then ‘understanding and transcending limitations which instead of being considered as an obstacle, now serve as a stimulus for realization of human creativity’ (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 2002). The situation and the concern now are seen as relationally-responsive (Shotter, 2001): we learn at a deep level that the world we judge as something ‘out there’ is created by the onlooker, and that what we express and communicate has no meaning other than the consolidation of a previously adopted and unresolved viewpoint.
Mental Consciousness:
In this thesis refers specifically to the theories of Jean Gebser (1956) who distinguishes five (5) consciousness structures: Respectively the archaic, the magic (mystic), the mythic, the mental and the integral consciousness structures. Historically their development has been progressive and in reaction to the earlier structure. From a linear viewpoint, mental consciousness arose in reaction to mythic consciousness. Implies a focus on rationality, cognition, logic. Its weakness is presumed to be its resistance to irrational ways of knowing which previous consciousness structures were able to access. Integral consciousness structures acknowledge and take into account all forms of consciousness.

Morphic fields
Concept developed by the biologist Rupert Sheldrake. Sheldrake (2005): ‘Since the 1920s many developmental biologists have proposed that biological organization depends on fields, variously called biological fields, or developmental fields, or positional fields, or morphogenetic fields… Morphogenetic fields work by imposing patterns on otherwise random or indeterminate patterns of activity [and] are not fixed forever, but evolve… Social groups are likewise organized by fields, as in schools of fish and flocks of birds. Human societies have memories that are transmitted through the culture of the group, and are most explicitly communicated through the ritual re-enactment of a founding story or myth, as in the Jewish Passover celebration, the Christian Holy Communion and the American thanksgiving dinner, through which the past become present through a kind of resonance with those who have performed the same rituals before… Morphic fields underlie our mental activity and our perceptions, and lead to a new theory of vision, as discussed in The Sense of Being Stared At (2004). The existence of these fields is experimentally testable through the sense of being stared at itself… The morphic fields of social groups connect together members of the group even when they are many miles apart, and provide channels of communication through which organisms can stay in touch at a distance. They help provide an explanation for telepathy… The morphic fields of mental activity are not confined to the insides of our heads. They extend far beyond our brain though intention and attention. We are already familiar with the idea of fields extending beyond the material objects in which they are rooted: for example magnetic fields extend beyond the surfaces of magnets; the earth’s gravitational field extends far beyond the surface of the earth, keeping the moon in its orbit; and the fields of a cell phone stretch out far beyond the phone itself. Likewise the fields of our minds extend far beyond our brains.’

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‘Moving’ landscapes:
In this thesis, I talk about ‘moving’ landscapes as opposite to ‘fixed’ landscapes. An approach that discerns geo-social awareness. Is holistically and process-oriented rather than goal-oriented. One’s attention is focused in the present and there is little to no concern with intervention or ‘improvement’ of situations and/or people other than seeding and nourishing ‘new attractors’ that are life-oriented, the removal of obstacles and reliance on the power of self-organisation.

Murky communication:
In this thesis, refers to ‘fixed landscapes’ and/or ‘slipping communication’ that needs to be compensated for. Creating space in a round-about way to get one’s message through: moving around rather than going against or adhering to other people’s paradigms.

Oerbeeld:
(Dutch). In German: Urbilt. Refers to ancient imagery that continues to underpin contemporary belief-systems.

Open-snapping edges:
Concept introduced by Henk Burggraaff (2007) who refers to concepts with ‘openklappende randen’ [open-snapping edges]. Their use is encouraged to enhance dialogue, thus understanding (p. 53). Such concepts have unlimited meanings, examples of which are ‘soul’, ‘person’, ‘self’, ‘God’. Other examples I believe have that quality are ‘timing’, ‘spacing’, ‘rite’, and ‘cross’.

Organismic (operative) values:
Carl Rogers distinguishes values that are either inherent to the organism or adopted from the environment. Those that are inherent to the organism are labeled organismic. Rogers et al (1989): ‘Need not involve any cognitive or conceptual thinking. It is simply a value choice which is indicated behaviorally when the organism selects one object, rejects another. [Example:] He likes food and dislikes the same food. He values security and rest, and rejects it for new experience… each element, each moment of what he is experiencing is somehow weighed, and selected or rejected, depending on whether, at this moment, it tends to actualize the organism or not’ (p. 171). Other to conceived values.
(see ‘conceived values’).

Paradigms:
Ormsby-Green (2006) describes paradigms as ‘patterns or models which we use to evaluate the world around us. They, in other words, are a way of viewing things, a viewpoint, a perspective.”
Paradoxic spaces:
Where there is no compulsion to make viewpoints right or wrong and opposing viewpoints can co-exist without a need no reconcile.

Participatory thought:
‘Free’ thinking: communication that is unlimited and immediate. It has no communication lags; no space and time is involved so there are no distinctions between giving and receiving. Bohm (1991, 1996, 1998) refers to participation in which boundaries are not really separations but there for descriptive purposes only (1996, pp. 98-99). Refers to insight and is associated with mind as something that is not in the head but in the whole body and past the ego (Goenka, in Hart, 1987, p. 29). Mind is not something related to the brain (ibid, p. 26) but to mental consciousness (see mental consciousness).

Planetisation:
Concept much used by Gidley (2007) as she refers to the contemporary world that is in a transition from industrial to planetary awareness. As different to the concept of ‘globalisation’, planetisation takes account of the earth’s ecology. In the thesis I argue that aesthetic and artistic media better express and communicate what is neither in the pluralism of perspectives nor in the unity of perspective where the answer lies (Gidley, in Molz & Gidley, 2008). Verbal expression of perspectives from a place of righteousness produces ‘jarring’ interspaces and produces a third dynamic: a ‘slipping communication’ (see ‘slipping communication’). As Griffith & Griffith (1994) suggest, one can speak with the ‘husks of words’ quickly (p. 82), but ‘everything that is not listened to ‘correctly’ is actually submitted to, accepted and absorbed’ (p. 83) yet not necessarily communicated.

Plek der moeite:
(Dutch). Can be translated as ‘area of difficulty’. The concept was introduced by Kooistra and by Wierdsma, two Dutch authors to whom Van Hoom (2007a, pp. 135-136) refers as a central notion to the idea of ‘attention’. She (ibid) describes the ‘plek der moeite; as the place where people invest more energy to work with differences in meaning-making and create new meanings. They for example leave space for intuition, experience, love and that which ‘escapes words’ for ‘light’ to emerge. Also a crucial concept to this thesis as it lies at the centre of cross-cultural exchanges in which communication is not straight-forward. At the centre of this ‘spot’ lies

1 Van Hoom (2007a, pp.135-136) expands on the idea ‘the spot of difficulty’ as presented by Kooistra (1988) and Wierdsma (1999), and refers to this ‘spot’ as that place where people invest more energy into differences in making meaning to create new meanings, by for example leaving space for intuition, experience, love and that which ‘escapes words’, and ‘light emerges’ (Van Hoom refers to Simone Weil in this respect). At the centre of this ‘spot’ lies the willingness to truly hear and understand the other without really knowing where the interaction ends, and also asks from the other to enter into this space and be prepared to feel insecure.
the willingness to truly hear and understand the other without really knowing where the interaction ends. Also asks from both parties to enter an insecure space.

**Projection/reflection principle:**
Ormsby-Green (2006, pp. 125-128): ‘that whatever we receive from the physical universe is a reflection of what we have within, and that which we put out reflects back for us to experience.’

**Psycho-synthesis:**
Theory developed in detail by Dr. Assagioli. This branch of psycho-therapy does not distinguish the subject or object from its environment, but seeks to theoretically reconcile components of the unconscious, including dreams, with the rest of the personality.

**Point Of Entry or P.O.E.T.:**
A term coined by Kincheloe & Peters, 2004) as a central notion, with the narrator’s focus on the entity between the researcher and the researched. Due to the P.O.E.T.’s dynamic character in this thesis, I sought to create a fluid, moving space that would allow, in Evans’s (1993) words, differing textual interpretations as something not only possible but desirable.

**Performative Social Science (PSS):**
A space in which imagination is communicated as knowledge of the world, and contextualised in the dialogic communication-act that is co-constructed at once between senders, receivers and the field (Crouch, 2007). This interactive space is non-personalised so as to evolve. It is a movement which potentially undoes fixed ways of ritualising the world and underscores the relevance of an evocative narrative that both moves towards and away from fixed foci on communication styles, stereotyping, diaspora, political injustice, identity politics and other concepts based on a world ‘out there’. The idea is to learn accept and apply paradoxic spaces in which dialogue emerges. A preferred outcome is the undoing of bipartisanship, and the emergence of a range of options.

**Schil:**
(Dutch). Literally translates as: bark, skin, peel, and upper layer. The ‘Schil’ is the space in-between self-other/Other, the grey area, the centre, the crossroads and the space of the traveller. At the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK), the Schil was described as: ‘the transition between i.e. inside and outside, I and the other, space and the other. The boundary constantly changes through the exchange between marker-points, which are those points where I notice the movement from my core to the outside and where the ‘skin’ lies. The physical skin is the tangible form of the ‘Schil’’. As a contact boundary, the ‘Schil’ is both ‘weerbarstig’ (Dutch for
stubborn) and in/formative: A ‘rite of passage’ or birth canal; a space of transformation and Self-realisation; a process that is long and expansive that involves various stages of development in which the ego needs to let the Higher Self do her work (Assagioli, 1988, p. 62).

Slipping communication:
As suggested in the Dutch focus group, communication does not always ‘grab into each other, but slips past each other.’ The self-invented term ‘slipping communication’, then, refers to human exchanges that are seen as communication but are actually something else. ‘Slipping communication’ is felt and recognized across cultures and across disciplines, but difficult to express and communicate in words. Often ‘murky’ communication is used as a bridge (see ‘murky communication’).

Social ecology:
1/ a concern with the ecology of human relationships seen as interconnected to their environment. 2/ a discipline that was developed and practiced at the University of Western Sydney. Prof. Stuart Hill²: ‘Social Ecology (SE) at UWS today is an emerging meta-discipline that provides a sophisticated and critical framework for the generation of holistic theory, deep understanding, and effective, responsible action. It derives its theory and direction from applied philosophy (critical reason, ethics, world-views, imagination), personal experience (postulation, action, reflection, contemplation) and diverse sources and systems of disciplinary, cultural and contextual knowledge (education, particularly ecological thinking, and spirituality). SE emphasizes actions and reflective practice that integrate personal, social, political and environmental concerns and possibilities. End goals include wellbeing and health, in the broadest sense, equity and social justice, and the fostering of mutualistic and caring relationships, personal meaning, organizational learning, co-evolutionary change and ecological sustainability.’

Sticking Sides:
A concept introduced by Dimitrov (2005) as part of ‘fuzziology’. Refers to the space and time when communication between parties does not flow freely but ‘sticks’. Dimitrov suggests either one or both parties are unable and/or unwilling to surrender their viewpoint. Refers to righteousness. An outside facilitator might be able to assist in problem-resolution provided s/he has no personal agenda.

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Tacit knowledge:
A concept Polanyi (1966) introduced to describe knowledge that cannot be talked about because implicit. For example, algebra and language. In fuzziology (see ‘fuzziology’), tacit knowledge in organizational contexts is considered to be in the heads of people as agents. This knowledge is continuously changing and evolving and considered the greatest knowledge base of a company. To stimulate coherence, ‘swarm-dynamics’ (as part of fuzziology) considers it important not to silence or cut out ‘noise’ from outside but appropriate it to sharpen and strengthen the internal organizational fitness: to be willing to understand, absorb and transform it to stimulate internal growth and creativity.

Way-finding:
A concept introduced by Dening (2008): ‘A word modern islanders use to describe their craft and the craft of their ancestors in piloting their voyaging canoes around the Sea of Islands’ (p. 147), but without scientific instruments. They used to rely on the interpretive craft of reading the cosmic imprints on the environment (ibid). In this thesis, ‘way-finding’ implies a very different focus of attention to the one that is usually applied in most (Western) cross-cultural education contexts. It sets up very different dynamics in cross-cultural relationships due to the use of intuition and intrinsic knowledge.

Wholesome life ecology:
Proposed by Dimitrov & Naess (2005) as an approach based on complexity theory and aims at exploring the secrets of the wholesome - healthy and fulfilling - human life.
Dimitrov & Eriksen (2006): The idea is that ‘what connects and centers the body-mind-soul dynamics is the human spirit. When life is lived in a wholesome way, it seems that the human spirit takes care for its unfolding, and the power of spirit is irresistible; any attempt to suppress it undergoes fiasco. It does not matter that the science cannot understand the power of spirit. In analogy with the chaos theory, where the mathematical proof of a chaotic attractor is in the emergence of the effects which the attractor manifests in the phase space of the chaotic dynamics, the proof of the power of human spirit is in the emergence of the effects this power manifests in the experiential space of the human dynamics.’

X-factor:
An alternative way of talking about the cross translated in this thesis as a ‘tracking device’, much like a compass or GPS system, but also a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.): the entity between the researcher and the researched (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) which is central to bricolage as a research-methodology (see ‘Point Of EnTry’). Can be translated also as the intermediary, or that which the humanist psychologist Assagioli (1988, pp. 35-39) refers to as the ‘to unity guiding centre’. Following Steiner’s teachings, Soesman (1990, pp. 39-41) refers to the term life spirit (pp. 39-41): ‘all that moves us, in fact, all that is biography in us, all that which has a hidden existence within us… The designation for the cultural life pattern of the human being’ that makes us move from a feeling that we are in the bulls’ eye already whilst we seek to hit it. Uses real-life relationships as enabling vehicles through which ontological effects are established and repeated until valuable life-lessons are fully incorporated. Effectively, it (life spirit, the X-factor, chiasmus, the pivoting force) writes the ‘biographical plan that lies in the depths of our soul’ (Soesman, 1990, p. 39).
ABSTRACT

This study explores contemporary cross-cultural education with 19 (nineteen) educators in Australia and the Netherlands who are holistically oriented. It takes as its core focus what happens at the centre of cross-cultural exchanges to give space to the inter-subjective and move forward by attending to feeling.

The participants took part in three focus groups and three one-on-one interviews each. The methodology called bricolage was applied to process the data alongside complexity theories and the Performatve Social Sciences (PSS). This enabled ways that focus on human dynamics at the centre of which knowledge transfer and dissemination are synthesised in the ‘synthetic moment’ and where boundaries are blurred to bring people and their landscape together.

The reader/viewer is presented with a written and an audio-visual auto-ethnographic account that attributes to self-study. As a multivocality, the accounts reflect this study’s focus into the ‘Heart’ of the cross; an intertextual space, an I-Thou dialogic encounter that emerges from polarities of all kinds (Gangadean, 2004). Here, individual spaces overlap in maieutic inquiry as a way forward for enacting integrality in academic writing (Gidley, 2007, p. 44). Both accounts point to the significance of aesthetic engagement, and are storied within the contemporary world that is in a transition from industrial to planetary awareness (Gidley, 2007).

The approach I adopt is interdisciplinary and draws mainly on three disciplines that traditionally rarely communicate with each other: (cross-cultural) education, social ecology, communication and the arts. Though challenging, the attempt to interrelate these disciplines necessitated a praxis of looking that is generative; creating agency and bringing to life the focus on the metaphor cross; a focus central to this thesis by considering it a verb and a noun, both dynamic and fixed and as such a bridge that opens up a space for people to have dialogue whilst attending to and navigating spaces in-between binary positions such as self-other, body-mind, subject-object, feminine-masculine, right-wrong and true-false.

With the focus on the entity between the researcher and the researched – both in bricolage and maieutic inquiry as research methodologies – I have been able to explore and report the tension between thinking (head) and feeling (heart, stomach, gut) and subsequent cross-cultural dynamics. With that I found a hybrid application and a focus on the cross most suitable to posit a subtle subject that is inherently inter-subjective, dynamic, creative and open to interpretation; a ‘communication about communication’ (Capra, as cited in Lowe et al., 2007, p. 240).
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

warped

as the sun sets
and we walk our paths
too few of us in reverence
enriching life

but caught up in having to have or be
disappointment about
our common loss
too few of us allot
to hold infringement of space

crowding space instead
carmachines and cultured lands
roads, that normalise our paths
as Knowledge becomes extinct
chasing money, status and wins
rather than balanced living
whilst educating children
to keep up the crazy pace

If they snub, we drug ...

... how much deeper can
Fallen Angels fall?
how much mercy
can we be granted?
I cry deeply within
lament collective spirit
as too few of us give it life

I long for the desert
where I can sing her songs
and maintain the space

But destined I am to be here
where few can hear my call
if only they’d listen
if only I could
and enunciate the wind.

José
7 September 2003

The 21.40 min. film titled ‘The OTHER Side of Language in X-Cultural Education: Unravelling the CROSS’ starts with Jack Cohen’s (2001) maxim: ‘Ignorance recognised is the most valuable starting place’ (p. 15). I acknowledge the depth of insight underpinning this statement, which resonates with Krishnamurti and Bohm’s (1985) suggestion that intelligence, attention,
perception, isolation and love is a common ground for all of us and not outside of anyone, although we might think this when we assume ignorance as part of divisive, fragmented thinking (pp. 260-261). When I talk about ignorance in this thesis, I do not mean arrogance, but unawareness: in the words of Tandon (1995/2005, p. 4): ignorance means ‘the [wrong] cognition of the eternal, the pure, the pleasant and the self in the non-eternal, the impure, the painful and the not-self’.

One research participant talked about ignorance in terms of ‘seeing as a camouflage’. Other participants inferred ignorance is something that makes communication difficult: when negating sensory awareness we miss much communication, which is why much of what is said does not ‘grab into each other, but slips past each other.’ Whilst ‘slipping communication’ is recognized across cultures and across disciplines, it has never been addressed as an ‘issue’ in contemporary cross-cultural education.

As a teacher trained in Expression & Communication (E&C) in The Netherlands from 1982 to 1986, I do not consider myself to be solely a formal educator, an artist, a counselor or an organisational coach, but rather a hybrid form of all of those. My role is also to facilitate interpersonal and group- dynamics and the tension in between people’s roles as individuals, as members of groups and learning organizations, and as members of society.

I have experience in cross-cultural education, and this dissertation explores dynamics in this field with particular emphasis on cross-cultural exchanges. The idea is not to give definitive answers to perceived problems or to adhere to a particular framework or ‘certain’ position, for I am not capable of doing this. But I am capable of point out another direction: a being sensitive to what is exchanged and what not. So there is no focus on outward manifestations such as skin-colour, size, shape, level of development, race and gender, but all the more on the felt sense and intuition.

This study requires from the reader to understand my work as a teacher, and now researcher, of E&C as interdisciplinary, holistic and focused on raising awareness of human ecology: the interrelations of humans and their natural and artificial environments (Dimitrov, n.d) and people’s self-healing and creative potential as sensitive beings. I resonate with products from Northern/Central Europe at the turn of the last century when the machine had not yet derailed the ‘vanguard’ notion that artistic communication operates pneumatically (spiritually) and according to a synaesthetic ideal: an ancient geometric/harmonic vision of universal order as perceived by a range of artists from this era. As Bruce Elder (2008) explains, this ideal reflects reality as basically vibratory, with a basic similarity among the kinds of information we receive from the various senses. For example, Goethe and Kandinsky perceived colours and tones at the same time as different vibrations of the same all-pervading reality (p. 30). This is why it was considered ‘normal’ at this time to not only see art, but also philosophy and education as important in terms of what
they do to people. In other words, they were seen not as commodities, or as ends in themselves, but as tools towards a higher goal: important tools, because matter has an effect on spirit.

1.2 Journeys to this dissertation

Among a series of artists, philosophers and educators who operated according to the synaesthetic ideal, the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian and especially his triptych titled ‘Evolution’, resonates deeply with me and could be considered a backdrop to this dissertation.

![Image 2: Piet Mondrian: Evolution](image)

The painting for me reflects the human being who is aware –in the words of Elder (2008)- of his/her place in the resonance of the vital force, behind which the dance of opposites such as yin and yang, male and female, darkness and light, earth and heaven, fullness and emptiness. ‘This soul enters into sympathetic vibration with everything’ (p. 29).

The ‘text images’ below depict my experiences as a teacher in an Aboriginal school in The Tanami Desert of Australia that not only inspired me to do this PhD but also to write about cross-cultural education as a ‘landscape’ best negotiated by applying bricolage as a methodology; one that tinkerers at the edges of existing paradigms and structures by employing a mixture of tools and the means at hand.
From my diary, 1 February 2000

The land develops on my skin as
my white skin shrivels up: So where was my home?
The fight to remain in control rapidly loosing its grip as
The Voice becomes stronger in our Silent talk.
He smiles: Welcome back to homeland country.
Then dismissed.
And I know I am free
To pick the fruits of this motherland.

On that day we sit together in the staffroom. We have a meeting of sorts and sit in two circles: one of white educators and one of Aboriginal people. I tune into their different vibrations and silent spaces. Tom, the rainmaker, sits behind me, and I feel his eyes prick through the back of my head. His smile makes my heart jump for joy. My ‘skin’ brother Japurrurla is here also, and his wife (my sister-in-law) and my next-door neighbour friend. My two teacher-assistants are here also; one is there to help me as a friend, the other to teach me lessons. I look at my white colleagues in the same circle as the one I am sitting in, and I feel conscious of my ‘otherness’ as a European woman. I feel different yet the same with the Aboriginal people, but not so with the non-Aboriginal Australian staff. It is as if they resent me for some reason, but I don’t know why. Is my Dutchness getting in the way? Does it relate to ancient contests between Anglo-Saxon and ‘continental’ tribes and different modus vivendi: secularism governing the church-state relationship in the Netherlands, and the established state church governing that relationship in the UK (Zambeta, 2008)? Is the UK still ‘quietly’ influencing the current Australian political climate with its Christian mission and the Puritist notion of salvation (Ward, 2008)?

I find myself lost for words. There are three ‘groupminds’ here in this room: that of the ‘white Australian teachers’, that of the Aboriginal people, and ‘my’ Dutch group mind. I have no ‘mate’ from my country so I cannot bounce off my thinking. I know we look for communion, but we all seem so different. Before I came out to the Tanami Desert I was ‘prepped’ with a cross-cultural communication course to make it easier to talk with Aboriginal people. But nobody ‘prepped’ me for my colleagues who seem to think that I think like them. I miss an awareness of ‘culturing’ that seeks to demystify but not destroy cultural complexity (Bakic-Miric, 2008).
From my diary, 23 April 2000

I see two tracks in the red desert sand:
One songline, one a long stretch of bitumen.
The songline still sings powerfully
As the people sing and walk this scarlet land
And the hardy road of bitumen ‘sings’
With hardy cars that stink...
A very different tone to both I know
I need to come to grips with.

I say to my ‘sister-in-law’: ‘I feel like a black woman in a white skin.’ And I tell my brother I want to go to that country over there, where the mountain looks like Mt. Fuji. He looks at me but says nothing at first. Then he says: ‘That’s men’s country.’ I say: ‘I’d like to go there one day.’ Again silence. Two weeks later ‘my’ whole skin-family stop by my house in the school jeep. ‘Napurrurla, Get in!’ they say. ‘We go hunting. You drive!’ They take me to the place where we hunt goanna and honey ant. They show me how they teach their children how to hunt. That 70-year-old woman runs faster than me, and I am a marathon runner! I meet my match as she relentlessly focuses and ‘dances’ the land, almost flying across the trees and shrubs. I give up and cry, exhausted and thirsty. They laugh and giggle. I learn about humility and honour.

Baobab tree

She waited a long Wait
Until I came by, at last.
Then her Silence
Broke mine...

Her Open-hearted Eyes and
Black Skin touching-soft ...
Nothing was said, so present
Was our friendship
As She handed me the coolabah

Jose, 19 May 2000
**From my diary, 2 March 2000**

I am attacked by five dogs, all crazy.
Their owner just as mad, they say.
Outrageous kids throw things on the roof.
Petrol sniffers throw beats on the drums.
A cry for help:
Please get us out of this
Turmoil that's not ours...

I know the wheels will turn
As I persist and believe
In the willpower of the encounter...

The wheels are turning around
The rhythm of the drums
Is getting into a groove
People are turning around and
Open their doors
But boils of distress and a sore throat
Test my willingness to pursue
This madman's' test with
My blue dress torn to pieces
Reminds me of the need
To shift focus rapidly
And uplift my spirit quick-fast.

**From my diary, 21 May 2000**

Difference?

Yes, I did feel bypassed
When I was not even considered
Part of the team
Placed out of their game
Yes, my choice, and theirs.
Yes, my path, and theirs.
They don't converge here.

And my ego hurts
But that's alright.

When I said 'no'
To her request for
Sugar and butter
For damper and tea
For a thousand reasons.
I felt the tribal mind hurling towards me.
And watched it stop in front of me.
From my diary 21 May 2000

GROUPMIND
Guilt when not abided by rules,
Shame you should feel: Stay part of us
We’ll protect you from danger.
Say sorry and we’ll forgive you.
Don’t speak for or against us.
We sort our own stuff out and keep secret what
We want to withhold from you.
We’ll love you if your actions agree
With ours
Otherwise abandonment
Or we’ll bring in the law-enforcers.
For groups’ sake,
Amen.

I am writing a thesis on cross-cultural education and crossing communication barriers. And I wonder how to speak a thousand words with a few? Why use words when Silence and images speak so much clearer? Expressing and communicating dynamics, including feelings, not emotions but feelings, is what I seek. Sensations have colours and ‘sounds’ to them that sometimes ‘hit’ us, in ways that a world that thinks in terms of adding up, dividing and multiplying does not acknowledge. Feelings are another side of language; a language known across cultures: felt experiences that cannot be expressed in words except poetically.

So I make a filmic impression to express and communicate dynamics; a felt experience of what is often left behind … I hear my Virgoan critical voice say ‘its not good enough’. But I also hear another voice; a voice that knows… a voice I follow and trust. If this voice had a name I would call it Intuition, or is it something else? Who is to know? Who is to say? I hear the power of Silence that breaks sound barriers… And I rest in it in an effort to become part of it, with each moment as a both a starting- and an end-point.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much Too much</th>
<th>Yet speaking as one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That’s what they say</td>
<td>A paradox;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s what I say.</td>
<td>A double helix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much effort to resist the Flow.</td>
<td>Two poles kept apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t do it no more,</td>
<td>And a world in the middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t do it no more.</td>
<td>A void filled with Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This isn’t work but anti-survival.</td>
<td>Where one hand draws the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is running out for this one.</td>
<td>always in motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I resist knowing this</td>
<td>always still.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two powers of will-power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In apparent opposition</td>
<td>Jose, 7 June 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a migrant and holistically oriented cross-cultural educator, I experience an inner duality, with one foot in a ‘fixed’ landscape and the other in a ‘moving’ landscape. It is like the difference between head- and heart-thinking. Dreyfus wrote –and I cannot remember the year he wrote this– said that ‘human thought doesn’t think in a binary mode. It doesn’t work with units of information (with bits), but with intuitive, hypothetical configurations. It accepts imprecise, ambiguous data that don’t seem to be selected according to pre-established codes or readability. It doesn’t neglect side-effects or marginal aspects of a situation. It isn’t just focused, but lateral too.’ This type of ‘human thought’ contrast sharply with ‘head-thinking’: that frantic activity that spins around in the head. Dreyfus’ type of thought I call intelligence (wisdom). ‘Head-thinking’ I call intellect. The voice of the artist in me ‘hears’ intelligence. The voice of the teacher in me hears the intellect.

If I can accept both as operant at the same time, I feel that I operate in ‘ethics’. But when I believe one ‘voice’ is better than the other, I feel off track.

Somehow I link this inner duality and the two voices with the cross. I think of the cross often found on top of church towers, and I think of the cross that many people carry in their heart. And I think of the church of Handel not far from my place of birth in The Netherlands: a church of great significance to many Catholic pilgrims, and a church that like so many other Christian churches was built on top of an ancient Pagan site. I connect this association with the Western group mind that has developed into one that is focused on possessions. And I feel both sad and angry for us,
as a culture, to have allowed ourselves to forget the knowledge that we once had, lived and celebrated.

Image 3: Church Tower of the 'Handelse Kerk' [church of Handel]

1.3 The focus of this study

This dissertation suggests a more holistic and artistic approach as a form of evolving cross-cultural education, away from a climate that re/produces a performance of dynamics that embodies violence due to ignorance of a disembodied male dominance in which people’s viewpoints and actions are attacked or defended, not accepted. This performance, this game of playing tennis with viewpoints usually exhibited in communications that stem from and are built on mental pictures and iconic knowledge (Bohnsack, 2008) may have reached its use-by date.

The emphasis both in the written and filmic part of this dissertation is on the felt experience (Gendlin, 1996, 1997) and the use of all of one’s senses including the intuitive sense (Janesick, 2004). The emphasis is not about agreements in cognitive judgment, but about an aesthetic encounter in which the presence of dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges: dynamics that are there in a textured way, and provide the intimacy needed for knowledge as a meaningful practice (Todres, 2007, pp. 39-41). I have included data from interviews with research-participants to reflect some of the dynamics that took shape during the research-process, but also to involve both the head and the heart of the reader.
As a teacher in Expression & Communication I have felt the need to turn ‘boxed thinking’ back onto and into itself and show the significance of attendance at the moment of bifurcation in cross-cultural exchanges; the moment when there is an opportunity to go one way or another, depending on the underpinning intention and focus of attention (awareness) of one party or more. I wanted to show there is another way of going about, of walking a course away from management structures that dictate with limited vision and make people, including those in leadership roles, feel caged, oppressed, exhausted and reduced in their capacity to pay attention (Wheatley, 2008). I wanted to emphasise currere (Eisner, 1972): the running of the course whilst walking it.

So I explored the dynamics as representative of the crux in cross-cultural education, where meetings and clashings between people and cultures self-organise as a web of relationships which, Thompson (1996, p. 126) suggests, adapts to an ecology that either compresses attention (a fixation within limits) or focuses attention (creatively expands into a new space). Cumulative movements in which each single motion has consequences that open up a new bifurcation and move either upwards to a new culture of a higher spirituality, or downwards towards darkness and entropy which is why, Thompson (2004) argues, it is important to consider our current level of consciousness that now has ‘become the biggest obstruction to the continuity of human existence’ (p. 10).

The current transition from industrialization to ecological thinking and the related meltdown of three disintegrating systems involving the economical, environmental and psycho-social (Gidley, 2007, p. 7) demands more from cross-cultural educators than intellectual argumentation about geo-social products and processes from an either/or (boxed) position. It demands experiential
understanding and working with dynamics at physical/mental/spiritual levels as an integrated whole. It requires a looking from within and without; a change in viewpoint not imposed upon from outside but felt from within because a shift in attention. It requires deeper awareness of the impact of signs and symbols on the human psyche. For example, an accent on doingness (performativity) but not the done (performance) is but a performance of cultural politics in which we, as auto-ethnographer-performers insert our experiences (Denzin, 2003, p. 12). This performance eats away at the heart of a pedagogy of hope; a pedagogy which is enabled by a shift from an academic to an aesthetic mode of cognition (Thompson, 2004, p. ix).

I formulated the following research question: How does a sample of holistically oriented educators understand and work with complex dynamics as they teach and learn across cultures? Subsidiary questions that help to clarify the problem were: 1/ How do cross-cultural educators approach tpe crux of the matter, where the split or the divide, or in terms of chaos theory bifurcation, is experienced? 2/ How is the split contextualised as a web and the dynamics that support it? 3/ How might wholesome life ecology re-energise understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics in a cross-cultural context?

These questions will be answered in the following chapters and in the conclusion, but the answers are not clear-cut. They are presented as a bricolage that reflects the landscape of cross-cultural education. In the words of Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984, p. 11):

One cannot imagine that the book is guided by any poetic unity or harmony. On the contrary, the poetry is of a different sort, one that responds to our times. It is a poetry of fragmentation, contradiction, unanswered questions, specificity, fluidity and change. We are ... different people from ... different cultures thrown together in a so-called multicultural society; or rather we are drawn together (with our different ways of expressing ourselves) by a concern for one thing which remains constant in spite of everything... what might be called a "politics of place.

1.4 Significance of this study

The focus of this study was on the metaphor or symbol cross to be able to unravel the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges. I felt a focus on the cross was timely for its religious connotations that – perhaps until only very recently – powerfully affected world politics including globalisation, underpinned by a connectionist kind of group mind with constructs such as ‘sin, guilt and other mistakes as part of an energy process, not the fault of individuals’ (Bethe, 2008). This group mind however is rarely recognised, and as such reinforces disregard for our sensory relationship with the earth with significant implications for cross-cultural community-building, civic pride and environmental resources (Carter, 2005, p. 185).

This research showed that the cross is not only a metaphor for friction and crucifixion, but also for meeting and transition. The significance of exploring this metaphor is powerfully expressed in the
words of the Danish biologist Hoffmeyer: ‘Life is based entirely on semiosis, on sign operations. The living world … can be awe inspiring or deeply moving and, whatever else it may be, it concerns us. It is made of the same stuff as we ourselves are - it resembles us because it dreamed us up’ (as cited in Bird Rose, 2008, pp. 158-159).

I felt concerned with the apparent fixation on crucifixion and correlated perceptions of compressed spaces; boxed realities that may express intentions of changing the masculine face of existing structures of domination through fear and power, manifested for example in the control of post/graduate students (Thompson, 1996, p. 119). This concern deepened in the process of research as I experientially came to understand space and time not as ‘square’ or ‘boxed’ but as more of a feminine receptacle; a kind of cauldron in which the masculine, including time, is the creative artisan; male and female are cosmological metaphors and ontological (ibid, p.120), the cosmos a seamless whole information field that connects you and me and all things in the universe (Laszlo, 2003, p.117).

My intention was necessarily contradictory: I both confronted and embraced viewpoints I knew were limited as products of mental and not integral consciousness. This necessary paradox enabled me to ‘walk’ the road and fine tune at points of bifurcation (on crossroads), and it was here where I learned the significance of ‘watching our hearts and minds with delicate attention to unravel the hidden ways of our desire, and understand the pursuit of sensation which is one of the major activities of the mind’ (Krishnamurti, 1978, p. 120). I necessarily produced a more reflexive self and performative autoethnographic account of cross-cultural education as a Performative Social Science (PSS). This means a space in which imagination is communicated as knowledge of the world, and contextualized in the dialogic communication-act that is co-constructed at once between senders, receivers and the field (Crouch, 2007).

In other words, and similarly to Expression & Communication (E&C), cross-cultural education need not be either a linear or non-linear approach, but can be a Performative Social Science that adopts a both/and approach (Dimitrov, 2005) so as to evolve: a movement in which at the same time are taken two steps forwards, one step back, steps sideways and upwards and downwards. This ‘cross-focus’ potentially undoes fixed ways of ritualising the world, and underscores the relevance of an evocative narrative that both moves towards and away from fixed foci on communication styles, stereotyping, diaspora, political injustice, identity politics and other concepts based on a world ‘out there’. With the both/and approach that accepts and applies paradoxic spaces, dialogue is possible and a range of options can open up, guided by questions such as what is really wanted, how and why we maintain certain belief systems, and so on. Dialogue is important when systems are outdated and unwarranted because unhealthy and unsustainable (Laszlo, 2003; Bohm & Edwards, 1991; Thompson, 1996, 2004).
1.5 A collective individual quest of undoing knots; a journey of reaching deeper within

Though presented as a self-study that can be helpful to raise particular questions that drive educational change (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008, p. 26), deconstructing and refocusing on the heart of cross-cultural education was not an individual but a shared journey, not only with research-participants but also with my three PhD-supervisors. This is why I write an autoethnographic account: a ‘self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts’ (Spry, as cited in du Preez, 2008, p. 510). The account is narrated both in writing and in filmic form as alternative ways that show shared patterns of thought, symbol and action of a particular group (Hamilton et al, 2008, p. 22). The accounts are meant to ‘activate subjectivity and emotional response; to be told and retold rather than theorized and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than undeniable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, pp. 217-218).

The idea behind presenting this dissertation as an evocative narrative and as such engage both the head and the heart, relates to the wish to evoke the memory of the contact that is always there in between and among the self/other relationship in a shared, common mind; a common noetic polity (Thompson, 1996, p. 152) or a morphic field (Sheldrake, 1987, 2004, 2005) in which human dynamics interweave and crossover and produce relationships that are neither right or wrong, nor true or false: they are but experiences. By focusing on what the narratives do, what consequences they have and to what uses they can be put, they can move life forward (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 22). By concentrating on the shared space where individually adopted but collectively produced paradigms collide, it becomes possible to ‘see the face and hear the voice’ of a situation (Shotter, 2001) such as cross-cultural education. The value of that is to be able to focus in more deeply and constitute a collective multidimensional reflective practice on how to move forward in hope whilst situated in a demographically shifting world (Y.Li et al, 2008, pp. 253-254). As Hansen (2001) suggests, this liminal space is in need of more attention, because ignorance to it has led to a manifold of tricky situations in the world today, including the world of science.

*The true professional is a person whose action points beyond his or herself to that underlying reality, that hidden wholeness, on which we can all rely.*

Margaret J. Wheatley, 2005, p. 134.

Though some may argue a focus on autoethnographic lived experience and a felt sense is narcissistic, a study that discounts the role of the researcher in the process is not providing a holistic view of a studied (sub)culture: ‘the experience is you and you are part of the experience’ (Dethloff, 2005, p. 5), and ‘we must embrace the biases of the researcher to develop a much richer understanding of the context studied’ (ibid, p. 57) that are mixed in with biases of other
members of a (sub)culture. The quest here is not only to give a more authentic representation of the experience of a culture, but also to stimulate the reader to reflect on one’s own experiences in the field and in relation to the text, as such transcending the purely personal (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The quest is also to call intellectualism into line: for it to stop engaging with itself and instead act like a sword in cross-cultural exchanges, with the intellect as Jung suggested, ‘as much more than an instrument that divides (but) the force which turns something infinitesimally small into the infinitely great’ (as cited in Raff, 2000, p. 103).

1.6 A theoretical background

There is a fixed landscape of cross-cultural education as part of a consciousness that considers paradigms as separate ‘things’. The difficulty, Montuori & Conti (1993) suggest, is the peculiar nature of paradigms that makes them invisible for the most part. But, I argue, they are only invisible when we ignore the felt sense and fail to consider the concept of group mind. This study takes considerable note of group mind, with as much as possible a ‘reflection-on-the-future’ perspective whilst linking reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action into a coherent whole (Wilson, 2008). Such a ‘cross’-perspective helps to unpick ‘knots’ and/or shed light on ‘blind spots’ shaped in ignorance. This in turn helps an experience of being separate from the group mind.

Education generally and cross-cultural education specifically have a responsibility to supply tools that facilitate self-study of a kind that enables people to survive a world that changes at an incremental pace: a self-study as suggested by O’Loughlin (1995):

Education must involve a recognition of the inherent order of human locatedness. It must create a life world which supports a satisfying human existence grounded in a livable environment. This may mean that, initially, we need to become much less naive about how experience actually occurs. In his account of the pre-conscious awareness of body-subjects, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that the term perception is impoverished. "Encounter" is the notion we need to recover in order to do justice to our fundamental relationship with the world. This entails a multi-faceted ebb and flow of attention and involves all shades of obliviousness, attending to, taking notice of, and intensified contact. Education needs to be seen as education in environmental encounter, which is education concerned with those modes of awareness that develop and enhance an individual’s understanding of her/his world. Emphasis should be placed upon watching in new ways, noticing, opening oneself to, and attempting to see the world as it is, in its own fashion, so that person and world ultimately emerge. That world is to be explored experientially. Discourses are rightly the focus of concern for postmodernists, but bodies are the source of discourses as well as their product. The discourses identified by post-modern writers exist and are reproduced only through bodies
and their activities. Experiential exploration is, first and foremost, bodily exploration, and knowing is, above all, bodily knowing.

### The Spell of the Cave

A steel pin, or cold column of ‘logic’
Stalactite and stalagnite joined
Around which fuzziness whirls
Both static and dynamic
Self-sustaining,
There is no locale here
No time as such
Merely evolution
Up and down
A dynamic that just-is
‘justice’ a given.

That steel cold pin
drives down and builds up
sustains the doing and having
hits a concrete floor and
then bounces back upwards
has no bottom and top

Only inflow and outflow
Drops of water seeping out
falling out into the ocean of heaven
‘grounded’ in the paradox
As we go about the world
consciously or unconsciously...
based on decisions, old or new
with mechanisms that rule to destroy
but we pass those willingly
to assist evolution;
and realize our freedom
No part of a matrix, that strange
quality
adopted in self-denial.

Jose, 6 June 2008.

This study moves through, to go beyond the ‘fixed landscape’ of contemporary cross-cultural education that hones in on, and judges as wrong, cultural biases (shared values and beliefs) and associated social relations: they are varying ways of perceiving life as masked and marked in time and space. It seeks a path away from mental consciousness (Gebser, 1956); a ‘realm’ that fragments and divides what is essentially fractal (Bohm, 1996, 1998) and which facilitates a hegemonic ideology in which there is always some norm, some notion of something idealistic that does not exist in the here and now. It argues for a moving in-between ‘Kuhnian’ paradigms and an experience of ‘moving landscapes’; disciplines or fields which are not only something people run through but which also run through us, which is how we manifest dynamics. It argues for a more holistic approach and a change in attention, away from Goldhaber’s (2007a, p. 35) promotion of an attention economy as if attention is a market currency. That type of attention, I argue, may suit economic purposes but does not produce ‘insight’ – a clear awareness of exactly
what is happening as it happens (Gutaratan, 2002, p. 5). In other words, this study seeks healing and a facilitation of self-realisation.

Krishnamurti (1978) contends, the type of attention, ‘understanding’ and modifications proffered by the ‘fixed landscape’ are only superficial and do not suffice to create a paradigm shift but only further ‘suppress our personal cravings and ambitions and ability to cooperate for the well-being of mankind’ (p. 70). Furthermore, they only serve ‘the powerful and the cunning’ (p. 71). He urges people to have ‘hearts that are not filled with empty phrases, with things of the mind (but) to understand ourselves’ (p. 79). Steiner (1969) then suggests that in order to move beyond the intellectual logical mind in accordance with present-day spiritual conditions (p. 12), it is important to have courage and practice fearlessness through to the conviction that the sources of strength in the universe upon which one can draw are inexhaustible (pp. 75-76).

Participants in this study are holistically oriented cross-cultural educators who I consider to be people who confront fuzzy boundaries to understand and work with dynamics: a form of embodiment informed by bricolage in which not everyone may be willing to engage since life on disciplinary boundaries is never easy (Kinchele & Berry, 2004, p. 81): an embodied enquiry (Todres, 2007).

1.7 How I went about this study: bricoleuring my way around

In this section I will talk more in-depth than is usual in an introductory chapter about the research-methodology. I will also introduce the research-participants so as to set the scene, as it were, for the remainder of this hybrid dissertation.

It is hard to capture in words what makes meaningless the felt sense, intuition and other ‘uncertain’ skills. And I felt necessitated to move away from methodological-philosophical foundations that consider the mind, body and spirit as separate from each other: foundations that contextualise the split in cross-cultural exchanges.

As a teacher/researcher in E&C, I employ a hybrid practice: there are no boundaries between aesthetics and empiricism. This practice makes complex dynamics immediately visible, and enables a moving across and between matrices of discourse and behaviours where exchanges are not necessarily smooth and full translation may not be possible (Richards, 2006, p. 6).

E&C, which can be considered a Performative Social Science (PSS), freely makes use of, but is not limited to using for example collage, narrative, video, audio, new media such as CD ROM and web-based production, poetry, film etc. (Horsfall, 2008) to co-produce knowledge (Doornbos, van Rooij & Verdonschot, 2008). The purpose of using these media, especially in terms of E&C, is not to produce art but to accentuate communitas (Turner, 1974).
Throughout my work, the Taoist notion of human beings being actively involved in the world will be used to convey Man as a servant rather than a lord of nature... Art alone is able to capture and represent (at least in a concrete sense), the sense of life that inheres in all creation... To respect and appreciate Nature is to appreciate and respect each other... The final realization of all this is in learning to respect and appreciate ourselves, and nowhere in the spectrum of human activity does this come more to full consciousness than in the field of art. In art we capture ourselves as both subject and object. That's the Tao of art.

Qing Huang, The dynamical multimedia representation of Tao (2003, p. vii)

In the research-process, I collected data from a sample of holistically oriented cross-cultural educators –eight from The Netherlands and eleven from Australia. I largely intuitively analysed and selected the data (Braud & Anderson, 1998) which are interwoven in the text. But I also made a 21.40-minute film titled ‘The OTHER Side of Language in X-Cultural Education: Unravelling the CROSS’. This film is best watched after reading this introductory chapter.

The methodology I used to explore and represent dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges because there can be no one way, was bricolage (see Chapter Five).

As part of bricolage, the methods I employed in the process of research were: three focus-groups (Morgan, 1988) to produce, reflect on and represent cross-cultural exchanges, but also to give participants the opportunity to individually explore and stretch other ways of knowing, thinking and being whilst mapping the ‘domain’ (Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 2004) of cross-cultural education; three reflexive interviews appropriate to a performative social science (Denzin, 2001); creative diaries (Janesick, 2004) including drawings, poetry, paintings, photographs, ‘sculptures’, notes, doodles etc. (Capacchione, 2004) to focus thoughts (O’Connell & Dymet, 2006, p. 675); life histories (Brookfield, 1995) that tell us ‘something about’ (Minichiello et al, 1995) educators’ negotiations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and as such get to ‘see’ and ‘hear’ the dynamics in those exchanges; focused conversations (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002) that discuss and comment on the topic of study from personal experience and expand on ideas by asking each other questions (O’Connell & Dymet, 2006, p. 676). Although I used an Interview Guide (Patton, 1990) for the first one-on-one interview to set up the scene and narrow the research-focus into the ‘Heart’ of the topic of interest, as time moved on interviews became more ‘imbricated in place’ (Offord, 2002) and individual spaces and flows began to overlap.

As a form of ‘embodied enquiry’ (Todres, 2007) to understand and work with the dynamics in cross-cultural education, I also employed fuzziology including maieutic inquiry, which as Dimitrov & Naess (2005, p.p. 17-19) explain, depends essentially on the active interaction of the inquirer and the respondent. They suggest that ‘the interactions of sides involved in maieutic inquiry aim at liberating their creative potential from the pull of forces born out of human egocentricity and
egotism, blind attachments and addictions, social brainwash or power-based manipulations – forces which are able to convert the fuzziness of knowing into hard-to-surpass ignorance.’

Both maieutic inquiry and bricolage are methodologies associated with lifelong learning in that they take a lifetime to perform well (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 4) and as such are very difficult for someone who does a PhD. The research-journey was also challenging for I mentally, physically and spiritually literally lived this research. Physically, as a migrant to Australia with no physical home here and only a carload of personal possessions, I often house-sat people’s homes and moved not only within Australia from place to place, but also between The Netherlands and Australia. Mentally, I moved in-between the seemingly separate disciplines. Spiritually, I was immersed in a continuous process of self-study, turned every stone on the way and found relationships between the physical, mental and spiritual realms. From this, I learned to better negotiate communication-styles and relationships associated with one-way technological communication; a lesson that proved far from easy. Nevertheless, the process of bricoleuring my way around was helpful and proved a useful tool to learn to rely on inner re/sources whilst creatively engaged in a continuous process of practice-based research: a way of tinkering with available resources and restoring the understanding that wheels turn within wheels (Burneko, 1998). This research then supports Badham & Sense’s (2006) plea for an academic recognition of the informed practice of improvisation and bricoleuring as a way of ‘capturing’ practical wisdom and practicing alertness to conditions that foster self-awareness. It also supports the concept of Wholesome Life Ecology (WLE) which seeks to re-energise understanding among human beings in cross-cultural contexts. WLE suggests that to live wholesomely, in a healthy and fulfilling way under critical conditions of our epoch, it is important to attend to growing in wisdom and spirit (Dimitrov & Naess, 2005).

It is appropriate that I next briefly introduce the research-participants who freely gave their time to explore the crux in and the crux of cross-cultural education:

People who were interviewed in Australia:

Ma. is a female German migrant to Australia who is married to a Pacific Islander. She is a senior staff-member of an internationally operating corporate cross-cultural training organisation.

Le. is a female Australian who teaches English as a Second Language mostly in Asian countries.

Re. is a daughter from a Syrian couple who migrated to Australia some 40 years ago. She is a natural scientist studying to be a cross-cultural educator. Meanwhile she has set up and organises an international network that focuses on cross-cultural links.

Ron is a male Irish migrant to Australia and a senior staff-member and lecturer at a Steiner college.
Ros is a female Maori migrant to Australia and a senior staff-member of a cross-cultural social work organisation.

Cl. is a female daughter from Italian parents who migrated to Australia some 50 years ago. She is a cross-cultural educator and manager of a multi-cultural community organization.

Mars is a male Australian senior staff-member of a private Catholic secondary day school for girls that promotes multi-culturalism.

He. is a female American migrant at a Steiner school in Australia.

A. is a male migrant to Australia from Melanesia who trains people from a range of cultures.

R. is a female Australian who both teaches and counsels people from a range of cultures.

Joo. is a female Dutch migrant to Australia and business-owner of a corporate cross-cultural training organization.

The following people were interviewed in The Netherlands and are all Dutch-born, except for the first two people:

M. is a female university-lecturer from New Zealand who focuses on international and cross-cultural relations.

H. is a male corporate cross-cultural educator from Germany who facilitates programs internationally. He is also an ex-student from the Academy of Expression & Communication and someone I used to work with as a peer-student.

Jos is a female ex-lecturer at a university and now manager of a tertiary college that also trains cross-cultural educators.

In. is a female business-owner of a corporate cross-cultural training organisation. She is also married to a Greek man.

M.T. is a female manager of an alternative educational institution for highly sensitive and intellectually gifted young people who have been considered ‘unfit’ for mainstream education.

Marg is a female dance-teacher at this alternative educational institution. She also privately runs dance-workshops for migrants to Holland, and has lived overseas for long periods of time.

Br. is a female primary school teacher who also engages in cross-cultural education in different contexts.

Ca. is a female cross-cultural educator and filmmaker as well as casual lecturer at a university. She is also married to an American man.
1.8 Contents of the following chapters

In Chapter Two, I will deconstruct the field of contemporary cross-cultural education described as one that is ‘fixed’ in quality and in approach. I will pay special attention to the groupmind and its dynamics that create fixed positions and as such ‘sticking sides’ between people; ‘hard negotiation’ (Dimitrov, 2005) situations that require another than a ‘fixed’ approach, because they cannot be understood nor worked with from within binary or ‘boxed’ thinking. The chapter will introduce a concept borrowed from Ormsby-Green (2006) called the projection/reflection principle, and notions from the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK) such as ‘veld’ [field], ‘blind spots’ and ‘Scpal’ [skin, bark, layer]. With these concepts I seek to address the notion that a lack of understanding and capacity to work with dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges keeps intact collectively adopted and agreed upon mental images of people, cultures and landscapes as if something bounded and fixed (Reid, 2004; Leeman & Reid, 2006). Talking about differences and commonalities without understanding and willingness to work with dynamics reinforces accepted ways of thinking (within the square) that justify an ideological hegemony in which real-life relationships specifically, and life in vivo generally, are negated. I will query whether a fixation on identity politics creates death-oriented dynamics.

In Chapter Three, I will apply a both/and thinking lens, and focus on the multi-layeredness of cross-cultural landscapes as ‘something’ that moves through us as much as ‘something’ that we move through. The binary lens of ‘fixed’ and ‘moving’ landscapes is used, and accent is placed on the not foreclosing of ambiguity of unity and differentiation but on being okay with feeling ‘wobbly’ (Todres, 2007, p. 172) whilst exploring the dynamics in the two types of landscape. This attitude prevents a drifting into too much order or into too much disorder (Dimitrov, n.d.) as pertinent to transcending bifurcation (ibid). Central to this chapter are notions of conceived and organismic values (Rogers, 1973), the imbrication of cultural flows (Offord, 2002) and the ‘felt sense’ (Gendlin, 1996; Todres, 2007).

Chapter Four will explore in depth the cross; a notion that is central to this dissertation. It will discuss its religious and hierarchical connotations, and its association with fixed landscapes and attention as if an article of trade. It also talks about the value of focusing in more on two previously unexamined aspects of cross-cultural education, which are the Cross and Attention including mindfulness. It will describe how we came to be deeply caught up in reference frameworks that need unravelling also. The cross, I suggest, holds a capacity to tinker at the edges as part of an ‘evolving education’; a mode of ‘tracking’ that is consistent with existential dynamics and in keeping with emergent changes in consciousness from the mental to the integral. The chapter suggests that a focus on the cross is conducive to maieutic inquiry; a talking fuzzily about thoughts and feelings, something apparently wanted as part of evolving cross-cultural education.
Chapter Five describes how the cross can be used as a ‘tracking device’ to explore dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges. The chapter focuses in on the research methodology as I take the reader through an autoethnographic account and employ ‘bricolage’ (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Benterrak et al, 1984) as an interesting method that might disrupt the art/science binary. The chapter also describes the irrationality/rationality paradox that in and of itself, sets up boundaries. The emphasis as central to bricolage is on *the entity between the researcher and the researched*. As such it also reflects the process of maieutic inquiry and the dynamics thereof. The mechanism of ‘seeing as a camouflage’ and ‘slipping communication’ that makes communication ‘murky’ are discussed and the chapter further shows the close correlation between bricolage and maieutic inquiry when the cross is used as a ‘tracking device’: both methodologies tinker at the edges of existing paradigms and structures. With ‘the cross’ as the tracking device the focus is both on and located at the centre of attention, which makes an *evolving* cross-cultural education and a Performative Social Science possible. I emphasise this new field is filled with potential but requires attention from an – in principle – flexible and reflexive practitioner who wants to navigate the current globalised unstable context and raise more questions towards as well as reveal a glimpse of a world that is ‘not-yet’.

In Chapter Six I talk about cross-cultural education as a Performative Social Science, but in the context of how and why I made a short film that is both autoethnographic and experimental. I explain the significance of bringing ‘uncertain’ ways of knowing and skills into production, where emerges the power of art that at once irritates and ‘reports’ on the tension between thinking and feeling intertwined with acting; a power that helps both the educational and research community think outside the box, challenge ethical values and unchanging positivist notions, and both create and represent a dialectic between theory and practice. Effectively, this chapter reflects back to where I started this research; believing in a need to adopt another approach away from the static *engineering culture* that prevails in contemporary cross-cultural education.

Chapter Seven forms the conclusion chapter to this hybrid dissertation and formulates new questions.
CHAPTER TWO: DECONSTRUCTING THE LANDSCAPE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

Whilst Chapter Three explores the multi-layered quality of cross-cultural landscapes, this chapter introduces the binary landscape of cross-cultural education as one that is both fluid and fixed. I do this to turn this binary landscape back into itself and tease out how cross-cultural exchanges are negotiated at the point of meeting on the contact boundary, at the crossroads or bifurcation. I give an autoethnographic account of dealing with a ‘fixed’ landscape as a female migrant PhD student who was trained as a holistically oriented teacher and who resonates better with fluidity. Further I will talk about a transition period that can be facilitated by attention as an activity of concentrated application; an application that requires opposing parties to ‘stand back’ from being tangled up at the centre so ‘sticking sides’ disconnect and a fresh space at the centre can open up for an ‘eye to eye’ (I to I) meeting to become possible. The following photograph (Hubble telescope, 1995) represents how I visualise this dynamic, and as something associated with the Vesica Pisces about which I will talk about more in-depth in Chapter Four.

2.2 A background sketch

Unlike many other children who experience mental/physical trauma in their early lives, my childhood was not traumatic, but I was troubled by projections or mental images that others ‘dumped’ on me. I understood those mental pictures were/are like imprints that can have a negative effect on the human psyche when people are unaware of how they are being ‘affected’, but I did not have the tools to explore how this process develops. I tried hard to work it all out in a variety of ways, driven by a decision to clear my space so I would not ‘pollute’ the space around others. I practiced yoga when I was 14 (in 1974) and went for long bike rides to ‘clean’ the space surrounding my physical body. But somehow ‘things’ or energies kept ‘sticking’. When I was 18 I decided I wanted to be a teacher, though not a teacher who creates order in a classroom but who works with disorder, chaos. I believed chaos was better than stifled spaces, feeling that chaos is needed for change to occur.

Dutch born and raised, I started training as a primary school teacher in The Netherlands and when I discovered I would have to teach ‘order’ in the classroom, I switched to social work training. But when I found out that also this work centred on creating (engineering) order, I changed direction again, this time to training as a teacher in Expression & Communication (E&C). As such I learned how to understand and work with dynamics in individual and group exchanges.

During those seven years of higher education, I learned that the process I referred to and which troubled me early in life was kept intact by psychological theories that suggest someone’s thinking and feeling –someone’s ‘voice’- is isolated from others. I knew there was such a thing as a shared subjectivity; a subjectivity that is never isolated because aspect to how human beings communicate.

I felt relieved when I learned that this shared subjectivity has another name that points to the energetic charge of a shared subjectivity: Group mind, a word introduced by Ormsby-Green (2006, pp. 292-293) which means ‘an aggregation of combined caseloads of a number of people which sets up an ‘entity’ which seems to have a sentience and a will of its own. Entirely reactive, combining people under commonly connected caseload. Apparent in instances of mob rule, religious euphoria, societal judgmentalism, group fanaticism, and ideological fervour as typically seen in various religions, cults, belief systems and politics.’

The concept of group mind I have not seen iterated elsewhere though reference is made to ‘groupthink.’ But this word does not cover the negative and subliminal charge that a ‘group mind’ holds, and it occurred to me that it is exactly this negative charge that is in need of attention. The significance of gaining intellectual understanding of this phenomenon is to become more closely attuned to how dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges are effected by group mind. The following image from my Creative Diary shows what ‘group mind’ feels like to me:
Cultivating conversation lies at the centre of what informal educators do, but my work as a teacher in E&C -operating mainly in vocational and special education and only since 2000 in cross-cultural education- the focus was not just on conversation, but also testing out prejudices (prejudgments) and searching out meaning whilst becoming more critical. The focus was also on that which 'slips' away in the process yet subliminally influences 'our' thinking, 'our' feelings and 'our' actions. Those subliminal influences are so subtle that we hardly notice them, yet they underpin all teaching/learning processes and create the real lessons; life-lessons.

During the process of research I was asked what made my research different to all the other research that was done to date in the area of cross-cultural education. I blurted out without further thinking that I wanted to focus on the 'cross'. I had no idea what I meant by that reaction, and I was shocked by my own, rather fierce but intuitive response. It was only on retrospect and after a great deal of both empirical and literature research that I saw the significance of my response. The deeper I went into research of the 'cross', the more I knew I was on track, even though I had no idea what 'being on track' meant. I felt like a nomad in no-man’s land, though I had a sense of where I was going and nothing and nobody was going to get me off this track. Meanwhile I found myself, at least initially, surrounded by people who tried to block my progress, suggesting my project was too vague and probably useless in terms of adding to the ‘bank of knowledge’¹. I felt uncomfortable with the idea of knowledge as if something that can be personally owned, accumulated, deposited and saved; a banking principle with largely negative social consequences, as Freire (1972) suggests. Knowledge is not static and bounded in space and

¹ Luckily, my present supervisors’ attention was caught by my focus on the ‘cross’, and their support generated a process of deep inquiry.
time, nor outside of Self, and suggesting that invalidates people’s autonomy. The positive side of
the concept of a ‘bank of knowledge’ is that it connotes ‘group mind’ and its subliminal influence
that dictates double discourse and associated cross-cultural group-dynamics including in
teaching/learning situations.

Knowledge is not something out there or ‘in here’ as if people and other entities are containers.
Knowledge implies psychological time, say Krishnamurti & Bohm (1985) and when you end time
there is no knowledge (p. 125). It shows up as something substantial but is not. It appears in
conceptual metaphors that human beings adopt to make visible the intangible.

Conceptual metaphors are mental pictures that blueprint and shape imagination, or that which
Turner (1974) calls creative imagination which is ‘far richer than imagery [and] “creative”, because
it is the ability to create concepts and conceptual systems that may correspond to nothing in the
senses’ (p. 51).

‘Knowledge’ correlates in a way with quantum scientist and Nobel laureate Robert Laughlin’s
suggestion that ‘everything is emergent, but we’ll never know what from’ (Samuel, 2002).

In relation to the cross, I felt that the idea of a ‘fixed’ bank of knowledge could be associated with
crucifixion, not transformation. This is why I thought exploring this metaphor could lead to cultural
transformation, away from blind parochialism. ‘Culture’ could become an intermediary between
the particular and universal, the transitory and somewhat permanent, between micro and macro
levels of data and analysis and absolute and relative poles of thought and frames of
understanding (Perusek, 2007).

Doing this PhD study made apparent that cross-cultural education, as for multicultural education,
is to help students master essential literacy, numeracy, thinking and perspective-taking skills, and
cross-cultural functioning as something associated with levels of assimilation (Banks, 2006, pp.
55-58). This type of education ignores not only the metaphor cross but also dialogue (Bohm,
1996). I wanted dialogue: deep inquiry in a bid to steer away from ‘fixed’ positions and negotiate
the space in-between.

A cross-cultural exchange leads to dialogue when we question our responses to what comes
towards us and what we receive, as well as how we reflect on what we send out. As different to
debate which is based on opinions, dialogue implies as Bohm, Factor and Garrett (1991) propose
‘a kind of collective inquiry not only into the content of what each of us say, think and feel but also
into the underlying motivations, assumptions and beliefs that lead us to so do.’ Language as an
evolving ‘discrete infinity’ is much more than speech (Corballis, 2006) or words (Todres, 2007). It
is also about what is not expressed (ibid), as well as about ‘embodied seeing’ (Brodsky, 2005)
with the acting body as a crucial element in the transfer and translation of ideas (Gendlin, 1996;
Todres, 2007).
Contemporary cross-cultural education contextualises, promotes and shapes the widespread assumption of fixed positions and associated fixed ways of perceiving the world. It precludes the body: the lived or felt experience. As such it restricts dialogue and with that deep inquiry. This in turn breeds distance if not hostility. My hypothesis is that this is why for example non-Indigenous teachers struggle to provide ‘safe and neutral schooling’ for Indigenous students. The main strategy continues to be creating ‘order’ that is imposed from ‘above’; a tactic additionally kept intact by the ways in which non-Indigenous policy makers and Indigenous peoples negotiate. As an Aboriginal woman and assistant school-principal told me one day: ‘I would love to talk to them [the politicians and policy makers], but I do not know how.’

Religious practices, Griffith & Griffith (1994) suggest, advise on dilemmas yet forbid the kind of conversation that is needed to resolve the dilemma. Their focus on right versus wrong and good versus bad aborts expression of members to talk of their individual life experiences. Though less overt than through intimidation by overt violence, such covert cultural practices bind the body and bodily expression according to the dictates of the group (pp. 57-59). Griffith & Griffith’ take on religious practices could be translated to educational practices when individual life experiences are subjugated by theoretical expositions.

As became evident during this research-process, a synthesis between seemingly separate and sometimes even opposing fields appears impossible when there is an unexpressed if not unconscious intent to sustain one’s own ‘religion’ (Kuhn, 1970). This applies to any discipline, and not only to cross-cultural education, communication and the arts and social ecology, but also Aboriginal and holistic education, philosophy and mathematics.

What sustains binding cultural practices that arise from society-wide narratives about for example gender, race, age, economic status or ethnicity and keeps ‘sides sticking’ and the space in-between troubled, is the failing to unravel in dialogue and come to conceptually understand phenomena such as paradigms, implants, judgments, criticisms and beliefs, but also what emotions actually are and what kind of an energy for example anger, fear, excitement and boredom carry. Those energetic phenomena are embedded in the general group mind and (usually) unconsciously negotiated and co-constructed group-experiences that individuals reproduce by buying into them, taking them on board and attaching significance to them. The pay-off is a set of identities, and Ormsby-Green (2006) defines identity as ‘a package that the spiritual being creates or adopts in order to individuate (p. 295) which implies the ‘attempt to separate out from the mass by the establishment of a separate persona, having its own unique combination of characteristics’ (p. 296).

Difficulties in communication arise when individual life experiences of phenomena such as those described above are not open to discussion in a given context that is paradigm-closed. Religious and/or educational practices that focus on maintaining the current status quo would clearly reject
such discussions. One research-participant, A., commented that policies which are meant to prevent public discussions on people’s religious backgrounds reflect the bigoted climate or fixed landscape in which they are produced: ‘It’s like religious groups, they don’t query their own religion.’

Only recently I attended a workshop on non-violent communication for the first time (and perhaps the last). The conveners of this workshop invited participants to say in one word how they felt in that instance. All participants expressed one word and the conveners acknowledged each word. Then it was my turn. I expressed a word, holding the expectation and perhaps wrongly, the hope that the group and especially the conveners shared my viewpoint: that whatever individuals feel is, though personally felt, not something personal but a ‘vibe’ that lives in the space and individuals pick up on for personal reasons (preferences). I expected (and was it only ‘my’ expectation?) that their approach aimed to help shift the group mind from an analytical take on our environment that leaves out something important (Schroeder, 2008, p. 63) to an understanding of the deeper, hard-to-define experiences and values that give us a ‘sense of place’ (ibid). I expected they shared my viewpoint that we, human beings, are sensing beings who are actually capable of feeling patterns in a space in a felt sense when we attune to the centre of the body, especially when we move out of patterns associated with the discursive ‘doing’ side of our mind and into our ‘being’ side (ibid, p. 67). I expected that they asked for ‘our’ emotions from the viewpoint that they are not defined or bounded energies, the same as individuals are not defined or bounded entities. I expected they asked for ‘our’ emotions so as to prompt dialogue (Bohm, 1996), in the sense of ‘getting lost in talking’ (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1996, p. 268) by moving from the particular to the general and from the general to move still deeper and there perhaps meet the purity of what is called compassion, love and intelligence (ibid). Not so. And in hindsight, how ignorant I was at that point in time. But we learn from experience and not from intellectual understanding only, and as Ormsby-Green often says in our personal communications: We do not engage in spaces for reasons we think at the time, and often only (much) later that we realise the real ‘reason’: When I said I felt a sense of boredom, my comment was completely ignored and all the attention went immediately to the person next to me. This made me feel both confused and frustrated, and I felt violated because trapped in a cultural practice and a bigoted space in which I (and others?) could not move. I no longer experienced this workshop was about ‘non-violent’ communication: a notion that itself reflects either/or (fragmented or ‘boxed’) thinking and emphasises thus reinforces ‘violent’ communication. Not that I see either/or thinking as ‘wrong’ which would assume a ‘right’ way of thinking, but I felt no openness for dialogue: the course was to be run as pre-planned and there was no space for personal narrative that attends to the fabric of the ‘divided self’ (Bochner, 1997) so as to undo ourselves from the wider fabric of disconnections as promoted in educational institutions: a fabric that expects people to feel comfortable in a space that excludes the capriciousness of immediate
experience’ (pp. 421-422) and that ‘exalts the voice of reason, objectivity, and rigor, so we learn to hide our personal self behind a veneer’ (ibid, p. 433): a fabric that in reference to this thesis, contextualises the split in cross-cultural exchanges, and at the same time seeks to resolve that split. The space in this workshop reflected a fabric that has produced collective ‘emotional fallout’ as a result of a lifetime of teaching and research (Tompkins, as cited by Bochner, 1997, p. 434). Had there been a focus if not at least an interest in dialogue, I and/or we could have elaborated on our viewpoints. I could have explained that boredom is an energy opposite to that of apathy: that I see boredom, unlike apathy, as quite a light energy, not heavy, and an energy that links to the recognition of ignorance, which as Cohen (2001, p. 15) points out, is a starting point that departs from divisive, fragmentary thinking and moves forward into holistic thinking which is not thinking but some other factor, as Krishnamurti (1978, p. 263) suggests. I believed I was engaging in a space that was aimed at the recognition of ignorance.

Perhaps this event would not have triggered such an intense response in me, had I not had a range of previous experiences both as a student and a teacher in various educational contexts including holistically oriented ones that permitted me to see this pattern of unrecognised ignorance in full display and across the board.

‘There is no split between theory and story when theorizing is conceived as a social and communicative activity’, writes Bochner (1997, p. 436). Without an openness to deep inquiry which can be facilitated by a mutual unravelling of concepts, cultural and individually adopted myths remain intact and with that a double discourse of power, which in turn limits vision to the horizontal axis of life. In other words, a focus on sustaining the tribe or religious doctrine ‘serves’ one culture but not another, and its dynamics are entropic. Perhaps a better way is to look into one’s own social system first and foremost whilst working with or for others, so as to propel a self-organising and self-directed power towards change (LeBel, 2008). In other words, perhaps it is better to ‘slay the dragon within’ and accept the surrender to ‘inner being’ (Raff, 2000) whilst in communication with others.

From my diary, 9 August 2006

I saw a clearer picture of my need to create some sort of a place in which I can use the teasing aspect which Van der Kam (ex-lecturer in vocational guidance at Fontys University, The Netherlands) defines a playful form of ‘cataclysms’ as a cosmological power; something which some consider ‘provocative therapy’ which only works, Gerard suggests, when we really love people. Gerard said that I play ‘guinea-pig’ in this. I had to think about this for a while and then realised he meant that I tease answers out of people. Or as I explained to him, that people tend to get clear what they actually want by working with me, not by what I say but by what I do. Teasing for me has a positive connotation, as it relates to getting one’s mission clear, though I do not
specifically aim for clarity, but it kind of 'just happens'; it emerges as it happens. It is a way of facilitating towards that end, but not by fixing the focus on it.

2.3 The Schil and ‘blind spots’

The more aware we become of what ‘felt experiences’ are and that each feeling (sensation) and each thought only has meaning to the degree we signify it, the more we are able to observe the world in its different layers or ‘skins’. It becomes clear that we communicate at various levels, ranging from ‘close to our skin’ in a physical sense to ‘close to our skin’ in a felt sense away from the physical body and in realm that is much more subtle in texture (Wilber, 2001).

The dynamics in those layers appear to emerge in spaces in-between polar force-fields such as yin and yang, masculine and feminine, dark and light, centrifugal and centripetal vortexes, repulsion and attraction, left and right, top and bottom. They ‘mark and bend identities, remake time and adorn and reshape the body, tell stories and allow people to play with behaviour that is restored or ‘twice-behaved’” (Denzin, 2003, pp. 8-9).

Gestalt theory pays much attention to what they call the contact-boundary in which contact is creative: a complex interplay of organizing experience that is not concrete in time or space. It can be altered, dissolved or ignored so we experience a meeting somewhere else than where it appears to occur (Latner, 1992).

At the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK), this contact-boundary was coined the Schil that literally translates as: bark, skin, peel, and upper layer. The Schil was described as: ‘the transition between i.e. inside and outside, I and the other, space and the other. The boundary constantly changes through the exchange between marker-points, which are those points where I notice the movement from my core to the outside and where the ‘skin’ lies. The physical skin is the tangible form of the ‘Schil’”.

Dimitrov’s (2005) methodology called ‘fuzziology’ seeks to clarify this ‘Schil’; this multi-layeredness he refers to as fuzziness:

‘In a broad sense, fuzziness is the opposite of precision. Everything that cannot be defined precisely (that is, according to some broadly accepted criteria or norms of precision) and everything that has no clearly described boundaries in space or time is considered a bearer of fuzziness. In a narrow sense, fuzziness relates to the definition of fuzzy sets as proposed by Zadeh in 1965: sets, the belongingness to which is measured by a membership function whose values are between 1 (full belongingness) and 0 (non-belongingness). Fuzziness is an essential characteristic of the images that raise and dissolve in our thoughts - in our memories and reflections about the past and in our plans and dreams about the future. They have blurred boundaries and consist of fuzzy immaterial 'substance'. Having in mind how important is to think in images for the development of our intelligence and capacity to learn and know, to
act and create, to evolve and transform, one should not underestimate the role of fuzziness in human evolution. Fuzziness has a substantial presence in our knowledge about the society and ourselves. The constant interplay of human dynamics at three major scales of their manifestations - individual (intrapersonal dynamics), social (interpersonal dynamics) and existential (universal dynamics) - results in the emergence of spinning webs and 'whirlpools' of social interactions, which constantly reproduce forces and energies to strengthen or weaken the self-propelling capacity of these dynamics. There are so many intricately interwoven factors and conditions engaged in the realization of this capacity, that it is nonsensical to look for or to apply precise descriptions and definitions when explaining or dealing with their infinite (in number and diversity) embodiments.'

Ormsby-Green's (2006) methodology similarly seeks to clarify this 'Schil', this 'fuzziness' in which the projection/reflection principle (pp. 125-128) applies, by which he means that whatever we receive from the physical universe is a reflection of what we have within, and that which we put out reflects back for us to experience.

The more we understand about this principle, 'fuzziness' can clarify, which is the principle aim of fuzziology but also StrataQuest (Ormsby-Green, 2006): we understand better and work more aptly with the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges as fractal to what Sheldrake (1987, p. 320) calls morphic fields:

'Societies have social and cultural morphic fields which embrace and organize all that resides within them. Although comprised of thousands and thousands of individual human beings, the society can function and respond as a unified whole via the characteristics of its morphic field. To visualize this, it is helpful to remember that fields by their very nature are both within and around the things to which they refer. A magnetic field is both within a magnet and around it; a gravitational field is both within the earth and around it. Field theories thus take us beyond the traditional rigid definition of "inside" and "outside".'

Sheldrake's notion of 'morphic fields' resembles the notion of 'field' (called 'het veld' as conceptualised in the Learning Plan of the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK) (1972):

1/ The field exists everywhere and always,
2/ The field is the carrier of the total of the appearances,
3/ None of these appearances have a set place or shape (they are not things) and they do not exist apart from one another; there are reference-points and movements within the field,

The field consists of the four elements time-space-energy-substance and the processes in between these.

Another concept: de kern [the core], was defined in that same Learning Plan as 'the point in the field from where movement begins through which the other is attracted.' The 'other' was explained as
‘everything that I ‘bump’ into: 1/ Society, to be experienced from one of the marker-points of the other. 1a/ Reality; when I see society from another viewpoint. 1b/ Imagination, there are more societies than one. 2/ Collective, which is the sensed (felt) movement between myself and the other; 2a/ The pointed movement to connect society (the other) with me. 2b/ When I give structure to this movement then I make it collective.’

The above AVEK concepts may help enlarge a fixed horizon, particularly when introduced in addition to concepts such as group mind and paradigm as suggested in the previous section. They may help clarification of ‘blind spots’ in the ‘Schil’ between self and other/Other, or what Josselson (1996) calls the space ‘in-between’, Bingley (2003) ‘a space of play’ (p. 330-331), and research participants ‘the grey area’, ‘the intermediary’, ‘the dark corner’, ‘the centre’ and ‘the Heart’. Some people associate this liminal space with the ‘wounded Healer’ (Myss, 2001) or the space of a traveller who uses his/her baggage to get through difficult conditions (Levinas, 1987, p. 80). By opening up the horizon to ‘blind spots’ in the ‘Schil’ and attending to the dynamics, we can move through them whilst creating healthier groups and communities and healing ourselves; a healing that implies confronting our own wounds (Dimitrov, 2003; Komfield, 1998; Neville, 1989, 2007; Scott-Peck, 1978).

2.4 A crossing of paths

Throughout this research study, I learned how to look into a mirror that was presented to me by cross-cultural education. It confronted me with the ‘I’m alright Jack, how about you?’ attitude, which I discovered unsettles and belittles people. I also saw in the mirror the seeing of, and thereof acting out an unsafe and biased world, reflected in for example the emphasis on safe and neutral schooling. I saw in the mirror the emphasis on success, and therefore the seeing of, and therefore acting out of failing.

![Image 7: From my Creative Diary: Personal impression of mirroring space, time and people](image_url)
I discovered that to the degree that I was unwilling to look in the mirror and come to terms with what I saw ‘out there’ reflected ‘in here’, that to that same degree I reactivated and consolidated passive or active resistance both in others and myself. This resistance formed the wall in-between self and other; a wall that actually is the mirror. By protesting this mirror, it becomes a wall that blocks insight into ‘blind spots.’

I began to understand that I needed to look closer in and engage with dynamics. I was to see how others ‘carry the cross’, as one research-participant jokingly commented, so I could ‘carry’ mine and transform it in myself to begin with, and then convey the observed dynamics in an autoethnographic research product. I began to understand I was to accept opaque energy-fields as ripples in an ocean of energy; ripples that become waves and then flip over to fold backwards into themselves, but only when I permit them in and ‘beach’ on ‘my sand’.

I was to embrace a process of deep or ‘maieutic inquiry’ (Dimitrov, 2005), and convey the process of ‘crossing paths’ as an inner journey in which one’s attitude or approach is pertinent to external changes. The process of research would be about coming to understand what it means to adopt a position of participant-observer and be the hyphen, with which I refer to Perusek’s (2007) notion of participant-observation as ‘a process made real and synthesized solely by the consciousness of the individual who, perched upon the hyphen (in the word participant-observation) gives it life not just in the field, but potentially everywhere: post field in relation to data, while constructing ethnographies, and always, while engaged in and attempting to understand the world’ (p. 834).

I submerged deeper and deeper into the process of attending to the ‘cross’ and became more aware of the physically, mentally and spiritually ‘crossing’ of paths in a wider landscape; an interactively interweaving ‘landscape’ which I increasingly experienced as that which Sills & Lown, (2008) refer to as the third field; ‘a field much wider than individual people or the impact of their relationship’ (p. 78), together with two other fields Sills & Lown (2008) refer to as the first field of attention (establishing a vertical connecting by individual meditation practice and concentration to gain insight) and the second field of attention (extending the ‘horizontal connection’ by establishing an energetic relationship with another and energetically embodying a larger space in the moment of attending to that which is happening inside as well as what is happening in that Other) (pp. 77-78). Sills & Lown (ibid) refer to this process as establishing ‘groundedness’: ‘We can connect more strongly to an expanding internal sense of space that can include and attend to more and more experiences without discrimination. Grounding ourselves in this orientation in turn supports the capacity of the Other to open to more empathy and compassion for themselves’ (p. 70).

One research participant, Cl., a holistically oriented cross-cultural educator from Australia, reflected on her learning-process as a teacher as follows:
‘For me, this is about the absolute relativity of what we call existence. Our reliance on our senses for survival has given us the impression that what we are able to perceive is all that there is. I don’t think that we are even close to understanding the true nature of existence. The concept of the field brings forth the idea of what is potential and what is manifest as well as the idea of the multiverse. Potential removes the limitations of probability and possibility, keeping us open to the unexpected. The multiverse allows us to lay our perceptions of reality alongside those of another without conflict as the impulse toward dualistic thinking melts away. In terms of the “vocation of the educator in cross-cultural exchange,” I no longer see myself as an “educator” per se. Rather, I have come to see that my work offers me the possibility of opening myself to the beauty and the mystery of co-creation. Although my title has the word educator in it, I am trying to steer my organisation toward using a community cultural development (CCD) model rather than an adult education model as the basis for our work with the community. CCD values local knowledge, skills and practices, creates a safe space where contributions of all participants are made respectfully and are respected, uses the many languages of the arts to transact meaning and relies on the emergence of new understanding through the authentic interaction of the group. This model resonates well with the study of Social Ecology [and] gives me a sense of emergence that looks like clouds forming and dissipating. I also get a sense of swarming dynamics that hum and move as one, of unexpected outcomes (non-locality) which sound like loud but not unpleasant pops and of thick, rich compost decomposing and bringing on new life.’

Cl.’s rich description of ‘the field’ and how she sees herself partaking in and of it, reflects what lies at the centre or the heart of cross-cultural education. Her description tells the difference between educating by looking in and engaging with the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges, and educating by telling others what and how to do and/or be.

2.5 Confronting the Skin of a Tough Teacher

I would not have been able to find a tougher teacher than the field of cross-cultural education to develop my practice and theory as a teacher and now researcher in Expression & Communication; a toughness that was reflected by a comment of one Dutch research participant, Ca., who said:

Ca.: At the moment, there is a lot on offer in education, but you’re only allowed to (C. sniffs up air) and it’s gone again. And that is it!

Jose: Yes, and no context.

Ca.: Not any context. No depth... And that creates shallowness, superficiality. And I see that everywhere.

Jose: Almost as if ADHD is created...
Ca.: Yes, that is one thing... And you see there is no context and no depth. Not at any level. You walk into a shop and there are people who sell things. They cannot give any information about what they are selling. They have no interest either. And you see that on many levels. Because education is so shallow, superficial... just a quick sniff of things. There is no groundedness. The whole context has been lost. So you create very shallow people, really superficial and flimsy people with little body and touch. And that shallowness is there at many levels. Also in primary education, all that fatigue, all those teachers who are exhausted from always having to, having to, having to... There is no quietude. The space is chaotic. It is dirty. The classrooms are not orderly... It seeps through on other levels. The cleaners are foreigners who need to complete their job in a rush. And it keeps going on like that. It does not stop. So the urgency to do something about it is very strong in me. So thank god I choose projects that permit me to play all day long with children in a classroom (teaching them foot massage). But you won’t get me into a teacher-education institution, because I do not want to teach that way, in that sense. A lot of in-depth exploration is first to take place in teacher-education.

The ‘toughness’ of the field of cross-cultural education was also reflected back to me in the words of Marg, another Dutch participant:

I explain the field often as ‘concentrate on the air between you and the others’. Hermes [Greek god of communication] is symbolised with wings. He travels through the air. The air transports communication. In Greece his wings are the logo on post boxes... As the field is my starting point and specialization, I mostly have problems to translate my knowledge to more conceptual/mental thinkers.

Yet another and this time an Australian participant, Mars, reflected the toughness as follows:

The development of cross-cultural understanding was the great missed journey of 20th century, and remains the challenge for the 21st along with environmental change. The fear evident on the nightly news as story after story reveals the oft tragic lack of awareness of cultural issues, cross-cultural communication failures. The insular nature of human existence, which typically gravitated to the familiar, that which does not contradict or challenge, or move one out of the cultural comfort zone. The lack of tears at this ongoing human drama and how people become anaesthetised to the events and the inhumanity of the tides of human events.

From research-participants’ comments such as the above I tentatively concluded that holistically oriented cross-cultural educators ‘suffer’ the consequences of a focus in contemporary cross-cultural education that is rather shallow if not fixed in and on boundaries. This focus signifies the symbolic power of the cross in terms of a ‘crucifix’, and not so much in terms of transition or transformation. I thought deeper about this symbolic power and noted the following:

From my diary, 27 February 2008.
Cross-cultural education represents, to me, as a culture of embeddedness under the archetype cross. It is actually an archetype that is implanted into the human psyche. The result is a culture of suffering. Humanity has been implanted with a culture of suffering. We’ve adopted that cross in ignorance to who we really are, for purposes no other than to eventually recognize our power, our creativity, our love of life which we gave away to the implant as we placed ourselves under it. We’ve placed ourselves under the archetype ‘cross’ and spread it out, around. We’ve spread it out and around, and reinforced it onto each other, not knowing we were acting out something else’s drive, a drive that was implanted into us like a virus, and became embedded in our bodies.

Now our bodies operate as ‘skins’ that cover up that which we all share: The spirit within where we are all one. Our task is to shed that skin; that skin of suffering: that archetype. To carry it no longer, but carry it for as long as we need to, until there is no more craving for it or aversion against it; which is the same mechanism… craving and aversion—which are essentially a centripetal and a centrifugal power; forces that we’ve learned to consolidate in our bodies by taking perceptions seriously and evaluating them as right or wrong, and then reacting to them compulsively.

This culture of suffering has blurred our vision, dulled our senses. It has permitted us to shut out the other and as such created a culture of otherness. We even consider ourselves as ‘other’, shutting out that what we have in common; that spiritual quality that we all share and feel in our hearts when we open it up and fill it with love. All along it was filled anyhow, but we’d forgotten; too heavily engaged because pursuing this interest in this culture of suffering which exhibited itself in a burdening of ourselves with information; stuffing ourselves full with information; being bombarded by sensations. That was the game. So the name of the game behind the culture of suffering was to be overwhelmed, burdened by information, and as such forget how to communicate piecemeal and tailor-made bits of data, instead blurring out superficial stuff, always only touching the surface, with little intention to touch the deeper layers of those to whom we want to reach out. A result is/was a continuous rubbing past each other; rarely really meeting, but slipping and sliding past the other; rarely meeting face-to-face and seeing eye-to-eye and becoming as one; as a one humanity. May we have a space in the middle that is open, and remains open, to not be filled but kept open to allow a space for nothing to be present; for stillness and complete peace to enter the space, so all of us are no longer cluttered and bombarded; no longer interested in being bombarded by stuff; by gross energies; or even enticed by subtle energies. Yes, this is a path to be walked together, and it is a long path. The question is, who is willing to walk it, not as a follower or a leader but as a companion; towards an end that is endless; an end that is always the beginning of a new moment; a fresh moment; a still moment. May all beings witness themselves in that space; that space of the equanimous mind, where sharing is no longer a compulsion, but a possibility.

Jose.
Increasingly aware of my rather idealist expectations and intentions, I learned to not expect more from this research than to only lift a limited veil at a time and attend to some blind spots but not others. The difficulty however was in spotting the core ‘blind spots’ that form information gaps which, as Hopf (2003) suggests, are something either a/ totally unknown, b/ known but not understood or appreciated or c/ known but not available or acted upon, or available but closed for public access or detectable by existing systems. In other words, ‘blind spots’ are about what I referred to earlier in Griffith & Griffith’s take on religious practices. A core ‘blind spot’ then seems to be what de Spinoza (1951) calls ‘error [that] consists in the privation of knowledge … For instance, men are mistaken in thinking themselves free; their opinion is made up of consciousness of their own actions, and ignorance of the causes by which they are conditioned. Their idea of freedom, therefore, is simply their ignorance of any cause of their actions’ (pp. 108-109).

Similar to Griffith & Griffith’s viewpoint, Van Hoorn (2007a) refers to ‘blind spots’ as spaces in which communication does not run smoothly: people find it difficult to express themselves (pp. 101-102). They can only ‘go around’ them, and characteristically people ‘touch’ those spots only briefly as they ‘rub up against’ them. But they also tend to bounce back from them again from a sense of self-protection (ibid). In other words, the tendency to ‘bounce back’ into the previously established position occurs in and as a projection/reflection principle.

2.6 Fixed focus of attention in policy

It appears obvious to those who have adopted a viewpoint on societies as structured and fixed, not fluid and self-organising, that educational policy across cultures is largely driven and supported by cross-cultural educational researchers’ findings (Banks, 2006, p. 173). This viewpoint ensures ambiguity in politicians’ support of attitudes that need attention whilst they themselves support the current attitudes. Educators’ attitudes, stereotypes and expectations for example are considered in need of considerable attention, but whilst politicians themselves keep binary thinking intact, possessive individualism is merely toughened (Apple, 2006, p. 15) doubly reinforced by neo-liberalism that is ‘organized around racial dynamics’ (ibid, p. 14), so the negative cycle Apple, Kenway & Singh (2005) refer to as ‘globalization from above’ is reinforced.

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) suggest that the preference for binary thinking, otherwise called ‘polarization’ or ‘either/or’ thinking is especially rampant in cultures with a high masculinity factor, and that most Western countries have this high masculinity factor. Exceptions to this ‘rule’ are for example the Scandinavian countries and The Netherlands; those what they identify as ‘feminine’ countries are also comparatively small in number of citizens and as such have less of a ‘voice’ in global including educational politics.
If we temporarily adopt Hofstede & Hofstede’s viewpoint on feminine and masculine cultures, a
dynamic becomes apparent which we could refer to as political polarising ‘logic’ that serves the
production of an expansive and ‘ever-growing encyclopaedia of facts, theories, hypotheses,
doctrines, pictures etc.’ (Dimitrov, 2005, p. 99). This polarising logic is produced and processed
by what Black (1968) calls ‘something mental’ (p. 211). It follows that this ‘logic’, especially when
it is fixed on maintaining the status quo, manifests a perceived body/mind rift that reinforces
games such as acting the victim, invalidation, pulling rank, dispersion, diverting focus, small
picturing, creating conflict, creating a victim, overwhelming, generalizing, locking-in, non-
acknowledgement and provision of ‘false data’. As such, by separating having from being, a
landscape of culture is created that consists of two boxes: Right or wrong, and false and true.

A landscape that is formed in and through the application of such boxes breeds dogmatic or
righteous attitudes and aggressive communication (Steiner, 2007). Such a landscape also invests
belief in, and actively supports narrowly defined conceptualisations of human intelligence
according to the ‘factory model of education’ via the World Bank’s ‘Education for All’ agenda
(Gidley, 2001; Gidley, 2002; Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002). Here, a politics of certainty is
encouraged: a politics that negates uncertainty or turbulence that is ‘not just a useful noun for
describing the unsettling effect of an unexpected force that alters your course of movement.

Turbulence is metaphor for the broader levels of interconnection and interdependency between
the various forces that are in play in the modern world’ (Papastergiades, in Bash & Zezlina-
Philips, 2006, p. 114). But this interconnection and interdependency is ignored if not opposed to
keep intact the mechanism of protecting ‘blind spots’ in the ‘skin’ or the contact-boundary.

Thus is reinforced the domination of a fixed landscape which we could also label (and still
according to the theory of Hofstede & Hofstede) as a ‘masculine’ global culture. Since ‘masculine’
cultures emphasise strength, muscle-power and polarisation (according to Hofstede & Hofstede),
small community-organisations, cooperatives, so-called ‘less’ fortunate people and others who
are somehow quite capable to handle their own situations are judged as ‘disorderly and ruined’
(Vigh, 2008) and effectively belittled and brought to ‘correction’ (p. 10).

Both in The Netherlands and in Australia, I have facilitated a number of groups of new migrants
on their course towards a new and more appropriate study or job. Once in The Netherlands, I
worked with a young man from Afghanistan. He was obviously highly intelligent and sensitive. He
had grown up in a wealthy family and was politically aware. Whether he had actively contributed
to the war in Afghanistan that had impelled him to escape from his country and become a refugee
in The Netherlands I do not know. But whatever the reason he was placed under juridical
restriction, his ‘grievances’ were ‘heard’ by most people in the community including my
colleagues at the time, from a political and personalizing viewpoint. They seemed to have little to
no compassion for this man, which I found hard to handle.
2.7 A bid to steer away from fixed identity politics

St. Clair and Jia (2005) suggest cross-cultural education is dominated by academic cultures in which scholars from all over the world share a culture that concentrates on what are considered ‘higher’ mental functions such as literacy and numeracy; functions that require a set of cognitive skills that enable people to see what the world looks like on paper and how to process information abstractly. Expectations that emanate from this viewpoint on ‘higher’ mental functions demand from the ‘Other’ that s/he gains a strong command of literacy. The use of formal logic, scientific knowledge and debate are accentuated. They ignore the supposedly ‘lower’, yet considered universal, mental functions: functions such as biological and physiological abilities (visual, auditory, tactile etc.). An emphasis on cognitive rather than on aesthetic skills diminishes the perception of subtle sensations such as colour, pattern, balance and texture. Interestingly, these ‘lower’ mental functions that St. Clair & Jia refer to are those that artists draw on. They also evoke self-transcending emotions that push people out of the ‘cocoon of familiarity’ (Pushkin, 2001) and into ‘the world of prose’ (David Olson, 1996, as cited in St. Clair & Jia, 2005, p. 3).

As a teacher in Expression & Communication (E&C) I emphasise those ‘lower’ mental functions to be able to tease out and unfold ‘fixed’ dynamics within and among people. But as a post-graduate student in a ‘fixed’ landscape of cross-cultural education, I struggled to give express and communicate those functions in order to ‘fit’ them into the ‘higher’ mental functions.

### Beginning the Journey

Don’t write too poetically, he says,

The Ethics Committee won’t understand…

A pain guls through my heart and into my breasts, then

Creeps into my shoulders and

My throat bulges out.

I feel despair, his, mine, ours, theirs…

They won’t understand, he says,

I’ve tried so often.

Not long after he resigns,

Leaves this institution for another.

I feel let down and wonder

The ethics of all this …

Jose, 8 October 2008
I witnessed within myself that what are considered ‘higher’ mental functions produce ‘certain’
cognition that in turn, as Dimitrov (1998) suggests, impose ‘frozen patterns in the space of human
thoughts and feelings’ that cannot be ‘thawed out’ by alienating ‘uncertain’ skills such as feeling,
intuition and deep inquiry. In denial of ‘uncertain’ skills, people’s attention remains fixed in ‘known’
ways of thinking, feeling and acting, which produces ‘passive groupthink’ and ‘exhaustive
competition’ (ibid), so opposing poles hold on to their boundaries and ‘sides stick’. Dialogue is
impossible in this frozen situation, and a split in the basis of the spirit/mind/body is created but
also kept intact.

Frozen patterns create ‘one-size-fits-all’ strategies that run opposite to, for example, Oceana-
Pacific ways of navigating in resonance with cosmic forces, otherwise called ‘way-finding’
(Dening, 2008). These strategies oppose Aboriginal ontologies that lie ‘outside discourses of
‘race’, difference, enlightenment and progress [and] limitations of objectivist binaries, cultural
racisms, patriarchy, regimes of othering, liberal contradictions and ambivalent plays’ (Harris and

On a much grander scale, they stifle living meanings that ‘are unknown before the act of
emergence; meanings in dynamics – not settled forever, not imposed from outside the vortex, but
born from within the vortex and impregnated by its whirling ‘energies’” (Dimitrov, 1998). With
those ‘whirling energies’ kept under wraps, people’s attention span (their state of alertness,
awareness) is reduced. This badly affects what Turner (1974) defined as communitas, or anti-
structure. This ‘bad effect’ seems to produce a militaristic language that pertains to what David
Hawkins (1992) calls force as different to power. Utterings such as ‘tackling’ problems,
‘defending’ rights, and ‘shooting’ the messenger have become common in the global political
landscape, whilst dialogue is cut short and placing faith in mysterious solutions and political or
spiritual gurus is encouraged.

Jean Gebser’s (1956)\(^2\) notion of five consciousness ‘structures’ is useful to contextualise the
mechanism of emphasising ‘certain’ cognition and the frozen patterns it produces. Gebser
suggest each consciousness structure has its own forms of asserting and assigning power and
authority. Each structure came into effect in reaction to the previous consciousness structure, so

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\(^2\) Gebser defined five realms of consciousness, and each of these levels has its own forms of asserting and
assigning power and authority. Those five levels are respectively the archaic, the magic, the mythic, the
mental and the integral realms. Gebser suggests each subsequent realm is a reaction to the previous, so the
mental realm developed in reaction to the mythic, which developed in reaction to the magic (mystic), which
developed in reaction to the archaic. So mental consciousness inhabits all those suppressed and repressed
ways of knowing and knowledge-systems. This explains why ‘academic’ knowledge that is embedded in,
and hangs on to mental consciousness, negates knowledge associated with metaphor, symbolism, and
archetypes, but also ‘magic’ and other forms of archaic ways of knowing generally considered as
‘primitive’. Integral consciousness however resonates with new sciences such as complexity, chaos and
string theory. Integral consciousness embraces all ‘previous’ forms of knowing for it assumes all is part of
the whole and the whole imparted in and partaken by the aspects. Bohm (1996, 1998) explores this notion
of participation in depth.
the integral in reaction to the mental structure, the mental to the mythic, the mythic to the magical and the magical to the archaic consciousness structure.

So it appears that contemporary cross-cultural education is still embedded in the mental structure with its focus fixed on the horizontal axis of life: body and mind are seen as separate from each other. More specifically, mind is seen as the brain; as something purely physical and something that can or must be influenced, constructed and deconstructed. This assumption precludes the spiritual component and the integral connection between body/mind/spirit. It produces more emphasis on time (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985), and as such diminishes self-determination, self-directedness, self-organisation, autonomy as well as the interdependency of all living systems.

The following image from my Creative Diary shows my impression of how people function as funnels through which these consciousness structures and associated ‘politics’ spread out and impact the space.

Image 8: From my Creative Diary: Personal Impression of how people act as funnels

Capra (1982) observes that yin corresponds to responsive, consolidating, cooperative activity and yang to aggressive, expanding, competitive activity. The landscape of contemporary cross-cultural education can be considered a ‘yang’ landscape that, because it disowns yin-qualities, recreates pictures of the world and of people; pictures of cardboard cut-outs that manifest a partialised and out of context world with a supporting ideological hegemony. Methods, models and studies offered to relieve ‘contentious cross-cultural events’ (Hogan, 2002; Okun, Fried & Okun, 1999c; Mackie & Smith, 2002) do not handle and as such endorse the unconscious
mechanism of ‘giving away power’ (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2002). This is why Grande (2000) for example suggests that critical theorists are to re-examine their epistemological foundations and ‘strive to achieve interplay between the past, present, and future, and ride the faultline between continuity, resistance, and possibility (or) Coalition, Agency, and Identity.’ That ‘faultline’ is what I earlier referred to as the ‘Schil’ that can be dissolved by attending to ‘blind spots’. But that type of attending does not occur in contemporary cross-cultural education, which first became clear to me when I taught grade seven students in an Aboriginal community. To the contrary, the attention is fixed in a strong belief in, and associated powerful attachment to existing structures.

I discovered there is a distinct and fixed focus on the horizontal axis, which to me connotes an inverted focus. Perhaps I can explain by using a notion of Kunneman’s ‘the plurality of the horizon of values’ (as cited in Halsema, 2007, p. 73). Similar to Gadamer’s notion of a ‘fusion of horizons’, an image emerges of unlimited options in seeing and valuing the world from the outside in. With that, for me the questions also arise: what lies beyond that horizon, and does ‘the horizon’ form the whole context, which Hawkins (1992) defines as a ‘total field of observation predicated by a point of view’ (p. 270). In other words, the context appears to be reduced to points of view that are seen as something fixed on an imagined horizon. A fixed notion of horizon itself disregards other ways of perceiving. With the attention fixed on the horizon, a linear and three-dimensional world is seen only. That fixed attention ignores what is above and below.

When the attention is collectively fixed on the horizon, a groupthink develops that is reinforced in ‘common’ agreement and forms a group mind. In this group mind are contained what Ormsby-Green (2006:344) calls stable data; ‘information accepted as true, therefore considered a reliable base on which to establish future attitudes and movements. It doesn’t have to be true, only accepted and agreed up as such. The wildest and craziest opinions can be so accepted, providing a stable (albeit illusory) basis for future viewpoints’ (p. 344). Ormsby-Green’s notion of ‘stable data’ connotes a similar dynamic to Dimitrov’s ‘frozen patterns’.

2.8 Teasing the linguistic network

Power dynamics that filter through the ‘double discourse’ (Harrison, 2007) are largely unconscious and reproduced through what is taught and in what is considered knowledge: a metadiscourse that is always at work in-between the student and teacher (p. 42). This metadiscourse, I argue, must be seen in a much larger and global context, and one that is largely built on unconscious knowledge of power relations and not content; power relations that are a result of which control mechanisms have been increasingly internalised, and people become agents of those mechanisms. It is a double discourse that is much like a property of culture of talk; or as Lowe, Moore & Carr (2007) contend, ‘culture’ is a ‘property of talk and not of territorial realities.’ This culture I perceive as being built on and into fault-lines that Lau & Murningham
suggest are ‘hypothetical dividing lines that may split a group into subgroups based on one or more attributes’ (as cited in Oetzel, Dhar & Kirschbaum, 2007, p. 188).

Faultlines are mentally constructed rifts that are aspect to and partake of a conscious structure that pertains to the body/mind system that most people commonly agree upon as ‘the world’; one that according to the social ecology framework and reiterated by Oetzel et al (2007) is self-similar on different levels; something that happens on micro-levels also occurs on meso-, exo- and macro-levels (p. 184). In other words, it is as if the morphic field or extended mind (Sheldrake, 2004) which sustains the world as we see it today stores the mechanism in which human beings in the world of today perceive a picture of the world according to the faultline mechanism; an idea closely related to Hume’s idea of the space in which time and place are created and concepts of past and future are sustained along with the commonly perceived need for penetration; a splitting mechanism that ‘is nothing but the annihilation of … one body upon its approach to another’ (pp. 47-48). Faultlines exist and have meaning in the realm Black (1968) refers to as ‘something mental … something occurring in the mind’ (p. 211) that ‘drives’ people to split themselves off from the whole both in a vertical and a horizontal direction.

The belief in the body/mind/spirit rift is constituted in the belief that spirit is something external to human beings and other organic and inorganic forms of life. A consequence of this belief is that we consider phenomena as ‘real’ and ‘without question’ true or false. With that ‘without question’ notion in place, we assume fixed positions; thought as separate from feeling and separate from acting or doing. As such we divide and ‘fix’ ‘reality’ into two boxes: the contents of one box are true and the contents of the other box are false. Here, dogmatism or righteousness dominates the field rather than ‘uncertainty’, which results in aggressive (Steiner, 2007) or violent communication (Van Gelder & Rosenberg, 1998; Rosenberg, 2002).

Especially French philosophers such as Foucault (1977), Baudrillard (1988, 1994, 1996) Levinas (1987) and Irigaray (2004) have drawn attention to this issue and many ‘new’ theories have been developed on top of theirs. But still built on the same ‘blaming’ mechanism in reaction to existing power relations, the mechanism that pertains to the mental consciousness structure in which power relations are deconstructed is not handled. The language used here is what Marshall Rosenberg refers to as ‘jackal language’ that denies choice, places demand or evaluates: choice is denied by what the Nazi Eichmann called Amtssprache (German for office talk). Rosenberg in an interview with Van Gelder (1998):

‘When asked for examples, Eichmann said, “It's basically a language in which you deny responsibility for your actions. So if anybody says, 'Why did you do it?' you say, 'I had to.' 'Why did you have to?' 'Superiors' orders. Company policy. It's the law.”’ In other words, punitive action follows if not acted upon, and evaluation or diagnosing occurs when we place labels on people, even when the labels are 'nice.'
That attitude is regarded by Bohm & Edwards (1991) as proof of the fragmented mind and its processes of fragmentation (p. 6). Bohm & Edwards suggest that this kind of thought ‘is more or less a representation of what is there, like a map [that] has a creative function as well, to create what is there… It is a very powerful instrument, but if we don’t notice how it works, it can also do great harm’ (p. i). As I argued above, by attuning to the Schil and ‘blind spots’ not only our discourse but also our ‘double discourse’ or metadiscourse unfolds ‘fixed’ landscapes. As such we enact a living educational theory drawn from and refreshed in creative practice as emergent theory; open to fluid, dynamic, personal and social ways of coming to know (Glenn, 2006, p. 283).

2.9 The death of cross-cultural education?

This question relates to whether to ignore or throw out the significance of the cross metaphor or use it to clarify the ‘blind spots’ in the ‘Schil’: in other words, to see the cross as something of a crucifix or as a tool towards transformation. The question pertains to whether or not to enliven the religious/political notion of ‘right’ education (Apple, 2005); the masculine landscape that is stratocratic (supported by armed forces) and death-oriented. It pertains to the question whether or not to place the spotlight on the androcratic (Eisler, 2002, 2004): the feminine landscape that is life-oriented. Both ‘courses’ have significant consequences for both students’ and educators’ ways of currere: for ‘running one’s life-course’ either as a connoisseur of one’s own path (Eisner, 1979) or as a ‘part-timer’.

The impact on not only individuals, but also cross-cultural education as a ‘landscape’ will be significant pertaining to what path will be taken: individuals will value sensitivity and self-awareness or groupthink and ‘fitting in’. The ‘landscape’ of cross-cultural education will produce more fixed positions, defined by Ormsby-Green (2006) as ‘positions of immovability’ (p. 288) if they negate human dynamics as fractal to existential dynamics.

The choice is between a path based on fixation of the contact-boundary (the ‘Schil’) and a ‘doing as if’ reflective practice, or ‘promote’ and ‘lead out’ what Atherton (2005/2007) calls ‘real’ reflective practice. In other words, the choice is between an ideological hegemony that reinforces identity politics and related death-oriented dynamics including the sense of ‘being burdened with stereotypical beliefs’ (Devita, 2008), or an enlivened and creative practice of cross-cultural understanding and working with dynamics. The choice is to either forget or to remember and bring to light the ‘forgotten common agreement’ which Lyotard (1991) contextualised as follows: ‘To think consists of the amelioration of the big nomad. It is that which is obsessively demanded of us. You must think in a communicable way. Make culture. Not think according to welcome what comes about, singularly. To prevent it, rather… It’s a domestication, if you will, but with no domus. A physics with no god-nature. An economy in which everything is taken, nothing received. And so necessarily, an illiteracy’ (p. 199).
The illiteracy to which Lyotard refers produces an ideology of performativity that produces more 'culture' but also more 'noise' and 'quarrying': effects that are revolutionary and not evolutionary, for the attention is fixed and culture and/or gender judged as a norm. This ideology 'regulates notions of masculine and feminine within everyday embodied social practices' (Butler, in Robinson & Davies, 2007, p. 100) which supports the practice of separating out cross-cultural education and cross-cultural communication. This separation maintains the illusion that education is not related to communication, stifling dialogue and keeping shortcuts in communication unresolved; a mechanism that nurtures the mechanism of reducing the complete picture into bits (Lucas, 2006) and enables professionals to continue 'symbolic generalizations' (Kuhn, 1970, p. 182) without interference (Garfinkel, 1967). As such, 'cultural experts' can continue to proffer peace yet hold on to 'the pull of forces born out of human egocentricity and egotism, blind attachments and addictions, social brainwash or power-based manipulations – forces which are able to convert the fuzziness of knowing into hard-to-surpass ignorance' (Dimitrov & Naess, 2005, pp. 17-19).

Christie (1984) argued that in the context of Indigenous education for example, scientists continue to dump their inventions of new educational theories and practices onto schools which 'follow suit (good servants as they are), promoting that it is ... unproductive to admit ignorance' (p. 22). His words reiterate those of Steiner (2007) who suggested that scientists, 'sad to say, have taken over the field of pedagogy [and] a scientific training has actually been accepted as valid educational training, whereas the two should be completely and absolutely different' (pp. 4-5). The result is the 'carrot and stick' approach that produces a technical and mechanistic view of teaching (Dallmayer, 1998, p. 98) and the differences between the Self and identity remain blurred.

2.10 Is another perspective wanted?

Perhaps it is important to hold on to desires related to economics and jobs, along with a (theoretical) desire to be seen in a certain way, i.e. 'European' or 'not-European'. Perhaps it is politically incorrect to talk about feminine and masculine landscapes and prefer one landscape above another. Perhaps it is politically incorrect to feel okay about being born in a European culture and with a white skin. At least, so I understand from someone who reviewed an article I once wrote. Perhaps it is less interesting from an economic perspective to confront fuzzy boundaries (Dimitrov & Russell, 2005; Dimitrov & Dimitrov, 2005) and to promote the liminal (Hansen, 2001). Perhaps it is important to reinforce the process of groupthink, which Ruiz (1997) describes as 'the agreements and beliefs we have stored in our mind' (p. 15). Perhaps it is more important to reinforce the idea that chaos is something undesirable (Cunningham, 2000) and preventative intervention recommended (Kozub & Kozub, 2004). This, after all, ensures that people remain people oblivious to what we 'automatically' carry with us: 'units of cultural
inheritance’ or memes which ‘are transmitted via imitation [and] spread exponentially, like a virus’ (Dawkins, 2001, p. 229). They, after all, ensure that systems of faith rule the world-agenda (Dawkins, 2006; Beckford, 2007). Most Western modules are based and built on top of religious faiths’ programs that assume a ‘punishment’ paradigm, and perhaps this is politically correct. Perhaps chaos is ‘bad’ and order ‘good’. Perhaps people do get out of control if they are not controlled by other people or by systems that perhaps have served the human race well.

But somehow the space around us is changing and the type of thinking that has polarized our minds and ‘closed us off from the full rapture of fully conscious experience’ (Griscom, 2007) seems no longer appropriate. Neither is the attempt to make people think in certain ways in a bid to build unison, for such consensus is a horizon that is never reached. When difference or ‘differences’ continue to be ‘fixed’ by fixing the focus of attention on the physical/mental and ignore the spiritual aspect of life, the world remains to be seen from a linear, or horizontal perspective in which time and space continue to be enlivened in a circular or a square kind of way, depending on where we were raised. But what remains in that approach, worldwide, is an insistence on a need for religious rather than spiritual practice and, with that, a suppression of mythical, mystical and archaic constructs which mental consciousness structure has kept intact. Though this contention might suggest I object to religious practice, this is not what I mean to suggest. But I do object to an attitude of insisting on what is right and wrong; a normalising attitude that does not facilitate dialogue but closes down the opportunity to a collective venture into a more liminal space where the eye in the cross-cultural exchange can reveal itself.

I am alluding to ‘wise up’ on the dynamics behind what is considered right or wrong, false or true; concepts that create the Other (Apple, 2006, pp. 8-14). Those morals pertain to the splitting and fragmenting, schizoid mind in absolute fear of life and death (Bohm, 1991, 1996; Sievers, 1994; Krishnamurti, 1955; Bateson, 1972/2000; Argyris, 1999; Dimitrov, 2005). This type of mind can be seen as Mental Consciousness (Gebser, 1956) or intellectual-mental-rational consciousness which is still deemed the highest form of thinking humans are capable of (Molz & Gidley, 2008, p. 50).

David Bohm (1998) believes the way to deal with the fragmented mind is through dialogue and participation rather than abstraction: ‘In a genuine dialogue, each person is participating, is partaking in the whole meaning of the group and also taking part in it’ (p. xiii), and as such we can gain a sense of implicate order, which means that ‘each part of space contains waves from everything, which enfold the whole room, the whole universe, the whole of everything. In the implicate order everything is thus internally related to everything, everything contains everything, and only in the implicate order are things separate and relatively independent’ (p. 105). But nobody really understands yet at an ontological level what the implicate order means, because we ‘ordinarily we aim for a literal picture of the world, but in fact we create a world according to our mode of participation, and we create ourselves accordingly. If we think in our present way, we
will create the kind of world that we have created. If we think in another way, we might create a different world, and different people as well. Only the two together can change’ (p. 106).

But does this ‘other way’ of thinking include feeling? Is for example Gendlin’s (1997) approach of focusing that concentrates on the felt sense commensurable with Bohm’s notion of the implicate order? To date, I have not been able to find any answer to the seeming incommensurable space in-between thinking and feeling, and especially in Chapters Five and Six I will attend to this incommensurability in the context of artistic and scientific studies. Here suffice to say that my personal experience tells me their relationship can be established if not deepened by attuning to the resonance of an event and by looking in the mirror of what we see out there and relate that back to what is ‘in here’; by applying the projection/reflection principle and thus engaging in the dynamics of the ‘Schil’; that is, in terms of the AVEK and to remind the reader, ‘the transition between i.e. inside and outside, I and the Other, space and the Other.’

Though for example invaluable the sharing of experiences between educators and students who discuss feeling ‘caught in the middle of two conflicting discourses of empowered knowledge creation and instrumental performance requirements’ (Harvey, in Greenwood, 2008, p. 125), this path can become more progressive when we also bring ‘conflicting discourses’ into dialogue with each other. The purpose would be to understand and work with the dynamics in which we hitherto found what we thought was ‘our’ place; a place we claimed as something of our own but in hindsight may appear as but a place we temporarily inhabited; a place we needed for a short period of time, not to hang on to but to give us a temporary sense of security to be able to reflect on what we are attending to and better understand what we attract and reinforce in our lives; to see that and how we secure a sense of safety fed from fear of intimacy which elongates the delay to the day of reckoning with death (Sievers, 1994).

By the fear of intimacy I mean the negative type of self-protection: the compulsion to face-save for example. Buddhists refer to this fear of intimacy as ‘clinging’; something directly related to the propagation of scarcity in time and space which produces all the conflict in the world (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985) sustained by ideologies pertaining to fantasies of ‘owning and ‘disowning’ people and other resources including materials, thoughts (ideas, philosophies) and sensations, but also agreed upon notions such as being in need of attention: a concept Goldhaber’s (2007b) theory of an attention-economy supports and relates to consumerism.

But there is something else also which, as Berne (1966) suggests, reaches beyond ‘processes of filling in time until the arrival of death’ (p. 184). What reaches beyond, he suggests, is ‘awareness; something which rises above the programming of the past [and is] more rewarding than games, which is intimacy [and] may be frightening to the unprepared’ (Ibid). This intimacy Thompson (1981) refers to as the cosmic dance; a dance he suggests we must understand in
order to understand events, or what comes to pass as the musical and geometrical pattern of
movement in Creation; the patterning of all patterns of events which is the Logos (p. 83).

Human beings are mirrors for the universe to look at itself, says Bohm in his book titled ‘The
Undivided Universe’. Bohm (1996) suggests that the observer affects what it is observing and it is
in turn is affected by the observed (p. 80). But at a certain stage the distinction between the
observer and the observed cannot be maintained: the assumptions are no longer looked at but do
the looking; the observer is the observed. Similarly, Ormsby-Green (2006) suggests we are
human beings; ‘a present-time personality package being occupied at any given moment [and]
automatically donned to meet changing situations’ (p. 252). The moment those temporal identities
are recognized they cease to have significance and with that the combined force field in which
discourse and metadiscourse were partialised to experience a sense of ‘place’. Now a much
wider context opens up before us; a context where intuition reigns, not intellectual debate.
Intuition is part of a realm Dimitrov (in personal communication) introduced to me and it ‘stuck’:
‘Maieutic Silence.’ Maieutic pertains to the Greek word maieutikos which implies midwifery, and
Silence is that which Rabbin (2006) defined as ‘what is before words, before thought, before self,
before everything; the unmanifest, formless, wordless. That where Reality slowly manifests within
you, comes into form, into words, hovering between and surrounding these two seeming separate
worlds: unmanifest and manifest, formless and form, wordless and form.’

Without plugging into this Maieutic Silence, there is no ‘rite of passage’ or ‘birth canal’ of
transformation and Self-realisation; a process that is long and expansive and involves various
stages of development in which the ego needs to let the Higher Self do her work (Assagioli, 1988,
p. 62). By drawing on this larger space, it is possible to do what Apple (2006) urges us to do:
‘Emerge from this play-ground of victimhood as a powerful rhetorical device, and speak of hope
and possibility whilst acknowledging the nature of danger, as we query our own way of reinforcing
power-dynamics’ (p. 165). This larger space permits us to do what Kincheloe & Berry (2004, pp.
66-67) suggest: ‘Steer away from the comfort of unexamined warm and connected mystical
interconnected feelings about oneness with the world.’ With that we also steer away from fear-
induced patterns, which are reconstituted in the effort of lumping together with groupthink that is
often reinforced by and in a neo-liberal and neo-Christian ‘ethic’. This ‘ethic’, Symes & Gulson
(2008) argue, has powerfully in/formed the Australian education system since early colonial days,
and was recently given a boost in the alliance with the Howard government with the Hillsong and
other ‘born-again’ churches; a groupthink which indulges in promotional hype that ‘quietly’ sets
out to punish, not celebrate difference, and make wrong if not demonise anyone and anything
that is seen as threatening to the status quo and is ‘not part of us.’ This philosophy disparages
the welfare state under a politics of derision, which counsels the socially disadvantaged or marginalized to accept a ‘hand up’, not handouts (Symes & Gulson, 2008, p. 241).3

By recognizing the dynamics associated with those ‘clinging’ tendencies we are able to ‘build’ relationships in a space where communication is not about being right, but about a flow of energy between people that results in confronting and then ‘understanding and transcending limitations which instead of being considered as an obstacle, now serve as a stimulus for realization of human creativity’ (Dimitrov & Weinstein, 2002). The concern now is relationally-responsive (Shotter, 2001) which means that we duplicate rather than emulate or react. We learn at a deep level that the world we judge as something ‘out there’ is created by the onlooker, and that what we express and communicate has no meaning other than the consolidation of a previously adopted and unresolved viewpoint. As Robert Rabbin (2006) points out: ‘we self-medicate when we believe what we say and hear. If transformation is our desire, it is not achieved by adopting content, concepts or some other set of beliefs. Neither is it achieved by refurbishing self-image, joining a group, parroting phrases or otherwise adopting of a language that is ‘the operating system that simulates reality.’”

What we say, hear and see is illusory, virtual, and has significant consequences that we say we dislike; yet we create and agree upon this giant façade, all immersed in this role-playing game. We know this and we keep doing it, creating self-imposed ‘deadlocks as outcomes of attitudes in hard negotiation that are either externally or internally sourced’ (Dimitrov & Weinstein’s, 2002).

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have contextualised contemporary cross-cultural education as a field which promulgates more yang than yin dynamics when taking account of Capra’s (1982) observation that yin corresponds to responsive, consolidating, cooperative activity and yang to aggressive, expanding, competitive activity. This contextualising took place as I sketched out and as such deconstructed the multiple layered geo-social landscape of contemporary cross-cultural education. After this I suggested that deep inquiry needs more attention in cross-cultural exchanges especially pertaining to cross-cultural educators, or cross-cultural education, as a cultural system that celebrates yang – but not yin – qualities alone will lead to not only its own death but also deepen already troubled global relationships. If the field, I argue, wants to live up to and accord with present day complexity sciences and shed light on its positivist and anti-positivist reference frameworks, it will undo collectively adopted and agreed upon mental images of people, cultures and landscapes as if something bounded and fixed, and open up a space for

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3 Symes & Gulson (2008) suggest this ‘promotional hype’ forms a powerful aspect to ensure the survival of the Hillsong and other ‘born-again’ churches. They do not mention however that, like in any other ‘hype’, this groupthink can only be nurtured by buying into the perceived need to satisfy their hunger for sensationalism.
dialogue in which boundaries are crossed but ‘blind spots’ in the contact-boundary confronted so ‘fixed edges’ can unfold towards deeper self-realisation not only on individual but also collective bases.

In the following chapter, I will look closer into what is possible if we are to look more into the heart of the dynamics where the split is contextualised and experience them in a felt sense.
CHAPTER THREE: WALKING WITH DIFFERING CROSS-CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it became clear that ‘blind spots’ in the ‘Schil’ both mask and mark out difference. They manifest and reinforce ‘fixed landscapes’ and create ‘dead’ patterns in the fabric of cross-cultural exchanges and, like in buildings, dead patterns keep us locked in inner conflict (Alexander, 1979, p. x).

Fixed landscapes are formed by ‘boxed’ thinking or what Dimitrov (2005) refers to as either/or thinking: it employs either a dualistic (linear) or non-dualistic (non-linear) focus. The dynamics in such landscapes are death-oriented, and Dimitrov encourages a methodology as part of Wholesome Life Ecology (WLE) called fuzziology, which employs both/and thinking. Here, the notion applies: Do not reject nor adhere to anything: Go beyond. The emphasis is on understanding human dynamics as fractal to existential dynamics.

In this chapter I will apply a both/and thinking lens, and focus on the multi-layeredness of cross-cultural landscapes as ‘something’ that moves through us as much as ‘something’ that we move through. The binary lens of ‘fixed’ and ‘moving’ landscapes is used to accentuate the not foreclosing of ambiguity of unity and differentiation but on being okay with feeling ‘wobbly’ (Todres, 2007, p. 172) whilst exploring the dynamics in the two types of landscape. This attitude prevents a drifting into too much order or into too much disorder (Dimitrov, n.d.) as pertinent to transcending bifurcation (ibid). Central to this chapter are notions of conceived and organismic values (Roger, 1973), the imbrication of cultural flows (Offord, 2002) and the ‘felt sense’ (Gendlin, 1996; Todres, 2007) in cross-cultural exchanges. But I will begin this chapter will a rather fixed binary lens to contextualise the remainder of this chapter.

3.2 Applying a binary lens to see something

As someone from The Netherlands – a place Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) define as ‘feminine’ – who felt powerfully attracted to the landscape of Australia – a place Hofstede & Hofstede (ibid) define as masculine –, it was difficult to get used to ‘Australian’ ways of navigating the landscape. I was used to talking about ‘landscape’ in a ‘felt sense’. I was also used to artistic ways of
expressing and communicating, and cooperative practices in educational contexts and cooperative student/teacher relationships with flexible modes of delivery\(^1\).

A Dutch female research-participant who lives in Australia, Joo., is considered an expert of Geert Hofstede’s work. When I asked her to contextualise her personal experiences as a migrant, she said she struggled with the differences in approach especially towards people who are considered financially and socially disadvantaged, and generally the difference in the ways in which the ‘top dog’ and the ‘underdog’ are treated socio-politically, and the differences in focus: not on family and community but on scoring high points, and on work not as a calling but as a way of making money; something that relates to Moore’s (1992) notion of a job as manufacturing (p. 183). But also in how people in Australia are disadvantaged politically by Australian bi-partisan politics; a political structure which stands in stark contrast to the Dutch multi-party politics. She associated the Australian approach to the generally strong emphasis on neo-liberal/Christian values that appear to underpin this society.

Personally, I struggled with the demands to fit into ‘institutions that like factories manufacture teachers that produce good students that can and want to serve a mechanised and computerised world’ (Miller, 1996); a masculine culture that emphasises identity and identity-politics as if static phenomena.

There may be a danger in applying a binary lens in order to see different community story lines, for they may produce anew ‘fixed’ landscapes. But, I also believe that denying a binary lens does not change old patterns that are stuck, not only in a personal but also a collective space of mind. So applying a binary lens can be productive provided it is used to produce a ‘flow forward’, the aim to make fuzzy what are fixed boundaries and ‘fixed’ reference frameworks. ‘Boxed thinking’ cannot unfold by negating it, or by arguing for or against it, for that produces only more ‘hard’ negotiations in which ‘sides stick’ (Dimitrov, 2005). In other words, by not allowing the application of a binary lens, communication-blockages are created: a split in cross-cultural exchanges. ‘Boxed’ thinking can unfold, not by blocking the application of binary lenses but by negotiating them differently.

I said earlier that I was trained as a teacher in Expression & Communication (E&C) in The Netherlands from 1982 to 1986. The holistic and experiential way of teaching/learning assumed education is about living, evolving organisms that change organically and dynamically in developing relationships. A teacher in E&C assumes a position which Bohm (1996) contextualises as one in which ‘the world’s problems’ are our own personal problems and not something ‘out there’ (Bohm, 1996, p. 77). It is also assumed that existential problems exist in a cosmic context (Capra, 1982, pp. 409-410).

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\(^1\) Regrettably, I have also seen the climate change in The Netherlands, possibly effected by globalisation and its neo-liberal (masculine) power-structures that invalidate ‘smallness’.
The study to be a teacher in E&C took a minimum of four years, and was fully recognized by the Dutch government. There was no focus on theory, because it was assumed that theoretical knowledge only has relevance when experiential understanding is already in place. In my Masters’ dissertation (Hancock van den Akker, 1997) titled ‘Education: The Educare/Educere paradigm’, I describe the different approaches in teaching/learning between educare and educere. ‘Educere’ focuses on ‘leading out’ (Ogilvie, 1987, pp. 39-40) the potential or wisdom that lies within. ‘Educare’ means ‘to mould’ or ‘to train’, and focuses on ‘jamming in’ information (ibid). As different forms of cultural action (Freire, 1972), educere seeks to transform social structures and serve people’s liberation, whilst educare seeks to preserve those structures of domination (p. 146).

Though the two forms of education appear opposed to each other, in terms of dynamics they are actually flip sides of the same phenomenon and they necessitate each other, as I proposed in my Masters’ dissertation. They are only considered in terms of right and wrong, so in opposition to each other and not also co-constitutive, if cultural invasion is wanted: the conquest of people by induced action (ibid, p. 147). But if cultural synthesis is wanted, which means ‘confronting culture itself as the preserver by which it was formed’ (ibid), a yin/yang dynamic or dance in and of Tao can unfold over time by employing both educare and educere. Freire (ibid, pp.146-150) refers to this ‘dialogical cultural action’ as something that does not aim for the disappearance of the permanence-change dialectic, even if that were possible.²

To prevent a getting stuck in a debate that settles itself in presumed fixed boundaries, maieutic inquiry seeks to go beyond those boundaries by honing in on the dynamics within, and the quality of the exchanges in the space in-between the inquirer and inquired. The idea is that the two personalities as it were de-personalise as a third entity of sorts emerges. It is a dynamic that is also inherent to number: whilst a two (2) signifies appearance, manifestation (Steiner, 1972/1980, p. 34), a three (3) emerges when not negating but coming from two or ‘polar’ positions: their unity reveals itself as number three (ibid, p. 35).

Cultures have various cultural schemas of education that involve different types of teacher/student exchanges. In The Netherlands, holistic education and educere are ways of teaching/learning that are fairly commonplace across all levels of education. Not so in Australia.

When teachers or students from one culture enter into a relationship with a teacher or student of another culture, and there is no personal regard for cultural synthesis, miscommunication seems inevitable if not insurmountable. Hui (2005) for example, suggests that most Chinese students bring with them cultural expectations on what education should be and how they should be educated in Australia (ibid, pp. 33-34). Those expectations are generally not brought into

² In a sense, this dissertation employs both approaches: educare in the written word, and educere in the filmic product.
dialogue, she suggests, and that in itself creates much difficulty. My observations in doing this PhD study similarly show how difficult communications can be between a PhD supervisor from one culture and a PhD student from another culture when there is little regard for cultural synthesis and personal expectations are not expressed. This has not only been my personal experience, but also that of other migrant PhD-students who I have had discussions with.

My expectation was linked with my cultural understanding of the word PhD supervisor. In Dutch academia the title promoter is used instead of ‘supervisor’ suggesting there is no emphasis on hierarchical distance in the PhD student/supervisor relationship. My negotiations, particularly with PhD-supervisors who came from cultures which Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) consider ‘masculine’ made me realise that the word ‘supervisor’ connotes hierarchy with a mixture of administration, care, surveillance and oversight. The difference in cultural understanding not only in terms of education generally but also PhD-supervision, at times made our exchanges difficult if not problematic. For example, I expected that our personal expectations would be negotiated before we began our ‘alliance’, so as to set up a cooperative climate for possible future misunderstandings to be easily nipped in the bud. When this did not happen, I noticed I began to invert and experienced a sense of frustration that I could not communicate. The space did not allow for this, which distracted my focus of attention and slowed down my progress in study, at least for the first 18 months. Only later and upon working with a supervisor who understood Dutch culture from personal experience, I managed to integrate this experience into this study.

What the reader can learn from this is that the crux in and the crux of cross-cultural education take shape right from the start of a new alliance or relationship. It is also paramount, I suggest, to also acknowledge the ‘site-hardening’ tendency in a cross-cultural exchange that can turn negative when personal/cultural expectations are not consistently brought into dialogue and throughout the relationship until it ends: People do not have fixed boundaries when considered as sensitive and sensory beings.

In the research-process, participants but also PhD-supervisors showed me dynamics I did not always like. But they were inevitably mirrors of dynamics I knew from personal experience and which I needed to reflect upon.

Personally, what I learned in the process was to accept or at least tolerate different belief-systems as necessary to understand and work with identity, not as something inherited or static, but a reflexive project. With that I saw the key to the undoing of ‘sticking sides’ is not an emphasis on identity-politics but a valuing of the self-constructed and ongoing ‘story’ about the self as described by Van Sell & Kalofissudis, (2002, p. 40):

> the individual human being mapping his/her existence through experimental works with his/herself (and) socialized via a self-development reciprocal Role. As actors or players in life’s drama they play all kind of roles, in order to attain wisdom and to attempt to understand

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their interactions. In life’s drama, some parts of the script have been established by the society, but more of the script is generated at a specific space-time where individuals are set as active participants.

From the various exchanges, I learned that it may be in the attendance to the four dimensions: visual production, perception, interpretation and reception (Muller, 2008), but also other forms of perception including the twelve senses (Soesman, 1990) that it is possible to learn to more deeply appreciate the physical/mental universe in which this story about the self takes shape, and to observe ‘extreme sensitivity to initial conditions’ in dimensions beyond the immediately visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 7); something that is deeply necessary in this dehumanised world (Tacey, 2008):

Like Les Murray, the artist Michael Leunig sees more than is commonly seen, and feels more than is commonly felt. This, perhaps, is the key feature of the visionary artist in any country in any time: he or she ‘sees’ the sacred, when apparently the habitual consciousness of the day does not. The creative artist is a seer… The task of the artist is to remind people that they do in fact have spiritual lives, that they do feel and sense a level of being that isbeckoning them to a new awareness and self-identity.

Tacey, 2000, p. 113

3.3 Explorations of landscape

Especially since doing this study, I have become particularly attuned to the sensations in different environments. I have moved around a lot, not only between The Netherlands and Australia, but also between places especially in Australia. As a house-sitter -something I elected to do in order to alleviate the financial stress in support of my study- I came to experience each home as a uniquely different sensory experience. I became attuned to the sensations left behind by the people who owned the home and others before them, the place in which the home was situated, and how it was built in relation to the four directions of the sun’s movement from East to West. I also attuned to the surrounding landscape and felt into its energy on my daily 10 to 18 km. long runs. I looked into not only the natural environment, but also the traffic flows and people’s different ways of engaging in and as a community. I came to see some landscapes as more ‘fixed’ than others in a sensory sense and as a holistic experience.

The benefit of my staying in places for relatively short periods of time was, that I would not become integrated enough. This enabled me to explore how I responded to different dynamics, and as such perhaps better understand other people’s responses in those landscapes. It also enabled me to understand landscape as something that, regardless of how it is interpreted theoretically, has a flow, a colour, a tone, a taste and a smell to it. Whether people perceive those sensations synaesthetically or not is beside the point here. What matters is what we, as sensory
beings, do with those sensations, because our responses produce matter that not only influences the landscape but spirit as a whole.

Particularly as a visitor to a landscape, the ways in which I respond to different sensations has become more apparent. I found that these ways appear to come down to the basic distinction between what is known in Vipassana meditation as aversion and craving. With that also became apparent that belonging or feeling at home in a place as merely a localised all-pervading vibratory reality is something I always do. This feeling is associated with planetary awareness.

‘Planetary’ (Gidley, 2007, pp. 46-47) is a word I will use more in this thesis to counterbalance the more politico-economic term ‘globalisation’ and emphasise the interconnectedness between ‘several layers or spheres of planetary concern to human research. Gidley (ibid) explains planetary in terms of:

geosphere -the physical body of the planet; biosphere -the ecological concern for the lifefsystem of the whole planet; noosphere -in relation to integral planetary consciousness; and
cosmosphere -in relation to broader understanding of the place of the earth in the cosmos.

Many contemporary discourses using the term planetary have been inspired by Teilhard de Chardin’s research on the noosphere and his notion of the “planetization of mankind.”

Fixed landscapes I see as fields of ‘expertise’ that reciprocally interact in and as a range of paradigms or reference frameworks that always follow their own dynamics yet also miss noticing how they simultaneously shape perception, deconstruct, reconstruct, circulate and recirculate those frames in a continuously recycling manner to sustain the self-organising system of meaning-making; a system of fixed positions that encodes and formalizes images, texts, discourses, and cultural, social and historical biosocio/geographic landscapes, but always with ‘active windows’ to see worlds ‘out there.’

Landscapes that I label as ‘fixed’ build understanding on top of and about pictures that are stacked on top of and built into old (reference) frameworks. Coetsee-Manning (1996) refers to those landscapes as maintaining ideologies that, to the degree they are not explicated as images, are projected on the screen inside one’s head and interpreted, and then portrayed as ‘realities’ in the world ‘out there’. And later in this thesis I will show that employing the ‘cross’ as a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.) in the research-process facilitated an inquiry into those images that cannot be separated from individual and social identities and their quest for stability of identity (Rose & Kincheloe 2003, pp. 2-3): images that nevertheless but raise and dissolve in our thoughts and have blurred boundaries and immaterial substance (Dimitrov, 2005).

Such ideologies implicate fixed attention, which Ormsby-Green (2006) defines as a ‘focus reactively locked in on small pictures and unable to shift. Inflexibility, dogmatism, bigotry’ (p. 250).

In Chapter Four I will talk more specifically about the dynamics associated with fixed attention as different to focused attention in relation to the symbol, the metaphor and the verb cross. Here I
will focus in on dynamics associated with landscape as something that contextualizes the split or a healing.

Wylie (2007) points out that the notion of ‘landscape’ has different connotations for people from different cultures (p. 21). Dutch people, he suggests, interpret landscape from a strongly visual and artistic viewpoint and bears a relationship to both legal and administrative concepts of community, property and justice. The Dutch interpretation, Wylie contends, is different to for example German or English cultural interpretations. There, landscape is seen more as something ‘bounded.’

But this thesis does not focus on a range of cultural meanings of landscape, but on the dynamics associated with landscape as a phenomenon. So I will leave discussing a range of viewpoints on landscape to others and only point out that my interpretation of landscape is stereo-typically Dutch and deeply influenced by my training in holistic education.

Each landscape has its dynamics: there is a flow to a landscape that can be perceived in different sensory ways, which as a whole experience is known in T’ai Chi as a ‘sense-reality’: that what we sense in the centre of our body.

Each individual has a different sensory preference, as is widely discussed in for example theories on different learning-styles, and knowledge around this topic is specifically applied in approaches such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming but also in contexts of cross-cultural education. Those theories and applications concentrate on ways to control learning-processes, not on understanding and working with the dynamics in those processes. There is no time or place in those contexts to attend, to notice, to observe or follow the flow, the drift or the process of nature: the Watercourse Way (Watts, 1975) which ‘may be attained but not seen, felt but not conceived, intuited but not categorized, divined but not explained’ (ibid, p. 42). The attention there is fixed on controlling physical and mental ‘landscapes’, not focused to raise awareness of one’s sense-reality, or on understanding and working with human dynamics as fractal to existential dynamics.

It could be argued that this fixed preference is shaped by globalisation and values Carl Rogers’ (1973, pp. 13-28) labels as conceived values, referring to the preference for a symbolized object/subject with an outcome in mind. Conceived values, Rogers suggests, are characteristically introjected, adopted from other individuals: the source of them is outside of the individual and personalised to gain a sense of belonging, that is ‘being loved’ or ‘being accepted’. In other words and related to landscape, conceived values and therefore conceived sensory preferences are adopted, taken on board, believed in and adhered to ways of perceiving the world. As I see it, associated with those ways are emotions of a particular colour that paint the world that is observed, and result in for example what Dawkins (2006) refers to as religiously driven ‘duty of protection’ (p. 313); a ‘duty’ that seems to correlate with Foucault’s notion of the diagram of Panopticism as a mechanism of supervision and a strategy of truth, which is co-
constructed in relationships that produce normal, conforming individuals in a disciplinary society. This type of society acts out like a machine, Bogard (1991) suggests: 'It traverses power-institutions and sets them in motion' (p. 332) as forms of a 'bio-power that assumes control over whole categories of people and creates a ‘species body’ (ibid. p. 334).

In Chapter Two I briefly referred to Jean Gebser’s (1956) notion of five consciousness ‘structures’ each of which has its own forms of asserting and assigning power and authority: integral, mental, mythic, magic and archaic consciousness. I also said that contemporary cross-cultural education has its focus fixed on the horizontal axis of life: body and mind are seen as separate from each other. More specifically, mind is seen as the brain; as something purely physical and something that can or must be influenced, constructed and deconstructed. This assumption precludes the spiritual component and the integral connection between body/mind/spirit. As such it also precludes self-determination, self-directedness, self-organisation, autonomy as well as the interdependency of all living systems.

Steiner (2007) argues this ‘exclusionary’ practice, this from the top down approach is associated with religious belief systems and practices; systems and practices which focus on the horizontal axis of life and assert and assign power and authority to second chakra phenomena such as money, sex and power, and first chakra phenomena such as family and physical survival. Ignored are third chakra phenomena that relate to interactions (exchanges) with people and self-esteem, but also courage, generosity, ethics and self-discipline (Myss, 2001, pp. 183-184) as a result of which people have a diminished trust in using their intuition, being able to ‘hold their centre’ and withstanding criticism. Instead, they have trouble expressing and communicating their opinions, wants and needs. The result is ineffective relationships and being controlled by others; shame, loss of face, and a lack of personal identity are power crises (ibid) typical to the world of today.

Operative or organismic values, Rogers (1973) suggests, refer to the preference or value choice that is not socially learned and personalised. These values show up behaviourally in the selecting of one object/subject and rejecting another. They connote a preference to which Schroeder (2008) refers as the ‘felt value’: ‘the immediate, felt sense of worth or importance that something has for someone. Felt value is a process that has its basis in our implicit, bodily relatedness to the world instead of in abstract concepts of what is good’ (p. 69).

As a sensory kind of preference, organismic values present in that what we like and dislike: values pertinent to the human being that is other than socially, culturally, historically and biologically conditioned. Or as Watts (1975) suggests, human beings are 'organisms [who] have ways of intelligent understanding beyond words and conscious attention, ways that can handle an unknown number of variables at the same time beyond the capacity of deliberate thinking and planning (p. 7). Perhaps those ways are organized according to what Steiner called the
‘biographic plan that lies in the depths of our soul’ (as cited in Soesman, 1990, p. 39): something contemporary cross-cultural education pays little, if any, attention to.

If it is so that increasingly more voices – voices of ‘cultural creatives’ (Ray, 2008) – speak loudly of the need to ‘wise up’ and rely on those organismic values and gut-feelings to see what lies beyond the perceived need for ‘competing discourses of teacher-identity and practice’ (Edwards & Blake, 2007), and if ‘cultural creatives’ characteristically are those people who are both inner-directed and socially concerned, have spiritual and psychological depth as well as the maturity needed for a new culture; a better world in hope (Ray, 2008), it comes as no surprise that there is a widespread call for other methods than those provided by ‘consultancy witch doctors and purveyors of recent fads and fashions’ (Badham & Sense, 2006, p. 368): fads and fashions that negate the self-organising and self-healing capacity of human beings (Dimitrov, 2005). As Dimitrov (ibid) suggests, it is more important to listen to what you resonate with (build on organismic values) rather than to what others dictate. But, as Rogers (1973) contends, it is also important to not simply negate conceived values (as if we could).

Lowe, Moore & Carr (2007, p. 247) suggest a talking about values is important to kick off a discourse in cross-cultural contexts, for values are the very ‘stuff’ that matters in those contexts. But they refer to paradigms, and do not specify a difference between conceived and organismic values. I believe it is the ‘conceived values’ that need attending to, not only in an intellectual but a felt sense. They are part of what Ormsby-Green (2006) calls ‘group mind’, and Rogers’ (1973) says that conceived values, because they are not ‘ours’ unlike organismic values, tend to be fixed and rigid. They also carry with them a resonance: that of of control-being controlled. He suggests that when a person enters into the feeling area and into deep examination of the different sensations surrounding those conceived values, the previously adopted evaluation of those (i.e. bad or good, false or true) is able to lose its tight grip on the person and s/he experiences a sense of relief. With that, s/he is better equipped to do whatever s/he wishes to do with them. With that, also the fluid, flexible quality of the person naturally re-emerges and his/her organismic values become clearer. Also the sense of self-worth increases along with the acceptance of apparently opposing dynamics that present themselves simultaneously, e.g. a desire to isolate oneself and a desire to connect with others. As such, a new kind of emergent universality of value directions becomes possible, which promotes a positive evolutionary process (p. 28); something Rogers considers necessary because ‘the world culture in all its respects seems increasingly scientific and relativistic, and the rigid, absolute views on values which come to us from the past are anachronistic’ (p. 13).

This ‘new kind of emergent universality of value directions’ corresponds with Kincheloe & Berry’s (2004) notion of the ‘enacton of interconnection in which human consciousness emerges’ (pp. 66-67). This enactment also needs to be backed up by intellectual knowing, they suggest, to ‘steer well away from the comfort of unexamined warm and connected mystical interconnected feelings
about oneness with the world’. The aim is to become more aligned in thinking, feeling and acting in a range of changing landscapes, which Inwood & Martin (2008) suggest, can be examined, not as ‘scenes into which human are inserted’ and as products of human activity shaped through and shaping cultures, but as unstable and shifting systems of meaning (p. 375). These meaning-systems are never ‘fixed’, and when they are considered as such, they tend to cause a split in human exchanges.

The compulsion to change one’s surroundings for example creates a ‘fixed’ landscape associated with perceptual and discursive imperialism (Jandt & Tanno, 2003): ‘the process of observing and interpreting information about cultural Others through an underlying set of ideas based not so much on reality as on myth’ (p. 206) and ‘the language marked by self-interest, in-group favoritism and ethnocentrism’ (ibid).

Associated with fixed landscapes are fixations in terms of belonging, and Offord (2002) for example refers to ‘the movement of site-hardening – where space is turned into place, invested with meaning, where space becomes abundantly relational, and is deeply embedded with an architecture of symbol and truth’ (p. 4). In such ‘fixed’ landscapes, ‘hard negotiations’ (Dimitrov, 2005) take place and ‘sides stick’. They can make cross-cultural exchanges ‘weerbarstig’. The flow here is centrifugal, and ‘weerbarstigheid’ assists this flow as the ‘site hardens’. It would seem that when this dynamic is not observed from within but strictly adhered to, especially ‘outside’ relationships could become problematic.

‘Weerbarstig’ can be translated as hard-wearing, tough, forceful, stubborn, inflexible, but also as merciless, heartless and harsh. Van Hoorn (2007a) points out that what we do with this ‘weerbarstigheid’ and associated difficulties is what makes the difference. She suggests that ‘especially when we accept the difficulty, act accordingly and communicate it, and consider the difficulty as something we just need to go through, the burden becomes lighter and space is created so new possibilities can emerge’ (pp. 96-97).

3.4 Boxed perception

From my engagements both as a teacher and a student-researcher in the field of cross-cultural education, I learned that these variables control the field itself and its relationships —including research-processes: flows between people are seen in a globalising, not planetary context. Cross-cultural exchanges are seen through a linear lens. Though some studies attempt to open up the area by looking at the split from a supposedly more integral perspective, of which studies done by Oetzel, Dhar & Kirschbaum (2007) are an example, those studies are still constrained to the horizontal focus on life. There is little to no reconsideration of the quality of ‘categorical frames’ which, as Victor Turner (1974) pointed out, are ‘carried in people’s heads and nervous systems, and have a steering “cybernetic” function in the endless succession of events seen in
terms of phases, and structures as the more stable aspects of action and interrelationship’ (p. 36).

LeBaron (2001, 2003) then brings the attention to four variables in cross-cultural communication that she describes as contextualizing her work as a cross-cultural communication ‘expert’: 1/ Time and Space, 2/ Fate and Personal Responsibility, 3/ Face and Face-Saving and 4/ Nonverbal Communication. She suggests these variables are much more complex than they convey, because intrinsic to cultural dynamics that influence the course of communications and effect (an escalation of) conflict. She suggests, that ‘a culturally-fluent approach’ [Italics added] to conflict implies working over time [Italics added] to understand these variables in context, and they need to be studied and applied to enhance relationships across differences’ [Italics added].

LeBaron’s contextual approach is useful especially in terms of cultural-fluency. But her argument lacks a reconsideration of the notion of perception itself: ‘Differences’ are a consequence of fixed attention and aspect to fixed ‘landscapes’; linear horizontal perspectives in a ‘striving to become all things [and] become nothing; merely the habit of dissociated, uninvolved modern man’ (Griscom, 1989, p. 7).

Scientific theory in visual perception similarly assumes fixed positions in the sense that it suggests people react to outside impulses; we do something with light that falls on our eyes. But it does not question if people are other than merely ‘passive’ receivers of external impulses. A different viewpoint is proposed by for example the biologist Sheldrake (2004), who suggests seeing is also active; our eyes do not only receive but they also project energy, which is why –like other animals – we sense when someone/something stares at us. Merleau-Ponty (1964) similarly suggests that ‘the mind goes out through the eyes to wander among objects [and] the painter never ceases adjusting his clairvoyance to them’ (p. 166). He ‘knows that the roles between him and the visible are reversed’ and here emerges the experience of ‘inspiration and expiration of Being, action and passion so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between what sees and what is seen, what paints and what is painted’ (ibid, p.167). This is why, Merleau-Ponty contends, artists such as Andre Marchand and Paul Klee felt that ‘it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days it felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me… I was there, listening’ (ibid, p. 167).

I will stress a number of times in this chapter that despite limitations to any theory or practice, each also has its own merit and its own place, and each can be and perhaps even must be appropriated as Expression & Communication (E&C) media and ‘fits’ the current context until the use-by date is reached. Also theories of visual perception are very useful because of some of their basic concepts. They suggest for example that we use reference frameworks that permit us to see images of a world that we consider as ‘reality’. But those images are also often optical illusions and culturally negotiated and agreed upon. For example the Müller-Lyer Illusion in which
two vertical or horizontal lines of the same size appear different in length to most Western people who live in carpentered worlds.

Image 9: Image of the Muller-Lyer Illusion

To them, the double-arrow like figure appears shorter in length than the figure with the outstanding ‘arms’. But experiments reported in 1966 by Segall, Campbell and Herskovitz suggested that the Müller-Lyer Illusion does not apply to people who grow up in non-carpentered environments. They tested some Zulu people in South Africa who, at the time, lived in circular huts with arched doorways and had little experience of Western rectangular buildings. The Zulus seemed less affected by the Müller-Lyer Illusion. The argument goes that these people lived in a ‘circular culture’ whereas those who are more subject to the illusion live in a ‘carpentered world’ of rectangles and parallel lines (Segall, Campbell & Herskovits, 1966).

What theories on visual perception do not consider is, if there is ‘life’ outside of those reference frameworks, what creates them and what is their function. As such these theories confirm dualistic thinking: a thinking that negates non-duality.

On the other hand we have non-dualistic ways of thinking such as fuzzy logic: a thinking that negates duality.

Each rejects the other paradigm, and so both effectively imply and apply the assumption that there is such a thing as a box within or outside of which worlds exist, be they boxed and square worlds, round worlds, spherical worlds, triangular or pyramid worlds, or whatever.

The rejection of other viewpoints or paradigms -which could be considered aspect to ‘fixed’ educational landscapes and with that ‘fixed attention’ as I will discuss in Chapter Four- could be associated with ‘rational goal cultures’ which look ‘down’ on notions such as dynamics and personal development: the ‘world’s problems’ are considered ‘other’ to ‘personal problems’ (Bohm, 1996, p. 77). In the ‘pursuit for certainty’ that is antithetical to learning (Edwards & Blake, 2007, p. 33), what is forgotten in those landscapes is that in the implication and application of reference frameworks (paradigms) there is always something that escapes our attention or ‘slips away’ (Ten Bos & Kaulingfreks, 2001; Van Hoo, 2007a; 2007b). And it is that which escapes our attention (due to the fixation) or ‘slips away’ is what rationalism is unable to deal with.
3.5 What seems to escape organisational attention

Many people perceive the world in particular ways and are caught in 'boxed thinking' as part of a group mind we could label with the term 'mental consciousness'. This includes myself as the author, and to be able to work my way through and partly out of this fragmentary way of thinking, I bring to the discussion a binary perception of landscape as representative of the 'boxed thinking' mentality, in an effort to turn binary thinking into itself to be able to see it for what it is: A 'fixed and 'moving' landscape.

Applying binary notions helps, not in terms of dualism but rather an explicit duality expressing an implicit unity (Watts, 1975, p. 26) may help to recognise that on the one hand there is an awareness of non-separative being and on the other differentiation, and that a fixed focus on one or the other locks out one or the other and creates an imbalance (Todres, 2007; Dimitrov, n.d.). Though it appears that 'fixed' and 'moving' landscapes preclude each other's existence, like in the yin/yang principle they are flip-sides of a coin, the poles of a magnet, or pulse and interval in a vibration: they are mutually supportive (Watts, 1975, pp. 22-23).

The two different landscapes, not in terms of their physical or social features but as a difference in approach bring into one a sense of place or oekus; 'a place where inhabitants relate to one another and dynamically interact' (Dimitrov, n.d.).

The approach in contemporary cross-cultural education was largely fixed in existing paradigms as part of the mental consciousness structure, and with that is associated, as Krishnamurti suggested (as discussed by Forbes, 1997) a lack of attention to the intentions, the physical nature of places of education including the atmosphere, and to all participating members in a school. Hence an emphasis on a 'moving' approach that attends to the felt sense of a space and of exchanges between people and the environment including cosmic forces.

In terms of landscape, Bingley (2003) contends that most socio-geographic inquiry continues to rely on predominantly visual perception and cognitive reflection, yet everyday perception of place and landscape is multi-faceted: a whole sensory experience (p. 343). Bingley’s notion of landscape could be called ‘moving’ in that she considers landscape as “the transitional object; a mediator between inner (Me) and outer (Not-Me) worlds, used to develop the potential space; a space that carries the dynamic, creative relationship of all objects.” Also Merleau-Ponty’s (1964) notion of landscape could be considered ‘moving’ when he writes that ‘the painter's vision is a continued birth’ (p. 168). Todres’ perception of the living body as the ultimate medium of the ‘more’ to which the body has experiential access whilst already there as part of our everyday lives and co-arising with its situation (Todres, 2007, p. 20-22) could also be considered ‘moving’ in that the emphasis is on emergence, on bringing forth a progressive flow.
Those who accentuate ‘moving’ landscapes use an approach and a language that seems quite different to those that bring about ‘fixed’ landscapes. In the words of Todres (ibid, p. 173), their approach has a focus ‘in which unity holds diversity, and diversity holds unity [that] is about presence: a wide world in which non-separative being here and specialised engagement are interpenetrative.’ Their language is often ‘murky’ if not poetic. Their language looks for the ‘more’ than words that brings together the said and the unsaid: ‘a kind of language that is released from the logic of identity’ (ibid, p. 23).

Most research-participants expressed and communicated ‘moving landscapes’ not only in how they theorised their work but also in how they communicated among each other and with me as a researcher. More often than not they used ‘murky’ language, and one research-participant, Ma., contextualised her reason for using ‘murky’ language in her work as follows:

You know how I said about this communication model? There is a receiver and sender and a message? This is a really basic communication model … and there are about twenty more. And there are paradigms in culture. They are part of a culture, but they are still paradigms. So when you have communication, and we’re not so much talking about the relationship, but there is a place where there is an overlap. There is congruence. So I’m thinking if we have someone from a very different culture to my own, that area I would assume could become a language. You know how I was saying there is a common language? So the sender has a responsibility, a kind of message he issues to the receiver. So if I talk to an executive, and they have participants and they want to know what’s going on and how bad it might be for them, and so… so as a consultant my message would be along those lines. And how I reciprocate those. It’s just a time to increase that space, or by coming to that space to get my message through. So it’s like a strainer. Whatever, you know, whatever you want to put through a strainer, like particles to go through, to make sure that my communication is received. So in that communication model we are drawing on, there I meant a message is murky. Because I might want to sort out what I can do before I need to raise it. And so I make conscious decisions to make my messages murky. So I can take… you know, it gives me the freedom to do what I need to do.

What Ma. describes suggests that she sometimes needs to create space in a round-about way to move around rather than confront or adhere to other people’s paradigms, and as such get a message through which she seeks to convey. With that, her focus is not fixed on conceived values, but on getting a felt sense for the communication or the landscape of those she assists. The context in which she applies ‘murky communication’ appears to be particularly suitable for ‘fixed’ landscapes that need to be ‘compensated’ for:

Ma: Resistance is a typical response to a disruption of expectations (this is how we define resistance in the context of organisational change management). I would presume that resistance would come to bear in cross cultural education as well, i.e. every time a belief, tradition,
behaviour, rule or taboo is ‘violated’ (i.e. expectation not met) it is likely to create a disruption in the communication underlying education. This could possibly be compensated for by one of the people involved in the communication/education process making a leap ‘over the top’ of the manifestation of the culture or it can cause a complete breakdown of the communication.

‘Murky’ communication appeared to be key to go around that which Ten Bos & Kaulingfreks (2002) refer to as what seems to be entangled in a paradox of isolation (individualism, self-management, hedonism etc.) and connection (communication, togetherness, networking). They suggest the interface can only be explored if we use metaphors of contagion and infection (p. 6). Goenka’s (in Hart, 1982) notion of confronting (accepting) the ‘pus’, Jung’s suggestion of confronting ‘the shadow’, Raff’s (2000) idea of ‘slaying the dragon-self within’, Assagioli’s (1988) and Ouspensky’s (1950) reference to the ‘man-machine complex’ that is to be seen as other to ‘essence, and Krishnamurti & Bohm’s (1985) dialogue in which they differentiate the conditioned mind or the brain, and the universal mind that is unbounded, all point in a similar direction. What they have in common is the way they circumvent the phenomenon that cannot be addressed directly, for it appears unable to look itself in the eye and own up to whence it came.

‘Murky communication’ can bring to light what Dimitrov (n.d.) refers to as “cultural” attractors that have very little to do with the growth of our intelligence, with the urge to understand the secrets of inner nature, expand our consciousness and open our spiritual potential.’ He suggests those ‘cultural’ attractors include those that seek to close down binary lenses (ibid) that permit a felt experience for the dynamics in a landscape. This may facilitate insight into ‘blind spots’ that are often intimately inhabited and culturally negotiated manifestations of exchanged and negotiated physical/cultural projections/reflections: images (and myths) that are traditionally passed on and reinforced in imbricating practices such as cultural rituals and symbols. As I discovered during an interview with Ros:

Ros: Should I come here and tolerate you because you want to interview me about cross-culture?
No! I come here because I want to be here because we have created a relationship on the internet, when you said: Hi Ros, what do you think of this? And I say: Ohhh, yeah that’s what I reckon. I send it over and you say: Yeah, that’s pretty cool. What do you think of this? We’ve done all those things. I eliminated tolerance. You eliminated tolerance. Maybe. I did!
Jose: OK. So as I negotiated my space, no, shared it with you...

Ros: Shared it! You offered and shared. I did not have to come back. You did not have to come back to me. But you did! It was not about tolerance. It was about starting in the grey space.
Jose: Yeah. And the willingness to share. You with me and me with you. And...

Ros: Yeah. And then we come here. And we’re doing it. And we’re doing it, why? Watch the other dissipate. There is no other here. And we started here. Because we’re sharing. From a space of
mutual respect. And we eliminated tolerance because even though it was uncomfortable at the beginning, we were able to negotiate to a place where we could come to a neutral space. Fuzzy! The grey area! Remember in complexity it says, from the grey area all sorts of possibilities can emerge. The sky is the limit. This is the sky is the limit. You and I sitting here, we are talking about something that could make changes for others to come. That’s the possibility.

The above exchange depicts a space I was not familiar with, and I remember myself feeling uneasy with the dynamics she communicated. They carried a resonance that felt like protest, which I in the first instance disowned. I remember myself immediately pulling myself back into the dialogue for I realised there was something here I needed to see, and perhaps it related to her telling me that I was used to engaging in spaces in which ‘tolerance’ prevails: a concept she contextualised as follows:

Ros: Well, this is what I think… it is an icon of our society, across the world, globally. People say we need to be tolerant. No, we don’t. How dare you tolerant of me? How dare I be tolerant of you?

Jose: Because what does it connote for you, the word tolerance?

Ros: Ah well, this is my thinking… if you look in the dictionary the word tolerance means to put up with something. Why should I put up with something? It does you a disservice. It does not mean I have to get on with you. It does not even say I have to like you. It says nothing. It is a nothing. You know, I think it gives an excuse to people to say, ah well I won’t have to look at it, as a real. How would you feel if … you were told to tolerate… because it is a different culture: Tolerate… because we are in a country of tolerance… just because it is expected. That’s why I am saying, get rid of tolerance. Negotiate a grey space. Explore difference, nurture likeness, seek understanding and watch the other dissipate.

The following excerpt from an interview with Ma., a corporate cross-cultural educator who focuses on organisational cultures, reflects a felt sense of dynamics that take shape in her landscape and which quite likely effected our conversation: a conversation which she wanted to take place in her office and as such was not a ‘neutral’ place³, but a place ‘stamped’ by conceived values:

Ma: If we talk about culture in organisations it is much easier to name. There are lots of theories in organisational culture, for example some cultures are either performance driven, or you can be customer-service focused or whatever. Or you might have a culture where accountability is taken very seriously… or where people are pushing responsibility around. And so when you’re engaged

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³ I asked participants purposely to choose where they wanted the interviews to take place, since I wanted to get a sense of the kind of spaces they preferred to engage in. I had not (yet) considered that those surroundings would influence the dynamics in the interviews and focus-groups. In future research I would like to attend closely to that interchange also.
in cultural analysis, then you can name it. You still have to be careful not to offend the client, but you can name it, more so than when you talk about racial or cultural differences.

Jose: So it softens those boundaries… (I remember my scepticism coming up)

Ma: Yes, it does that so people cannot be found to be discriminated against. It is meant to protect people, because you cannot treat people badly because they are of a race and culture. But race and culture are closely linked, so…

Jose: Lots of questions come up for me. Because culture… there is no agreement on what that means. And when you look at race… there is no dialogue I know of, on what that means…

Ma: And there is no scientific evidence for race… And so we do not know what it is, until you have someone to explain it. And so that is when you start ferreting through other people’s paradigms… about what other people might have thought even…

Jose: And then what happens for you?

Ma: What happens for me? It really depends if I have time to entertain that thought, and if it is important enough to me, and want to get to the bottom of it, then I would go down and find out what the meaning is… if I can remove the paradigms, if I can see what it is, and that is the challenge of course…

Silence… (I feel tension and want a turning point)

I write the following notes when I transcribe the interview that tells me that I had bumped into a ‘blind spot’:

(I feel thrown here, and feel we’re talking across paradigms… I remember I don’t want to give up and feel we might get somewhere if I just go with my feelings to get to that point of meeting. But do I really? Perhaps I want her to come to the point of meeting… Perhaps I want her to see something… Does she feel unsafe? Do I feel unsafe? Yes. Do we feel unsafe? Perhaps… where is the boundary, if there is one…) 

Jose: I just get the feeling now of a lot of potential in the area… however I don’t even know quite what we’re talking about…

I remember that I felt I had touched an unsafe area, a ‘blind spot’ that was not to be explored for one reason or another. And even though I prompted Ma. to explore the area with me, it seemed impossible at that point. There appeared to be a ‘cultural attractor’ that wanted to close down a binary lens that at first appeared fruitful: a lens in which the difference between organisational and ‘societal’ cultures seemed to work for us.

At another point in the interview and upon reflecting on the symbolism of the cross, the landscape revealed itself: Ma. contextualised this ‘cultural attractor’ as follows:
Ma.: A cross means a crossing of paths. So a Christian cross. Which really means, I’ve been told, is like a person with the arms out-stretched. And so it is a symbol of life in that way. It is a point of connection where the lines are crossing. What else do I think about? There is crossroads, where you have an opportunity to go and step onto a different track.

Jose: Yep.

Ma.: Then we talk about cross-cultural, which… I am just brainstorming… meaning across cultures… so it’s moving beyond one’s own point to another culture, at least to a part… which is I suppose is a space of interest and openness to it… maybe I’ll come back to it, maybe I’ll see something else in the cross. There is of course, I suppose when I said about the Christian cross, there is all these paradigmgs based on religion based on Roman hierarchy, manipulation and mind-control blah blah blah… all mind-control that is ‘other imposed’ and loaded with torture and sadness, and this has brought perhaps a lot of joy and salvation for a lot of people… but to me? A lot of control and a lot of intolerance and a lack of willingness to explore, and this of course this reflects to my experiences with religion… which then of course reflects on the symbol… You know, things like the Inquisition, where people on that symbol were condemned to the most horrendous forms of death and torture… and families break or quarrel because some believe in other stuff… You know Crusades, where people expose themselves to going to a war, and go to war to protect something that is not theirs against people who own it for religious reasons. So yeah, I think there are a lot of bizarre associations with the cross…

Jose: And if you… that sounds bizarre maybe, this thing about peace, and let’s pretend the Cross is not there… I get the feeling there is this belief out there that if we pretend this whole thing that is represented in the cross and if we bypass all that and go towards peace and focus on enlightenment, then everything will be fine…

Ma.: Ah Okay. Interesting point! That’s interesting because you know what? I think it is there! People are genuinely and fiercely protecting their boundaries! As soon as we say something that someone else feels threatened by or does not agree with, you have a response of resistance or defensiveness, which is a form of resistance, because you are threatening to cross their boundaries, their personal boundaries. So yes, I can see what is happening. But it sounds to me like a political or a… Yeah, it just sounds like denial really. I mean we talk about multi-cultural environment, which does not necessarily ignore the cross-cultural, but like in our workplace we acknowledge we have a lot of different cultures working in one environment… we’ve got about… I don’t know, up to about 30 different nationalities. Plus the ones that work for us, and they all have pretty narrow ideas and values and thoughts that are different as a result of their own cultural....

Jose: And so in your work, do you think, look at or talk about those boundaries? Discuss them?
Ma.: Yes, to a degree. The only thing in a corporate environment is that you have to be very careful because you cannot discriminate on the grounds of race. And so whenever you talk about something like that, you have to very mindful of how to put that forward and discuss …

The conversation with Ma. seemed to focus on exploring the difference between organismic and conceived values. This exploration seemed necessary to be able to unpick a kind of gaint value-mass associated with the symbol or metaphor cross, and possibly it also assisted Ma. to clarify if only for herself, that her organismic values did not necessarily cohere with the organisationally dictated conceived values.

Organisations advisor, trainer and coach Van Paassen (2007) has found that nowadays many individuals and teams spend time on handling polar positions (p. 91). Many seek connection, aliveness and space for reflection for development and research. But at the same time, she argues, little space and time is taken to sit back and look inwards, or to simply talk and listen. The longing for solutions and quick fixes is still the overriding force (p. 98). In other words, the overriding force seems to be a set of conceived values that have an impact on individual employees and as such the ‘communitas’ (Turner, 1974) of the organisation.

Dutch philosopher Achterhuis (2003) complains of a world that is ‘frozen’ in a deadlock of time and space: many people don’t ask questions, and don’t engage in experiences and activities that take time. Furthermore, both work and social spaces and domains marginalise slow questions, slow experiences and slow activities (ibid, p.74). The Western world so structured that there is also little space to work in a natural environment which stimulates intuitive work and the ‘non-technical rational-rational’ (Schon, 1983). This diminishes the possibility of the ‘Thou’ to become present in an act of love: an act educators need to know and trust in the process of slowing down (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006) and as such build a a space in which restricted structures and constructs can offer people the opportunity to transform their lives (Zohar & Marshall, 2004).

The following excerpt from an interview with In., a Dutch cross-cultural educator, reflects the above ideas:

In.: What you describe was done by the monks in the past: Taking a word or information into the mouth and taste it. The term for this was Ruminatio. The Benedict monks did this… And I feel it is important to do this, and at the same time I find it difficult to do. Because I live in a world that I allow myself to be dictated by. And I don’t see this as a personal problem but one that applies to many people. It is visible all around us: Busy, busy, busy. Much much… Everybody is exhausted by the time it is Christmas. People need at least a week to recover and then still are not fully rested but HAVE to move on again. I belong to that group too. I participate in it too! AND I know I do not want it that way. So yeah… when you talk about communication… it is only a very limited vehicle.

Jose: You mean verbal communication?
In.: ‘Yes, verbal communication. We don’t take the time to… I don’t think we take the time even to… and you were talking about this… to make contact with our inner… communicate from our inner being, our inner core being…’

The perception of a lack of time and the speed at which globalising education systems are developing, including cross-cultural education, produces more boxed thinking as a result of which the world as a whole reinforces the downward spiralling vortex; a ‘speed’ that is reinforced by increased pressures from the business world and information technology giants such as Microsoft (Marques Cardoso, 2008). They create more, through covert fixed hierarchical structures that reinforce linear objectives to privatise, save government’s money or solve problems, but whether money or social problems are really solved is contested and transformation unlikely (ibid, p. 241), because they reinforce ‘knowledge contributions as captive of one privileged view, tolerant of a second marginalized view and denigrative or ignorant of a third view’ (Lowe et al., 2007).

During the research the notion of time, including the perception of ‘lacking time’ (e.g. for dialogue) popped up frequently. It was often brought into context with differences in perception between mainly Indigenous and so-called non-Indigenous cultures. In common was held a viewpoint that those differences in perception tended to underpin the split in cross-cultural exchanges: a split that, Pelzer (2005) suggests, is held intact by what he calls the ‘hostility triad’ of contempt, anger and ‘moral’ reasoning. Pelzer does not talk about how this triad comes about and is held intact, but this research seems to point to a possible connection with a mechanism associated with the conditioned mind: a mechanism of holding on to self-imposed boundaries which shapes fixed landscapes, fixed notions of identity and identity-politics. Those boundaries may be associated with both conceived and associated values. In Chapter Four I will talk more about this mechanism in the context of self-protection and the negative and positive sides of it.

This mechanism of holding on to self-imposed boundaries I had not accounted for in field-research, and it caught me by surprise. Somehow I believed that, because all participants identified themselves as holistically oriented, self-imposed boundaries would not come into play: that is, be actively defended. To assist what I considered a holistic approach in research and as such create a safe space, I was mindful of bringing into dialogue from the very start what I expected and what my intentions were, as well as my personal experiences in cross-cultural education. I hoped this would be sufficient to invite research-participants to talk about theirs, and that as such a collaborative space would emerge. Because at the time I was not aware (so ignorant of) the differences between conceived and organismic values, I believed collaboration somehow meant anything but a defending of self-imposed boundaries. I did not realise at the time that I held a cultural orientation: one that was influenced by Catholic conceived values which ‘lurked’ in the background of my mind and of which I was not aware. As such, I of course held intact a self-imposed boundary that, in hindsight, does not correspond with what I consider to be ‘my’ organismic value-set.
So I was caught by surprise when others not only presented but actively and intensely defended a cultural boundary. This defense manifested itself in the hostility triad: For example, two research participants who were born and raised in the ‘opposite’ hemisphere to the one in which they worked argued for a better world, but they simultaneously branded the people in their host country as ‘racist’. The intensity in tone with which this branding occurred told me that there was a hostility-triad in place of contempt, anger and ‘moral’ reasoning: a triad I saw as a dynamic that I wanted to understand and work with. But it so appeared that this dynamic was not to be queried. In other words, it self-protected, and the intention behind the communication was not to open up but to split.

Another participant from overseas talked about bi-competency and how ‘well’ she had adapted to Australia, but at the same she denigrated the competency of other migrants in the focus group who, unlike her, did not defend their tribal/cultural background: She suggested ‘others’ did not want or were unable to adapt to, let alone understand and work with her culture. This produced enormous tension among participants including myself: a tension that I did not like and protested (defended). As such I reciprocated the part of self-protection that seeks to split, not meet. Effectively we imbricated a place (Offord, 2002) that had a ‘site-hardening’ effect (ibid). Upon further conversations with some of the other migrants, I was told that also they felt extremely uncomfortable with this energy-field and were unsure as to how to handle it.

It was in those blurred instances when I became painfully aware of my limitations as a facilitator/researcher: I did not see at the time that I was participating in a group mind of which I had very little understanding. New possibilities could have emerged had I at least accepted that self-imposed boundaries exist also in my world, and that perhaps those boundaries can also be used positively: as a form of positive self-protection useful to an evolving education (Gidley, 2007) and creating a space of ‘finding-oneself-in-relation’ (Todres, 2007, p. 122) whilst distinctions are made respectfully.

3.6 A sense of embodied enquiry

The instant in which I seemed to bump into a cultural attractor in incidences as described in the previous section –attractors that seek to close down binary lenses- seems to sketch a group mind that dominates contemporary cross-cultural education as fractal to yet a larger group mind: a group mind which Krishnamurti & Bohm (1985) suggest, is ‘the root of all conflict, not only outwardly but also a tremendous conflict of humanity’ (p. 9) that relates to a mistake made long ago (ibid, p. 12). This mistake relates to notions of greed, attachment and so on: notions that bring in the notion of time and of becoming, which creates endless problems (ibid, p. 23). Once it is realised that the insistence on ‘becoming’ is futile, so Krishnamurti & Bohm argue, we may experience the beginning of a movement that is not structured in time (ibid, p. 29). To assist this movement, Krishnamurti (1978) suggests a move away from remedies that do not suffice to
create a paradigm shift, but only ‘suppress our cravings and ambitions’ and are ‘more diabolical and devastating’ because induced by people who see that ‘increasing antagonism between men only leads to indiscriminate destruction and is therefore no longer profitable’ (pp. 70-71). Hence, Krishnamurti urges people to have ‘hearts that are not filled with empty phrases, with things of the mind [but] to understand ourselves’ (p. 79).

Ron Miller (2003) warns that any holistic philosophy fails if the four most essential principles of holistic education are not practiced by the educator: 1/ The development of the whole person and not only a selection of human possibilities, 2/ A new relationship between teacher and student, with dialogue, cooperation, friendship and respect to replace authoritarian practices, 3/ A spiritual rather than a materialistic view on the world, with respect for the self-driving force that surpasses rational, intellectual understanding. Self-actualisation is prime, and 4/ A phenomenological, all-embracing, ecological, world-embracing perspective inclusive of all aspects of the human experience. Miller contends this approach is radical but not ideological. It is a life philosophy.

The above authors suggest that there is no easy answer, no quick-fix method, no such thing as a certain direction, and no limitation in time and space, or in options and resources that are available to us. All that is needed is a different attitude: a different approach. Part of this different approach could be considered a different type of attention associated with depths of feeling, or sensitivity.

*There is really another whole realm of depth and sensitivity available in life, but somehow, you are just not seeing it. You wind up feeling cut off. You feel insulated from the sweetness of experience by some sort of sensory cotton wool. You are not really touching life. You are not making it again. And then even that vague awareness fades away, and you are back to the same old reality. The world looks like the usual foul place, which is boring at best. It is an emotional roller coaster, and you spend a lot of your time down at the bottom of the ramp, yearning for the heights.*


Gendlin’s (1996) ideas and methods of ‘focusing’ circle around the notion of ‘attention’: a notion I will talk more in Chapter Four, but here I will briefly explain its meaning. Focusing implies a ‘bodily sensing’ or ‘bodily attention’ away from the notion that the body (or the mind for that matter) is a physiological machine. Instead, the body is a ‘sensed from the inside experience’ that expands as we invite it in and learn about its immensely rich, multifaceted, fluid and intricate experiential quality. Focusing also and only attends to life enhancing, energy giving, forward moving values. If values push a person’s energy back which ‘spiritual language’ can also do, they are not ‘experientially sound’ (Gendlin, 1996, p. 275). The uniqueness of focusing, I find, is in enriching the connection between thinking and feeling but *thinking is in service of feeling* and not the other way around.
The significance of bodily awareness was expressed by C1., an Australian research participant who used to feel ‘burdened’ by ‘noisy’ communication and excessive superego talk:

C1.: I have to go back to my body a lot. A lot of people I deal with… they do not know what they are feeling…. Do not interpret their bodily feelings… and if I see that in them coz I see that in me… quite likely, but we can interpret anything and that is always part of ourselves… that has a lot to do with being with another person… what is within us is what we feel in others… and that is cross-cultural in itself… and so what I do is look at what is going on inside of me…

Jose: Does that work?

C1.: I think it does. I get good feedback. The light turns on sometimes. A lot of times the human experiences shows to be what we all share together, and when we really feel what we are feeling and share that, then that makes that tunnel, makes that bridge between people.

‘Embodied inquiry is a practice that attends to the relationship between language and the experiencing body’, writes Todres (2007, p. 176), and it focuses on the sense-making experience. Some words, he suggests, have a feel to them that resonate our feelings. They ‘work’ for us and ‘fit’, whilst others don’t. Largely based on Gendlin’s approach, Todres (2007) emphasises an awareness of the provisional and secondary role of words: they are more like contours of the experience as communication takes shape with the body as the ‘shepherd’ of participation (p. 20).

The words are a bodily lived experience for both the speaker and the listener, and the quality of the conversation is one of a progressive ‘flow’ rather than a conclusiveness. In other words, Todres suggests, the words are continuously refreshed to bring the conversation forward and a shared perspective proceeds and works such that knowledge becomes a meaningful practice.

In many interviews I held with participants on a one-on-one basis, it so ‘happened’ we collaboratively explored the feel, look, taste or sound of some concepts I had earlier introduced
which enhanced the being able to see how they interconnected into a kind of web of a meta-language that is not fixed but produces a progressive ‘flow forward’. The following excerpt from an interview with Cl. reflects this ‘forward flow’:

Cl: I tried to come to terms with the words on this continuum you were talking about. Individuated is more separate… group mind seems to be emergent… a property that is there as a result of these minds together, whilst Homo Sapiens is more of a scientific construct. You could just do a thesis in the unpacking of these words…

Jose: Yes, and I struggle with the scientific stuff of there being the static or the dynamic. But in my view they are both there, and everything is in the process of becoming, and everything is in development.

Cl: I tried to unpack the cross-thing too. I played with the symbols that the words gave me. They look to me like the Christian symbol and of the body, especially the +, also bad and as in dynamism… And the X the meeting-place, coz you come from a place and identify it… like when people could not write and wrote their name. And in + the opposing thing, and the 2-dimensional, and the flat plane. But you were saying: A wormhole, a tunnel, wow… tell me more about that.

Jose: Here we go back to strings. I used to think in terms of the static idea, but then I also knew there is not only static. I began to wonder what else is there in the cross. And I find I can either look in a fixed position, and when I justify the fact that you or I look like a woman and believe it is true what I see, then I immediately have a fixed and justified position. But when I can of look at myself, stand back and look at myself in the situation, things shift position and become more pliable but also you become pliable, and we can then things can start to change and become more dynamic, not only in between us but also around us… if we are open to that. But there is still that point of being centered, and there is the flying into and out of the centre… How this all fits in and maybe it is nothing… I do not know yet.

Cl: I assumed you were trying to find a metaphor that would help people to understand the gaps in cross-cultural education… and I stayed with the stereotype and see how it could be limited… a cross is pushed down … a cross is wrong, it is a symbol that for me is limited coz of what I have experienced in the community… but then again quite likely I do not have the understanding…

Jose: Yes. Thank you. And I reckon we can try to find out how it works, not only for me or for you, but also for others to see what happens in the exchange with others to see how the whole dynamic of the cross works itself out, related to concepts like racisms etc… So I just want to offer some tools and conceptual frameworks that help you to play with the symbol of the cross and the whole dynamic of cross-cultural stuff consequencing into racism etc.

Cl: I still see difficulties again in the stereotypical way of seeing the cross just like in the individualised versus the individuated self etc…. Unless you want to see how… And maybe that
is how it works… by using the symbol of the cross that they come to see something… is that what you hope for?

Jose: Yes.

Cl: Great. Let’s go for the trip.

The following excerpt from an interview with a research participant, Ma., also serves as an example of ‘a forward flow’:

Ma.: We were talking before about Maieutic Inquiry, a concept I had not heard of. And I was not familiar with the scientific way of introducing a concept and then explaining it later. Even when reading it a few times, I completely tuned out and thought: I do not understand that word. And I went to Google trying to understand what it meant, but I still felt wobbly on the term. Sometimes, when you do not understand a word as a foreigner you filter it out. But sometimes it can completely derail any communication that comes after that word and might be of significance. But that then gets filtered out.

Jose: Maieutic Inquiry, just to inform you, is hazy, is fuzzy at the start to progressively make things clear. It fits into fuzziology, of nothing being fixed, really. And maieutic actually means something like birth, the birthmother, giving birth. Maieutic inquiry is where both respond, like what we do is explore something together. It is not about right or wrong. We look at like what do I know and what do you know. It is about being in dialogue. And whilst being in dialogue to understand what it means to be in dialogue. All that to explore how to communicate across cultures and what kind of barriers come up. Stuff you’ve spoken about as well. And to expand on that. And so we give birth as it were to something…

Ma.: to an insight in that, or an understanding, a recognition of sorts...

Jose: Yes, something I have no knowledge of… I might have an idea about it, and so might you, however it is in the mixture of things where problems or patterns might be spotted, and where we might find something like … that could give birth to more… to across cultures, to communication across cultures...

Ma.: That makes a lot of sense.

Jose: Ah yeah, how is that?

Ma.: I am taking my consulting hat and when we consult a client, I would describe a part of the work of being a consultant as someone who ‘clears up’, and uses information to generate something new. Asking the client what they know, and then with the ability to analyse and transform with the methods that we use, something new emerges. So in a way it applies to my work. I used to call it clearing, that’s how I look at it. Other people do other stuff. Technology guys write programs and presentations and that. But before we can do that we need to get into
difference in granularity and detail so we can do something and our tools can work… So in that context, perhaps not so much important in an education context but in a work context...

Jose: Yes, same same. It’s all education really. But it depends on how we look at education. In education we have the paradigms of educare and educere, where the one is pumping information in and the other leading out. And some see one as right and the other as wrong, but for me they are both ways of walking. And it is in the willingness and understanding to be in that Maieutic Inquiry space...

Ma.: As you’re saying that, the paradigm of education for me is that it is institutionalised. The rest I call learning and development. I put a boundary where you don’t. Where I talk about work, you say same same, I do not see it that way because I would have put an institutionalised boundary around education. And so that was a paradigm I was coming from.

Jose: And is that a paradigm out there. Is that your paradigm? Your assumption?

Ma.: It’s one I’ve come to adopt. It’s how I’ve seen education happen. I’ve done lots of self-education, self-development and learning and that stuff, but there is not the same value placed on it… as there is on institutionalised learning. Because you don’t walk out with a recognised qualification of sorts. And so there is a paradigm, and then there is a value that locks that in.

Jose: That’s again like a cross-cultural thing… the academic assumption, an assumption that you think is an academic assumption, and whether it’s true or not…

Ma. (interrupts): You can argue, this is interesting… not only is there culture across different countries, languages or however you want to define it… You know, we work with organisational cultures, and using that, the academic culture would be different to a public service culture, or a consultants’ culture, retail culture, banking culture. Even though these are not necessarily racially driven cultures, they are still underpinned by a shared set of paradigms and values and they cross, I suppose, they slice and dice in a different way.

Jose: And so the dynamics might be similar?

Ma.: Yes, very much so.

Jose: OK. And so these dynamics are what we explore in this research… see how they form part of the same thing?

Ma.: Yes, I do. Now I do…

'Maieutic inquiry', Dimitrov & Naess (2005, pp. 17-19) suggest, depends essentially on the active interaction of the inquirer and the respondent. They suggest that ‘the interactions of sides involved in maieutic inquiry aim at liberating their creative potential from the pull of forces born out of human egocentricity and egotism, blind attachments and addictions, social brainwash or
power-based manipulations – forces which are able to convert the fuzziness of knowing into hard-to-surpass ignorance.’

By aiming for ‘maieutic inquiry’ and by focusing on the felt sense, it seemed easier for me to facilitate a ‘moving’ landscape which quickly turns into one that is ‘fixed’ when a focus on personal and/or group-identity is more important than the mindful bearing of the gift of ‘belonging to wound’ (Todres, 2007, p. 115): a focus that I translated in the context of my research-topic as ‘bearing the cross’ whilst seeking to transform a fixed cross into a dynamic, a kind of gate, a passage to a ‘soulful space’ (ibid, p. 117) that is born in the quality of a ‘mutual vulnerability’ (ibid, p. 119).

I wanted to feel into the landscape of each participant as closely as possible, whilst considering each person’s landscape as fractal to the larger landscape of cross-cultural education and a ‘fractal’ autoethnographic journey. As Capra (1982) wrote, our interactions with our environment are a continual interplay and mutual influence between the outer and our inner world, with patterns we perceive around us that mirror our inner patterns (p. 320). This getting a feel for participants’ landscape began very early in the research-process. Participants either lived in Holland or in Australia, and since I could not be in both places at once yet wanted to get a degree of insight into the dynamics in their landscape, I made the first inter view a ‘written’ exchange and asked each participant to answer a set of questions (see Appendix Three).

I asked participants for example to ‘draw out’ what they see when they think of the metaphor ‘cross’. I explicitly used the word ‘drawing out’ to invite participants to give a rich description of their interpretation.

Ros replied to this question with the following image of Robyn Kahukiwa, a contemporary Maori artist. No text was added to this image.

Though I asked Ros in a later interview to elaborate on this image, the point here is to convey the ‘felt sense’ of the exchange itself. Ros’ preference to present an image without further comment indicated to me a power that stood on its own. It demanded that I inquired into the feeling of the image.
When I asked Ros to tell me more about her earlier comment of ‘feeling silenced in my own skin when engaging with the larger academic world’, she presented the following image of the same artist. This time the image was accompanied with text:

![Image of an abstract face art](image)

*It's not what they say but what they don't say. Romanticism and the concept of the noble savage can be felt, seen and interpreted when one does the following... e noho (sit quietly) titiro (watch), whakarongo (listen), ako (learn).*

I asked Ros to tell me about how her earlier proposed idea that ‘the other needs the space to be heard the way we are and not the way we should be according to the powers that be’ might come into effect on a daily basis. She answered with the following images, again accompanied with text:

*Eliminate tolerance, negotiate a grey space, explore difference, nurture likeness, seek understanding, then watch the other dissipate.*

![Images of people in various settings](images)

I asked Ros to tell me what such a space would look like/ feel like/ sound like/ taste like/ smell like, to which she answered:

*Fuzzy...fuzzy...fuzzy...fuzzy...fuzzy*
Offord (2002) focuses on the subjective resonance of two landscapes to explore and ‘locate as expressions of confluence and imbrication, two sites that illustrate the complexity and fecundity of belonging’ (p. 13). He describes ‘meanings and connections [that] cohere around specific sites [with] implications of belonging to a place that need to be connected, to be made explicit.’

The landscape that Ros illustrated conveys a site in which ‘a visitor’ to the landscape—which in itself indicates a binary position of landscape and ‘self’ and an inward and outward ‘I’- acquires a sense of belonging by a willingness to engage in a process of negotiating. She said the space between us felt safe because we both negotiated, as she described it, the ‘grey area from which all possibilities can emerge.’ During the interview with Ros, I commented on the image in which Bill Clinton keeps his eyes open as opposed to the Maori Elder, to which she answered:

Ros: It all became because we decided to eliminate tolerance. Because I am sure if you did not want to learn from me, you would not have contacted me. And if I did not want to learn from you, then I would not have responded, aye. Yeah. So that’s how I think we can do it everyday. Now, this is how I describe it. This is a Maori beauty aye. This is the Dalai Lama and a child. If we eliminate tolerance, all those things there, the hongi, when people rub their noses, and the Maori-concept that means: Peace I bring, peace I give to you. So, that is what the hongi means. So the Dalai Lama, look at that, they are on the same level, yet he’s the next thing to God for some people. Yet, there’s a child that’s just taken out of the group! And through those things there, they are able to greet each other and say: I come in peace. And peace I give to you. Same here. It’s a Maori Elder. Bill Clinton, the most powerful man in the world of his time! Yet through that, they are able to share: Peace I bring with you and peace I give to you. Children. The older ones with the younger. You see, nobody is higher! There is no other. The other is encompassed in, the thing. Where is the other? None, because they come from here. And the principles and the values of the hongi, are exactly based on that… This is what I reckon: I reckon that it is not everyday that Bill Clinton will rub noses with a Maori. It is probably the first and probably the last time on that visit. Right. So it is new. So it’s new. Right. This is the grey space just the fact that they are rubbing noses. Explore difference. So perhaps he is still here. Perhaps that’s why his eyes are open. Perhaps it is different. Perhaps he is not sure about this. Perhaps he does not know why he has to do this. But he has to do it because he’s got to connect with these Maori’s. Perhaps he is still at the tolerance. Perhaps he is still thinking about the tolerance. But I dare say this: That if Bill Clinton would spend a lot more time with Maori’s and learn a little bit more about the hongi, I bet you in due time his eyes will close…

Jose: If he is willing.

Ros: If he eliminates tolerance (laughs).

Jose: And able to do that. And willing to do that.
Ros: Well, but that's what your willing is. If he, if he eliminates tolerance, if he is willing to say no, I am not going to do that, I'll start on the grey area. That's what I'm saying. Willing. Yeah?

Ros' expression of being 'willing' sets up the very space which appears to make possible an 'imbrication of belonging' (Offord, 2002) but without attachment to the outcome and as such clear from conceived values. Imbrication refers to the effect of tiles on a roof, used here to specify the quality of something that intersects, is interlocked, layered, touching, holding together, produced by the accrual of spatial and temporal experience, underscored by the identity-subjectivity. The imbrication of belonging thus refers to the qualities of all these activities just highlighted upon the production of how one belongs’ (p. 14).

Similar to Offord, Capra (1997, 2008) seeks to move away from Cartesian and technical rational epistemologies and their tendency: a tendency, which as Capra (1997) suggests, breaks up complex phenomena into pieces to understand the behaviour of the whole from the property of its parts (p. 19). His approach called 'ecoliteracy' (2008) emphasises a shift away from measuring to mapping mutual relationships and interactions in ecosystems, not only among components but also between whole systems and surrounding larger systems. It implies a finding of repeating configurations called patterns that are visual images, and contextual knowledge, not content knowledge. In other words, 'a shift of perception from material objects and structures to the nonmaterial processes and patterns of organization that represent the very essence of life.'

Both Offord's and Capra's approaches resonate with that of Dimitrov's Wholesome Life Ecology in response to a call for integral education theory (Gidley, 2007; Molz & Gidley, 2008).

To me the call for integral education theory is to contextualise itself academically in the long history of integral philosophies, east and west, and to contextualise itself geographically within transnational, transcultural, planetary discourses that go beyond the Anglo-American integral discourse.

Molz & Gidley, 2008, pp. 61-62

3.7 At the turn-around point

Henk Burggraaff (2007) suggests that dialogue, thus understanding, can be enhanced by using concepts that have ‘openklappende randen’ [open-snapping edges] (p. 53). Such concepts have unlimited meanings, examples of which are 'soul', 'person', 'self', 'God'. Other such concepts I consider to be 'timing', 'spacing', 'rite', and 'cross'.

When dialogue occurs such that 'sticking edges' between people 'snap open', a landscape opens up that can be felt in the body as an aesthetic quality (Todres, 2007, p. 176): a quality that is desirable and feels like a 'moving' landscape:
**Poetry of Landscape**

She kisses my feet as
I breathe her colours, her smells,
her breath, she
Does not mind my
Bits of resistance, but wants me
to learn love her more.
Walk all over me, she says, for
I am your glass mirror, and
Look, look into me, and listen, listen to
Hear my whispering whispers
of colour my

... photons, purple, pink and blue
And my emerald green my
emerald green
Sink into me; embrace me, devour me
and become part of me
Her smells, her breath, her
Manifold of sensations
Escape into my awareness, my breath
In surrender to her Will-Power

Jose, 8 October 2008

The ‘cross’ and the spaces and times with which it is associated has a particular resonance, and moving into the ‘felt sense’ of this symbol and what it carries forward in different people’s minds can be revealing if not aesthetically pleasing. I remember the sensation well when Ros began to talk about the images she had sent me earlier during our interview. It felt like she was inviting me into her world and we began to shape a shared and aesthetically rich reality:

*Ros: Can you understand? That’s my cross. The window is the thing that is tangible. So it is the real. The world. Because the world is made up of concrete. Not the earth. The world. The world is wood, is concrete, is whatever the window is, on the big building. But here is the spirit of me, the spirit of my people. We are part of the window but not really, because we are… flesh. And we can disappear and come. What I see myself is trying to be here, so that for other people, my people and other people who are marginalized, we are there. That’s what I mean by the cross. The window is there without us, but I’m saying no, but I am there. And so are other people. And we make up… we are part of that window, whether you like it or not.  
Jose: Is there friction in there or not? 
*Ros: Yes. There’s friction. Big friction. Because a normal person who is part of the window, that looks out from the window, is the power, is the other, is the big person, is the system, is the window. And only privileged people can be in that window. Because if you think about it, you can
wipe that me off, and the window will still be there. That is the spirit of who we are. We are only there.

Jose: And can you wipe the window as well?

Ros: The window will never go. Because it is made up of concrete. This window is tangible. The window is this. But that person there is the spirit.

It struck me that Ros’ interpretation of the cross had no Christian connotations at any point. She never discussed such a link in any of our discourses, in contrast to every other participant.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I suggested that the crux in and the crux of cross-cultural education and the dynamics in associated exchanges take shape at a personal and ‘feeling’ level. I described a few landscapes as imbrications of place and especially attended to their felt sense to reflect dynamics in landscapes that I co-created: dynamics that contextualised a split or a meeting place at the centre of cross-cultural exchanges that took place. Assagioli (1988) similarly discusses the need for ‘dis-identification to synthesise’ with, and as the self that uses the physical body, the feeling and the mental body as tools to travel the road of life, the same way as a car is the extension of the driver (p. 138).

I suggested it is paramount to acknowledge the imbrication of flows and the ‘site-hardening’ tendency in cross-cultural exchanges, and with that attune to the ‘felt sense’ in the cross-cultural exchange in order to produce a flow forward. Of import is perhaps to acknowledge viewpoints such as Guowei Jian’s (2000), who suggests that we generally acknowledge power issues, but do not immediately reflect on how power is negotiated in our own actions.

It may be useful to acknowledge the deep fear within which is necrophilic (Dimitrov, 2005; Freire, 1972). We could consider and feel more deeply into parts in us that fear death (Sievers, 1994), as a result of which we insist on perfection and resist anything that threatens the ‘hygiene machine’, which is why laughter, desire, conflict and ethics are not ‘wanted’ (Ten Bos & Kaulingfreks, 2001, 2005). It may be useful to attend to what Ormsby-Green (2006, pp. 149-162) calls ‘cultural rituals’ and Turner (1974) ‘atemporal structures’; ‘purposive action patterns’ that at deeper levels are ‘categorical frames’ (p. 36); frames that perpetuate the reaching for external authority and expertise.

We could perhaps move out of the need for ‘human drama’ (Turner, 1974) by becoming more receptive to the other, opening the space to engage with the other, maintaining the connections with the other (Leeman & Wardekker, 2004, p.15), but also by being mindful of ‘negatives’ and the ‘overburden’ of significance by taking time and space to counteract the consumerist speedy attitudes prominent in a globalising world (Achterhuis, 2003, p. 74).
Perhaps we could learn to accept ‘friction’ as something *productive*.

This chapter both suggested and sought to give texture to a focus on the felt sense in cross-cultural exchanges and the contours of a landscape that hitherto appeared to be fixed and how it can begin to move.

In the following chapter I will both suggest and give texture to a focus on the felt sense and the dynamics of the sign, metaphor, symbol and verb *cross* that, upon reflection and meditation, can disclose subliminal forces and wisdom (Steiner, 1972/1980, p. 59).
CHAPTER FOUR: ATTENDANCE TO ATTENTION AND THE CROSS

4.1 Introduction

Being here

As silence graciously
Gives way
To impulses

Borne in the urge
To come to terms
With Self...
with the Already
Being understood
Right from the start
And before the urge
Began...

bubbles of air
Forming into
Mouths full of
Sound
And lips that
Form soundscapes
And visions...

I would lay them down before

Your and My Self...
... to see...
...A viewpoint
Now...
And then another one
And another one...

Split seconds
of time-space-energy-mass
As if for real...
speaking for itself ...
The whole and the detail
In the Simultaneous...

Thank you for being here.

Jose, 26 May 2006.

In the previous chapter, I sketched the importance of attuning to the felt sense in cross-cultural exchanges and the surrounding landscape. In this chapter I will expand on the felt sense in reference to the symbol, metaphor, sign and verb cross and to the concept of attention. As the
21.40 min. film titled “The OTHER Side of Language in X-Cultural Education: Unravelling the CROSS” shows, the notion of attention featured prominently in this study and appeared to be associated –though in a blurry kind of way – with the cross.

I will talk about different theoretical interpretations of the concept attention and relate these to contemporary cross-cultural education’s failure to attend to attention. Indeed, as Fehmi (n.d.-a, pp. 5-6) suggests, education has narrowed down people’s focus of attention. Or in the words of Ormsby-Green (2006), it has produced ‘fixed attention’. In the previous chapter I hinted at this reduced focus as something associated with ‘fixed landscapes’ including a fixation on globalisation as different to planetisation. I will also discuss different viewpoints on the cross, but they are subjective interpretations that do not seek to ‘pin down’ but traverse and overlap religious, cultural and mathematical/scientific notions.

The chapter then shows that talking about the cross permits a tinkering at the edges to produce an ‘evolving education’, and as such models the notion that there are emergent changes in consciousness (Molz & Gidley, 2008, p. 52). It also shows that it is useful to take away a fixation on ‘educational reform’ and the notion of ‘educational transformation’: notions that are limited by the very philosophical reference frameworks they use and subscribe to (ibid, p. 54). In other words, and in reference to the previous chapter and as a prelude to Chapter Five, talking about the cross as a Point of EnTry or P.O.E.T. (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) permits a ‘moving’ landscape that does not fix the focus on meeting whilst negating the moment of bifurcation. It permits a focus that is not fixed on imbrication, but one that develops a landscape that is more of a bricolage of different viewpoints that do not necessarily meet, and neither do they need to.

To emphasise the urgency of a shift in attention, the chapter will also discuss how holistically oriented cross-cultural educators can sharpen their focus and flex personally adopted and negotiated reference-frameworks, and with that enhance their capacity to understand and work with dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges.

Like the previous chapter, the discussion here will again centre on the research questions: How does a sample of holistically oriented educators understand and work with complex dynamics as they teach and learn across cultures? Subsidiary questions to help clarify the problem: 1/ How do cross-cultural educators approach the crux of the matter, where the split or the divide, or in terms of chaos theory bifurcation, is experienced? 2/ How is the split contextualised as a web and the dynamics that support it? 3/ How might wholesome life ecology re-energise understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics in a cross-cultural context?
4.2 What is and is not attention

In: More as a way of ‘beeldspraak’ [image langzame] is what I mean, when I talk about ‘looking at’. Looking at... you know, real attention in terms of who the other person is... You know, in terms of searching... searching for what is behind....

Jose: Ah, in search for the person behind the curtains, as it were?

In: Yes! Purely technically speaking I mean as well... like looking at each other from a 90 degree angle. So you have the space to look away. That’s also why I like to go for a walk with my clients.

Jose: Yes, same here.

In: I do a lot of career-guidance, and so most of the time I have three or four or five talks with people. Not in all conversations it works as well. And with some people I have tried it only once or twice. But I always try to go for a walk with people in the forest. That works beautifully. A space emerges then, and a better balance between head and body. Now there is... I have only just cut an article from the newspaper which says... and perhaps you find that interesting also... (In looks for the article)

Jose: Look, and that kind of thing... when I think of education, it’s the same, don’t you think? The teacher still stands in front of the class most of the time. Or there are computers... which is again similar... it is all very... it’s terrible really... it’s all so very offensive in a way...

In: Yes (she has found the article and reads out aloud). ‘Science has shown that walking has a positive effect on the mood and the ability to learn, and also people’s sense of well-being increases.’ A lady from the University of Tilburg did this research.

Jose (scans the article). Ahhh, and she connects it with pilgrimage...

In: Yes, by doing this PhD-research she tries to explain the succes of pelgrimage-sites. Theologically, but also neuro-scientifically.... Yes... isn’t this what Aboriginal peoples do: go for long walks?

Jose: Yes they do. And I notice myself when I run... it is like a meditation... provided you look in a particular way. And I think of education again, because it is so powerfully directed at knowledge in the head... I’ve forgotten now what I was going to say... Ah yes, Aboriginal peoples... when I run... that looking... and the eyes... there is also a link with the cross, because the cross is linked with vision...

In: What?

Jose: With another way of looking... with the inner eye, and with insight... in the sense of seeing a larger picture... a bigger perspective... Whilst looking with the physical eyes... is seeing with a reduced perspective... And I notice in cross-cultural education, like when in taught in the Aboriginal community, that focus is very much, er... (I make gesture of enclosed or tunnel vision)
the longer you walk or run, the more you are almost forced to see more of the trees, the sky, all those gorgeous shapes and colours around us, and the smells... the body as a whole... becomes more sensitive...

In: Yes, I have written a book together with my colleague-friend, which we wrote whilst we walked the Pieterpad (a walk of about 250 kms) and runs from Pieterburen (in the Norther of Holland) to the Pietersberg (in the South of Holland). Each day we started again, we had a kind of sense-meditation. You know, really smell, really hear, really feel, really see. And then we talked about a topic which would then become a new chapter. We tried to connect theory, knowledge and life experience, and as such bring a spiritual kind of dimension to it. And we linked each theme with the bigger in which we live our lives.

The above conversation with In. circles around the notion that attention to one’s senses deepens a sense of contact that is not negotiable. Attention is a state of awareness and when attended to, offers changes within one’s physical/mental structure that positively effect our relationships. This viewpoint correlates with Fehmi’s (n.d.-b) description of attention as ‘the most basic behavior we engage in’ and ‘the process we use to control our awareness, it’s direction, proximity and scope.’ Fehmi’s (n.d.-a) fundamental observation during a long process of thirty years as a researcher and provider of biofeedback, neurofeedback and training in a clinical setting, has led him to believe that ‘to realise our human potential fully is to learn to be aware of, choose flexibly and implement effortlessly an expanding, dynamic range of attentional styles for the optimum allocation of our resources’ (p. 1). As a result, he devised a program that permits the shifting of attention styles so as to drop the process of triggering and support bio-psycho-social-spiritual factors such as fixation, rigidity, obsession, anxiety, resistance, attachment, loneliness, inhibitions and other reaction to the contents of attention (p. 20).

Attention is an act of being-in-the-moment; an effort never completed.

Van Hoorn, 2007a, p. 154

In the context of education generally and cross-cultural specifically, it is of interest to note that Fehmi found that a fixation on specific content – something he refers to as ‘narrow-objective attention - actually creates mental and physical problems (pp. 19-20). This fixation is linked, he argues, with the Cartesian notion of ‘I think, therefore I am’: a notion that fixes the attention on thinking, or mental awareness. This fixation negates the other senses (pp. 20-21) and impacts our physiology, perception and behaviour (p. 21). It also produces problems as a result of and whilst teaching cross-cultural education, as I found when I taught in the Aboriginal community: the focus on ‘head-learning’ - English and Mathematics - seemed to be completely opposed to if not unfit for their ways of learning. As I learned when I was taken for goanna- and honey-ant hunting, their way is through attending to the centre of the body. Furthermore, a fixation on head-learning and with that negating the other senses facilitates miscommunication, and not because of the
speaking another *verbal* language: When I took my students out bush in the school’s jeep so they could practice speaking the English language in a non-formal context, they pointed out animals which I simply could not see. No matter how hard I looked, I missed their point of contact that so seemed to excite them. This left a huge gap in our communications.

A learned cross-cultural educational fixation on certain areas only — a fixed focus for example on cultural bias, differences in behaviour, and different learning styles - reduces, as for any other learned fixation on an area of specialty, bring with it, as Fehmi (n.d.-a) argues, a reduced speed of perceived activity and with that time to respond appropriately (e.g. faster or slower, or with more or less insight) to a range of situations (p. 22) including certain feelings, emotions or other sensory experiences (p. 23). And it is this which makes attention to attention so significant in the context of cross-cultural education, for not only the content but also the context of cross-cultural education is littered with strategies that seek to resolve *consequences* of a fixed focus, yet itself produces this fixed focus.

Not only Fehmi, but also Schroeder (2008) emphasises attention training as a result of personal experiences. Both also object to a focus on what is good or bad behaviour and science that downplays the importance of feeling in human exchanges from a mechanistic and purposeless viewpoint in which ‘feeling is seen as merely a side-effect of conceptual thought’ (p. 70). Though both scientists place different accents on the notion of attention — whilst Fehmi focuses on neuro/biofeedback training, as an environmental psychologist whose interest is in Gendlin’s ideas and methods, Schroeder’s focus is more on the *felt sense* of natural environments and the tuning into the bodies’ subtle, physical responses to different spaces (pp. 63-64). For example, the differences felt in the centre of the body whilst walking in a forest, in a paddock, on a beach or in a city. Or the differences in sensations between walking in a university-building or in buildings of a health-retreat. Schroeder (ibid) emphasises that some spaces feel ‘right’ whilst others don’t, and some places make us feel a loss of energy, whilst in other spaces we feel we gain energy (p. 66). He also stresses the difference between doing and being, and that attending to *being* releases the discursive, ‘doing’ side of the mind (p. 67).

Patterns that people impose on themselves and their environment in their discursive thinking create constraints in conversations, but nature does not impose such patterns, says Schroeder (ibid) which makes it easier for us to shift easily into a state of ‘being’ (ibid).

In Chapter Two I quoted a participant’s viewpoint on the fleeting quality of education, and talked about the ‘skin of a tough teacher, the ‘Schil’ and ‘blind spots’ to which we either or not attend. I also briefly mentioned the linguistic network that like a web of double discourse promotes an ideological hegemony. I suggested they consist of mental projections/reflections that carry energy and are fractal to a larger field or landscape in which we engage. In terms of culture, this larger field is a group mind that is littered with memories that, as I suggested in that same chapter in
reference to Todres (2007) can be circumnavigated and/or addressed in a process of ‘embodied enquiry’ and attend to the said and the not said, which is how an ‘imbrication of place’ (Offord, 2002) can come about.

The way the human being directs his/her attention however is linked with cultural habits, fixations and biases and the range of possible styles of attention and the link between attention, experience, physiology and consequent behaviour (Fehmi, n.d.-a, p. 1). Schroeder (2008) similarly refers to discursiveness and socially imposed patterns that are based on our perceptual systems, interpersonal expectations, social norms and personal goals and projects (p. 67). As social beings, it is difficult to notice those patterns and their sensations or dynamics in our interactions unless we specifically attend to those with or without the help of an outside person (Dimitrov, 2005): ‘Blind spots’ are blind because they form part of our conditioning. They are also ‘blind’ because they are ‘dead’ patterns that are produced in and by death-oriented dynamics that produce ‘sticking sides’ (Dimitrov, 2005): something that fuzziology and maieutic inquiry as part of Wholesome Life Ecology attend to in particular. Without such attention, to rephrase Mars’ words, ‘the insular nature of human existence [and] the lack of tears at this ongoing human drama’ and is the split in cross-cultural exchanges contextualised.

In Chapter Three I talked about Sheldrake’s (2004) notion of the extended mind, which suggests that people are not merely passive receivers of information. The mind goes out through the eyes, says Sheldrake (ibid, p. 166), and this viewpoint fits my personal experience that when I feel I do not get the attention I believe to want, this is because I myself do not attend; I do not give attention and so receive nothing. But when I do attend to something/someone, it is as if my ‘light’ penetrates the object/subject so it lights up, and in turn I feel like ‘I’ light up.

But intellectually knowing is not sufficient: There is always an underlying feeling, a sensation that people seem to desire regardless of culture. Or more precisely, there is a range of sensations we project and reflect for the experience; sensations we deeply treasure. As Ormsby-Green (2006) argues, sensations or energy, including emotions, are something the spiritual nature of human beings values above all other things hand in hand with entertainment (p. 279). It is like a drug and ‘the basis of everything from the interaction of relationships to involvements in cults, holy crusades and mighty causes’ and the way to seek control of the physical universe and other people physically, mentally and/or spiritually (ibid).

Buddhist teachings, and especially Zen-Buddhisms and Vipassana meditation, accentuate mindfulness in a similar fashion to Gendlin, Fehmi, Schroeder and Todres, in that ‘attention’, the ‘felt sense’ and sensations connote a form of listening into the mind and the body. This notion of attention runs, from my perspective, opposite to the type promulgated by Goldhaber (2007a). Though the ‘quality’ of attention is seen similarly by Goldhaber in that attention is an ‘evanescent, hard-to-grasp aspect of mind’ (p. 1), that is also where the correlate ends. Goldhaber, in contrast
to others, sees attention as ‘primarily related to the aligning of minds’ where some ‘pay’ attention and others receive it (p. 2). In other words, from his perspective people’s minds are (yet) to be aligned, preferably by virtual communication. His teachings are about making a ‘connection’ from the viewpoint that there is a shortage of attention, and he believes asking for it resolves the problem of (apparent) disconnection. To him, attention appears to be more of a currency in ‘memes’; a concept first introduced by Richard Dawkins who proposed memes are units of ‘cultural information’ that whilst largely useful, as programs they also contain ‘viruses spread solely because they embody the coded instructions: Spread me’ (Dawkins, 1991). It is this ‘virus-spread’ that Goldhaber (2007a, 2007b, 2008) seems to want.

When Goldhaber (2007b) talks, for example, of the World Wide Web as a host of opportunities for ordinary people with modest technical skills to seek attention and to play around with related issues, including intimacy and friendship, he ignores the capacity of this same ‘host’ to scavenge on people, luring their already scattered attention away from listening in and finding the connection that is always already there deep within. He claims attention is the leading scarcity most sought after (and) very much part of the move away from what we can call the Money-and-Thing-World (or just plain Money-World, for short). Everyone has a need or want for attention, he argues, because it makes people ‘feel good’ about themselves as ‘key to a satisfying life’. That is why people must practice ‘the enlargement of self’ (p. 25). More crudely posed: puff yourself up and speak louder if you want to be heard and want other people ‘to align their mind with you’.

Clearly his argument for the new ‘Attention-World’, ‘Attention Economy’ or ‘Attention Society’ (2008) makes a claim for more performance, or stagecraft, not genuine communication nor self-realisation. In his own words, attention is ‘about being right in front of an attentive audience (which) grants you immediate strength and power’ (p. 25); a notion opposite to gaining ‘insight’ – a clear awareness of exactly what is happening as it happens’ (Guturatana, 2002, p. 5) and ‘concentration’ or ‘tranquillity’ which is ‘a state in which the mind is brought to rest, focused only on one item and not allowed to wander’ (ibid).

The point I endeavour to make is that Goldhaber’s ideology seems to satisfy the yearning for an idol, a ‘tribe leader’, for more external control. This ideology fits in with that which the Hillsong and other ‘born again’ churches (see Chapter Two) encourage: an indulging in promotional hype¹ and with that supporting a politics of derision that threatens real-life relationships, because it scatters attention.

Attention is defined by Ormsby-Green (2006) as ‘focus of awareness’ (pp. 249-250): scattered attention lacks focus ‘commonly seen in mental meandering, free-associating, and continual divergence of attention into non-sequiturs or items irrelevant to the current subject.’ ‘Free

¹ In the previous chapter I spoke of Symes & Gulson (2008) who connect ‘promotional hype’ with the Hillsong and other ‘born again’ churches.
associating’ Ormsby-Green (ibid) explains as ‘the apparently random process of a thought or memory connecting with a vaguely common element in another thought and so on into a chain reaction, pointed in no intelligent direction. A random leap-frogging of one thought to another as each perception restimulates the next. A characteristic noticeable in people unskilled in mind discipline or control, or those under heavy overwhelm and unable to either marshal their thoughts or handle the random energies. A characteristic of rambling storytellers. Not limited to verbal exchanges, as emotions can free-associate as well’ (p. 289).

In everyday discourse, a desire for sensationalism derails moments of silence; an absence of words. Associated with silence, as I suggested in Chapter Two, is intuition and also inspiration as part of a larger realm associated with the unmanifest, formless, wordless, and Reality slowly manifesting within you, coming into form, into words, hovering between and surrounding seeming separate worlds (Rabbin, 2006). This larger realm enables people to talk ‘fuzzily’ about ‘fuzzy’ matters in a pedagogy of listening, employing a different, more holistic ancient science of harmonics which Hoffmann (1987) suggests was introduced by Pythagoras and involved both seeing and hearing, or the intuition of spiritual realities. Steiner (2007) refers to this realm as that of ‘musical forces’, and Johnston (2004) to an infinite space in which the subtle body and aesthetic and ethical relations emerge as a space of ‘the processural between’, attributed to the Western archetypal messenger Hermes-Mercury who moves between the material and the spiritual (p. 333). Here, embodiment ‘is not exclusively tied to materiality (corporeality) [and here] a modification of aesthetic sensitivity necessitates a radical re-conceptualisation of ethical responsibility’ (p. ix). In other words, this space requires ‘playing in the ‘between’: renegotiating dualisms at the heart of Western discourse and endeavouring to utilise diverse knowledges and practices in ways that do not position them as antithetical, whilst ensuring respect for their differences’ (ibid, p. 333). From this can emerge a space of beating Hearts in which people as individual artists become an integral part of a larger social network with a generative force (Volckmann, 2007) that hitherto seemed to be bound in educational systems (Apps, 2002). Here I refer to artists not necessarily associated with a person’s profession but as artists in a spiritual sense.

Lacking an absence of words and attention to silence reinforces a negotiation gap between for example Indigenous and Western discourses (Benterrak et al, 1984, p. 67).

The more silence is derailed, the higher also the addiction to stress, high energy and speedy communications; but also more violence, more racism, more misunderstanding, more intolerance including of ‘quiet’ people.

Coetzee-Manning (2006) suggests that already most professionals, educators and politicians are bad at self reflection, because they are deeply caught up in ideologies and management styles of production and reproduction. This, she argues, shows up as forms of education that are not
understood as power dynamics acted out in the activity itself; in agency. This contention echoes cultural Marxists’ criticisms on education that claim cultural forms of education constitute political realms that fixate attention on powerful economic and political interests that exercise control, and in effect they ‘dupe’, deceive and render passive the wider population (Wylie, 2007, p. 101).

When such behaviour is acted out and agreed upon in organizational contexts as organized cultural forms, there is barely a chance for dialogue; something both Freire (1972) and Bohm (1996) consider pertinent to bring about a change in direction including in educational context. As Factor (1994) argues, ‘dialogue is very subversive and no organization wants to be subverted. No organization exists to be dissolved. An organization is, by definition a conservative institution.’ Factor’s argument links in with Goldhaber’s notion of attention and the ‘attention-economy’ that feeds into and out of fixed landscapes that focus on globalisation, not planetisation.

Van Hoorn’s (2007a) doctoral thesis –which won the Book of the Year award of the Dutch OOA [Order of Organisational Experts] talks about the notion of attention in relation to organisational contexts, and suggests it is a powerful concept that helps access and reveal hidden aspects of organising. Whilst Fehmi (n.d.-a; nd.-b) and Schroeder (2008) say attention is crucial to respectively the physical/mental health of human beings as a species generally, and environmental psychology and research specifically, Van Hoorn suggests attention is crucial for organizations in order to work well because respectful towards the autonomous self (p. 159).

Van Hoorn (ibid) frequently refers to the writings of Iris Murdoch who suggests that the point of attention is a source of energy and power produced in stillness: wherever people direct their attention they are nurtured by it. This viewpoint echoes that of Sheldrake’s (2004) notion of the extended mind.

This study sought a holistic and allocentric approach to cross-cultural education and a move away from approaches that contextualise the split in cross-cultural exchanges. An allocentric attitude connotes attentive engagement with the world such that they can be aesthetic experience, as Todres (2007) suggested, similar to when we look at a piece of art, listen to music, or attend a ‘holy’ space of sorts (Alma, 2007, pp. 42-43).

But the aim of attention training, as suggested earlier upon discussing Fehmi’s, Schroeder’s, Gendlin’s and Todres’s viewpoints, prepares the observer to take notice of the felt sense. Mindfulness training as practised in for example Vipassana meditation, alerts him/her to take note not only of the mind’s fullness, but also it’s tendency to run away with itself and the hidden ways related to desire, and understand the pursuit of sensation including aesthetic sensations, which is one of the major activities of the mind (Krishnamurti, 1978, p. 120). In other words, mindfulness training urges the taking note of the difference between mind and brain (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985), and to become aware of sensations as mere physical/mental phenomena that in and of themselves have no ground and no direction.
In the following section I will look closer into these notions, and though myself still trying to come to terms with the difference between mind and brain, I seek to produce a kind of coherent account for it's relationship to the notions of 'attention' and 'cross'.

4.3 Attending: to the difference between Mind and Brain

Ormsby-Green's (2006) description of attention as a 'concentrating perception on a given target' (p. 249) and a 'focus of awareness' (ibid) implies an active type of thinking which Steiner (2007) referred to as 'ordinary power of thought that is free of the body but has two faces, like Janus: either it is dependent on the brain, making our thoughts aware only of what can be mirrored in the brain and nervous system, in which case it is relatively passive since it seeks support from the instrument of the brain. Or it can free itself. Without any meditative activity, merely by pulling itself together inwardly so as to become aware of its true nature, by extricating itself from the support of the brain, it becomes a more active kind of thinking' (p. 108).

The two different foci of attention and their difference in dynamics I will refer to later in this chapter in relation to the vortex-ring formation and the 9.12-minute 'film' 'Fractal Flows'. Here suffices to say that Steiner (2003) referred to electric, magnetic and gravity forces that are relatively lifeless, and to peripheral, etheric, cosmic forces that are more random.

Krishnamurti & Bohm (1985) suggest that lifeless forces are part of material processes that act in ignorance, in darkness (p. 126). They also suggest that thought has been creating in this darkness, created its own darkness and functioned in that, but 'insight' is independent and able to clear the darkness, which makes perception possible (p. 138). Insight is not part of this darkness, this blindness, but active and free, and something Bohm (1996) refers to as participatory thought that sees that everything partakes of everything and that its own being partakes of the earth (ibid, p. 99). It's problematic and fragmentary side is 'muddled up with literal thought' (p. 101), and some aspects are very inadequate, or even dangerous: Some tribes assume another tribe as not human; a notion that reminds us of Hitler's Germany (ibid, pp. 99-100). Participatory thought – 'free' thinking – is communication that is unlimited and immediate. It has no communication lags; no space and time is involved so there are no distinctions between giving and receiving. Bohm (1991, 1996, 1998) refers to participation in which boundaries are not really separations but there

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2 The vortex-ring formation I try to explain in the appendix titled 'Fractal Flows' is a poor effort of giving words to something that might be easy to explain for someone who is mathematically trained and/or knowledgeable in quantum physics. But without such a background I was left to use other devices such as imagery and giving a messy verbal account.

I felt dubious about including this appendix to the DVD, since it is but a conjecture and a subjectively felt experience of dynamics associated with the projection/reflection principle. I have not been able to bring this perception to the fore and into discussion with others just yet, though am keen to do so in future with anyone interested and especially cyberneticians and/or mathematicians.

In the end I decided to include this 'explanation' because my perception of the vortex-ring formation resonates a powerful dynamic that I associate with the cross.
for descriptive purposes only (1996, pp. 98-99). This free thinking is insight and associated with
mind.

The mind, says Goenka, is not in the head but in the whole body and past the ego (Goenka, in
Hart, 1987, p. 29). It is not something related to the brain (ibid, p. 26). This idea (insight) is shared
with Krishnamurti and Bohm (1985) and Fell & Russell (1994). The brain, contrary to mind, is a
biological phenomenon that has evolved over and in time. It has become part of the structure of
time and produced fragmented thinking which is incapable of ending the split in cross-cultural
exchanges: it cannot, of its own, see the way it has been functioning. It can but resist a realisation
that the old path associated with the notion of ‘becoming’ [something/someone] has not worked
(Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985, p. 21).

Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 17) suggests:

Mind includes the emotions and non-physical aspects such as memory, reaction, and so on.
The brain is NOT the mind, but a body-physical mechanical switchboard that connects mind
and body to handle all the physical mechanisms of interaction between the two. The mind
correctly resides within all the body cells, each of which has a cellular memory, coordinated by
the brain switchboard. Scar tissue and calcification round a broken bone are results of cellular
memory protecting a physical area Removal of mental trauma results in regeneration of
scarring or calcification back to its original state of healthy tissue. And so on. Memory and
intelligence are impinged on to a large degree by health or sickness. Removal of bad health,
pain or mental trauma causes automatic rise in both memory and intelligence, therefore ability
to cope with life.

Ormsby-Green methodology called StrataQuest consists of courses and models that teach
people to become aware of and able to dissolve ‘conflict’ by stimulating the recognition of a
thinking that is structured in and as of time and paradigms, including judgments, criticisms,
blames, protests, significances, expectations buy-ins and beliefs. It seeks to assist an ending of
what Krishnamurti refers to as conflict that causes cells to decay. When there is no such conflict,
the brain is ‘ordered’ (not confused) and stops ending itself (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985, pp. 154-
157).

To go beyond the perception that time exists independently of us, as if we ‘are’ in the stream of
time’ which creates psychological experiences that the ‘I’ organises to psychologically know about
itself and feel a sense of ‘me’ (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985, pp. 25-26), and to feel a sense of the
creating mind which is ‘behind’ the brain, Goenka (in Hart, 1987, pp. 26-27) distinguishes four
processes: consciousness, perception, sensation and reaction. The first process is the receiving
part of the mind, the act of undifferentiated awareness or cognition. It simply registers the
occurrence of any phenomenon, the reception of any input, physical or mental. It notes the raw
data of experience without assigning labels or making value judgments. The second mental
process is perception, the act of recognition. This part of the mind identifies whatever has been noted by the consciousness. It distinguishes, labels, and categorizes the incoming raw data and makes evaluations, positive or negative. The next part of the mind is sensation. In fact, as soon as any input is received, sensation arises, a signal that something is happening. So long as the input is not evaluated, the sensation remains neutral. But once value is attached to the incoming data, the sensation becomes pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the evaluation given. If the sensation is pleasant, a wish forms to prolong and intensify the experience. If it is an unpleasant sensation, the wish is to stop it, to push it away. The mind reacts with liking or disliking which is the fourth mental process. Goenka suggests that attachment and suffering are always found together and develop due to the mental reactions of liking and disliking which occur as a result of sensations that arise from contact through the five physical senses and the mind\(^3\) through which we experience the world (ibid, pp. 47-48).

By attending to attention, the ‘felt sense’ and the mental reactions (evaluations) we not only produce but also reverberate, thus become more aware of the ‘fuzzy’ quality of ‘our’ perceptions associated with ‘blind spots’ or ‘dead’ patterns in cross-cultural exchanges that create and recreate a split). We are better able to understand and work with human dynamics as fractal to existential dynamics, and perceive perceptions, processes, products and patterns as simply concentrations of active thought that are negotiated. This increased state of alertness facilitates the transforming of knowledge to wisdom.

4.4 A closer look into attention as a state of mind

*Attention does not imply a focus on outcomes, but a being active in the moment; responsible, and leaving open a space for inspiration to enter.*

*Van Hoorn, 2007a, p. 154*

Dimitrov (in personal communications, 2008) suggested that what I earlier described as attention is awareness. But as suggested above, attention is a *focus* of awareness, and Ormsby-Green (2006) defines *focus* as ‘the ability to hold attention’ (p. 288) and *awareness* as:

1/ The quality, quantity, and degree of perception, from high to low. 2/ Our volume of perception, potentially capable of going far beyond mere consciousness. 3/ The extent of our ability to discriminate. 4/ Ability to see and comprehend through and beyond apparencies. 5/ Capability of observation, comprehension, and recognition. 6/ Perception lacking emotion, intelligence, thinking or logic. 7/ A characteristic of Wisdom. 8/ Recognition, Cognisance, Realisation, Understanding, Intuition’ (p.250).

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\(^3\) Whilst Goenka refers to six senses (the five physical senses and the mind), others talk about people’s multiple senses. To name a few, Soesman (1990) following on from Rudolf Steiner, describes people’s twelve senses. Chris Griscom (1989) suggests people have seventy senses.
In other words, attention is an activity of concentrated application that in cross-cultural exchanges produces dialogue: both parties ‘stand back’ from being too deeply involved at the centre so ‘sides’ no longer stick between two seemingly opposing poles.

Image 11: Image from my Creative Diary: Standing Back to be able to witness the dynamics at the Centre (within the ‘Vulva of the Vesica Pisces)

Dialogue then reveals both life- and death-oriented dynamics that are more likely to pertain to both parties (poles) and can be addressed provided a ‘better’ place is wanted and the tools are available for deep inquiry. For example, a facilitator can introduce data that explain the meaning and implications of paradigms, implants, pretended knowledge, energy fields, resistance, judgments, safe space, compulsive rescue etc.; phenomena that both constitute and arise in each cross-cultural exchange. In addition modules can be introduced that train people to ‘hold safe space’ so ‘blind spots’ show up and underlying dynamics can be revealed and addressed. As such a space is able to manifest comparable to a revolving torus knot at the centre of which emerges a place of re/emergence; a place comparable to the ‘vulva’ at the centre of the vesica pisces which represents that place (Thompson, 1996, pp. 116-117) in the ‘being-to-being meeting’ where we ‘interbe’ (Sills & Lown, 2008, p. 73).
This I argue must happen not because humanity demands it, but as a consequence of humanity’s own actions including globalisation and the associated financial crisis in which we currently find ourselves; a crisis in our society that makes old forms of institutions and social structures obsolete and where amidst the rubble something new can and must emerge. As Scharmer (2007, as cited in Reams, 2007, pp. 240-241) argues, this new form of presence and power grows spontaneously from and through small groups and networks of people, with as the ‘blind spot’ the place where our attention and intention originates and the ‘success of intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener’.

Here, it is as if ‘little’ eyes, ears, tastebuds and other kinds of receptors within and around our body attune. Soesman (1990), after Steiner’s teachings, distinguishes twelve senses with which we ‘interbe’, and they are of a physical, soulful and spiritual quality. Attending to those senses I believe is valuable to experience our ‘common’ spirit.

The following two diagrams drawn by Rudolf Steiner show what those twelve senses are. The bottom three senses are the physical senses, the middle three the ‘soul’ or emotional senses, and the top three the spiritual senses.
Ormsby-Green (2004) alerts us to clearly distinguish emotions from sensings: both are ‘feelings’, but emotions are mentally produced energy phenomena that we experience as a consequence of various stimuli, whilst sensings exist outside emotion. He (2006) therefore distinguishes conscious from unconscious awareness:

‘Conscious awareness: Those things immediately available to ‘view; the things we know about and can ‘see’. (I.e. I am aware of today’s weather. I know how to fix this situation. This is my best course of action). Unconscious awareness (or native, natural awareness):

1/ Consists of an Underlying knowingness, not available to immediate consciousness, wherein no analytical or thinking process is involved. Just knowing what to do without having to think about it. Hunches, Inspiration, Artistic expression and ability, Talent, Wisdom, Intuition. Many people have high awareness only in limited and specific areas, other areas being of low capability and in disarray. Few people have any significant scope or breadth of awareness.’

Ormsby-Green’s description alludes to a range of energy-fields that have been of interest for sometime to people across cultures, and the more illusive manifestations of energy are those of intuitions, or gut-feelings, sixth sense, insight, inner feelings, hunches, premonitions, spontaneous knowledge from within; manifestations that are encouraged by those who seek to help professionals to reintegrate, reconnect and provide continuity to wholeness (Kalofissudis, 2003). They support relaxation, meditation, careful observation and creative expression as a first step to understanding a world that exists overtly, simultaneously and secretly within the world of our linear existence (ibid).

I find the description of three fields of attention Sills & Lown (2008) described for therapeutic practice useful in terms of this dissertation, since they describe the ‘cross’ in cross-cultural

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education from an expanded focus of awareness. I will cite in full their description of the three fields:

First, we focus on ourselves through an individual meditation practice where we investigate our own internal processes. Often this includes two interrelated components. One of these might be a concentration practice (samatha), such as following the breath, for slowing down and quietening the mindbody. Another might be an insight practice (vipassana), in which we notice the rising and passing of the constant internal stream of thoughts, memories, feelings, sensations, emotions, ideas and so on. This helps to establish that embodied presence which – as it becomes subtler and more refined – allows more and more information to surface. It’s like throwing a big stone into a pond. We might just notice the initial contact with the water, but if we keep paying attention it takes a very long time for the ripples finally to cease. A stillness and spaciousness is fostered which enables us to meet the sensitive, evasive and refractory nature of consciousness. The qualities of sustained attention and embodied presence can open into subliminal layers where there is an expansiveness that can hold whatever is arising in the mindbody (Nyanaponika Thera, 1975, p. 33). As a ‘vertical’ orientation, this is an important practice to build into daily life but it is also a reference point when we sit with a client, a place to attune to, time and again, in order to sustain attention in the second field. This second field is where we extend into a ‘horizontal’ connection by coming into energetic relationship with the client. As we sensitize ourselves to our own condition, we also become more sensitive to that of the client. In the therapeutic relationship, information can be communicated directly through subliminal field awareness. We don’t have to know cognitively what to say or do. The question is, can I just open myself up to the experience of ‘the other’, whoever they are and whatever their experience is? Can I allow myself to be affected and notice how I am affecting them, how they are experiencing me? Can I be as sensitised as possible; as fully embodied as the field of subliminal mind and the nature of being possible; as fully available to impact as possible – at all levels? This is where it is as important for the therapist to bring as much attention to what is happening inside for her as to what is happening for the client. This is a ‘joint practice’ where awareness is brought to whatever arrives through the gateway of relationship. There is recognition of mutuality in the human condition that allows attention to deepen into the third field. This is an attentional field that is much wider than either the therapist and client or the impact. It is what is possible to be directly contacted – at the level of the citta or being – within a much wider relational field when we let go of the task, the agenda, the focus, and just allow an expansion of awareness into the room and beyond. The intention here is to listen to the whole of a client, even when focusing on a particular process or strategy. This includes opening more fully to the unknown and the implicit: that which is not possible or necessary to access with the cognitive mind and that which is yet to come into being. The therapist’s awareness extends to non-verbal, tonal
qualities of subliminal communication and remains open to the unexpected. When attuned to these layers of contact, there is greater opportunity for responses of both therapist and client to come from within the field of awareness.

The three fields described above suggest to me how attention sets up a dynamic between two opposing poles that, as I perceive it, also sets up another dynamic I earlier referred to as the vortex-ring formation; something I experienced as follows:

![Image 14: From my Creative Diary: Feeling into the centre of the cross and experiencing the vortex-ring formation](image)

At the centre of the cross (X) a vortex is set up that prompts the pulling apart of the four compartments into a \( \wedge \) (phallus-like figure), a \( \vee \) (glyph-like figure), a \( < \) and \( > \). This in turn allows for a reconfiguration and depending on the focus of attention those ‘figures’ attract into action a new vortex at the centre: A ‘cross’-focus (vertical and horizontal at once) that can be associated with the third eye; in-sight.

Alternatively, the process can be visualised as the X that through focused attention ‘unsticks’ the \( ) \) (from the centre so two parts emerge: ) and ( .

Those two parts can reconfigure into a new figure and facilitate transition from two fixed I’s (two fixed identities) into initially crossing-over entities that together manifest symbolic insight, as pictured below:
4.5 Archetypes and ‘beeldspraak’ [image language]

In Gestalt approaches (of the same kind to approaches in E&C) imagery and metaphor can be important means to reach the other person in an unexpected and fresh manner and allow people to access aspects or depths of themselves, which they ordinarily cannot or will not access (Mackewn 1997, p. 139).
The *cross* as the core focus in this study is both an ‘oerbeeld’ [in German Urbilt] but also a *beeldspraak* [in German Bildsprache, and in English ‘image language’]; it is both a noun and a verb; a dynamic * languaging* (Fell & Russell, 1994) and a causal metaphor, which unlike a descriptive metaphor, not only describes but also implies the causal connection with dynamics that are represented in cross-cultural contexts (Eoyang, 2004, p. 59).

Fowler (1976) suggests we ‘live our lives in dynamic fields of forces [and are] pulled at and moved from many directions... faced with the challenge of finding or composing some kind of order, unity and coherence in the force-fields of our lives’ (p. 24). These fields of dynamic forces ‘arise out of our experiences of interacting with the diverse persons, institutions, events and relationships that make up the ‘stuff’ in our lives’ (and) form a ‘dynamic storehouse of potential imaginal material upon which we build our further experiencing, consciously or unconsciously’ (p. 25). That dynamic storehouse, he suggests, is ‘faith’ that is not the same as religion, for ‘religion is constituted by the forms faith shapes’ (p. 27). Metaphors, symbols and concepts, he suggests, express and enact the ultimate environment in which we place faith (ibid).

The cross is also an archetype, or an implant. In Koestler’s (1975, p. 353) words:

> If the great confluence towards which science strives is the universal logos, the ultimate spring of aesthetic experience is the archetypos. The literal meaning of the word is ‘implanted’ (typos = stamp) ‘from the beginning’: Jung described archetypes as the ‘psychic residua of numberless experiences of the same type encountered by our ancestors. They are stamped into the memory of the race, into the deep layers of the ‘collective consciousness’ below the level of personal memories. Hence, whenever some archetypal motif is sounded, the response is much stronger than warranted by its face value - the mind responds like a tuning fork to a pure tone.

Koestler’s concept of an implant resonates with my sense of that there was something to the cross that makes people ‘respond like a tuning fork to a tone’. The symbolism of the *oerbeeld* [Urbilt], archetype, or implant *cross* struck me as deeply powerful, strengthened by historically passed on religious, cultural and/or political undertones that subliminally affect people but are/were suppressed. In the research-process, it became clear that something is deeply triggered within the moment people focus on this *oerbeeld* [Urbilt] ‘cross’. What also became ‘clear’ in a fuzzy way, is that ignorance of the ‘cross’ as representative of a *symbolic meaning-making event* justifies the ideological hegemony about which I spoke in Chapter Two: an event sometimes referred to as ‘values engineering’ to create an Orwellian world ruled by ‘corporate newspeak’ (Morgan, 1997, pp. 150-151).

The documentary ‘How Art Made the World’ (ABC 1, 22 April 2008), Nigel Spivey suggests that the cross was seen as the paradox of both hope (redemption) and suffering (terror) until the Inquisition took hold of the Western world. Interestingly, nowadays the cross is largely associated
with Jesus hanging on the crucifix to accentuate ‘suffering’ in order to go to a heaven that is ‘beyond’ life on earth. Matustik (2007) suggests it is ‘always disastrous when politics cross-dresses in religious costumes, or when religion underwrites politics, or when economic welfare buys religious adherence’ (p. 238).

But by paying attention to and thus bringing to life the ‘oerbeeld’ cross and into contact with that of culture, it became possible to get an artistic and intuitive sense of their religious connection.

The cross, as suggested earlier is both noun and verb. As a noun, it symbolises a range of concepts and ways of conceptualising the world, mostly of religious and spiritual significance. As such it implies a spiritual journey.

The cross can look like a $\|$, a $>\langle$, a $\rangle\langle$, an $X$, a $+$, a $T$ and a $Y$. The cross has two (2) lines that intersect at a 90-degree angle, and interestingly the Western world attends little to the intersection – the crossroads.

As a verb the word ‘cross’ connotes journeying or passing, associated with the verb ‘crossing’, but also crossing boundaries and the association with emotions such as ‘making cross’ (implying friction, irritation, anger, frustration).

Culture similarly is a journey or a process, but also much like the substance in a petri dish something bounded and emergent (rising, life) and passing (transitory, death). A culture is auto-poetic (self-organising) and fractal (self-similar) to existential dynamics. Culture is also for example the human race that folds out of and back into its dynamics as it evolves and transforms its various layers of ‘skin’, as for the cross which is either considered something static or dynamic, depending on one’s cultural bias.

The words cross and culture in combination conjure up all sorts of images for me to do with cross-fertilisation: the desire to cross physical boundaries to explore new countries and cultures, the exchanging of goods and information, camel caravans and religious processions, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the various (religious) wars against Jews, Muslims, Pagans and Indigenous peoples, the imposing of laws and rules onto social systems, the desire to first create spaces and then transport convicts to colonise them, and the subsequent ‘cultural debt’ that creates an explosive mix of feelings of guilt, shame and jealousy, along with polarising attitudes, and an inhabited stance of absolute righteousness.

The joined term cross-culture, then, and associated with cross-cultural education in which the split is either or not contextualised, alludes to a richly developing history that is self-determined and therefore cannot be ‘fixed’ in concepts. In other words, it is not a static but rather a dynamic, an *auto-eco-re-organizing* (Morin, as cited in Kelly, 2008, p. 27).
4.6 Exploring the dynamics of the cross

Thompson (1996, p. 57) suggests that a scientific narrative is a cultural construction and the whole thing is built out of metaphors and mythopoetic ideas. If this is true, then attending to the metaphor or mythopoetic idea ‘cross’ as representative of cross-cultural education makes sense. It also clarifies, as I suggest in Chapter Five, that talking about the ‘cross’ opens up a gateway to exploring religious beliefs and feelings, and associate those with the concept of culture or group mind and the effects thereof. With the focus placed on something other than personal or cultural traits, it also makes possible the unfolding of ‘sticking sides’ in cross-cultural exchanges, and as such an evolving in and as a process of deep, creative inquiry as part of the birth of a new era in which the institution of education (that is, schools, colleges and universities) evolve as the cultural milieu evolves (Molz & Gidley, 2008, p. 55).

Focusing on the centre of the cross works like clearing a space in the forest in which different communication-flows at the levels of thinking (head), feeling (heart) and willing (hands) intersect at a participatory-integral level, and where the earth and the heavens meet in the centre of people’s bodies, thus ‘cutting across vertical and horizontal levels/dimensions’ (ibid, pp. 58-59).

Upon exploring the cross often in a meditative kind of practice, it occurred to me that it has four corners that meet as a square, and two lines that meet at the centre. But especially in the Western world, people seem to ‘gloss over’ that centre: the focus is on the two lines that crossover. This dynamic represents the lack of an individual/collective recognition of the imbrication of place’ (Offord, 2002). I ‘saw’ the correlation with binary or ‘boxed’ thinking or the proverbial ‘thinking within’ or ‘outside the square’ as indicative of that thinking: the square is emphasised, not the centre.

One day, frustrated with the number four for it felt ‘tight’ and ‘boxed in’, I was talking to a professor in Mathematics and I suddenly found myself asking him how the four can turn into a five. He looked at me with questioning eyes and said, ‘well, I think you need to look at knot theory and perhaps string theory.’ Until then, I had never heard of knot theory or string theory. So now a new area opened up for me that was very exciting for it corresponded with my sense of aesthetics and feel for visual/spatial dynamics including geometry. It also ‘gelled’ with my running experiences and understanding of how landscapes interfold with our bodies, the different bodies

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4 To date I am still puzzled about why I asked how to turn the four into a five. I think it had to do with my image of the pentagram and Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian man: an image which resonates deeply with me as a reflection of humankind ‘real’ nature. But why did I not say a six, or an eight, or a sixty-four, or any other number? What I know for sure is that my question arose from an intuitive place and not my ‘head-space’ and its boxed thinking. The significance of my question may reveal itself in due time.

5 I (thought I) was not interested in mathematics, or that I simply did not have the ‘brains’ for it. But upon exploring the cross, I began to understand that I learn intuitively, not ‘logically, and that I may have been able to understand mathematics in earlier education had I been taught in a more holistic way.
we can experience within and their apparently opposing yet necessarily interconnected dynamics, and the manifesting of moving and fixed landscapes.

Image 17: From my Creative Diary: Interchanging dynamics at various levels and contact-boundaries (comparable to an electron-shell)

I also felt here was the ‘path’ out of the intense and narrow band of intellectual self-expression that used to physically manifest as a tight head-space. I saw before me a way of unfolding through and out of the ‘pull of forces’ to which Dimitrov & Naess (2005) referred, and came to understand the symbolism of the American Indian medicine wheel that is about starting from the North (adopting a viewpoint), then travel South (getting experiential understanding of the viewpoint), then move West (hibernation to digest the experiences as a result of adopting a viewpoint) and come out in the East (with added wisdom) to start the journey again from the North to repeat the cycle but from an ‘wider’ perspective.

As such I understood cross-cultural education as both a process and series of products that interconnect, chiefly guided by two universal shapes or signs: the circle and the cross. I will briefly expand on how I perceive those ‘constructs’ to refer to the ‘storying’ quality of the dynamic landscape of cross-cultural education, but also clarify some of the concepts discussed in previous chapters.

The circle is not a closed loop but an ongoing story in time/space, and forms the boundary of a void that is both silent and filled with bursting potential. The circle, or O, for me represents the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end; the snake that bites its tail; the hole and the whole. It is the ‘I am-ness’; that potential to be moved, to be affected, without anything else getting in the way (Sills & Lown, 2008, p. 74). It has a resonance that is resounded in the world and resounds itself; it vibrates. The circle ‘.bounds’ that which in terms of the Academy for Expression & Communication refers to as het veld [the field] I already referred to in Chapter Two and implies: 1/ The field exists everywhere and always, 2/ The field is the carrier of the total of the appearances, 3/ None of these appearances have a set place or shape (they are not things) and they do not exist apart from one another; there are reference points and movements within the field. 4/ The field consists of the four elements time-space-energy-substance and the processes in between these’ (AVEK, 1972).

The ‘boundary’ is not static but a dynamic Schil [skin, bark, layer], which as I explained in Chapter Two, refers to the transition between i.e. inside and outside, I and the Other, space and the Other. The boundary constantly changes through the exchange between marker points, which are those points where I notice the movement from my core to the outside and where the ‘skin’ lies. The ‘Schil’ is the space in-between self-other/Other, the grey area, the centre, the crossroads and the space of the traveller.

As a contact boundary, the ‘Schil’ is both ‘weerbarstig’ (stubborn) and informative: A ‘rite of passage’ or birth canal; a space of transformation and Self-realisation; a process that is long and expansive that involves various stages of development in which the ego needs to let the Higher Self do her work (Assagioli, 1988, p. 62). It represents the area of participatory thought, which is ‘a mode of thought in which discrete boundaries are sensed as permeable, objects have an underlying relationship with each other and movement of the perceptible world is sensed as participating in some vital essence’ (Bohm, 1996, p. xxvi). The circle both as a construct and an evolution also represents a ‘zero zone’, in ‘knot theory’ an ‘unknot’, or to be seen as the Ouroboros principle that symbolises continual renewal, life and death cycles and the harmony of opposites. O as a number represents The Negative, the Infinite, the Circle, and the Point (Crowley, 1973/1996, p. 27). As an artist, I see life as circular: an eternal cycle of life and death that is not two- or three-dimensional, but extends out in timespace.

The cross is seen in various ways, and for example Crowley (1973/1996, p. 23) sees it in terms of the letters LUX. Most people however, as research showed, see it as two or more lines that cross
over at 90-degree angles. Each line in itself is a complete entity, because a number 1 or an I, which implies Unity, the Positive, the Finite, the Line, is derived from 0 by extension. The divine being (Crowley, ibid, p. 27). In string theory, a string holds the capacity to stretch, curve and open up in the middle. Each ‘string’, to me, represents an entity with its own unique vibration and both projects and reflects (resonates) the space/time in which it engages, and at the point of meeting (at the centre of the cross) ‘knots up’ with the entities with which it engages. When there are two I’s (which is usually the case in cross-cultural education because two ‘parties’ or entities exchange information) and their ‘sides stick’ at the centre, they form a double-loop (an 8 or oo). In other words, the space in between that Van Hoorn (2007a) refers to as the plek der moeite [area of difficulty] in organisational processes, has either not been entered into or been resolved.

Image 19: From my Creative Diary: The ‘Plek der Moeite’ is opening up

So focusing on the ‘plek der moeite’, in other words into the ‘Heart’ of the cross that is a ‘vortex of communication’ (Dimitrov, 2000) or an I-Thou dialogic encounter can emerge from binaries or polarities from all kinds (Gangadean, 2004). This space emphasises both the unique inseparability and the emergence of new meaning expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways and is filled with living meanings (Dimitrov, 2000).

An inquiry into this space leads to insights about the ‘quality’ of the space in-between polarities within the contemporary world that is in a transition from industrial to planetary awareness (Gidley, 2007). For example, in the research-process participants recognised how deeply influenced their own but also the human psyche generally by religiously/culturally reinforced mechanisms such as blames, expectations, attachments, significances, criticisms, finger pointings, protests, giving aways, buy-ins, beliefs, viewpoints, intolerances, denials, assumptions and limitations. This group mind made visible that the field of cross-cultural education partakes a stage of transition from a tribal to a ‘puberty-stage: though it argues for independence (like

The more the ‘plek der moeite’ clarifies, the more the cross is able to unfold into an hourglass-shape through which time flows; from a fixed or static + (a crucifix) into a ‘star shape’ with the ∧ (a ‘phallus’) on top of the V (a ‘glyph’) and a < left of the > in multiple directions.

Image 20: From my Creative Diary: Opposing poles and experiencing the Hourglass at my visit to a Tennant Creek Aboriginal site

In the 21.40 minute film, I show this process as a ‘matter of course’ that is perpendicular to itself, and therefore cannot be ‘comprehended’ or grasped, but always ‘slips’ out of our hands, like the sand of the hourglass. When the double-loop and the hourglass come together, they evoke the ‘third field of attention’ to which I referred earlier, because the two entities in an evolving relationship which unfolds at the centre like a funnel through which the sand, like units in spacetime, move of their own accord but ‘in tune’ with universal dynamics. As the amount of 8-like relationships multiply and these intertwine, the image of a lotus flower emerges that holds an indefinite number of leaves. In ‘linear’ and in the same ‘flow’ of dynamics, they ‘caterpillar’ forth like DNA-strands that both attract and repel each other in harmony; a string of H’s that unified at the centre flow through timespace like Helium.

The cross has been signified in different ways over time: as a T (the Tau-cross, used by for instance the Druids and now in quantum mechanics), as a + (the Christian cross, or crucifix), and as an X (by the ‘Good Men’ or Gnostics, but also the Nazis and the Jewish peoples). The X could also be written as a ) (and interpreted as Pisces in Astrology, and in association with Christianity
with Jesus as the fisherman and with ‘multiplication’ (symbolised by x) symbolised by the loaves and the fishes ‘miracles’. When the horizontal arms of the T-cross are pulled down into a v-shape, a Y-shape emerges which in the Jewish religion symbolizes Yahweh. When the v-shape has a ‘downward pushing’ force to it and the ‘base’ on which the vertical line ‘pushes up’ into the resistance of that line (like lava that pushes itself up through a crack in the entity) the T-cross (the Tau-cross) becomes an X or ‘spills’ the sides even further apart and into an ) ( or an ] [, depending on the amount of resistance of the horizontal forces. Now we see two individualised entities or I’s, and both ‘remember’ and perhaps ‘yearn’ for the time when they were still joined, but that time has passed and it is time to move on and repeat the process. And into effect comes a process of multiplication that speeds up as it gains momentum. Here, in this mental consciousness-structure, it is necessary to have separate structures, rules, behaviours, beliefs, and patterns of culture, which are not only corporate or incorporated, but embodied and personal in the most profound and strongly defended sense (Morgan, 1997, p. 245), which is why the thought of unlimited potential, power and love is deemed unbearable and corrupted in every way possible. But at some point also that process comes to an end, and the two I’s need to meet again to ‘go beyond’ their self-identification. It is then when the two lines draw together again and cross over to transform into a [ ] or an (); an integral consciousness.

![Image 21: From my Creative Diary: Experiencing what Understanding and Working with Existential Dynamics means](image)

So the gaze is on the ‘plek der moeite’ [the spot of difficulty] (Van Hoorn, 2007a) that lies at the centre of cross-cultural exchanges, but by the human ability to consider (think, concern, matter,

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6 Van Hoorn (2007a, pp.135-136) expands on the idea ‘the spot of difficulty’ as presented by Kooistra (1988) and Wierdsma (1999), and refers to this ‘spot’ as that place where people invest more energy into differences in making meaning to create new meanings, by for example leaving space for intuition, experience, love and that which ‘escapes words’, and ‘light emerges’ (Van Hoorn refers to Simone Weil in
consequence) as aspect to *focused attention*, as opposite to fixed attention. Reasoning here acts like a sword. A sword that, as Jung suggested, 'is much more than an instrument that divides... it is the force which turns something infinitesimally small into the infinitely great... the transformation of the vital spirit into the divine’ (Raff, 2000, p. 103). It demands the finding of insights amidst and out and above the rubble of that which is sometimes referred to as the not-Self or primary self. Attention, relaxation, meditation and concentration (Dimitrov, 2005, pp. 80-81) are also employed to empower the thinker (ibid, pp. 84-86) and enrich sensory awareness (Cayoun, 2004). The capacity is developed to unlock the Self from the pretended or not-Self with all its 'pus' locked into judgments, blames, expectations, attachments, significances, criticisms, finger pointings, protests, giving aways, buy-ins, beliefs, viewpoints, intolerances, denials, assumptions, limitations, etc. (Ormsby-Green, 2006).

When we clarify those locks – another reality becomes visible. We notice the reverse applies to what contemporary theories on visual perception proclaim: we do not see perspectives in the sense of lines merging into one point at the horizon, but we 'see' that the lines of the horizon pull into and through our 'presence' and extend out in all directions. We experience that we are not 'plugged' into space but to the contrary, that space emerges in and through us: the landscape runs through us as much as we run through it. It is as if the not-Self flattens out and the Self rises up like a pivot, and now we are conscious of that we are both that pivot and the eye of the needle through which we weave a silver or golden thread and weave webs of relationships: webs that, unlike the 'sticky' webs that contextualise splits within and among cultures, are like rainbows.

When we come from that clearer space and this pivoting force around which dynamics whirl, we engage in a performance art which Dening (2008) refers to as 'way-finding': 'the word modern islanders use to describe their craft and the craft of their ancestors in piloting their voyaging canoes around the Sea of Islands' (p. 147), but without scientific instruments. They relied on the interpretive craft of reading the cosmic imprints on the environment (ibid). This 'way-finding' implies a very different focus of attention to the one that is applied in most (Western) cross-cultural education contexts, and sets up very different dynamics in the space.

In the 9.12 minute film titled 'Fractal Flows' (appended to the DVD) I make an attempt to explain the difference in dynamics between these two foci, and the vortex-ring formation that emerges as a result: a formation with 'side-waves'. These 'side-waves' feel either electric or magnetic ('sucking' or 'pulling'), but cannot be explained.

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this respect). At the centre of this ‘spot’ lies the willingness to truly hear and understand the other without really knowing where the interaction ends, and also asks from the other to enter into this space and be prepared to feel insecure.

7 The vortex-ring formation I try to explain in ‘Fractal Flows’ is a poor effort of giving words to something that might be easy to explain for someone who is mathematically trained and/or knowledgeable in quantum
What I discuss in this ‘film’ is very conjectural, yet I felt it needed to be added to this thesis as this ‘insight’ emerged as I reflected on the cross and the difference in dynamics when we either focus on the square or on the centre. About one year before I talked to the camera to make the ‘film’ ‘Fractal Flows’, I made the following notes in my Creative Diary:

![Image 22: From my Creative Diary: Two completely different ways of interpreting ‘focusing’](image)

### 4.7 A leap of faith

In Chapters Two and Three I talked about imbrication as something Offord (2002) describes as contingent on the social, natural and cultural relations that are not only observed but also participated with; the quality of intersecting, interlocking, layering, touching, holding together by the accrual of spatial and temporal experiences underscored by one's identity (p. 14). In that chapter I also talked about attending to processes of imbrication in dialogue and open up a space in which becomes visible what lies behind and beyond fixed identity-constructs: a more ‘fluid’ space with life-oriented dynamics. That space, I will suggest next, is not focused on self-protection in a negative sense. That space requires a leap of faith in the sense of learning to trust and rely on intuition and the felt sense, but also another approach in educational practices: an approach that implies currere: walking the course whilst walking it, finding-oneself-in-relation physics. But without such a background I was left to use other devices such as imagery and giving a messy verbal account.

I felt dubious about including this appendix to the DVD, since it is but a conjecture and a subjectively felt experience of dynamics associated with the projection/reflection principle. I have not been able to bring this perception to the fore and into discussion with others just yet, though am keen to do so in future with anyone interested and especially cyberneticians and/or mathematicians.

In the end I decided to include this ‘explanation’ because my perception of the vortex-ring formation resonates a powerful dynamic that I associate with the cross.
(Todres, 2007) and finding one’s way without technical equipment: ‘way-finding’. It implies blunt-rocking (Ormsby-Green, 2006, pp. 254-255: making do the best one can: being pro-active even if the short terms result are less than good: it least a progression has begun. It implies using the means that are at hand in a given situation to do the best one can: bricolage.

Schroeder (2008) and Fehmi (n.d.-a) similar to Buddhist teachings, talk about the fragmented mind’s (the brain’s) compulsion to grasp or ‘cling’. Krishnamurti & Bohm (1985) talk about the groping or ‘particular mind’ (p.p. 32-33) that is conditioned to reach for something intangible which it cannot capture or hold, as it is part of time (ibid). This conditioned mind self-protects.

Ormsby-Green (2008) defines ‘protection’ as the act of defending our opinions, realities, and considerations of personal survival however we perceive it. He distinguishes two types of self-protection: positive –when we need to stand firm with strength and constancy in the face of other’s negatives and neither give way, buy in, nor take on board things that would bring us down or diminish our position, and negative –when self-protection is used to sanitise the holding of fixed positions, block progress and encourage passivity. Here, ‘blind spots’ and ‘clinging’ block what would normally be a flowing exchange including communication-flows.

Image 23: From my Creative Diary: The clearer a person’s mind from ‘blind spots’, the clearer the communication-flow in cross-cultural exchanges.

There is a difference between having to self-protect –a tendency I talked about in Chapter Three that creates a split in cross-cultural exchanges, and a positive type of self-protection. The mechanism of ‘having to’ self-protect is compulsive, whilst the other –positive- type is optional: it can be used but is not necessarily applied.

Upon watching the film titled ‘The OTHER Side of X-Cultural Education: Unravelling the CROSS’, the reader would have noticed or felt, the difference between someone who is negatively self-
protecting and someone who is positively self-protecting. S/he would also have felt the difference in dynamics in the various excerpts from interviews that I have included in this thesis.

The reader is reminded of fuzziness as something that pertains to the space in-between self/other: the 'Schil' as described in Chapter Two. The aim of fuzziology is to clarify fuzziness (Dimitrov, 2005) which implies the resolution of 'blind spots', an awareness of the difference between brain and mind, and awareness of the difference between two types of self-protection, and an awareness of the difference between conceived and operative or organismic values (Rogers, 1973).

I am not trained as a psychologist, psychiatrist or natural scientist, so I will not enter into a debate on what is and is not libido, but I will offer a viewpoint that is useful to consider in the context of self-protection, and the research-question as to how to re-energise understanding among human beings and increase the ability to work with complex dynamics in cross-cultural context. Sharp's viewpoint is also useful in the context of the section following this one.

Jungian analyst Daryl Sharp's (1991) describes libido as follows:

[Libido] denotes a desire or impulse which is unchecked by any kind of authority, moral or otherwise. Libido is appetite in its natural state. From the genetic point of view it is bodily needs like hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex, and emotional states or affects, which constitute the essence of libido.

In line with his belief that the psyche is a self-regulating system, Jung associated libido with intentionality. It "knows" where it ought to go for the overall health of the psyche: The libido has, as it were, a natural penchant: it is like water, which must have a gradient if it is to flow [Symbols of the Mother and of Rebirth," ibid, par. 337]....

The analytic task ... is to discover the natural gradient of the person's energy. What is it, at this moment and in this individual, that represents the natural urge of life? That is the question. [The Structure of the Unconscious," ibid, par. 488.]

Instead of using the word 'libido', Steiner talked about 'life-sense' as associated with 'spirit man' as different to 'physical man.' 'Spirit man' gives us warnings of what is health-giving and what ill-making (Soesman, 1990, p. 24). Life-sense makes us for example cry and experience pain to be able to be fully incarnate into our body/mind and eventually again transcend from it. Life-sense helps us to incarnate and learn 'life' lessons. It also gives us a 'sense of place' (Schroeder, 2008) and drives us to understand and work with dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges in order to progress.

Libido, or life-sense, drives us in an 'uncertain' direction though of itself this drive feels certain. It is linked with willingness (Steiner, 2007). For example, it drove Russell, Dimitrov and Fell (1994) to apply a 'double surrender' strategy -'double' because both parties employ and apply
willingness as a strategy. They suggest ‘double surrender’ strategy is a place of lacking ownership over any preconceived or subtly imposed negotiation outcome: ‘No one side participating in the process has any monopoly on a specific way of solving the critical issue. There can be no valid negotiation if any side has a fixed and predetermined outcome. We respect and accept the opinions of every side and by a profound understanding of these opinions, we "drift" together to what unites us and makes us happy’ (ibid).

The willingness of applying a ‘double surrender strategy’ arises from ‘life-sense’ and is linked with organismic values. As such, this strategy cannot be imposed on individuals or on groups of people. It can however be adopted as a new approach, not to achieve a specific outcome, but to practice currere in a ‘bluntrocking’ effort: an effort that deserves more public attention as an alternative that might become more and more applicable to a global economy that hitherto accentuates globalization, but is falling apart as a result of the credit crunch and makes cooperatives and their ethics flourish (ABC 1, 2 January 2009).

The ‘double surrender strategy’ and with that notions of willingness, libido and positive self-protection, link in with a viewpoint that was expressed by the research-participant called Ron:

One way of putting it is that we have a primary view of ourselves, so here I am: an adult educator and a father, and Irish person… so I have all these fixed personae, but there is a whole other secondary part of me which is always trying to break through. And this primary part does not want this to come through because the primary part will have to change: it won't exist as it is. There is always this process of this other part of me who I am not-yet, wanting to come through. And that’s the same in society, in an organization, it’s the same in a marriage relationship: it’s… yeah, it’s how the world is. So whether we like it or not, it is happening. We can resist it. Absolutely we can resist it. And we can deny it! But it is still happening. It will still… it does not stop.

We have three choices when we view human development: The world is going backwards, the world is standing still and the world is developing. They are the only choices. There are no other choices, as far as I am concerned. Everything else is a subset of those choices. Everyone knows the world is not standing still. And whether we think the world is developing or whether the world is going backwards is actually a choice. Because if we really examine it, the world is a much more optimistic place than we realise if we allow it… how to put it… if we… that whether the world is going backwards or forwards is just a way of thinking. It is nothing else. It is a way of perceiving. That’s all. And there is plenty to point to the picture that the world is developing.

Ron suggests a reflection on one’s fixidity in approach, but Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 176) suggests willingness can be a fragile thing and needs to be tested to sharpen it, like a sword needs hammering to do its job properly. In other words, it needs to be enacted, and it is activated in action. This viewpoint echoes that of Steiner (2007), who repeatedly stressed the need for
physical activity to experience and learn to deal with obstacles and, as such, strengthen full incarnation.

Ormsby-Green (2006), Steiner (2007) and Dimitrov (2005) suggest when willingness (action) is sharpened, so are sensitivity (feeling) and mind (thinking). The three correspond and all three components need attention in evolutionary – as other to reactionary – practice and simultaneous attention. When one aspect is not practiced, the other two areas are also not practiced and implode to that degree.

Whilst ‘thinking’ or the mental body has been sufficiently sharpened in contemporary cross-cultural education, action (the physical body) and feeling (the spiritual body) were deprived of attention. The split in emphasis has contextualised both a ‘fixed’ landscape and splits in cross-cultural exchanges.

4.8 Discovering the X-factor

This section focuses especially on the aesthetic and artistic realms and, as such forms an introduction to the following two chapters and the short film that accompanies this dissertation. But first, it needs explaining that the research-questions did not imply an investigation into these realms. Yet, I will talk about art and aesthetics, because the research-process revealed that the negation of those realms has actually reinforced the split in cross-cultural exchanges: I have frequently pointed out in this thesis that communication is not something that is limited to rational thought or structured in and by the brain.

The aesthetic and artistic realms are associated with the ‘feeling’ body and contain mythopoetic language and metaphors such as the cross. Talking about the cross then appeared to open up the ‘feeling’ body. It also opened up a space for dialogue.

By making use of aesthetic and artistic media, the spirit, the basic personality, the ‘you’ apart from body and mind, the true unit of consciousness, that part which can perceive and create, as Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 18) explains, finds expression in the physical universe by making use of body and mind (ibid, p.19). It makes possible a free to function interchange that operates at its highest and at its best, in order to arrive at solutions of greatest good for the greatest number (ibid).

This is why, I argue, aesthetic and artistic media better express and communicate what is neither in the pluralism of perspectives nor in the unity of perspective where the answer lies (Gidley, in Molz & Gidley, 2008). Verbal expression of perspectives when not accounted for (experienced and recognized) at the spiritual level produce ‘jarring’ interspaces: in the interchange of dynamics at the boundary level where one entity’s paradigm (mental background) crosses over into another and where ‘resistance’ or friction is held, mental baggage either facilitates or restricts communication but always seeks to reinforce ‘stuff’ because it wants to reproduce itself according
to its own image. It produces a third dynamic or group mind, as I explained in a previous chapter but from another angle. This is why, I argue, friction cannot be resolved in verbal ways alone, as most communication models purport including for example Rosenberg’s model of ‘nonviolent communication’. To the contrary, verbal communication alone tends to distract people’s attention away from the felt experience in communication. As Griffith & Griffith (1994, p. 82) suggest, one can speak with the ‘husks of words’ quickly without waiting for the body’s response to catch up ‘unslowed by the pace of the heart’ (p. 82). But ‘everything that is not listened to ‘correctly’ is actually submitted to, accepted and absorbed’ (p. 83).

In other words, it is important to shift from the cerebral space to feeling or ‘heart-thinking’ (as one research participant called it), and for that deep listening is required. Deep listening is aspect to maieutic inquiry about which I will talk more in the following chapter. Deep listening implies connecting the ears to the mouth and to feeling. Without deep listening a double discourse and the mechanism of an unspeakable dilemma is reproduced; ‘distress produced by family, religious or political circumstances that have imposed forced choices in people’s lives and must remain hidden from important persons involved in the situation’ (Griffith, Polles & Griffith, 1998, p. 144). Deep listening awakens the inner being and replaces the ‘silent’ silence that Western thought produces, this ‘inner awakening creates a distance that helps break bewitchment of the authoritative voice’ (Fiumara, 1990, p. 58) and as a result the continually repeating cycles of negative behaviours (subjective and dualistic reality) can be broken.

To move into this ‘deep’ place of listening as well as literally shift my perspective, I like to do the following exercise which I repeat a number of times: ‘1. Point out something, 2/ Find yourself, 3/ feel the space in between.’ This exercise I find useful to ‘bend’ the reality of what I seem to consider real but intellectually know isn’t. From here I experience a more subtle space that lies beyond naivety (see point 6 of this chapter) and ‘framed’ concepts that Western thought produces in and by its own language: concepts that have deep cultural, philosophical and political roots held together in ‘pointing out’ strategies and taking on board evaluative (meriting) and ‘life-alienating communication’ (Rosenberg, 2002, pp. 15-23).

By doing this exercise (among a range of related others) I discovered something that is part of the mind that is not bound in space and time: a part that feels like a pivoting life force that facilitates the moving from one world of ideas to another. This pivoting force, as Kaufmann (as cited in Dimitrov, 2005, p. 34) suggested, is free and resides neither within the mental/physical body nor outside of it. It is ‘something else’. This pivot I will call the X-factor (a factor of the cross or –X-) because it is both dynamic and stable, and insinuates chiasmus: a word employed by West-Pavlov (2005) that means a ‘figure of crossing’ and is a symbol etymologically derived from the Greek letter ‘chi’ or X (ibid, p. 161). As chiasmus, the X-factor (an alternative way of talking about

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8 I adopted this exercise from one of the StrataQuest modules, designed by Ormsby-Green, Auckland.
the cross) is both a ‘tracking device’ (much like a compass or GPS system) and a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.): the entity between the researcher and the researched (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I will talk more about this ‘entity’ (the cross in the sense of ‘chiasmus’, the ‘pivoting force’ or the “X-factor” in Chapter Five in the context of bricolage as a research-methodology.

So, the X-factor is the intermediary, or that which the humanist psychologist Assagioli (1988, pp. 35-39) refers to as the ‘to unity guiding centre’. Following Steiners’ teachings, Soesman (1990, pp. 39-41) refers to the term life spirit (pp. 39-41): ‘all that moves us, in fact, all that is biography in us, all that which has a hidden existence within us… The designation for the cultural life pattern of the human being’ that makes us move from a feeling that we are in the bulls’ eye already whilst we seek to hit it; ‘we start from the target and the arrow or bullet is drawn in from there’ (ibid, p. 42). Life spirit intends to move forward by ‘starting from the target’ and uses real-life relationships as enabling (not ‘disabling’) vehicles through which ontological effects are established and repeated until valuable life-lessons are fully incorporated. Effectively, life spirit (the X-factor, chiasmus, the pivoting force) writes the ‘biographical plan that lies in the depths of our soul’ (Soesman, 1990, p. 39).

Though I will talk about this ‘factor’ in Chapter Five as the ‘tracking device’ and the P.O.E.T., here I continue using the term X-factor, and not chiasmus, life sense, or pivoting force, if only for the word X-factor alludes to Steiner’s (2003) ‘X-realm’ which he defines as ‘simply light-filled gas’ as other to the other three realms which are the U-realm associated with ‘heat’ (temperature), the Y-realm which ‘represents chemical effects in fluids’ and the Z-realm that is ‘life effects acting in solids’ (p. 173). I have not yet explored the association of what I call the X-factor with the X-realm, but it certainly feels correct because the ‘consistency’ of the X-factor feels gaseous: air-like. I am also quick to stress I do not seek to ‘impose clarity’ upon sensation (ibid, p. 48), simply because it is impossible to place ‘matter’ (signify) on perceptions from the Z-realm: ‘life effects in solids’ cannot perceive the other realms for it is too fixed and solidified. The X-factor can perceive ‘solids’ however because it is kind of ‘above’ those, literally speaking.

The explanation of symbolic shapes may help to clarify: Steiner (2007) stressed the import of engaging with geometric shapes when people’s minds are caught in materialism, and I’ve found it useful to explore the four central shapes that have been central to all cultures for as long as we know humanity exists: The dot, the circle, the cross and the square (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1996). From my explorations, the dot at the centre could be seen as the X-factor and feels like air, the cross as the ‘crossroads’ feels like water, the square as the place to ‘standstill’ feels like earth, and the circle as an ‘unknot’ or Ouroboros principle that symbolizes continual renewal, life and death cycles and the harmony of opposites, feels like fire.

Chevalier & Gheerbrant (ibid) also suggest that cubes represent solidification, stability and the stoppage of the cycle of evolution (p. 914), which is why I earlier talked of ‘boxed’ thinking.
In respect to the four realms but also geometrical shapes to which Steiner refers, it is interesting that very little notice has been taken of those ideas generally in Anglo-American teachings (Steiner, 2003, p. 48) in education (Molz & Gidley, 2008) but also cross-cultural education. Perhaps this relates to an ancient intellectual (mental) discrepancy between Anglo-Saxon and Northern-Central European peoples, as Steiner argued, which has blocked dialogue and the acceptance of a range of viewpoints including Steiner’s teachings (Gidley, 2007). Were his teachings at least officially accepted in the Anglo-American world and on a much wider scale, it would become clear that they are closely interlinked with Eastern philosophies. For example Steiner’s teachings about the four realms reflect Yogic teachings that identify earth (solids), fire (temperature), water (fluids) and air (gaseousness). Chinese teachings include a fifth element: wood, and it would be interesting to explore this apparent difference in perception in future-research.

If cross-cultural education were to attend to the X-factor, people might become more aware of their ‘embodied divinity’ (Raff, 2000, p. 247), though as Assagioli (1988, pp. 35-39) points out, the realization of a ‘to unity guiding centre’ comes about only when a person feels the need to depart from the aware personality: the daily I. When the person wills to make the journey and encounter the many stages in between. He suggests some people have an image of that which they want to become, and they draft up a plan as it were of how to get there. They first imagine an external united centre, and that image forms a link between the personality and his/her higher Self. As such, they set up the scene so s/he can become that which s/he wants to be. Others, Assagioli suggests, do not have such a clear image. They are people whose psychic structure is more pliable and rely more on their intuitions than on plans.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have spoken in depth about the significance of the cross as symbolic for a site of transformation. It can be interpreted as both a verb and a noun and it is because of the power that lies at the crossroads, or the heart at the centre where the two lines cross over and cross-fertilisation initially takes place, that can bring about an eventual re/birth into something new. I have argued for a move away from processing information in fixed ways, because those ways have reached their use by date. This yang way of processing (Capra, 1982) has turned in on itself and become obsessive compulsive and needs to be owned up to by individuals and preferably groups of people, because if not owned up to is kept ‘hanging’ in space like a centrifugal force that revolves around its own hub that pushes attention inwards and propels the machine forward, but distracts people’s attention away from their inner centre; their pivot or X-factor.

In the following chapter I will sketch bricolage as a way of employing the cross to undo the ‘fixed landscape’ of contemporary cross-cultural education, and contextualise not only this methodology but also the theory by making use of text images of interviews with research participants.
CHAPTER FIVE: ‘TRACKING’ WITH THE CROSS: A P.O.E.T.

5.1 Introduction

In Chapters Two and Three I sketched contemporary cross-cultural education as a ‘fixed landscape’ with a ‘politics of place’ that proceeds in entirely conventional fashion (Richards, 2008, p. 9). I also talked about Offord’s (2002) notion of ‘imbricating’ a space to feel a sense of belonging and call a space ‘home’, and I suggest that attending to processes of imbrication in dialogue with both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ may be conducive to open up the eye in the space in-between people. I spoke of a different approach: an attending to ‘blind spots’ in the Schil [skin] that deserves more attention, and in Chapter Four I said mindfulness (attendance) and unravelling the cross are useful ways to ponder and understand for example lineage and cultural ritual – rather than idealize or deny those as for example Abdallah-Pretceille (2006) suggests. As such a new space can open up; a rite of passage that Sills & Lown (2008, p. 74) refer to as ‘a transitional place like a doorway opening in two directions.’ Further I suggested that real-life relationships, but also silence, need more attention, as well as space to self-reflect and talk fuzzily about thoughts and feelings, something apparently desired as part of ‘evolving cross-cultural education.’

This chapter provides an account of bricolage as a research methodology, which has also informed the way I selected the nineteen research-participants in Australia and the Netherlands and solicited their involvement. The chapter describes the methodology as a way to ‘walk’ the landscape of cross-cultural education in order to understand and work with the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges and also as a way of analysis and reporting. As such, I not only contextualise the previous theoretical chapters, but also the cross as a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.): the entity between the researcher and the researched (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

Bricolage both highlights and enables tensions pertaining to that entity, as this chapter will show, because though materials used are ‘of a limited heterogeneity because materials are made available by imperial and ethnographic forays’ (Levi-Strauss, as cited in Ramazani, 2006), they also dialectically gave way to a reconceptualisation of cross-cultural forms of exchange and an emergent poetics of space. The strength, but also the difficulty, with bricolage is that it expands interdisciplinary boundaries for it does not tolerate but cultivates difference (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 77). So friction may be considered a desirable aspect to bricolage. It provides an opportunity to learn the skill of negotiating self-other ethnographic relationships by way of “good
enough” methods (Luttrell, 2000) which means: Accepting mistakes; acknowledging personal stakes and investments in research relationships; not shying away from frustrations, anxieties, and disappointments; seeking to understand the differences between self and other; not getting mixed up in with others who are in their own right. It means that being reflective is something to be learned in degrees rather than in absolutes (thus preventing narcissism, I would hope); sustaining multiple and sometimes opposing emotions; keeping alive contradictory ways of theorizing the world; seeking compatibility, not necessarily consensus; expanding rather than narrowing the psychic, social, cultural, and political fields of analysis (ibid).

Image 24: From my Creative Diary: How dynamics flow, driven by intention.

Friction is a ‘rubbing’ sensation we desire so we can ‘Touch and Feel; to Experience (Storm, 1972). ‘Many people live out their entire lives without ever really Touching or being Touched by anything. These people live within a world of mind and imagination that may move them sometimes to joy, tears, happiness or sorrow. But these people never really Touch. They do not live and become one with life’ (ibid, p. 7).

To bring life to this ‘rubbing’ sensation, I asked research-participants what something felt like, looked like, smelled like, tasted like, the significance of this the acknowledgement of sensation and as such make conscious a ‘felt experience’ (Gendlin, 1996) which ‘is a demonstrable, but not
a demonstration; it can be conceptualised, but is not a concept’ (p. 202); ‘the present is a various and creative scheme, rather than a unitary one (p. 204).’ By attending to rubbing sensations (friction) it is possible to open up boundaries, or ‘peripheries that have always been both physically and symbolically central for exercising sovereignty and establishing national identity’ (Allon, 2005, p. 68), because ‘blind spots’ are revealed but also makes many a paradox and continually changing dynamics in the ‘Schil’ more tangible.

5.2 Inviting the research-participants

Interestingly, the process of finding participants was indicative of the research-methodology I was to apply: I was to work with the means at hand to be able to collect the necessary data.

Finding participants is known to be a process of compromises and constraint, with finance and time often being the major constraints. Compromises often have to be made in terms of what the researcher would ideally wish to do and what is practically possible (Walford, 2001, p. 5).

After ethics approval I set out to find holistically oriented cross-cultural educators both in the Netherlands and in Australia. The job of finding them was not as easy as I had expected. Not only was it difficult to frame the research-population, it also appeared to be ‘hidden’ in mainstream organisations: I was unable to trace an existing organisation that focused on holistically oriented cross-cultural education. Since I had been out of the workforce for a few years to focus on my study, I did not know a lot of cross-cultural educators - personally or professionally - who were also holistically oriented. I knew of three holistically oriented cross-cultural educators, who worked together in a regional Technical And Further Education (TAFE) college in Western Australia. But I considered this number of participants too small and I lacked time and the necessary finances to travel to this potential research-site. Also, I wanted to use research-methods that did not rely on traditional approaches to find out how the research-population addresses the body, mind and spiritual as a package which we recognize as a human individual, with all parts indivisible from each other interacting and affecting each other, and each overlapping and impinging on the other two with a number of phenomena that result from this complex interplay. I wanted to film the interviews to make visible dynamics that cannot be put into words, and I expected participants to commit a minimum of eighteen hours of contact-time to the project so the dynamics could emerge more vividly: both rather unusual requirements for research-participation.

It soon became clear I had to use a method known as ‘snowball-sampling’ or ‘chain-referral’: a technique often used when there is no specific frame listing all the elements for the population of interest, and not amenable to deduction (Scott & Marshall, 2005). A holistically oriented cross-cultural educator is not only someone whose professional approach is difficult to define, but also his/her work-location is not necessarily specific. ‘Snowballing’ is often used when there are not many alternatives with the research-population being located outside mainstream social research:
when they are ‘hidden’, socially stigmatised, hard to reach or ‘elitist’, or otherwise vulnerable (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p. 275). The method consists of the researcher first approaching some people who fit the criteria and asking them whether they could refer other people who fit the sampling criteria and also may want to participate. The process is based on the assumption that a ‘bond’ or ‘link’ exists between the initial sample and others in the same target population (Berg, in Miller & Brewer, 2003). In other words, the researcher invites a few people to participate who in turn suggest others to participate and so forth. This way the sample continuously grows (Klesse, 2007). Snowballing ends when there are no more people to add, or when extra people add no useful information, or when researchers run out of time. Correlated to this, the quality of the sample depends on the starting point, and strength of the network (Payne, 2004, p. 210). In contrast to the Australian group, the Dutch group appeared a very strong network, possible because most participants in this group were referred to me by a holistically oriented cross-cultural educator, vocational counselor and friend of my sister, called Gerard van de Kam. Though he did not respond to my request as to whether he wanted to participate in my project, Gerard was very keen to help me with names of potential participants: people of whom he thought they were extremely committed to their work. In Australia, one of my PhD-supervisors (Dr. V. Dimitrov) provided me with a few names of potential participants, but only two of those ended up participating as most lived too far away to be able to be part of the focus-groups and as such represent a network. The difference in the two groups’ cohesiveness was remarkable, and had the Dutch group not been as strong as it was, it might have been far more difficult to identify when the research was completed and no more participants were required.

From the above it may be clear that the advantage of the snowballing-technique is that it gives an opportunity to gain insight into social experiences of people who tend to be hidden from the research-community and lay people’s view of social life, but snowball-samples also tend to be biased. This may allow for coherence in a research-group, but also does not allow a researcher to make claims that can be generalised (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p. 279).

Overall, I contacted twenty (20) people in the Netherlands. They practiced as educational consultants in private practice or in corporate training institutions or taught at universities. In Australia I contacted twenty-five (25) people who worked at universities or in Technical and Further Education institutions. Others were in the business of educational and corporate training.

Of the forty-five (45) people contacted, seventeen (17) ended up participating: eight (8) in the Netherlands and eleven (11) in Australia. In the Netherlands, in addition to the people who were referred to me by the person mentioned above, the researched group consisted of two (2) people whom I had met a year before. They were both academics, lived with a partner from another country, and at the time of meeting had already expressed interest in my research-project and said they were willing to participate. In Australia, in addition to the two (2) people referred to me by Dr. Dimitrov, the group consisted of a person who was referred to me by a retired holistically
oriented cross-cultural educator (Dr. David Dufty), a friend of mine and two (2) friends of hers, a student at ‘my’ university of whom I knew she had recently set up a cross-cultural network-organisation, three (3) people whom I had met whilst I house-sat a home about five (5) hours drive from Sydney, and one person who they suggested I contact.

Because I did not ask participants to give me a detailed account of their background, it is difficult for me to give an in-depth breakdown of the research-group according to categories other than the following: all participants identified themselves as holistically oriented. The sample of Dutch participants consisted of women only, whilst the Australian group held two (2) men. Age-wise, most participants were between 40 and 55 years old. The Australian group consisted mostly of first- or second-generation migrants. Only one person was Australian born and of Australian descent. Though most Dutch participants were born and raised in the Netherlands, many had a migrant partner and spoke another language at home.

There were two (2) people in both groups whom I particularly wanted to participate: Someone who was born in New Zealand had worked in Australia and now lived in the Netherlands, and a Dutch person who now lived on Australia. I was curious to hear both their perspectives on their host-culture.

I first made email-contact with potential participants. When they expressed interest in research-participation, I made telephone-contact in which we either or not agreed to further collaboration, after which a first time for interview was negotiated. Each subsequent meeting including focus group was negotiated with each individual participant. Email-addresses of the different participants were never exchanged on my behalf, as I wanted to ensure each person’s confidentiality.

5.3 The science/art binary

Cherry (2008) proposes that performativity as an organising principle itself is performed through meta-discourse practices inherited from positivist science, in which phenomena ‘out there’ in the world are reinforced and authorized. Hence he suggests a reconfiguring of its own modes and forms of practice that are performative of that world, and assuming a reflexive type of performativity. He suggests ‘performative social science should be self-conscious and self-referential; it should point to its own nature whereby the authority of such performativity is located in the performance itself’ (Cherry, 2008, pp. 17-18). Effectively, Cherry proposes performativity as a form of self-study that implies a questioning and counteracting of the typical role of ‘expert’ (Hermann, Cook, Elliott, Lewis & Thomas, 1996, p. 255, as cited in Bullough, 2008, p. 8). Self-study also implies a looking more deeply into teaching and learning processes and practices (Loughran & Russell, 2008, p. 1) away from placing blame to seeking internal solutions through collaboration, cooperation and self-assessment of both the teacher and the learner (Christie,
important is teaching/learning to hold space (Burchell, 2008; Ormsby-Green, 2006) and stepping outside the boundaries of traditional research (Burchell, 2008).

By making use of bricolage, which is a hybrid methodology, I hoped to disrupt what Lyotard described as a scientific ‘illiteracy’ (see Chapter Two) that corresponds with the ‘over-valuing of literacy and hence inducing shame and stigma for those of us who are ‘illiterate’ – that is, ignorant of one set of techniques; reading and writing’ (Benterrak et al., 1984, p. 61). I hoped to nurture a pedagogy of hope that is assisted by a shift from an academic to an aesthetic mode of cognition (Thompson, 2004, p. ix), which I felt I could best achieve by creating a neo-narrative; a ‘third space’ that links practice and theory to show what goes on in the space in-between and ‘between the lines’ of differing cultural narratives and the empirical social world as it actually exists to those under investigation. I also wanted ‘to chart major societal changes that are underway, but not merely at some broad social level (Roberts, 2002, p. 5).

As such I produced an autoethnographic account that embraces numerous personal meanings and gives voice to experience (Stewart, 2007, p. 132) and incorporates (auto)biographical data and collected texts that are storied within the contemporary world (Stewart, 2007, p. 131; Scott-Hoy, 2002, p. 276). This new meta-narrative was not meant to become an integrated and coherent nor explanatory account, but to hint at a metaphorical key that can unlock what I referred to in Chapter Two as an ideology of performativity; an ideology that condoes and reinforces the separation between seemingly separate academic disciplines such as art, social ecology, philosophy, cross-cultural education and cross-cultural communication. As Merleau-Ponty (1958, p. 176) suggested, ‘intellectualism cannot conceive any passage from the perspective of the thing itself, or from sign to significance otherwise than an interpretation, an apperception, a cognitive intention… [It] distorts both the sign and the meaning: it separates out, by a process of objectification of both, the sense-content, which is already ‘pregnant’ with meaning, and the invariant core, which is not a law but a thing.’

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1 Holding Space is defined by Burchell (2008) as ‘providing a way of expressing deep-seated values and intentions for my practice. It represented a space in which there was potential for the student to find, confirm, and articulate a way forward in their research that held greatest meaning for them at this point.’ Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 294) defines ‘holding space’ as ‘being in the presence of another whilst holding open a vacuum wherein the other can perceive and move without interference. Injecting nothing into the space between.’ Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 342) defines space as 1/ physically, the environment which surrounds one. May be of any size as perceived by the person, from small to huge. 2/ Mentally, the intellectual or emotional area occupied. I.e. “I am in a bad space” or “I’m coming from a very comfortable place”. 3/ Spiritually, the extent of awareness ranging from collapsed to massively expanded. A concept of freedom (ability to accommodate) or lack of it. Spiritual space can be filled up with additives, or freed out by removal of additives which can clutter a space to an eventual point of non-function.’ Ormsby-Green distinguishes safe from unsafe space (2006, pp. 108-115), and defines safe space as ‘A person’s immediate environment being free of bad effect or undesired consequence. An area, be that physical, mental (intellectual/emotional), or spiritual, wherein one can be, think, or act without negative results occurring’ (p. 335).
In the process of not only doing the research but also producing the research products (the written and filmic parts) it was necessary to navigate the boundaries in-between those seemingly separate disciplines to understand and work with a world of felt experience. As a teacher in Expression & Communication (E&C), I work with the tension between thinking, feeling and acting and as such learn about embodiment as an evolving practice in which ‘I’ cross over boundaries and feel into the dynamics in those spaces. To achieve that I practice 1/ acknowledgement of various fields or landscapes as different and necessarily complementary approaches to produce ‘reality’, and 2/ willingness and capacity to confront and observe the dynamics within those fields or landscapes, and their boundaries. To be able to ‘see’ the dynamics, I engage in Maieutic Inquiry; an exploring of conditions and transforming of knowledge to wisdom (Dimitrov & Naess, 2005) and a process that depends essentially on the active interaction of the inquirer and the respondent (ibid, pp. 17-19). This chapter focuses on this active interaction as the Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.); the pivot, the axis for the rest of application in research and anything that this has or can generate meaning in the process of bricolage (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 108). The Greek word maieutikos implies ‘giving birth’ and as such plays an ‘active role for humans to shape reality and creating research processes and products that represent it’ (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 324). In Chapter Three I explained that landscapes and ‘landscape-artists’ paint each other, and as a bricoleur I wanted to ‘paint’ the cross-cultural landscape slowly and as a felt experience. As such I was able to experience what Merleau-Ponty termed a ‘shared materiality’ in which the I-as-subject and the object of production and enquiry as material are in process at the same time. They operate according to a performative cycle or spiral in which products were seen as iterative statements (Richards, 2006, pp. 4-5). Synthetical moments came about in the felt experience and I discovered the ‘I’ in the practice of research, as I began to understand ‘coincidence’ better with theory, feeling and practice not as something following on from each other but necessarily incommensurable and crossing over.
5.4 The suitability of bricolage in cross-cultural landscapes

I found bricolage to be a particularly suitable methodology to explore dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges. It would have been inappropriate to design a project and choose ‘certain’ tools: a top-down process. It was better to use the means at hand; work with what research participants offered for deeper exploration ‘to complete, or nearly complete the project’ (Hatton, 2000, p. 1361). The result was an emergent construction (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991): an evolving cross-cultural education, and one that ‘changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques of representation and interpretation are added to the puzzle’ (p. 161).
Bricolage also proved a most appropriate tool to reflect research-findings, for it offered the opportunity to weave together a written and an audio-visual text that reflects how cross-cultural educators navigate cross-cultural education and associated dynamics that are hard to capture in words and better ‘talked around’ whilst weaving a different kind of web: a ‘quiltlike bricolage’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 9): a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.’ As such, and typical to bricolage, the research-findings are presented in a way that disrupts traditional academic writing that is often boring or difficult to read (Janesick, 2004).

I found that ‘bricolage destroys the mystique of the engineer’ (Benterrak et al, 1984, p. 149): I drew preliminary conclusions and voiced those to see how participants would respond to them, and did not always get ‘nice’ or affirmative responses. When I could not easily accommodate those ‘negatives’ I realized the mechanism of craving for ‘connecting in’ (buying into attraction; craving) and/or ‘throwing out’ (buying into repulsion; aversion) viewpoints. It gave me better understanding of the difference between ‘doing as if’ reflective practice and what Atherton (2005/2007) calls ‘real’ reflective practice that seeks to go beyond what Buddhists refer to as ‘suffering’ (dukkha) and egotism (atta) through the coloured lens of past conditioning and therefore reacting with ignorance, craving or aversion with wisdom lacking (Tandon, 1995/2000, pp. 100-101). I also became aware of how much is omitted in cross-cultural exchanges and the implications thereof such as more categories that shape separate disciplines that do not bridge the ‘gap’ between, for example, Aboriginal and White discourses (Benterrak et al, 1984, p. 67). It made me realize the importance of observing other people’s boundaries and more importantly, accept those.

The ‘mystique of the engineer’ was also destroyed when I was forced to feel okay with limited tools at hand, including time, space and intellectual understanding, and hence make a product that would always be narrow, historically distorted and incomplete (ibid, p. 1362). In other words, bricolage for me was about ‘coming to terms with perfectionism as a reflexive thinker who seeks a significant shift, from understanding consciousness as being capable of oppressing unconscious drives, perceptions and actions, into consciousness as being a continuity of these’ (Nakatsu, Rauterberg & Salem, 2005).

Bricolage, then, may be considered a methodology appropriate for cross-cultural contexts and especially holistically oriented educators, because it is tailored to projects that employ thinking, feeling and action as interwoven moments in the here and now. Bricolage is also challenging because It demands a ‘thinking on the feet’ and relentless self-reflection, including on the social construction of self, the influence of perception on the nature of inquiry, and the removal of knowledge production from the control of elite groups. It also enables the digging up of what was missed or thrown out, what was lost in mono-disciplinarity and Western rationality (Kincheloe,
forthcoming). Inevitably it also digs up the very element that manifested the division between disciplines and feeling, thinking and acting. Schon (1983/1991, pp. 281-282) argues this element relates to a fear of paralysis that ‘may spring from worst-case analysis which ignores opportunities for reflection within the action-present… from an inappropriate dichotomy of thinking and doing.’ He suggests that when we do not confront this dichotomy by ‘reflecting-in-action’, we create empty dreams, or that which Iris Murdoch called ‘an empty heaven’ (Alma, 2007, p. 42). In regard to this I would like to stress the importance of becoming more aware of not only reconsidering what is now considered ‘negative’ but also ‘positive’, not only what is seen as ‘wrong’ but also what ‘is right’, ‘true’ and ‘false’. Furthermore it is important to be relentless in this activity of attendance, because old patterns are hard to break.

The Academy for Expression & Communication (1972) emphasized the significance of repetition to learn about and become better at relationships (as part of the sixth learning-phase), and also Gendlin (1996) suggested an enlivening of ‘problems’ by ‘presenting them to attention repeatedly… We need only observe our own experience when we try to solve a problem’ (p. 73). This process of repeating not only strengthens willingness but also builds authenticity and trust; something Paul Reader (2008, p. 306) argues is essential to what he calls a ‘painting methodology’ in which we ‘let the process do the painting’. A Maori research participant, Ro. referred to this approach as follows:

Consider the following: Atuwa. We say Atuwa. It means: Whenever, in due time. When it happens. When the time is ripe… No pushing. And they say: Oh you Kiwis, you Maoris, you’re always laying back. But it is about making the space available for others, giving the space and connect. It is not about laying back. It is about giving opportunity for others to be able to feel the space. It is part of what we all should learn to be able to do: allow another person to fit into the space the way they need to. Not come and sit here, take your hat off. Take whatever, take…!

Hospitality goes a long way. And being sensitive as a host to see what they need. That’s why I am saying: Atuwa. In due time… Some people take a longer time. How long has it taken for you and I to negotiate the space? Aye? We fight. Are you married? Where we are now, where could the space take us in the future? Aye? It can finish, after the research. But down the track, there will always be a connection. Because our space has been created. Based on that, there’s forever. The other dissipates. No such thing as the other… That’s what I am saying: Atuwa. When? Who is to say, and I peer down into the future, who is to say in ten years time we see each other at a conference… Wahhhh. The space comes back together. There is no other. We connect again. Because we’ve already created the space to build. And that’s when I say: Atuwa: In due time. Or whenever. The connection, you know, is forever. It’s the fractal. Water. Poof!

Repetition produces ‘artistry’, a term coined by Schon (1987) in reference to practice which develops reflection-in-action competence; the habit of reflecting on what one is doing in the act of doing, learned through working in situations of uncertainty and problematic circumstances.
(Reader, 2008, p.301) Repetition permits deeper understanding of the Self in Other yet as separate from other, and undoes the conviction that ‘I was, I am, I shall be’; a perception of human beings who are ‘in fact a series of separate but related events, each event the result of the preceding one and following it without any interval [which] gives the appearance of continuity, of identity, but this is only an apparent reality, not ultimate truth’ (Goenka, in Hart, 1987, p. 28).

Clearly, bricolage involves the practice of discipline and flexibility in mind and body, and as such better ability to understand and work with a complexity of limitations, expectations, beliefs and power structures. As such, it is an appropriate tool for mobile people who need to survive and negotiate with limited means at hand and in often contentious situations. Bricolage is an appropriate and holistic navigating tool closely linked with ‘bush mechanics’ or technacy; ‘an ability to manipulate form in space [and] a three-dimensional expression in response to, [and] take[s] account of resource availability, cultural and social issues and a range of time and money issues that do not need a linear process of [for example] literacy followed by numeracy (Seemann, 2000, p. 6). It is a way of using the means at hand; a skill very familiar to people in the desert who, in the course of history have been confronted with continual survival challenges and through that made the most influential discoveries, They were forced to use their brains, creativity and instinct for cooperation (Ferguson, 2008). Stafford Smith (2008) suggests policies designed by people who themselves have a static lifestyle and operate from ‘above’ have a negative effect on those people: ‘Desert people are becoming very annoyed at this, as it erodes their essential flexibility and power of making the right decisions for themselves.’ To sympathetic policy makers, he suggests there are great opportunities in this area to create a policy-context for real innovation.

The following excerpt from an interview with an Indigenous research participant reflects how ‘mobility’ (flexibility in body and mind) is perpetually thwarted in ‘static’ systems and why employing bricolage as a methodology that employs thinking, feeling and action as interwoven moments in the here and now, a ‘thinking on the feet’ and relentless self-reflection can turn around ‘static’ courses of action for real innovation:

Ros: Most people that I know are interested because of their Romanticism, and the fact that I have become a noble savage. Because I am still an Indigenous, Maori woman. But I have made it through a system, and they accept me given the system that suits them.

Jose: And so you see that their stronghold, if you like, of Romanticism, and the concept of the noble savage justifies their position?

Ros: Yeah. That’s what I think yeah.

Jose: Alright. And that is how they justify the system and are tied up in it themselves?
Ros: Yeah. Absolutely. I think that the main is like that. Because of all... and you'll understand more a little bit more as we go through. Like my supervisor for example, he is no Maori. Yet, we have connected and engaged for a long time, of sharing. Because he makes a point 'Ro., from you I learn.' And I say to him: 'From you I learn.' And so we started on a grey area. And we are able to come in between. I do not see an other. There is no other. Our relationship started on the desire to learn from each other. And we are able to come between and so there is no other. And so it is a circle. So if I can do this with my supervisor, he is not a Maori, I can do it with everybody. But on the same token, so can the system.

Jose: Who, the people or the system?

Ros: OK. The people who dictate the system.

Jose: You reckon they would like to, would be able to?

Ros: They would have to sacrifice a lot, I think (laughs).

Jose: And so what does that start with, that kind of sacrifice... If it is a sacrifice... What would they need to be able to go there?

Ros: I don't know. Because I am not there. So I cannot say for them. But I suspect they would have to be a lot more sensitive to what the people are interested... they would have to be a lot more willing to accommodate for the people who come into the space that might not necessarily fit their window-frame. But they would have to be brave enough to say to the system, that might I remind you has no body, or colour, or gender, but is just a something that is very very powerful, enough to make those people do things that are not good for a person... to basically you know, have to be brave enough to make the change. So yeah, I cannot say for them because I am not there. But I suspect that would have to happen. Does that make sense?

The sacrifice this participant spoke of is perhaps to be made in the emphasis on ‘performance’, and especially ‘dramatic’ performance. For example, one research participant suggested that his staff, of which most are white Christian educators, highly value ‘sassiness’, so high scores are given to students who ‘perform’ in dramatic and loud ways, but low scores to performances of, for example, Asian students whose ‘volume is turned down a bit more’.

This emphasis on ‘dramatic’ performance negates the power of Silence, and as such forms an organising principle that itself performs a meta-discourse practice inherited from positivist science. For example, educators who perceive an importance in ‘must be excited’ or ‘must be continuously rewarded’ (Tomkins, as cited in Robinson & Davies, 2007) imply that people ‘need’ attention according to the framework of the attention economy (Goldhaber, 2007) as if attention is a market principle of supply and demand. This narcissistic self-organising market principle is fed especially when performativity is inappropriately judged in terms of ‘negative’ or ‘positive interactions’ and not at the level of felt experience. Cross-cultural exchanges then remain sites of
resistance without compassion, which perpetuates the myth of creationism and reductionist education. As two Dutch research participants suggested, as teachers they still felt they could not be themselves but play a role because the space is too unsafe. Another New Zealand/Australian participant suggested she learned 'how to fail', ‘be a failure’ not only in the process of teacher education, but also now as a university lecturer in The Netherlands where she felt ‘politicised’ and ‘reduced to the foreigner.’

Re. from Australia similarly expressed her grievances around reductionist thinking and making inappropriate judgements about styles of ‘performativity’, but from a global perspective:

Stereotypic views… this is another one. Syria today is not agreeing with the rest of the world. Automatically they try to pressure you to agree with you. They almost make Syria look different. An opposer. They label it as an Axis of Evil, supporting terrorism, because it may not agree with other politics. And you go there, see, you see… in the old days they called Syria the land of Nomads, because there was no issue of terrorism, so they called it the Land of Nomads. Like in documentaries, they show you the man on the camel in the desert. Not people like me and you, but other people who don’t know about Syria they ask: But is it just desert there? And where is it on the map? … In Syria, they love literature, they love history, but the media just don’t say that to us. And this is where the gap occurs. Maybe this is the other side of the angle I don’t know about. Because this is the meeting point, the intermediate… this is the West, and that is the East… I won’t say Islam because so many beliefs there…. and this is the side where everyone is trying to see, but nobody sees this section, or this angle, because they are poles apart. They are never ever going to meet unless they make a connection we don’t understand.

In. from Holland and herself a specialist in cross-cultural communication, referred to ‘white communication’ as one that accentuates verbal- and body-language, but does not take note of ‘the inside of someone’s story’ and as such does not make ‘a connection we don’t understand’:

White communication, to speak in your language (points to the head)... there is a lot of goodwill in gaining insight into how things work in other cultures. But there is very little known about all that. And the knowledge is... er... very rational, very cerebral... It is all about very different things... You know, sometimes my partner says, ‘you are such a white Western educated girl that has learned to communicate in white ways.’ And I was educated in the first place in a very rational manner. And it is very difficult for me and often very unsettling to loosen up from that. I open myself up for spiritual stuff and do all sorts of things in that area, and still I find it very difficult. ‘You play with words’, he says. That bothers him. And he often says, why don’t you say that directly? He communicates at a very different level...

She then sketches another approach applied by her Dutch business partner during a course they co-facilitated:
Belgian people, they are... ah well, I’ve seen a few times now that when it comes to learning, they are still very much focused on how the educator passes on knowledge: That one-way communication style; information. Last Tuesday we ran a program for six educators, and they only told stories, one-way traffic. It was about numbers and demographics... and one man talked about judicial aspects, rights and obligations, about welfare payments and aged care pensions. And another talked about statistics and vitality. And my colleague said, and I thought that was very powerful: I have not felt at home here all day. He said, I think the better approach... with due respect, is about the inside of the story... Because every person has a different story. And when you can contact that individual personal story, that’s where it all starts...

To make a connection, Br. from Holland, whose neighbours are Iraqi migrants, suggested it was important to show ‘respect’, not in terms of doing what others expect you to do, but by being aware of the mechanism of ‘placing aside’².

Br.: With those Iraqi people, when I go to visit them I have to take off my shoes. And then you get those silly slippers and you are supposed to put those on, which I won’t do. They found that shocking at first, and so I explained that has nothing to do with cultural differences... I said that I believe that to be a matter of respect, by not placing myself aside and do as they say. They have come to accept this as part of who I am now, and now I am welcome to visit them just with socks on.

5.5 The cross/crossing to open up bounded landscapes

With the focus on the cross, it was only ‘natural’ that a ‘storehouse’ of religious ideas and their effects on geo-social landscapes would emerge. One participant, herself Christian, did not associate culture with religion, and even strongly opposed this viewpoint. Others who did not identify with a religion suggested religion and culture are necessarily related. A participant who identified herself as Muslim expressed her relief (as heard in the film) about being able to talk about the ‘cross-cultural links’. She suggested it was important to reflect more deeply on cross-cultural links in terms of religion, landscape and group mind, especially when one culture’s history and past civilizations is ‘poles apart’ from another:

Re.: When you think about it, why do people live the way they do today? People adapt differently according to their culture to different places. Like for example, you go to... you see people with their hats and caps and whatever, I cannot even remember what they are called, but they are all covered-up. I think it drags on from one generation to another. That is how I see it. I have always

² Ormsby-Green (2006, p.319) defines ‘placing aside’ or ‘placing under’ as ‘positioning oneself or someone else as inferior to someone or something else. For example: I placed my desire to be an actor aside in order to get a better job. I placed myself under my mother’s need to look good socially. I placed his needs aside in order to advantage myself. I placed aside my marriage vows in order to have an exciting affair.’
asked dad, why do these women... I think on commercial television, there is this woman I think from Abu Dhabi, Emirates, and they always show this woman begging or something, like she is praying on the side on the grass. She is very happy, calm, tranquil, sitting down in one area, but her face is all covered. And I said to dad, they are not supposed to be like that, because... I thought that is religion. And he said that is not religion. That's culture. Because he was explaining to me what religion is really all about... The problem is that people mix religion with culture. They think that, like for example, I don't know if you've seen them around Sydney like that, they cover their whole eyes, but that is not religion. That is their culture from that area. That is an adaptation, I think, that crosses from one generation to the other... that's how I see it.

Jose: It is almost like a mutation...

Re.: Exactly. Yeah, you could say that. Because religion, because I know so much about religion because I am a Muslim myself, whereas I don't look it, because my parents talk to me about that, it really is that you are only supposed to be covered, but show the face. The veil. But they cover all their face, because maybe that area where they come from, or that sect, they all wear it like that..., because of different beliefs, cultures, different parts of country... For example you have two villages in one country. Two villages. They are all the same religion for example. But this village, they wear the scarves this way, and that village, they wear them all over their face. Because in that village, people tell them to do that. And they go along to that path. But they don't change. They don't want to change. So they just keep on doing that. And their children see them do it and children are forced to do what the adults do and they act the same, dress the same, from one generation to the next.

Hereafter Re. went into deeper inquiry and talked about the importance of the wider geo-politics that create more bounded ('fixed') landscapes:

Re.: People are just blinded with views, accusations, er... I think just the media, through different ways. That's what I see at the end. And my project is to achieve that and narrow this gap. And I am sure I am never going to achieve that, because the power is too much. The opinions and... it is just too strong. It is going to take generation after generation, because for people to come back and maybe think the opposite way is going to take a long time. I could be wrong, and I don't know if you agree with me. But you see, I hate talking about politics, and maybe I could be wrong, but....

Jose: Yes, but the problem is, we have culturally come to see things in dualism. But today's sciences know there are many many more universes than just three that most of us see. There is not only black and white. And so it is pointless talking to them, because they believe in duality. The trap is thinking that what we see is true; that there is such a thing as a dualistic world. To the degree we buy into that idea and give it energy, it forms a trap. The way out is to use language that not everybody might find acceptable, because a few stereotypic views might be challenged,
and people might get nervous or edgy, but that’s OK. We’ve done that before. None of that is a new thing, because the ancient people knew that too, like the people in Mesopotamia knew that all already also. And I saw something else too, which is the cross is the same as the eye, which is the centre. In holy places again, you’ve got these two rings on the well. The water-source. So these rings are also like two ways of seeing, and this bit in the middle is the centre, which is much like RA, or the dark area, that what is not nameable, because it has no name.

Re.: And so we are talking about the same thing.

Jose: Yes. And so here with the eye… what sort of occurred to me, I don’t know exactly what I saw, but this word came up and this was the result: OK, so if this is the eye, and this is the pupil… I have never really had a strong connection with the pharaohs or whatever. So this is the pupil, or a hole, and so here in the middle of the hourglass, see here is the cross again, and I am creating the hourglass-theory, but in the middle we twist things around and put time into the equation. Whereas in the middle there is just space. But if we put the equation of time in, then we get the split, we get duality.

Re.: You see, it is amazing how people visualise things in different ways. Like I use a triangle, and you use an hourglass. But we are talking about similar things. Intellectually we think differently, but at the end we think the same. Only because our backgrounds are different… we have studied different things in different ways, because I am a science person, maybe… and you?

Jose: Oh, all-round (laughs)?

Re.: Socially, maybe socially… because as scientists maybe, we think geometrically. Maths. For example elements… Very different to a philosopher, or a social scientist.

Jose: Depends on how you look at it… See I also look at it as an artist. I see myself more as an artist. And we are all artists in a way. I mean, we are all creative beings.

Re.: The only way hindering is that: Stereotypical views. At the end, they always break it up like that. It is amazing. How many people are dying, because two people, two people cannot decide on one thing? This is how I… If you go and tell people, you’ll be classed as a different person. Someone that is different than other people in society. Maybe you’ll be seen in a different way. Maybe it is this way … a terrorist (laughs)?

Jose: Ah yeah.

Re.: It is amazing. It has nothing to do with religion.

Jose: No, it is just a mechanism of labelling.

Re.: Yes. Labelling. Stereotypic views. Another word would be, being portrayed. Conveying. Being pictured like something. You know, like they say, a picture tells a thousand words? They
only have to show a picture of somebody and point their finger at it and then they don't need to waste their time. They don't have to explain. That's what is happening now. But I am glad I know now... You know...

Jose: Yeah. Now, can I finish my story here? Now, this is the eye, this is the hole here and this is the eyeliner... these are the rules... and what I see is that originally we are all egalitarian, and some of us mutated away from the original blood-lines that the original pharaohs held intact. They just held power and knowledge intact whilst the population was egalitarian and just scattered around the world as more space became available. The original pharaohs held the space safe, but did not impose their power. I feel that those in Mesopotamia...

Re.: Yes. That is where the basis of maybe mankind.

Jose: So you call that civilisation? Human kind maybe?

Re.: Humanity. I am so glad that I have met you, because this is so interesting.

Jose: But here in Australia I feel that there was a huge sea...?

Re.: Have you heard of Gondwana? It was also New Zealand, Tasmania, I think, if Africa was part of Gondwana, then maybe... But no, because that was before the Ice Age. But humanity was much later... and that's where science comes in.

Jose: Well, the white race... our colour...

Re.: And what we are saying is what has been worked out by scientists and social scientists, together.

Jose: Yeah.

Re.: Ah. Interesting.

Jose: And my, my, I guess talk is that I want to say that everything has been layered out and that it (the timeline) is confirming what you and I know and we knew all along. And they knew that in Mesopotamia as well. It just had to all eventuated over time, and if we are stupid enough, we are going to make the same mistake as they did as they collapsed. And there is no need. So time to learn from that dark area.

Re.: Yeah. That's the dark area we don't know about.

Jose: But we do, because in dialogue we can bring it up, but only with those people who want to bring it up.

Re.: Exactly. And this is where this occurs. The awareness, tolerance, respect, heritage, habits...

Jose: Habits too?

Re.: Yeah of course, because people have different habits. Different people have different habits and er, you might not realise it so much, it does affect the way other people think about things.
For example if there would be a man praying here in the middle of the square, I bet you nine times out of ten, everyone would stop doing what they are doing and start looking. But he is doing what he has been doing all of his life. To him it is just an ordinary prac… but like I just said now, we see that as not ordinary, but if he did that in another country, nobody would care. Nobody would even look at him. Just like nobody is looking at us whilst we are having a coffee. So habits, yes habits does come into the equation.

Jose: Do you think these concepts should be discussed, brought into the middle?

Re.: Yeah, of course. Because awareness obviously is what we are doing now. Tolerance is accepting it and living with it.

Jose: Living with what?

Re.: Accepting people’s habits. Say that’s tolerating people’s habits. For example some people do not tolerate other people’s behaviour. Like what I am saying about this guy just now. Respect is understanding because it is about understanding what other people do. Actually it should not be called respect, but mutual respect. Mutually respecting. In other words not see other people to what you really are. Because really at the end of the day, we are all different people. Just how I see, maybe, I view that person to be different than me and maybe some people view people like him inferior to who they are. But at the end of the day, we are all different people. That is where mutual respect comes into the equation. Because if we all, everybody mutually respected each other, there would be no tension. So…

The above excerpt came about as a result of talking about the cross and confirms Morgan’s (1997, p. 353) suggestion that the power of using metaphors is in their capacity to enhance an open-ended and continually evolving dialogue to deal with the complexity of organizational life. But it also challenges his notion that the weakness of using metaphor is ‘in that same openness because those very forces deny the unconscious contained in organizational life’ (ibid, p.244). Perhaps what counteracts this potential weakness is the intention that underpins the making use of metaphor: When applied in maieutic inquiry to give birth to insights, it opens up the forces of denying the unconscious in organizational contexts and its relationship to cross-cultural dynamics. The following excerpt from an interview with Ma. reflects the extent and depth of insight such inquiry can bring to the surface:

Ma.: If I would say to you what culture means, I would say (Ma. goes to the drawing board and draws a model and I notice myself momentarily wandering off mentally. Then I pull myself back again and think perhaps she is trying to distract my attention, twist and turn and divert the question I asked earlier… yet I find myself observing the exchange and wonder if she is making a point in action?) First we share paradigms. Then we have got a shared set of values that are all handed down.
Jose: Handed down from where?

Ma.: From the parents, the community that you are part of. So I think there is also some sort of a history that is shared. Well, I share, so you would have a shared history. And then you’d also have a common language, and that does not have to be a spoken language. And then we have proximity.

Jose: Who is ‘we’ to start off with?

Ma.: Oh, good question… the royal we.

Jose (laughs loudly). Fantastic!

Ma.: Oh, I don’t know… (smiles). So, that translates into customs and all that, customs and rituals as well, which is very important in a culture.

Jose: And what does all that look like in your culture?

Ma.: My culture?

Jose: Yes, Any culture that you see yourself as being part of, be it corporate culture or….

Ma.: Well actually, when we talk about corporate culture they have a different model… (Ma. writes down the words behaviours and systems, then symbols and financial incentive and then a business way of looking at culture). A lot of our culture-change programs would go in there. There could be rewards for example. Could be a laptop or something. What kind of behaviours? Do we reward this thing or chop it out? And the systems… I’d have to look it all up where I’ve read this all up and where I’ve come across it, but I’ve often seen that particular model in the context of transformation of a business type of culture. And this is just my own (points to the model Ma. just drew) of what I think is part of a culture. Of what makes it up. Of what I think what a culture is. And I don’t have necessarily race in there. Because if I was to be a Vietnamese person growing up in Germany with my parents, I would have the same language proximity, I would be taking on the history that they tell me and I would have a little bit of my own… but everybody is different and has their own experience. And I’d share their customs and rituals, although… so I question how much racism comes into all this… For some people that’s very significant. If you look at cultural theories and all that kind of stuff… throughout history.

Jose: What do you reckon is all this significance on race about?

Ma.: Power, greed and control.

Jose: Right…

Ma: (writes religion/spiritual beliefs at the bottom of the model). And religion and spiritual beliefs… But really, they all feed into that, but may well lead to all that to a degree as well. So again the institutionalised… spirituality, I suppose.
Jose: Ah that’s an interesting one. Institutionalised spirituality in a business culture, and an educational culture? Could that be the case?

Ma.: Yes. I think so. If you think about it… you know if you have a person who is very Christian or Catholic, they would say you have to be honest, you have to commit and you have to be that… almost any big company has some sort of a value-list, which is not that different to the Ten Commandments really…

Jose: Ah yeah, tell me more…

Ma. (smiles): Thinking out loud… You have the Ten Commandments if you are a Christian person. You are not meant to kill, not lie etc. Now where I work we have a list of values that people should be following, to be living… what do we call that now? Living the values. Which really means understanding what they mean and then demonstrating them. Because your systems then reinforce those values… Because if you are a role-model and living the values, there is a bit of a bonus attached… It’s not in black and white, but you get an understanding of having done a good job…

Jose: And so that is how you get rewarded?

Ma.: Yeah, and I think we have not really moved that far away from religion. I think corporations work just like religions.

5.6 ‘Slipping’ communication

From an ecological perspective, bricolage is a form of currere, which means the course to be run is one in which the educator is also the designer, not in a pre-planned way but as Eisner (1979, p. 34) suggests, in what emerges and becomes evident only after it has been experienced. In other words, currere (as bricolage) is a process of embodiment in which note is taken of the surrounding landscape to enhance the evolution of all parties involved. The process is not aimed to ‘fix’ an issue or stabilize it, but permits an entering into a life-generating relationship with other modes of being (Kincheloe, forthcoming) and moving together towards what is ‘Not-Yet’ (ibid, pp.15-16). As such bricolage also takes note of ‘slipping communication’ which means, as suggested in the Dutch focus group, that communication does not always ‘grab into each other, but slips past each other.’

From my diary, 3 April 2004:

I suddenly get the hunch that I was too emotionally involved – my ego was playing up too much –, which I saw reflected in R’s response: I saw/sensed her resistance. I introduced concepts to open up the space [but] perhaps I was impinging on R’s autonomy… I should have cleared my case before… Relating this out to the field, it appears there’s a huge unexplored area here of denying the felt experience as other to delving into emotions and as such impinging on another’s space in
negotiation processes (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005) … too much enmeshed and not freely engaged in the issue… with the consequence of gangling up against each other: One group versus another. It feels very yucky and I feel inclined to resolve this … which is a problem… because if I were to ‘resolve’ this as if something outside of me, I would be yet another person who contributes to the mechanism of compulsive rescue that usually is aimed only to satisfy personal needs and regardless of environmental consequences.

‘Slipping communication’ appears to be formed in a process one research participant called ‘seeing as a camouflage’; something I consider a ‘necessary product of contingent interactions among different sets of causal mechanisms’ (Jessop, 2004, pp. 10-11), as the following excerpt explains:

Re.: You know, everyone has different views. That tells me for example, I see as a camouflage, because it covers what you really are like. The camouflage, because you don’t see the other side of the person because they look and act the same, because they are living in the same area or maybe in the same society… Like my home country, obviously I have been raised here in Australia, but I see my family, ancestors as poles apart. Very different. That’s why when I go to Syria I, it’s amazing… even though it is very modern, everything like us, like they go out and have nightlife, very accustomed to Western, you know… When you’re there, physically there … see, it looks different, but it is like here at the same time. The people are very modern, westernised… er… yet the surroundings, because there is so much heritage, past heritage, that you think when you’re walking around there, how old everything is. But when you speak to somebody, the people are the same as here. But there is something different in that some people still live in the past. You got the old city and you got the new part of for example Damascus, the capital. And er. The old city is very old, but then you’ve got the new part… And then they are like us. Actually, more than us… the people they are very liberated. So it depends where you go and who you meet around an area.

‘Slipping communication’ is felt and recognized across cultures and across disciplines, but nevertheless difficult to express and communicate in words. In Chapter Three I already pointed to research-participants’ expressed and communicated ‘moving landscapes’ not only in how they theorised their work but also in how they communicated among each other and with myself as a researcher, and that they often used ‘murky’ communication, in the words of Ma., ‘to sort out what I can do before I need to raise it… it gives me the freedom to do what I need to do.

I imagine it was this ‘murky’, this ‘slipping communication’ I also made use of to invite research-participants into the ‘fuzzy’ space in-between presumably ‘fixed’ identities and reveal what generally is kept hidden and stored in areas not immediately available to view (‘blind spots’ that keep boundaries intact), as the following excerpt from an interview with In., a corporate cross-cultural educator, shows:
Jose: Some academics think that what we see is true. But I doubt everything and think: Yes, but what I think is never true, but a fixation of mind. So I always go back to the stone, and the stone expands and creates an effect like in Zen, and then you get a ripple effect, provided you stay ‘here’. But you need to know ‘who’ you are, but in fixation you lose control of ‘who you are’ and you lose ‘attention’. And the effects of that fixation make education destructive. It is based on certainty. And then I thought, okay, so there are cultural differences. But what is culture? What are different attitudes? Those differences are essential. And I wanted to know what intercultural communication is, away from fixed ‘things’ and ‘your language versus mine because language is fluid. It is not words, not grammar, but something completely different. I noticed I wanted something very different, and go back to basics. I wanted to bring words that are used to freely back into the centre away from finding solutions, to be in dialogue. But what is dialogue; how is that shaped? What is respect, tolerance, peace? Those words are used as if there is consensus around their meaning. But that is impossible. Because what you see is always different to what I see. So I just wanted to interview people who are already looking into this area to give it more voice, but also find the underlying motive, and clarify it. Because why do you do the work you do, huh? What is that interest in working with people from other cultures? So others can understand better... That is also why I use film, and imagery, and metaphor because they speak to the irrational. I want to create a product that shows the area in such a way that it calls people to dialogue.

In.: Yes, very interesting and at the same time quite an art to work from competition back to basics. Very difficult also. And what you describe is a process of years huh?

Jose: Yes, and so a kind of co-biography, or an ethno-biography, a landscape through which we walk together.

In.: So you do this for yourself?

Jose: Yes and no, I don’t see those as separate.

As the above excerpt suggests, I grappled with explaining my concept of self as not separate but as integral to a larger collective or group mind in which the projection/reflection principle colours the space. Group mind operates beyond cultural, biological, organizational, national, gendered and other bounded spaces. It is a subliminal, self-organising and self-emergent force that can be destructive when ignored. As the following excerpt clarifies, much deeper layers of insight at the level of boundaries emerged when I brought into dialogue the concept of group mind:

Jose: The problem I have with, whether it is psychology or sociology or whatever of the –ogies, is that they only look at the individual but not at the group mind. And that is why I’ve asked you about things like organisations, because in none of the other theories, not even in holistic ‘Steiner’
stuff… the concept of group mind is just totally denied\textsuperscript{3}. And that’s a huge one. Because whatever theories I read, be it from Maslow, or holistic counselling, or psychology, or a complexity person like Bateson, or developmental psychology, they all point at the ‘right’ area, but they look at the individual but do not consider their own field. That’s why I’ve asked you can you talk about this ‘ethical’ kind of stuff. Because the group mind, you have to understand that we do live in that group mind kind of stuff. And that is the thing. We live in this tension. And that was the beauty with the Academy for Expression & Communication, and where it was unique, is that we had the role of I as an individual, the I as a member of a group, and the I as a member of society. But even in that school we looked at society as society, human beings. But in social ecology, complexity theory, they also look at the cosmos. So in my translation the group is now much bigger. The group is really only a tiny individual. So I am a member of a group… So in my context, I am Jose, I also function in a collective and I can look at that as me as a human race, or as a tribe member, as gender, but whatever I do, I still categorise myself into a group and with that a group mind. Then as a member of society area I also look at the level of physics etc.

Ma.: I’m not sure where you’d look, but they look at, or I do, at team and organisation.

Jose: And how they feed into and out of one another?

Ma.: I don’t know about they do that. I’d have to look it up. But there is… I’d have to look at what literature is out there. But they do look at that. They do work on that like on an organisational model. But that is interesting, really interesting. Because I did not understand that as well, because I was trying to compare to games or adaptation theory… I was trying to understand what they were saying, but now I understand it more.

Jose: And like in complexity theory, they talk about without friction you cannot walk as Vladimir Dimitrov says. But in the denial of that friction… So it’s not about these roles. Yes the roles are there, but it’s in the dynamics, in the friction, in the tension where the learning occurs.

Ma.: So is friction the same as murky?

Jose: Yes.

Ma.: So that is the same thing as in what was it, in fuzziology?

Jose: Yeah. Stuff. People talk about stuff… We talk about group mind. But it’s like the waves, the dynamics in-between. And that is like the static stuff. But they need to unravel. Because there is no contraction… if there is no friction we cannot walk. Because otherwise there is nothing. And then in my, eh, that’s how it all ties in with the cross. And why I focus in so much on the cross.

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\textsuperscript{3} At the time of doing field-research, I felt particularly upset about the widespread level of ignorance in (cross-cultural) education to the ‘group mind’ phenomenon. I was aware that there are theorists who talk about ‘group mind’ that involve observations with the ‘eye of the mind’ (Wilber, 2001), and who use terms such as ‘group think’, ‘group synergy’ and ‘collective consciousness’. But those concepts are rarely brought into dialogue even when a situation demands clarification.
Which is what none of the other cross-cultural theories look at, and none of the organisational theories either.

Ma.: So this then ties in with what I was talking about before. When we talked about oil companies and making oil products and that is bad… but then we do not cross that line and say, but hang on a minute, they only make those products because we are buying them. We actually quite like using their products. We quite like going on a plane, etc. etc. So that is probably a form of denial that is systemic…

Jose: Yep.

Ma.: … and inherent in everything (Ma. lightens up, appears to see something of value and I respond to that…)

Jose: Yeah. Beautiful.

Ma.: Yeah?

Jose: Yes. Thank you. Because that’s it. I reckon that’s it (laughs).

Ma.: That’s it (laughs)?

Jose: Yeah, now we’re touching the real core thing.

Ma.: Because we’re all of a sudden asking to step out of paradigms, values, common language, all the stuff that’s written down there. But by doing what you’re doing, you’re saying nonono, let’s all step out of all those different things.

Jose: Yes. Let’s murk it up.

Ma.: And then we don’t have a frame of reference, and then we get scared.

Jose: Yes. And that’s where the exciting part happens. But that is where most theories, people, groups… hook off.

Ma.: You know most people cannot, you know how Ormsby-Green talks about energy in our relationship, be it overwhelm or boredom. But it just depends on how wide those values are. Because you cannot stay in overwhelm for too long. So you need a level of… I don’t know, you’d already need higher thresholds or…

Jose: Yep…

Ma.: So that would be… or more like…

Jose: The ability to take risks?

Ma.: Yeah, or how the people would say that by raising energy and vibration, like a collective shift in awareness or something like that hit me…

Jose: Oh right, yeah…
Ma.: You know, to be able to handle a higher... vibration...

Jose: Yeah...

Ma.: Hmmm... And that is the work that really matters... (sounds excited)

Jose: Yes.

Ma.: Bring about that ability to increase and hold increased vibrational energy, whatever that is. So that we can make better choices. Coz' we do not need to control. So this is almost where we are at an emotional level almost, isn't it? We've abandoned... If we go and draw the emotional ladder, and that we as a collective we ARE somewhere. We can go to all these higher and lower places, but overall we are in a particular place, and we might be able to raise the vibration...

Jose: Yes. And my theory so far collectively, at least in educational, as a group mind we are almost in the numb area, if not in the grief band. I feel that grief band, as a group mind...

Ma.: You know, I can't remember where I was reading it, but... In the industrial age, we still we are in... so there is a complete... there is a time lag... Interesting... you know, we're lagging behind in the industrial age, or... This was good!

Jose: Good!

5.7 Close-knittedness and ‘cheating’

Braud (1998) points out that the word research itself implies a particular way to knowing, suggesting a searching again, anew, back, and going about again or circling around again, just as respect suggests the idea of looking again, carefully, paying special attention, honouring, without preconceived bias, and revisioning implies looking over again, seeing again: all together, those three words infer an endeavour to fuller encompass the object of our investigation (p. 2).

This research was contextualised by experience-related questions to provide rich, thick and deep descriptions at as many levels as possible (ibid, p. 5). They aimed to map a variety of viewpoints and experiences so as to understand the territory and perhaps set a context for more workable models for future use (ibid).

The process of research, as suggested earlier in the thesis, permitted me to see the close-knittedness of 'culture' and 'religion' which makes it inevitable that researching cross-cultural exchanges is ultimately about understanding our own culture/religion, and effectively a self-study. Cross-cultural education, then, is a practice that is not about trying to ‘transcend’ cultural/individual biases, and as such negate the opportunity to explore the symbol/ metaphor ‘cross’. It is practice however in currere: walking the course whilst doing the talking, and plotting the course whilst walking it. It is a course in blunt-rocking (Ormsby-Green, 2006, pp. 254-255): making do the best one can, and not remaining passive but taking affirmative action, even when sufficient means of accomplishment are not at hand. It is a methodology comparable with
bricolage: a working with the means at hand, which includes understanding and working with one’s own and other people’s (cultural/religious) biases and coming to terms with the intellectual understanding that philosophical dimensions and empirical research cannot be divided: it is a constant process of revisioning and self-inspecting, and demands insight into the struggle between mind and brain, or the human condition (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, pp. 5-10). Cross-cultural education is a narration; a live account of a diversity of viewpoints that do not necessarily meet, just like the cross reflects the paradox of both meeting and clashing, as a Dutch participant, H. pointed out.

*From my diary, 2 January 2009:*

*Analysis was both easy and challenging for me. Often I got the best insights when I was running, which was easy. I was ‘doing’ something. But I also got great insights upon simply sitting with ‘myself’ in silence, and attuning to sensations or ‘sensing’. But before and also during those ‘sessions’ I always had to confront the perception of ‘lacking time’. Though the exercise always turned out to have a soothing effect on me and lead to insights that were often deeply felt and understood, I also had to push myself into this space, and I frequently noticed the tendency to ‘slip out’ of this practice and start ‘doing’ again. In other words, I confronted the struggle between ‘mind’ and ‘brain’, or the unconditional and the conditioned mind.*

The research-process permitted me the opportunity to develop confidence in my work as a transpersonal researcher, in the sense of using ‘many eyes’ not limited to the physical eyes, in the sense of processing data in multiple and often intuitive kind of ways, and of expressing them in multiple ways including in poems, images, diary-notes, symbols and film (Braud, 1998, p. 6). It also confronted me with my inexperience and limitations as a novice: I saw myself as a bricoleur who had limited knowledge of a range of research methodologies, and I realised the ‘truth’ behind the statement of Kincheloe & Berry (2004) that bricolage is not something you can become good at overnight: it is a lifetime endeavour, and not one that can be accomplished in a doctoral program or a postdoctoral fellowship (p. 4). To me, this meant that I had to come to grips with a range of limitations and not being able to produce a ‘perfect’ piece of work.

*From my diary, 11 August 2006:*

*I see a game in play of ‘not making progress.’ In other words, standing still is the game, but not as a positive but a way of appearing busy but actually being passive. The idea appears to be to limit progress, to not need to mean anything and escape using all capacities. I am afraid to be known.*

The games of assuming ‘shortcomings’, producing ‘perfect work’ and of ‘not making progress’ I saw reflected in a ‘blind spot’ that emerged during an interview with a participant who teaches in Chinese cultures. She talked about what Western society considers problematic in dealings with Chinese culture: Chinese people are seen as ‘cheats’ and they plagiarise, which the Western world considers ‘wrong’. The main dictate in her work, she said, was to make Chinese students
realise cheating ‘is’ unacceptable. When Le. told me this story, I saw the first glimpse of the
close-knittedness between culture and religion. Especially when Le. told me that she gave
students who cheated ‘zero marks’, I felt a sense of protest increase in me. I heard myself think
that I saw her role as a cross-cultural educator and the system that supported her work as a new
form of colonialism. I did not voice my concerns directly, because I felt there was an energetic
boundary I could not cross. But I remember myself simply acknowledging the sensation within
myself, which is when Le. softened her tone. But we also moved away from this subject
afterwards.

During analysis of the audio-visual data and especially when making the first drafts for the film, I
found myself battling with this piece of conversation. I was unsure whether to add it in the film or
not, and found myself repeatedly wanting to brush it off as if it was an irksome experience but
trivial. It seemed so unrelated to all the other data I had gathered. But when I looked deeper into
what was actually at stake in this incident, I realised cheating is actually a core ingredient and
strategy of the fragmented mind: It seeks to distract attention so the eyes are not on this energy-
field. It does anything it can to prevent the person to self-realise. It seeks material manifestation
and as such symbolises the square and ‘boxed’ thinking.

I knew then I had found a key to understanding the split in cross-cultural exchanges.

Already before the research process began, as I suggested in Chapter Two, I had experienced
this socio-political web that is defined by educational institutions and carried out by ‘experts’ in a
field (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p, 167; Cohen, 2001). That is why I felt I needed to focus on the
metaphor ‘cross’. It is as if people have to fit into existing reference frameworks, and that they are
not allowed to express and communicate their dynamism and with that realise the difference
between brain and mind: the ‘man-machine’ and ‘essence’ (Ouspensky, 1950). I have described
this difference in their dynamics in a variety of ways: dynamics that either or not contextualise the
split. I have said in different ways that people (including myself) are not free of binary thinking and
only to a degree work towards wholeness at the same time: that there is a constant friction
between rationality and irrationality, which in and of itself sets up boundaries, and that this friction
deserves more attention, and indeed listening, in dialogue both with oneself and other individuals
if not entire groups of people who are interested in planetisation, not globalisation.

a/ the import of listening to the ‘tone’ of voice

Listening is a cardinal feature of psychoanalytic work. Its elemental importance transcends and
unifies all other components of theory and technique. No matter an analyst’s theoretical
orientation, and irrespective of the conceptual frame in which the listening is organized or of its
focus at any given moment during an analytic session, listening is an activity underlying every
aspect of the analytic interaction occurring within the auditory sphere.

One research participant posed the following questions:

Cl.: Difference is the driver of dynamics. It seems natural to look at differences in culture (which I define as “way of life”) as fertile ground for driving the human dynamic. Do you define “cross-cultural” in terms of ethnicity or way of life? Do you identify “ethnicity” as a factor of heritage or experience? Do you believe that we can have resonances with certain cultures to which we are neither born, nor have extensive personal experience? If so how will this influence research? How do you intend to deal with the complexity of “belongingness” which each individual experiences in defining themselves and their culture? Will you be considering the influence of gender, sexuality, age etc? My concern is that we cannot look at something holistically if we pull out ethnicity as if it were a quantifiable phenomenon. Also, can you please clarify what you mean by the crux in and the crux of cross-cultural education? Do you mean what is important about why we do it and what is important about how we do it?

From what Cl. told me, I heard she was thirsty for deep or ‘maieutic inquiry’: she wanted to give birth to new insights, and her willingness I found encouraging and inspiring. I had no answers to her questions, but I heard she was happy to find her own in dialogue with others including myself. I felt Cl. had an inquiring mind, which I experienced as a relief after having interacted with a series of people in Australia, including potential participants, who said they were interested in my research-topic, but when push came to shove, their support appeared flimsy if not non-existent.

Ros. understood my frustration and disappointment very well, as the following excerpt reveals when she responds to my story:

Ros.: OK let’s stop this little train for a little while and listen to what you’re saying. There are some people that value what you’re saying. But I don’t think the main does. Because what we say is out of the box, it’s outside of the main. It’s outside and trying to fit into the window. It does not fit in the main. That’s what I mean with the silence in my own skin. The skin is what I identify as: Oh, that’s interesting. We have not heard much about the Indigenous people thing, so let’s hear what she’s saying for a while. So in my thinking ‘Let’s hear what you’ve got to say’ makes me feel like I am part of their Romanticism, and the fact that I am now part of this academic world, I fit into their space because these are the guidelines that I needed to jump for just to be there. So a lot of the time I feel like I am the noble savage.

Jose: Tell me more about that…

Ros. (laughs): I mean, I think some people would be quite… like oh is that how we make you feel? But no it’s not. That’s how I believe the system makes me feel. Not necessarily people. This is not about people. It is about the system that determines how people act and think because ‘these are the guidelines we’ve put together.’ And the system is powerful. So that’s why I say: What does she look like? And they say: Who? Is she a he or a she? Who? The system! Does she have blood? I don’t think it is a he or a she. Why is everybody so fearful of something that is cold,
that has no heart that is a nothing? Why don’t people look like people with a heart, with bodies, that have feelings that can commit? People are so fearful of this system-thing. And so that’s why I often say, what does she look like? Is it a he or a she or what? You’re nuts! But no. The fear of the system is so prominent. Yet, you cannot put the finger on what this thing is. That’s why I say the window that people look out of to keep them from…

Jose: From engaging…

Ros: Yeah. You know. A bit crazy, hey, but that’s how I think. That how my thinking is. So that’s my skin. So now when you read ‘silence in my own skin’, I simply put: I wonder. I wonder if they value what I have to say. Because I am who I am, a Maori-woman, who represents other Maori women… I wonder if they’re interested in that, or are they interested because I might have something different to say that they have not heard yet…

What I heard in Ros’ words was that she felt invalidated and misunderstood, not for what she says but for how she is approached in academia, and its emphasis on rationalism –on thinking, not feeling into the world of the other; not a ‘crossing’.

Crossing is an understanding, a sense of many implications at once. The crossing is what makes us say “Aha, that’s how it goes.” The concept of “crossing” explains this kind of explaining.

E. Gendlin, in Levin, 1997, p. 29

Bochner (1997) suggests there is a lack of confronting the two worlds of the academic and the personal (p. 418) in spite of (or is because of?) all the social engineering and the psychological theories and methods that have been invented. He argues that the ‘wider fabric of disconnections that promotes isolation and inhibits risk taking and change within universities and academic disciplines’ (p. 418) reflects ‘a scientific world [which] has no place for human feelings, motives, or consciousness’ (ibid, p. 423). It is seen as more productive to ‘review the literature, see what others have said; stand on the shoulders of giants’ (ibid, p. 424).

Though I have found there are differences in rigidity in terms of the notion of weaving into and out of the old and impersonal fabric, Eisner’s (1979, p. 192) contention still applies that ‘doctoral programs socialize students to believe that the most dependable procedure one can use to obtain knowledge is through science and that respectable inquiry in education, at least respectable empirical inquiry, is scientific in character.’ Also, at large, the idea still reigns that the use of for example metaphor, analogy, simile, or other poetic devices, is seen as lacking rigor (ibid). Yet, as this research has been able to show (to a degree) thanks to the people who believed and actively supported this research, there is deep value in ‘poetic devices’ such as metaphor: it requires a ‘listening’ attitude and triggers ‘murky’ communication which open up a space to pose personal and moral questions.
b/ looking in the mirror of the landscape of the ‘other’

I had planned in the back of my mind to query research-participants on the significance of exploring the conditioned mind, and of bringing into dialogue its building-blocks such as judgments, evaluations, protests, intolerances, denials, assumptions, criticisms, attachments: building-blocks that we usually consider right or wrong and false or true, which is how they form ‘blind spots’ and ‘sticking sides’: a split in cross-cultural exchanges. I wanted to know if people had enough interest in understanding the difference between the ‘native being’ (Ormsby-Green, 2006) or ‘essence’ (Ouspensky, 1950) and the ‘man-machine’ (ibid) or identity-package (Ormsby-Green, 2006, p. 295): the second being a result of the first. I wanted to feel if there was a space in cross-cultural education open enough to explore those notions and allow people to perceive other worlds. Because, as Eisner (1979, p. 214) suggests, it is less important to know whether something is really true, than whether people are enabled to perceive phenomena in more complex and subtle ways, including forms of evaluation that produce stock responses and habitual ways of perceptual exploration (ibid, pp. 218-219). Each time we point out something (point the finger out to something) without realising that what we see is our state of mind at that point in time and projected/reflected in/to the external world, the sleeve of the raincoat ‘sticks’ tighter to the arm and with that the raincoat to the body. I have appended a filmic description to the DVD (titled ‘The Sleeve’) in which I theorise this idea and the associated diminished capacity to perceive phenomena in complex and subtle ways.

Interestingly, what I found was that I was only able to explore this concept of the ‘raincoat’ and the ‘sleeve’ with two people: Cl. and with Marg. Somehow, the space with others demanded the attention went elsewhere.

The talk with Marg went in the direction of learning to deal with judgments, and what life is like without those. It centred on feeling, sensing the landscape of those we educate but also of our colleagues and the wider school-community. She spoke about the school where she works which has ‘a rainbow of people: they are all very different, and students have an affinity with them in different ways. That person with that person, and another with another. And it is about learning to deal with all of them. Because life has all of those kinds of people.’

Marg said that for her the emphasis in educating is on non-verbal communication and the willingness to ‘move with’ people’s dynamics: something also In. talked about in a focus group later that week:

Marg: ‘I am there with them. Something like that. Moving with.

Jose: Oh, that’s great.

Marg: Also great that you want to listen to this. Because, well, I don’t know… I thought I was going to talk to some scientific tart…
Marg’s comment of the ‘scientific tart’ told me that she felt in the company of someone who somehow understood what it means to ‘move with’.

The analogy of the raincoat was never explored in specifics, however the conversation with Marg did move to a discussion in which the ‘building-blocks’ were discussed in the sense of ‘fantasies’ that people bring to the table. Effectively, she contextualised what currere implies in practice: a willingness to work with ‘fantasies’ whilst ‘moving with’ the flow within oneself and the flow of the other to bring about a mutually progressive flow:

*Marg: ‘Giving shape to the fantasy. Er, the things present as they do: just right. Not more or less beautiful. Uncensured… the tension-fields between light and dark… tension-fields between er… longing for… and hesitating… something like that… giving shape to the inner spirit. Experiencing the pleasure of it and reciprocate it… share their quality… their soul… authenticity… their gift… When you can offer this to the world, that is beautiful, don’t you think?*

Marg felt it is more important to work with resistance for example than with ‘being good’. She protested the new age movement which presumes that it is good to ‘be open’ and as such re/produces a ‘fixed’ landscape:

*Marg: It is as if there is an allergy to old, old principles. Like: you’re not an individual. Just like what happened with religions, new ideas are being sold as new rubber stamps to place on people … Like, I was sent away by my sister because she was afraid I would teach him violence. People interpret resistance, protest, protection… they interpret it wrongly, one-sidedly.*

*Jose: Yes, like in cross-cultural education, the accent seems to be on ‘smoothing out’; artificial peace… things have to be ‘amicable’…*

*Marg: Yes, but I also notice I am more mindful than I was before: more aware of… I am more mindful… I don’t enter the room anymore and say: “Okay, all the chairs to the side. But more something like: ‘Okay, what is needed here. For concentration also, and er, accoustics. And warmth. And freshness. To be able to move in the boundaries: to move from an optimal feeling of safety… an optimum condition to learn… so in which people are able to be themselves as they are now, whilst er… whilst remaining open to learn more… always mindful of feeling safe, because when feeling unsafe, people cramp up. And when they cramp up, they give more resistance, or judgments, or something like that…*
The conversation with Cl. did not specifically focus on the ‘sleeve’ either, but Cl. took more note of the different building-blocks which I had written on the sleeve (see image above) and she resonated specifically with the word ‘protest’. Later in the conversation, and as the film shows, she said it may be useful to introduce the concept of the raincoat and the ‘sleeve’.

Our conversation centred around the cross and moved broadly around notions of the conditioned mind, the association with time (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985), and the lack of sensitivity that prevails in contemporary cross-cultural education.

The following excerpt reflects the validity of talking ‘fuzzily’ and attending to feelings, and describes an incident in which one of Cl.’s students called someone a ‘gook’: something Cl. said she reacted strongly to, which is when I asked her to tell me what the sensation felt like in that instance:

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4 This is why I elected to append to the DVD a short film titled ‘the Sleeve’ in which I talk about these concepts. I filmed this explanation very early in the research-process (early 2006).
Cl.: I guess... it was like... reacting to an arrow... I have things that I recoil from... like this one man I know for example cannot talk about Eastern block anything, coz of the pain he feels then... we all suffer from pain. It is part of the human condition. It is no point of hitting ourselves for it... and say: Oh, my fault, my fault... we have been through experiences and have given us the impression of things... and I feel at times like in that second with him... intolerance of intolerance... what a nonsense... sometimes there is only half a heartbeat away between us and people cannot see the difference... that is an issue for me with power-unbalances... those beautiful people that are different from the majority that are ... limited, not by their potential but the forces of majority, the pressure of numbers... what is democracy? They are forced by the majority to conform... they don't value individual expression... there is stuff for me around that now... Is my role then to just accept... is this how it is... Is there a need to protect people that are less powerful... on the one hand I can logically explain that learning is delayed and needs to happen. But on an emotional level the world is poorer because of this... It is a bit messy for me... and that is OK... there is not much choice in the matter I think. For I believe in a flow, in the unfolding as an emergent property... I am not going to hang myself for that I am not understanding that... I am painfully aware of it but not ... it is all very messy...

Interesting was that Cl. appeared adamant to engage in collaborative and deep inquiry: her 'landscape' was broad and 'moving', as the following excerpt reveals. Note that Cl. was the only person who queried into my feelings associated with the cross:

Cl.: How does the cross make you feel body-wise?

Jose: It has shifted from abandonment and death to possibilities... immense possibilities by being willing to move through the centre of it... So rather than by moving away from it like in other cross-cultural theories... enter into that space... Enter into the space of friction... you have to focus on the cross... but like in Holland in they do not even talk about difference anymore even... they assume if you just ignore the cross as I see it, and call it intercultural, they negate difference... with the idea that if you just ignore and negate the thing it'll go away...

Cl.: Darwin brought up this thing of destruction and focused on the survival of the fittest... but without destruction it is like... why are they so scared of difference?

Jose: Coz they live in fear.

Cl.: Yes, uncertainty stuff... because society tends to downplay other senses that society does not want to talk about or makes fun out of, coz they are scared of these things... believing they cannot take in more... you know what I mean... and they think what they know is all what they can take in... last semester I talked about multiception... It is called the dichotomy of rational and irrational, and thank god there are some likeminded souls that know we are not as limited as we've been told we are... that is very sustaining... all the other things you were asking... your sixth question... about my way of perceiving the world... We have this deep-seated reaction, that
identification of difference equates survival... if you are different you are a threat, and I find also familiarity is absolutely key... when people repeatedly see each other over a period of time and are literally in each others’ presence and finding that; Haye, I saw you and nothing happened, and then saw you again and still nothing happened... so it is not as scary as they thought.

Jose: Makes me think of my friend’s idea around panic… she said we get an impulse, so OK we react because we’ve learned to react... knee-jerk react… again triggered by fear, which is my own kind of finding… and she said all we need to do when panic strikes is wait for 10 secs. And I sat with this idea once in the morning as I tend to sit with myself… and I felt this reaction and thought… just wait 10 secs… and then found truth is always only 10 seconds away. And I realised I am willing to wait…

Cl.: Wow, that’s great… I like that… truth is always only 10 secs. away… I have trouble with that… tend to get out of my body… am too jumpy… my mum says just roll around the tongue 10 times before you respond…

Jose: Wow. Look at that. There is always the option of understanding we always have that choice to either knee-jerk react or to be with it and wait for 10 secs…

Cl.: I like that. I guess I need to wait for 10 secs. to just sit in my body…

Jose: Well you might want to consider what your options are any moment you feel like reacting… and when the knee-jerk reaction arrives and you know you have options to go with the reaction or just sit with it first… Understand the resistance… and perhaps unpick it for a while… if you want…

Whilst it was easy with some people to talk about feelings and other ‘sensitive’ matters, many research-participants drew my attention to more ‘brain’ related matters such as methods in cross-cultural education, racial, organisational or political matters. Their ‘tone of voice’ was more ‘thinking’ focused and the dynamics were less ‘moving’. For example, in conversation with In., I was reminded of the talk I had with Cl. about the ‘ten seconds,’ and I felt the urge to bring this to the table. In’s response sketches a landscape that is somehow different in ‘tone’ to the landscape that was sketched in the conversation with Cl.:

In.: That counting till ten is a very Western approach, you know, because it is aimed at learning to control emotion in order to move on ‘correctly’; a very Western approach.

Jose: But my question is also, what is above or underneath that? Because, I see emotion as e/motion: a wavelength, something in the ether. I can be angry but it need not be my anger because I might be feeling something or someone else’s emotion, and one I am merely reflecting. I need not even project it, I found out. And the more we ‘see’ that the more we can control emotion, not control in the sense of ‘Oh I need to hang on to that’ but more like ‘oh, I feel something; a sensation. So I can just continue to do what I was doing. The same with relationships, though they are a bit more complex. Also because emotions are tied up in those.
And so it becomes more and more complex at a physical/mental level, but not the spiritual/physical/mental. In. And most people are primarily concerned with the physical and mental.

In.: Yes, procedures and relationships. I see in communication trainings how difficult it is to talk about what is happening in the here and now. People find it difficult to see and listen, or when someone places them ‘below’ or ‘on top’. And when you talk of communication, well, communication is a very limited vehicle.

Jose: You mean verbal...

In.: Yes, verbal communication. We do not take the time to ... I don’t think we take the time to... you were talking of making contact with your inner... communication from our core being huh?... I was talking to someone this week, which impressed me, during an intake. She had problems at work and wanted to be coached by me. I asked her a question and then she sat there quietly taking her time... beautiful to watch... you know, that she took the time. She was ... her inner... and then she started to talk. I loved watching that...

With the above excerpts I have tried to show that the researcher whose research-focus is experience-related and whose approach is transpersonal, projects/reflects the landscape of the researched. The teaching/learning of such a researcher, I believe, is the awareness of another type of ‘technique: one that observes the dynamics whilst ‘moving with’ a landscape that is always somewhat different in each situation. The teaching/learning is in the coming to terms with the brain’s, or the conditioned mind’s tendency to make (cultural/religious) bias ‘wrong’ or ‘right’. The following words describe this ‘technique’ well, and though they are written by someone who talks about the value of Shamatha-Vipashyana meditation, I see the same diligence is required for an enquiry that is both embodied and maieutic:

It’s important to be faithful to the technique. If you find that your labelling has a harsh, negative tone to it, as if you were saying, “Dammit!,” that you’re giving yourself a hard time, say it again and lighten up. It’s not like trying to down the thoughts as if they were clay pigeons. Instead, be gentle. Use the … technique as an opportunity to develop softness and compassion for yourself. Anything that comes up is okay… The point is, you can see it honestly and make friends with it… Although it is embarrassing and painful, it is very healing to stop hiding from yourself. It is healing to know all the ways that you’re sneaky, all the ways that you hide out, all the ways that you shut down, deny, close off, and criticize people, all your weird little ways. You can know all that with some sense of humor and kindness. By knowing yourself, you’re coming to know humanness altogether. We are all up against these things. We are all in this together.

A mindful though ‘murky’ or ‘blunt-rocking’ practice seems to make possible a kind of synthesis and opens up a landscape that surrounds both the researched and the researcher. Some landscapes appear to be more ‘fixed’ than others, but to adhere to a righteous attitude that categorises one landscape as better than another is a big mistake, for the learning is in the boundary where the movement occurs and where embodied and maieutic inquiry ensues.

5.8 Slipping communication and tinkering at the edges

At the University of Western Sydney, the Confirmation Of Candidature (COC) is a process that endorses work already accomplished and plans for successful completion of the doctoral degree. It is also about suggesting improvements as well as an opportunity to receive positive feedback on progress. The COC tests the proposal, research theme or question to be explored, intellectual context, research objectives and procedures within the framework of the expectations of the degree and the available time frame. The COC consists of a submission of a written document between 2000 and 10,000 words, a verbal presentation to an expert academic panel selected by the principal supervisor, and assessment, advice and any required follow-up or other action required by the panel or College Research Committee. During the COC-meeting, only the panel and the candidate attend, and the meeting is chaired by the College Associate Dean of Research, and takes one to one and a half hours. The format of the meeting is at the discretion of the Chair but usually the candidate gives an oral overview of the confirmation document for about 15 minutes, which is followed by a question and answer session where both the panel and the candidate can ask questions. The candidate may be asked to leave the room while the panel confers and gathers their thoughts. Feedback is given directly at the meeting, and the panel completes a report with the outcomes of the confirmation process.

For my Confirmation of Candidature presentation I had created a fifteen minute PowerPoint presentation, which I showed alongside a piece of music that seemed appropriate to it. I did not want to verbally account for it, because the compilation spoke its own language, I felt, and as a teacher/researcher in Expression & Communication any verbal input from my end would only diminish the intended effect on the ‘reader/viewer’ and lower the possibility of an emerging dialogue. At the end of the presentation the panel was clearly touched emotionally, which had been my intention to produce in the tradition of Mienzczakowski post-performance discussions.

Not yet had I realized the implications this would have for me as a student. I simply was not used (ignorant) to this ‘authority’ thing. I understood what it meant to ‘need approval’ from external authority. All I knew was that I wanted to present something in a way that felt in line with my ethics’ and work as a teacher/researcher in E&C, and from that standpoint the presentation had the desired effect: an exciting dialogue emerged among panel members from three different Schools. But as a student I almost lost my PhD candidature because my presentation did not ‘fit’
the criteria of a PhD. I was recommended to do a Doctorate of Creative Arts instead, which confused me. Philosophy and art for me are one and the same and both essentially intertwined in teaching/learning/researching practices. Furthermore, I felt doing a ‘purely’ theoretical PhD or ‘purely’ an ‘artistic’ DCA was inappropriate for my purposes. Then it was decided I do a hybrid PhD that enabled the ‘tracking’ of ‘the cross’ as a P.O.E.T. in research, and though this took me on a journey that was enormously inspiring, creative and productive, I also struggled deeply with a dilemma I both resisted and wanted to confront: one ‘strata’ in which I feel ‘at home’ and ‘merge’ with the aesthetic realm and associated love for movement, balance, colour, texture, light, smell etc., and another ‘strata’ in which I merge with the ‘nutting down’ process of rational thought and its corrodung character which produces a strain in my head. It left me confronted with an impasse and as such reflected the tension between the artistic and scientific, including ‘slow’ and linear (digital) communication as opposed to ‘fast’ and non-linear (analogue) communication. And only by ‘tinkering’ with data ranging from concepts to ‘personal’ insights and ‘cross-cultural experiences and bewilderments abroad’ (van Hook, 2005, p. 66) was I able to make sense of the data, even though I felt many times that I was missing the nail whilst hammering away.

The ‘hybrid’ nature of my research was especially difficult because I was dealing with forces not pertinent to the ‘fixed’ landscape that exists in and reproduces in institutional practices. For example, it was widely accepted at the School of Education that it is difficult to apply social ecology to the field of education in a neo-liberal climate, and certainly bringing it in such a way that it is understood in the ‘right’ context. My endeavour to ‘merge’ three fields that traditionally hardly communicate with each other (being not only those of (cross-cultural) education and social ecology, but also communication and the arts) was reflected in the three supervisors, none of who had complete insight into the rich academic idiosyncrasy of the other two fields. Of course, all fields are always changing which makes communication between them very difficult. But the quandary I experienced was the personal, but also the collective and systematic ways of organising, which left both the panel and myself in contentious territory. Luckily we all felt a desire to come to terms with those dynamics though all to different degrees, and produced dialogues I often wished I could reproduce for academe’s purposes and the multi-cultural community.

What remained was the overriding feeling of being involved in a spiralling process but unsure whether going upwards or downwards. I had no ‘measuring tool’ but the six ‘fuzzy’ criteria I had learned to apply in my work as a teacher in Expression & Communication: self-awareness, cooperation, coming from life-experience and -knowledge, equal validation, developing self and environment, and utilizing Expression & Communication media. Those criteria permitted me to negotiate bounded spaces and boundaries as a bricoleur, as I repeatedly went through the six stages as described by Moustakas (1990, p. 39): engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. Each cycle increased my awareness of the field at large and made me more capable to work with the dynamics in it, though there was no reference
point. Those six stages continue to evolve and give space to 'slipping communication' and 'tinkering at the edges'. For example, for conference presentations I continued to practice the habit of producing and showing PowerPoint presentations alongside an appropriate piece of music without additional verbal input. Increasingly I gained confidence in the value of this type of presentation, because each performance appeared to have the desired effect on the audience: They were stimulated and surprised at the intensity of the effect it had on them and the questions it inspired. I felt encouraged to discover that performing this way in academic contexts could have such a profound effect on the academic self that seems so divided from the experiential self (Bochner, 1997); the latter I personally felt most comfortable with.

Those presentations in turn had an effect on my academic work, becoming more and more confident that somehow I seemed to know where I was going, even though I could not always give name to the place. But the constant remained: there was a tension between feeling or intuiting – that which knew where the journey led to – and my own as well as participants' thinking that wanted to 'grasp' and communicate where we were going, which is when the communication did not 'grab into each other'. This tension also manifested when I tried to 'grasp' or analyse and as such pushed too hard into the contents of what was said in interviews; taking insufficient time to 'taste', reflect on, ponder and feel into the space of the interview I 'missed' the 'slipping communication' that in hindsight proved key to deeper understanding of what actually happened. It appeared crucial to 'stand back' and take time to let the unravelling undo itself in order to attune to research participants' felt experience:

From my diary, 4 December 2006:

*Interesting that Re. never entered into answering question 3, where I wanted her to tell me more about the dynamics. Did she first need to unravel polarisation (i.e. right/wrong) and as R. said the being “POLES APART”? What struck me most in this interview were her picture of the 2 intertwining rings, her triangle (triangulation as a learned way of looking) and her moving away from the concept of the rings and then telling me her story in terms of the triangle, with the dark angle far away from the known… It indicates to me she has not yet taken note of the idea of a ‘negotiated space’, which is therefore ‘dark’ to her and ‘far away’ (so remains to be ‘an unknown’).*

Long after the day I transcribed the interview with this research participant, and not until I carefully attended to (analysed) the dynamics in the interview, I understood the value of the interview: Re. had explored the space in-between (which she referred to as ‘the intermediary’) during our discussion, and felt delighted in doing this. Re. had a distinctly scientific background and she emphasized that scientists typically ‘hate’ to be the guinea-pigs in study, including her. But in this study she was very happy to be a guinea-pig:

*Re.: In our experiments, nobody wants to be a guinea-pig; the person whose blood pressure is measured… Like someone has to run around the block and I can’t be bothered. Huffing and*
puffing over some stupid experiment, and then I can read about it in a textbook… (laughter). This is the thing… I mean this is the funny part of science… Oh God… I mean you only learn through experiments. I guess I am a guinea-pig (laughter).

Jose: And so am I, you know… (laughter). Yeah…

Re.: And I’ll be your guinea-pig (laughter).

Jose: And it’s in the willingness to be a guinea-pig… that we can go somewhere isn’t it (laughs). At least, that is my idea.

Re.: Yes (laughs). I guess, you need… things happen for reasons, like at the end. I am so glad I’ve met you, because you, actually, you know the first two emails when you told me about percutivity and er… that cross-cultural link, you know, that was the exact word, and er… as I told you, I have not come across the er… these terms… coz science is not up into this… you know, coz honestly, when you study science in depth… I was thinking: That’s the word: That’s exactly what I am discussing and working on …’

5.9 Maieutic inquiry as a place of birth

Associated with bricolage and focusing on the metaphor cross as an intermediary, I discovered that it is possible to navigate boundaries and spaces and negotiate tailor-made and innovative approaches in and as cross-cultural education: bring about a moving landscape. From a cross-cultural perspective, it was interesting that the ancient symbol of the Vesica Pisces (see pictured below, but also the Hubble photograph in Chapter Two) kept emerging in interviews, which often prompted deep inquiry. The Vesica Pisces helped us, as it were, inhabit the space in-between: the space where the projection/reflection principle is enacted, or the ‘Schil’. This ‘vacant space’ at the centre of the Vesica Pisces is sometimes referred to as the ‘lens’ or the ‘womb’, which is interesting in the context of maieutic inquiry that seeks to give birth to new insights.
For example, the conversation with CI. had a profound effect on her, as she reveals in an email she sent me the next morning:

Hi Jose, I just woke up and something shifted!!!!!! My own words floated in my head...Difference, Deficit, Delusion. I looked at them... and realised... Difference? .... we are all different, unique, so where’s the drama there?....Gone! Deficit? .... we are all corporeal and therefore subject to our limitations ....Gone! Delusion? .... silly really, if there is no "truth" then my "truth" is as good as yours ....Gone! All that is left is what IS. I'm not sure if this understanding will float away again. I don't think so. It has the smell of transformation about it. THANK YOU! There is no such animal as underdog, victim or disability. Just whole and complete expressions of the dynamic. WOW !!!!!!!!!! There's a lot of nervous energy running through my body just now, I need to sit with this. There's no one to protect anymore. I just have to relate to others as expressions of the divine.... everything else follows. I think that I was living this without really understanding it... Living it in my relationship to others but not to myself. I feel nervous, perplexed. Why couldn't I give to myself what I gave to everyone else?.... Another chapter for another day.... today I'll celebrate. Thank you for sharing your insights with me yesterday. I think that WE have changed my life. Thank you. CI.

By focusing on the centre of the cross or the ‘womb’ led to unsuspected insights as the above email shows, which made me realize bricolage is a way of doing research that ‘fits’ not only my work as a holistically oriented cross-cultural educator, but also my ‘vocation’ as a teacher/researcher in Expression & Communication who seeks to stretch other ways of knowing, thinking and being as an educational researcher (Gergen & Gergen, 2003).
5.10 Conclusion

This chapter explored the cross as a tracking device and a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.); the entity between the researcher and the researched as aspect to bricolage (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). As such I not only contextualised the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, but also its applicability to both the exploration and reflection of dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges that can never be normalized, poured into concrete, nor ‘saved’. Indeed, bricolage proved to demand a flexible and reflexive practitioner’s approach that makes it all the more suited to a holistically oriented exploration and the navigating of unstable contexts and liminal spaces at ‘the edge of chaos’ and in interdisciplinary spaces. Though bricolage does not seek a final answer nor solution, it certainly raises more questions towards and provides a glimpse into a world that is ‘not-yet’ as a pedagogy of hope where intra- and interpersonal and glocalised dynamics reveal themselves in the ‘synthetic moment’ of a performative and evolving cross-cultural education.

In the following chapter I will talk about why and how I made the short film that forms part of this dissertation.
CHAPTER SIX: A FILMIC EXPERIENCE

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter contextualised the *process* of practice-based research and making use of bricolage in maieutic inquiry that made possible an understanding of and ability to work with dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges. These include apparent tensions between disciplines such as education, social ecology, communication and the arts. I suggested that bricolage is an appropriate and holistic way of tinkering with what is at hand and using a mixture of tools that is able to give a glimpse of what is *not-yet*. It is closely linked with ‘bush mechanics’ or *technacy*; ‘an ability to manipulate form in space [and] a three-dimensional expression in response to, [and] take[s] account of resource availability, cultural and social issues and a range of time and money issues that do not need a linear process of literacy followed by numeracy (Seemann, 2000, p. 6).

In this chapter I will talk specifically about the filmic production, which is made to trigger a rethinking of cross-cultural education both in theory and practice and another way of thinking and seeing (Morgan, 1997, p. 4). It will show that, and how I applied bricolage or ‘bush mechanics’ as an inexperienced film-maker who makes a plea for an ethical and informed practice of improvisation (Badham & Sense, 2006).

Similar to previous chapters that focused on the cross metaphor as a ‘temporary common language while we navigate between disciplines’ (McGregor, as cited in Tesson, 2006, p.89) and between thinking and feeling, the film focuses on this metaphor to shift established patterns of thought (ibid, p. 97), the significance of which is to ‘melt’ ‘certain’ cognitive skills that, as Dimitrov (1998) argues, ‘impose frozen patterns in the space of human thoughts and feelings.’ In Chapter Two I said these frozen patterns reduce ‘uncertain’ skills such as intuition and feeling – processes that engage the mind, spirit and body, and also processes that echoes for example Oceana-Pacific ways of navigating in resonance with cosmic forces, otherwise called ‘way-finding’ (Dening, 2008), and Aboriginal ontologies that lie ‘outside discourses of ‘race’; difference, enlightenment and progress [and] limitations of objectivist binaries, cultural racisms, patriarchy, regimes of othering, liberal contradictions and ambivalent plays’ (Harris and Christie, 1994, cited in McConaghy, 2000, p. 270). The film was made by bringing ‘uncertain’ skills into production and as such reflects a culture of Performative Social Science (PSS).

*I think you raise the challenge of how to be micro when macro. You resist it, but also seem to be doing it. There is something about the face-to-face interactions that are generally so much*
more fulfilling on an embodied/personal level. Yet, I also think that you underestimate the
creative potential in just seeing the short film you did about the experience. There are many
ways that viewers might expand or be influenced by your film than replicating a workshop
format. Perhaps they take one piece of it to their classroom, or explore new ways of relating to
a friend, etc.

Gergen & Jones, 2008, p. 8

6.2 Why a filmic product?

Life emerges in all sorts of patterns/numbers that for example the architect Alexander (1979)
emulates in buildings. I consider patterns/numbers such as the möbius strip, the ‘unknot’, the
helix and the donut – intuitively associated with the cross – as useful to represent cross-cultural
exchanges, because they reflect another side of language that is hard to put into words. At the
same time they need a language that is generally understood, which is the verbal and the audio-
visual world with associated attachment to reference frameworks; models or structures that
permit the seeing of pictures of the world, but also contain ‘blind spots’ that upon irritation may
open up but also close down deeper. So mindfulness is required from a novice film-maker and ‘bi-
focal’ systems thinker who sees ‘both the forest and the trees (one eye on each)… which has
both structural and behavioural implications. Structurally, systems thinkers see both the generic
and the specific - not just the latter! Behaviourally, they see both the pattern and the event - not
just the latter!’ (Richmond, 1994), and cross-cultural exchanges are seen as self-unfolding,
something Stoller, (as cited in Denton, 2005) refers to as ‘sensuous scholarship’ that aims to
narrow the gap between observer and the observed.

The study of complex dynamic systems has uncovered a fundamental flaw in the analytical
method. A complex system is not constituted merely by the sum of its components, but also
the intricate relationships between these components. In ‘cutting up’ a system, the analytical
method destroys what it seeks to understand.

Paul Cilliers, 1998, p. 2

The field of cross-cultural education can generically be seen as a massive kind of cross in that
people take on board a variety of perspectives, and no matter what the perspective, there is
always the number two involved (one and other). Associated with my visual/spatial perception of
the world and related pattern- or system thinking, with the number two I see a picture of a double-
loop ( oo ) or a helix ( 8 ); that is, opposition or an eternal flow and related dynamics in-between.
When an anomaly is injected into the field, the dynamic shifts and the double-loop or the helix
catapults into an electron-shell. When more anomalies are injected at a rate that gives the system
time and space to adjust, perfect multiplication ensues without imbalance or unease. But when
too many anomalies are injected at once and at a fast rate, the system cannot cope and begins to behave irately (crossly) and either explodes or implodes (collapses).

I sought to create an interwoven linear/non-linear account of the reflexive interviews I held with research participants; interviews not as a method of gathering information, but as a vehicle for producing performance texts and performance ethnographies about self and society (Denzin, 2001, p. 24). Viewing culture as a complex performative process, I wanted the account to be at once autoethnographic, vulnerable, performative, critical and facilitative to imagining a better world (ibid, p. 43); a way of bringing another language into play to become a felt experience in line with the post-experimental moment in which no discourse has a privileged place and no method or theory has a universal and general claim to authoritative knowledge (ibid, p. 25).

From my dream-diary, 6 March 2007

It’s about coming clean in communication with the other. This feminine principle has been refuted for too long now. The local priest has had too much influence on schools in this area.

I wanted to give voice to a group of holistically oriented cross-cultural educators (including myself) who refuse to either assume or simply reject ‘boxed’ thinking but search for an epistemology of practice that is implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which they bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict (Schon, 1983/1991, p. 49). Their approaches are coloured by theoretically sophisticated and socially aware ways of seeing, and as previous chapters showed, they bricoleur a continually unfolding sensitive and sensitising autoethnographic map of con/textual and inter/textual worlds: an ‘enaction of interconnection’ (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, pp. 66-67). They do this by relying on inner sources and tinkering at
the edges of existing structures with a mixture of resources to be able to survive whilst aware of, and in appreciation of current circumstances: a way of tinkering that sketches life in the midst of different theoretical perspectives without horizontally or vertically fixed horizons as a cross-dynamic with reciprocally interactive and expanding effects. Working on the film was a process of clarifying what I really wanted to show. Especially when I gave myself the task of making the film as short as possible, much like writing the thesis, this demanded that I asked myself the question: what and how do I want to present the research-findings?

In the process I found that though I wanted to create an experience towards the purpose of highlighting collectively produced and negotiated dimensions that are both personal and shared – otherwise called a soulful space (Todres, 2007, p. 162), I could but present a very abstract experience with fragmentary biographical elements that only hint at a world that is not ‘not-yet’ though trying to break through: a world that – in the words of one participant – is one where ‘the cross, in cross-culture, is something that comes through the heart.’

The treasure of the wound of longing is the taste of the beauty and poignancy of human participation; the essence of relationship, the ‘we-feeling’ in mutual vulnerability. Soulful space: to be a place where this can happen: not just ‘soulful’, merged in the cry; not just ‘space’, the presence of flow and impartiality. This ‘we-feeling’ in mutual vulnerability may finally be the place that grounds more humanised forms of institutions and cultures, an existential achievement that would remember and take heed of Narcissus in his different forms.

Todres, 2007, p. 163

I believe I was able to reflect my thesis of cross-cultural education as a creative act, with dynamics that represent holistically oriented educators’ search to come to terms with their fractal ‘nature’ as different to what ‘boxed’ technical rationality would like us to believe. I also believe I have been able to reflect a Performative Social Science; a science that in the words of a research participant and herself a film-maker implies a:

not knowing; a wondering and feeling that there is something that is bigger than the self and is part of the not-scientific because it perhaps belongs to the realm of mysticism, which deserves its own place and space. Knowing is research and investigation of the potential and possible, the coming closer to, but also the remaining open for new possibilities and viewpoints. Science is always related to knowing something through experience or unexpected moments or givens, so knowing absolutely and in the absolute knowing nothing at all, being totally unknowing. It is a space of a strange friction: I know and at the same time I don’t know.

Capra (1982, p. 320) writes that our interactions with our environment are a continual interplay and mutual influence between the outer and our inner world, with patterns we perceive around us.

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mirroring our inner patterns where matter mirrors mind coloured by subjective feelings and values. Sensory perception begins at the 'gates of perception', and in the process of perception, Capra (ibid, p. 329) continues, rhythm plays an important role.

Sensory perceptions including rhythms, patterns and colour reflect dynamics that cannot be captured in words. Words are too ‘bitsy’ (as part of the fragmented mind) to describe them. A ‘moving’ medium such as film is more suitable to reflect those and inspire dialogue: something – as suggested in Chapter Two – which, as Bohm, Factor and Garrett (1991) proposed, implies ‘a kind of collective inquiry not only into the content of what each of us say, think and feel but also into the underlying motivations, assumptions and beliefs that lead us to do so’; in other words, an evolving ‘discrete infinity’ as so much more than speech (Corballis, 2006) with the acting body as a crucial element in the transfer and translation of ideas. I suggested contemporary cross-cultural education contextualises, promotes and shapes the widespread assumption of fixed positions and associated fixed ways of perceiving the world, and as such inhibits dialogue and deep inquiry, which perpetuates hostility. This inhibits ‘safe and neutral schooling’ for example for Aboriginal students.

The power of art and especially film lies in its capacity to express and communicate both linear and non-linear dimensions with its ability to stimulate sensory perception and simultaneously touch feeling and thinking. So it works like a double-edged sword that to a degree helps educators and their students think outside the box and challenge both ethical values and fixed positive notions of an unchanging and essential body of knowledge (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003, pp. x-xi). But also educational researchers can profit from artistic practice, I suggest, because as I found in using a hybrid approach in the research process, confronting the tension between fragmented thinking and feeling makes visible aesthetic relationships as aspect to wholesome life ecology; a tension that I explored in a process of maieutic inquiry and resolved to a degree by contextualising the cross in cross-cultural education.

To understand and work with this tension as a thinking/feeling dialectic, I used a Creative Diary (Janesick, 2004) in which I drew my feelings and depicted my conceptual thinking. On the DVD is appended a 45 minute slideshow that gives an impression of the seven (7) books out of which this creative Diary consists. The purpose of this impression to give the reader/viewer a vague sense of the space in which I engaged for about one year in order to unravel the cross: a ‘fuzzy’ space in which insights would simply ‘come in’. I would ‘see’ how knowledge evolved over time, how ancient peoples defended themselves, and so on. There was no logic involved in this space, and the reader/viewer is asked to not engage with the critical mind when looking at this slideshow, but to attune into my intent at the time – though not consciously: to understand and work with the thinking/feeling dialectic; an engagement in a liminal space to attune more deeply to and sense the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges; dynamics I came to see as apparent static entities but actually only snapshots within an evolutionary continuum (Dimitrov, 1997).
The DVD as a whole, then, is like an audio-visual text which addresses ontological questions (concerning issues of being) and taps into the libidinal energy of human beings (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003, p. 11) to which I referred in Chapter Four, stimulated by the research question: how does a sample of holistically oriented educators understand and work with complex dynamics as they teach and learn across cultures? Subsidiary questions that help to clarify the problem were: 1/ How do cross-cultural educators approach the crux of the matter, where the split or the divide, or in terms of chaos theory bifurcation, is experienced? 2/ How is the split contextualised as a web and the dynamics that support it? 3/ How might wholesome life ecology re-energise understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics in a cross-cultural context?

The questions have been addressed in other chapters, mostly in reference to the split and the struggle which the conditioned mind creates and it structures or contextualises in time (Krishnamurti & Bohm, 1985). But the film responds to the questions in a felt sense, and as a ‘soul space’. In it, I believe, I was able to represent research-participants’ efforts to re-energise understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics in cross-cultural contexts. The general theme is on the flow that is beyond and behind the conditioned mind: the flow that is not part of time.

I found embodied research – which this research was – to be a lived experience that stimulated dialogue with others as well as with my own personal selves, and this experience I believe is reflected in the film. It points to freedom as a space of ‘being more than’ and an important narrative opening into a dynamic paradigm that is of equal importance for qualitative research and the arts of life (Todres, 2008); a space of ‘maieutic silence’ in which it is possible to study the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions and foundations, and its extent and validity.
6.3 Why an autoethnographic account?

The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk\(^1\) suggests ‘that we are never in fact naked in totality in a physical or biological environment of some kind, but are ourselves space-creating beings. We cannot exist otherwise than in these self-animated places.’ I am immediately reminded of a short movie-cartoon I used to love as a child, called LaLinea\(^2\). Here, the artist drew out a one line story of a figure in a landscape whilst the story-line literally told the artist what to draw to continue and complete the story; the artist and his product were separate yet one and the same, interactive, self-referential and space-creating; a process I refer to as *eventuality* which Dutch artist Escher represented as follows:

![Image of Escher's 'Drawing Hands'](image)

I saw ‘eventuality’ unfold in the ways in which research participants and I ‘drew’ a story-line that could not be retold in any other way than by autoethnographic film as an event in what Russell (2005) and Ormsby-Green (2006, p. 344) call a Space/Time/Energy/Matter (STEM)-universe, which implies the *Physical Universe* as a material composition of our environment including intergalactic space (Ormsby-Green, 2006, p. 318).

Through this *physical* universe – including intergalactic space – we learn our lessons. But it also arouses our curiosity and inspires us aesthetically; something that applies to both artistic and scientific practice (Taylor, as cited by Jones, 2005). The physical universe arouses our senses

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\(^1\) The reader is suggested to visit the homepage of German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk: [www.petersloterdijk.net](http://www.petersloterdijk.net)

\(^2\) For some examples, visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZBZCBAh7c&feature=iv&annotation_id=event_672625
and creativity that has the ‘uncanny ability to work within rule boundaries while, at the same time, changing them’ (ibid). But the physical universe also demands an ethical involvement – both in artistic and scientific practice – related to the question how much manipulation and intervention is desirable. Filmmaking confronted me with this very question. As a result of my focus in research on dynamics and not static phenomena in cross-cultural exchanges, I could not limit my approach in processing the data to the written word. Those dynamics between self and other as a dialogic creative space, (O’Neill, 2008) but also the dynamics between feeling (intuiting, or that which ‘knows’) and thinking (that which tries to ‘grasp’) are fractal to a much larger dynamic that Performative Social Science seeks to transform by combining autoethnographic narratives with artistic representations (O’Neill, 2008).

I wanted to push the personal narrative as part of the human, existential struggle to move life forward (Bochner, 2003, p. 221) a bit further in an attempt to use evocative narrative to help a move beyond the personal. The emphasis was now on the research process not as a personal journey but as a collectively produced and negotiated narrative, which is why the voice I produced in the film was doubly subjective; doubly in the sense that I mixed the voice of the research participants in with my own.

The film is also autoethnographic for it represents the maieutic (pertaining to midwifery) quality of listening in, of attendance as a primary attitude that can provide the basis for the birth of thinking (Fiumara, 1990, p. 149). With as title “The OTHER Side of Language in X-Cultural Education: Unravelling the CROSS’, the film focuses on the act of attending to aspects of interior worlds which have not been, and still are not, permitted to rise to the level of adequate expression because subjected to ‘not listening’ (ibid, p. 145) in mainstream society; feelings and thoughts never listened to and not capable of giving an answer to the innumerable tensions that are created in a bipersonal field (ibid, p. 145) that is fractal to a bicultural group mind.

With the focus on the divided self – the academic and experiential or personal self (Bochner, 1997)— I wanted to make visible the core finding in this research: the thinking/feeling gap and associated struggles with analysis/synthesis and linear/non-linear accounts. This gap in-between subjective and objective ‘reality’ is both the ‘potential space’ and the ‘safe space’ where artistic media enable the negotiation of boundaries in the quest towards self-realisation whilst strengthening body, mind and spirit (Janesick, 2004, p. 14). While much of the discourse of this work retains this goal of self-realisation as an implicit value, the engagement with the topic should not be exhausted by it or the specific concerns of this practice would be swamped.

But since this thesis focuses on the hybrid space with transformative possibilities that may feed into cultural politics and praxis (O’Neill, 2008), I sought to stimulate a safe space for dialogue as a form of public reflexivity (Schneider, 2008). In line with Mienzcakowski’s post-performance discussions (Denzin, 2003, p. 82), such dialogue can give viewers back their control over
producing meanings of their own experiences to explore the divided self. The significance of this exploration relates to a friend and also teacher in E&C and film-maker, Fred Geerling, who said not long ago:

*Home is the space where the crow flies and the space among the trees. Most creative people, including creative and visionary teachers, do what their boss wants. They are busy creating the conditions to do what they like to do sometime in the future. These people are not engaged in the present, and do their own little projects on the side, unpaid.*

I felt it was important to irritate this concept of ‘being busy to create conditions for the future’ and as such lose a sense of ‘home’. Paradoxically, I wanted to produce an audio-visual account that reaches into and irritates the *engineering culture* that hopes to prepare society for technologies in ignorance of for example Bohm’s (1996) warning that ‘the more computers, radio and TV we have, the faster the virus in thought (fragmented thinking) pervades us and spreads… each and everyone of us nourishing that virus’ (p. 58). This so-called ‘memetic engineering’ culture converges biology, information systems and the development of biotechnology and permits manipulation of living beings. Here, sets of concepts are connected by ‘meaningful’ relationships including scientific typologies and ontologies (Bainbridge, as cited in Ferrari, 2008).

*The sad truth is that the academic self frequently is cut off from the ordinary, experiential self. A life of theory can remove one from experience, make one feel unconnected. All of us inhabit multiple worlds. When we live in the world of theory, we usually assume that we are inhabiting an objective world. There, in an objective world, we are expected to play the role of spectator. It is a hard world for a human being to feel comfortable in, so we try to get rid of the distinctly human characteristics that distort the mythological beauty of objectivity. We are taught to master methods that exclude the capriciousness of immediate experience. When we do, we find ourselves in a world devoid of spirituality, emotion, and poetry—a scientific world in which, as Galileo insisted, there is no place for human feelings, motives, or consciousness.*

Bochner, 1997, pp. 421-422

Reader (2008, p. 302) writes that ‘a transcendent truth would allow anyone, especially painters, to contest any interpretation of reality, but in fact the reverse happens and only powerfully sanctioned ‘truths’ hold sway; an episteme in which we are collectively encapsulated and which sanctions limited insight into alternatives.’ To counteract this machine-culture, I felt it was appropriate to produce an autoethnographic account of cross-cultural education as a Performative Social Science (PSS). This means a space in which imagination is communicated as knowledge of the world, contextualised in the dialogic communication-act that is co-constructed at once between senders, receivers and the field (Crouch, 2007). In other words, I wanted to make use of the viewer’s capacity to connect the dots; something Hollywood movies generally don’t do.
The film means to form a political mediation instrument in a three-way dialectic, and as it were command both the viewer and myself as filmmakers, viewers and directors at once who do not necessarily intellectually engage with each other but certainly do in feeling. When not combined with feeling, we separate ourselves from whatever is within the whole (Senge, in Bohm, 1996, p. xiii). In the previous chapters I referred in different ways to cross-cultural education as something under ‘a mysterious flow of influence’ otherwise called a ‘morphic field’ (Sheldrake, 1987) that has its own ‘morphic resonance’. Ormsby-Green (2006) calls this ‘mysterious influence’ a ‘group mind’, and Kuhn (1970) refers to it as a ‘paradigm’ that is not just a conceptual way of looking at things, but a shared consensual view of reality upon which a professional group (of scientists or educators for example) depends. It has its own rules, regulations, rituals, type of discourse, methods etc. that its members accord to; the group mind cannot be sustained unless with the members’ (usually unconscious) common agreement or ‘morphic resonance’.

What fascinates me is how shifts and changes occur simultaneously, often globally, within and across various disciplines. I am convinced that it is when one discipline is "talking" to another that these shifts begin. Sometimes, collaborating across disciplines also comes into play. One shift in higher education in recent years has been an engagement in postgraduate study by older, more seasoned students. This often means that these students bring with them life and work experience from outside the confines of the particular academic discipline of their current study. These postgrad students can not necessarily be led down one linear academic path and are more willing to engage with thinking "across disciplines" and bring to their efforts experiences from outside the walls of Academia. Those particularly attracted to PSS in higher education include people with backgrounds and experience from the media, as painters, musicians, etc., who are now engaged under the wide umbrella of Social Science scholarship in some way. These are the initial pioneers of PSS who bring both the utility of their arts-based backgrounds and creative problem solving skills to their academic pursuits. These are the same people who saw standard PowerPoint presentations and said, "Hey! We can do this better!"

Gergen & Jones, 2008, p. 7

From my diary, 12 September 2007:

I have decided to take the conversations I had with people as the core focus, but not as a form of conversation-analysis and not as a ‘mere’ aesthetic product only with ‘pretty’ pictures. MY FOCUS is on their way of working with and therefore understanding dynamics in relation to paradigm thinking (and) show that ‘holding space’ (attending/maieutic silence) can set up a safe space that people can freely step into and out of; where no judgments are placed on what they say or do, but where their expressions are free to exist on their own accord, and where as a result the dynamics can ‘bounce’ back on the people themselves so they can look at and into the
environment which they themselves produced. BUT I must not hold any expectations that people WILL reflect.

So I constructed a non-linear narrative of the reflexive performative self as a felt experience of a shared materiality. I intuitively chose clips from interviews with research participants, and juxtaposed those with a personal monologue and with shots from different landscapes in which I lived at the time. The personal monologue may be considered problematic by some viewers, but I felt it was necessary to include ‘my’ voice to emphasise the shared subjectivity: a subjectivity that as I argued throughout this dissertation is never isolated because aspect to group mind.

From my diary, 20 November 2007:

It seems so common in academia to think that what we feel is something personal and not a collective experience; something projected and reflected by individuals as a group. That makes me think of Delamont’s (2007) concern that autoethnographic accounts are personal accounts about personal anguish, which I feel is a gross generalization and almost belittling of the degree of self-awareness autoethnographic accounts express and communicate, from understanding of and willingness to work holistically, because with ‘how individual accounts of life experience can be understood within the contemporary cultural and structural settings, thereby helping to chart the major societal changes that are underway, but not merely at some broad social level’ (Roberts, 2002, p. 5). It makes me realize there is much work to be done in this area; much to explore about what viewers of an audio-visual presentation do with what is presented to them, and the consequences thereof.

I was careful to accentuate both ‘doingsness’ (performativity) and the done (performance) as a performance of cultural politics in which we, as auto-ethnographer performers insert our experiences (Denzin, 2003, p. 2) and in which we are responsible for the effects they produce. The end product then shows a tension between doingness as expressed in the activity of talk, of being silent, of self-expression now, and the done that is localized in the current context. Autoethnographic narratives, as Ellis & Bochner (2003, p. 221) suggest, do not need to reflect past experiences correctly. More important is what the narratives do, what consequences they have and to what uses they can be put (ibid). I wanted to produce a felt experience of bricolage as a:

theory of communication… subscribed to here as one that depends on relative difference rather than on the ideal of sameness through “effective”, “skilful” or “smooth” communication. It attends to the means of communication (the media) and the ways in which they represent different positions, types of people and knowledges. Without reducing everything to individual interpretations, or conversely, giving credence to an overarching general theory, it examines what sorts of readings are available, circulating at a given time … in the social arena, which is where they must be.
In line with my thesis, I did not want to produce a rational product of ‘omniscience’ but something ‘participatory’ and observational in style; something I found powerfully presented in the MacDougalls’ 1984 film ‘Collum calling Canberra’. I want to reproduce a ‘space-creating’ event in which the essence of the film would emerge in the space in-between and the ‘meanwhile’. This meant that I had to surrender to the flow of my intuition; a way of working with what Van Hoorn (2007, p. 52) refers to as the existence of emptiness away from the inclination to fill it in with mental chatter. The product ended up to be not a final report on data analysis but a ‘numinal or core experience’ (Alma, 2007) that is always subjectively and discursively felt.

I believe I was able to make a product that gives a felt experience both by adding my own voice to the dialogue and by attending to my awareness whilst I watched 30 film tapes of research and related data collected. It did not matter what my response was, but if the response to a piece of information was strong either normatively or aesthetically, I copied and pasted the clip into the software (Final Cut Pro 4). From that collection I compiled a two hour production which I later reduced to a one hour version and then a selection of 12 to 25 minute versions out of which I created the current version.

From my diary, 2 October 2008:

Katie, the film-maker, just watched my (almost) final cut film and was impressed. Which both surprised and delighted me. She said ‘I know that you don’t want me to comment on the technical side of the film because you are not a film-maker because you’ve had no training as such, but I love how you managed to weave together the story-line and the ‘bad’ sound. I don’t know if you did that on purpose or by accident, but I thought it worked really well.’ I said, ‘I am pleased to hear that, coz the sound was a real problem in filming. At the same time, I just don’t believe in mistakes. I believe (as a bricoleur, artist and teacher) that whatever comes along is what it is, and that it comes along for a reason I may not know of yet. I’ve often found in life that things happen and I might not like them, but in the end they prove to be just the things I needed to make things work now. So I’ve learned to just work with, as Johnson (1966) said, ‘the grain of those elements I cannot control’ (p. 14).

I do not mean to discredit artistic activities that witness craft, skill, training and long experience, but as an inexperienced film-maker I could but surrender to the uncontrollable.

6.4 Why experimental film

The world has long been conceptualised as fragmented, and both scientists and artists have either protected or protested the body/mind split, and for example Picasso and Braque and associated surrealist works such as that of Bunuel protested this split. But consciously and unconsciously our worldview has been altered by quantum physics and the influence of for
example Buddhist and yogenic teachings. So reality is no longer seen as fixed but as dynamic. This change in viewpoint has implications for science and also cross-cultural education now seen as an ‘entity’ defined by Dimitrov (1997) as:

*a holistic web of interconnected (interrelated, interdependent) interacting agents functioning as a whole and distinguishable from its surrounding by recognizable and permeable boundaries. There are many varieties of entities in respect to dynamic interactions of the involved agents: on the one hand the interactions between the agents may be fixed (e.g. an engine), at the other extreme, the interactions may be unconstrained (e.g. a gas). The function depends upon the nature and arrangement of the agents and usually changes if agents are added, removed or rearranged. The entity has properties that are emergent, if they are not intrinsically found within any of the agents, and therefore exist only at some higher level of description.*

I wanted to represent this other viewpoint on cross-cultural education as an ‘entity’ which to me, as a film-maker, meant that I also negociated the boundaries of the ‘hygiene-machine’ mentality that insists on perfection and resists anything that threatens itself and why laughter, desire, conflict and ethics are not ‘wanted’ (Ten Bos & Kaulingfreks, 2005, 2001).

From my diary, 20 November 2007:

*Geez, some of the footage is really really ugly…. i.e. some of the conversation between Ro. and Mar…. but well, should I embellish those? I think not…. why cannot we have ‘ugly’ things in life??? Addicted to prettiness??? I like to challenge that… as well as that I like to show things as they are naturally… not using extra light etc. etc. (I have no professional background in filming…. I am only an amateur and do not need to professionalise in filming… the same friction as we used to have at the AVEK, where we argued we did/do not make products for ‘pretty’, but to ‘confront’ paradigms because focused on Personal Development. Hmmm, I also like the different colours and tones of voice the film brings to the table…. people’s personal voices and their contexts…. some very argumentative/aggressive and some much softer/ open…. The difference in ‘righteousness’…*

A recent study showed that in the United Kingdom, people attend to the arts because they want to see something beautiful, want to be entertained or inspired, and to feel enriched in their lives (Keaney, 2008, p. 107). As I argued elsewhere in this dissertation, my research interest was not on entertainment to support the ‘attention economy’. To the contrary, I wanted to emphasise that ‘bad’ mistakes do not exist provided we have faith in the process of development itself; an important attitude that particularly applies to bricoleurs. As an experimental film-maker, I wanted to challenge viewers’ expectations of ‘perfect’ perception, and with that the entire ‘reign of logic’ (Francis, 2008, p. 83) that dominates contemporary cross-cultural education with its ‘nested truths’ (Gablik & Volckmann, 2007, p. 263). In other chapters I theorized those mechanistic ways, but in the filmic product I wanted to challenge the viewer’s capacity and willingness to take charge
and challenge his/her sensations and capacity to observe his/her reactions to what is placed in front of him/her.

In Chapter Five I suggested the core ‘blind spot’ that divides and solidifies boundaries is the Western thought that ‘cheating’ is ‘wrong’ because (culturally/religiously/organisationally) associated with deviance, instability and chaos. I talked about how I struggled with this concept and that I sensed there was something inappropriate and dogmatic about it. I said I repeatedly wanted to brush this irking concept off and cut it out of the overall analysis/synthesis since it seemed so unrelated to the rest. Especially in the editing process of making the film I felt torn between cutting out the sequence in which ‘cheating’ is discussed and leaving it in, and I decided to leave it in when I realized the significance of this element (as aspect to the monkey-mind, the ‘not-Self’ that seeks to distract and decoy the Self, and as such constructs and reinforces ‘boxed thinking’ away from Self-realisation). Though the concept of cheating is only briefly highlighted in the film as if something that is abhorred in Western (masculine) cultures and underpins the practice of Teaching English as a Second Language in Chinese cultures, I believe ‘cheating’ is a deeply embedded practice but brushed off in Western thinking, influenced by religious ideas and the quest for stability of identity. I wanted to emphasise that what we fear most and makes us feel uncomfortable we push out of sight, yet right there is often where the learning lies. Furthermore, that which is pushed aside does not go away. As Carl Jung pointed out, like the hound it keeps howling from the depth and thereby influences all that we do whilst we pretend all still is normal, caught in the excitement of having shiny new things (James, 2008).

A shift in ‘paradigm’ needs the consensus of its members, which can clearly only be achieved on an individual and not a group basis. But consensus can be built up only bit by bit and with courage because strong resistance from conservative forces is met along the way (Wheatley, 2005); something that applies to both the fields of science and the world of art (Kuhn, 1970; Sheldrake, 1987; Gablik, 1995; Crouch, 2007). A shift from mental consciousness that excludes, towards integral consciousness that includes the archaic, magic (mystic), mythic and mental realms, thus becoming integral, is enhanced by experientially understanding the effects of ‘cultural ritual’ on the human psyche (Ormsby-Green, 2006, pp. 155-158). Cultural rituals associated with mental consciousness restrain archaic, mystic and mythic beliefs; a result of its mechanistic resonance that predominated in the past few centuries and happens to be a linear, perspectival rational/mental mode on which we pride ourselves; a mode now heavily contested by people across disciplines who seek an “aperspectival” no-longer-just-rationally-piecemeal way of being (Burneko 1997, p. 82).

The confrontation I faced and which prompted me to make an experimental film was the question: how can I create an evocative narrative that is not only provocative but also ‘tickles’ the willingness to enter into dialogue. This willingness is what Dimitrov (2005) refers to as the ‘inner power that together with our infinite potential creates and realizes ourselves in innumerable
activities’ (p. 35). In this willingness can open up the whenua (Maori term for the spirit or quality of country) and the spirit of its peoples embedded in different ‘realms’ of consciousness including the archaic, the mythic, the mystic and the mental.

Image 32: From my Creative Diary: Personal perception of different dimensions

I did not want to produce a linear account that left the viewer passive, by which I do not mean to imply that the viewer is a passive consumer. But I do contest the way in which ‘non arthouse’ films seem to assume this to be the case, which justifies the production of ‘non thinking’ movies.

To confront complacency, I felt the film needed to be somewhat surrealist to flush out the eyes in terms of accepted frameworks of perception, but unlike surrealist films I wanted to respect people’s (and my own) personal space by confronting my own complacency, and as such enact an activist philosophy to unsettle what is considered real (Francis, 2008). In other words, I did not want to slash the complacent eye; an effect for example Bunuel tried to achieve (ibid), for example in his film ‘Un chien Andalou’: Land without bread.

Not only am I not a believer in an aggressive type of art, but I am also aware of the fact that many viewers watch a film to escape or get another perspective on life. My intention was and still is not to ‘charge’ a viewer in a way that diminishes the capacity to stay focused.

In this film I wanted to accentuate what research participants repeatedly expressed in roundabout ways: that viewpoints can co-exist, next to each other, in juxtaposition, but mindfulness is required to be able to accept that. I wanted to challenge the perceived need to ‘grasp’ what is difficult if not impossible: ‘slippery communication’ as well as the automatic ‘giving in’ to the compulsion to ‘make sense’ and ‘force’ into one mould what is not intellectually understandable. I wanted to ‘rub up’ against paradigms and their ‘web-building codes’ (Koestler, 1975, p. 39) and art can help realize change and humanity’s evolvement by nudging the ‘reign of logic’ and its ‘nested truths’ (Gablik, 1995; Volckmann, 2007; Gidley, 2007). The power of art is in its capacity
to inspire, offend, enrage and transform political, economic, religious, educational and artistic institutions because images cannot be separated from individual and social identities and their quest for stability of identity (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 2-3). And my brief introduction to the world of filmmaking taught me that especially experimental films reflect that power.

In line with experimental films I did not want to produce a linear and wide-ranging account that in a sense dissolves the tension between thinking and feeling, but unlike them I wanted to emphasise a safe ambience for the viewer to be able to self-reflect. For me it was more important to both find and represent a ‘middle way’ in-between the spoken and the unspoken word: the space that reverberates the space ‘in-between’ and the ‘meanwhile’; a non-linear account but an account of sorts nevertheless: much like Maya Deren, I sought not just a horizontal but also a vertical narrative line as well as a depth of it, almost like a cross-section (Brakhage, 1989, p. 110). I wanted to allude to the world of artists such as Chagall, Mondrian, Kandinsky and the group called ‘Der Blaue Reiter’ with painters such as Marc and Macke. I wanted to communicate a sense of the synaesthetic ideal, away from ‘machine-thinking’ that both produces and reinforces ‘boxed thinking’. This ideal entails the application of both reasoning and aesthetics towards ends of which we are uncertain.

6.5 How I constructed a experimental film

Before field-research had started and upon the recommendation of a PhD-supervisor who is also a film-maker, I made use of a handbook written by Barbash & Taylor (1997, pp. 276-483) to make a very crude initial ‘treatment’ for the film and a few very limited and broadly sketched story-boards. Doing this in itself was difficult. It felt as if I was reading a handbook on how to write a book whilst I was only capable of drawing pictures and was yet to learn how to write, whilst expected to write a book on an event that was yet to take place. Furthermore, video- let alone filmmaking was simply not part of my world, also because I had never been able to invest money in an expensive article such as a video-camera. So I had barely any reference points in a technical sense. But as an ex-painter and semi-artistic photographer (who knows very little about the technical side of photography but loves experimenting with a very simple photo-camera) I knew very well what kind of visual images I like to make: for example, I prefer ‘blurry’ to ‘crisp’ images, and I love the art of ‘pulling out’ light and colour-schemes in nature or in texture-rich carpentered landscapes such as on the Greek Islands or in South-East France (Collioure, for example). I also very much like ‘silent’ if not translucent images, and all of these preferences have somehow appeared to correspond with the ‘other’ way of focusing as discussed in previous chapters.

In terms of sound, I prefer an absence of artificial sounds, especially when visuals speak powerfully for themselves, and here I concur with Brakhage (1989) who criticises films that add
music or sound ‘for kicks and nothing else’ (p. 43). For that reason, I love watching short films that are more of a piece of visual art rather than a story.

I wrote in the treatment: ‘The different images and sounds will partly consist of my own private work, and partly of the work in interaction with the participants.’ My intention, as I said to participants, was to include parts of their footage as a show of their point of view, their way of seeing, and as such produce a ‘dialogic space’ in which the self and other meet in the ‘safe space’ of a filmic experience that helps foster cohesions/better community relations (O’Neill, 2008). I also had in the back of my mind (everything was so new, I had no context to refer to) that I wanted to express and communicate firstly, how holistically oriented cross-cultural educators deal with the making and living of place on different levels: how we make place ourselves, secondly how we collaboratively make place including in research-practice, thirdly how a representation of research can reconstitute that place, and fourthly how audiences/readers of our work turn create place: ‘exploring a visual ethnography in and of movement’ (Pink, 2008). As it was, this did not happen, because participants did not use the camera as I had expected they would. I did invite participants on different occasions, but only a few took up on the invitation.

I had images of somehow weaving the four central symbols (the circle, the center, the cross and the square/triangle) into the film, but also this did not happen: I simply ‘forgot’ this idea.

I wrote that I somehow wanted to build the notion of stillness, silence into the film. Silence, as part of attention, turned out to be such a crucial part to the research that, I believe, I was able to represent it.

I also wrote in the treatment that ‘my voice was to be reflexive: I as the interviewer am always visibly or audibly present in the film (Barbash & Taylor, 1997) and interviews and focus-groups were to be informal and intimate. Both these elements I believe to have successfully built into the film.

Further, I wrote in the treatment:

From my ‘Treatment Plan, 28 September, 2006:

Filming Interviews: Questions will be sent to the interviewee well ahead of time. The first hour of the interview will be audiotaped, and the second hour of the interview will be videotaped. The idea is that the questions will be more tailored to the participant then, and the second ‘cut’ allows for a deeper cut into the matter already discussed. The background of the take is selected and organized in a way that is seen as suitable by both the interviewee and myself. The camera will stand on a tripod initially and at the end of the interview, so there is a demand to focus at the start and at the end. But as soon as the ‘body’ of the interview embodies the space (and I have the urge to move the camera about in my hand), I will follow that urge so the situation is captured to suit the ‘climate’ in the room.
Filming Focus Groups:

The video will roll continuously, initially on a tripod, and in a ‘blurry’ mode. I will use the camera in hand and switch to crisp images when people draw or sculpt concepts of ‘the cross’. The sound is continuously turned on. The idea is to get multiple viewpoints/ perspectives on participating in cross-cultural exchanges, both in a verbal and a visual sense.

As it turned out, I did none of these things. During the interviews and focus groups, I noticed that out of respect for the space, I preferred to feel into the situation first, and only when it felt appropriate to start using the camera, I asked if participants had objections to my filming. Whilst many participants said they had no problem with being taped on film, two people were adamant they wanted the interview audio-taped only.

When I used the camera, I simply experimented with it and as such made both deliberate and accidental mistakes.

I filmed most one-on-one interviews with a hand-held camera, but I frequently put it down to be able to focus in on the conversation and not be distracted by the feeling of delight I experienced when filming with a low shutter-speed. In focus groups, I placed the camera on a table or the tripod, whatever seemed appropriate to the situation. One focus group was even filmed by a research-participant’s partner who was present in her support (and the participants did not mind) and who liked making videos.

I discovered during the process of filming, that using the camera as a form of creating visual art made me feel ‘at home’ with myself. I filmed that which, as it were, ‘called out’ to me, asking for it to be filmed. In other words, I felt like I was the medium between the world I embodied at the time and the future audience of the film.

In the editing suite, I once again struggled with my lack of experience in, and technical knowledge of the art of filmmaking\(^3\). I had no idea of how to deal with 30 tapes of footage (each of which 60 to 90 minutes long), and ended up doing something which Laurier et al (2008) refer to as ‘on-the-fly’ editing: to let the film play and at the point where one feels the cut should and then be hit the edit key (par. 31). I also struggled with the limitations of having both visually ‘beautiful’ shots with limited ‘content’ and ‘ugly shots’ that were filled with meaning, and with those produce something that had a story-line of sorts and was also visually attractive. To ‘fix’ the ‘ugly shots’ I found myself trying to distort rather than confront them and use them to my advantage in a bricoleur’s

\(^3\) Only recently I found out that my experience was perhaps not a solitary experience and aspect to the relative neglect of video in the social sciences, which is, as Schnettler & Raab (2008) suggest, sometimes attributed to its complexity and abundance: ‘video data are among the most complex data in social scientific research: [It] is multi-sensational and sequentially ordered, enclosing both diachronic and synchronic elements, e.g. speech and visual conduct, gesture, mimic expressions, representation of artifacts and the structure of the environment, as well as signs and symbols. Moreover, it represents aspects related to recording activity itself, such as the angle and the focus of the camera, the cuts and other elements pertaining to the activity of filming and editing’ (par. 34).
‘tradition’. When I spotted there was a ‘game’ in play in which I tried to ‘cheat’, which brought to my attention why I should include the sequence in which Le. talks about ‘cheating’ (see also Chapter Five): I was trying to ‘brush away’ and ‘paint’ over ‘ugly’ pictures. When I recognised and accepted this game, the tension I had hitherto experienced within me, eased off. With that I also lost the compulsion to modify the images and took away the distortions. Later I reapplied some of those, but now without the compulsion and with a sense of appropriateness and feeling they somehow added to the overall ‘story-line.’

I had the overall idea of telling the viewer something about cross-cultural education, not by documentary observation but by impression, and as such co-produce moments in ‘the ordinary world’ that has no overarching or predictable form; an effect Brakhage tried to achieve by organizing his films around unpredictable changes in composition, subject-matter, and rhythm, ‘each small pattern violated just at the moment when you think you have finally apprehended it’ (Camper, 2003).

To accurately reflect (in as far as that is possible) the bifurcation dynamics found in research and produce an account that made sense, I felt I needed to include some clips in which the lighting and/or sound was poor, or clips in which the camera was ‘badly’ placed (such as facing a big chair which was placed in front of the camera after I had positioned it and had started the focus group). Those ‘bad’ elements were not deliberate mistakes, but a consequence of a range of factors including a dysfunctional lapel-microphone and an inability to move the camera around during focus groups because I facilitated those. Also, interviews were held in places of research participants’ choosing which necessitated filming in large rooms that sometimes were also rather dark or showed inside information which was not to be shown on film. With limited time at hand (participants were extremely busy and only had exactly two hours per interview available) I could not set up the space with extra lightning and/or sound-screens. Fortunately the software allowed me to manipulate the clips in a visual sense and make them more acceptable to the eye, but sound can hardly be manipulated at all and the effects thereof may irritate the listener somewhat. By adding subtitles to the less audible fragments of conversation, I have tried to compensate this imbalance. At the same time, with the accent on listening in rather than listening at as the core component of what emerged in the research process, perhaps this mishap can be better tolerated. Perhaps it is possible in the attending to the film, or in a mindful way of ‘viewing’, that watching and listening and a verbal and non-verbal stream flow into one, so ‘a web of attention has the space to resonate’ (Van Hoom, 2007b, p. 105). And perhaps it is even possible for the viewer to step into the unknown whilst feeling embraced by a deeper knowing or understanding; an ancient register filled with memories and powerful trust in knowledge that is also present in ancient [Indigenous] cultures’ (ibid, p. 108).

The qualities of sustained attention and embodied presence can open into subliminal layers where there is an expansiveness that can hold whatever is arising in the mindbody
Like filming, the editing process also turned out to be ‘a craft learnt as a lifetime’s work’ (Laurier et al., 2008, p.36) involving an array of preceding and subsequent editing practices such as capturing clips, logging, making notes, rewinding, playing, stopping, adding effects and filters, repeated previews of the same scene, reviews of the material as a whole, showing the entire version to friends, my supervisors, ‘colleagues’ and a group of peer-PhD students. In other words, editing is reflexively embedded not only in the filmed phenomena but also in a whole range of filmic activities towards shaping an audience’s (including my own) response.

Similar to film-maker Kenneth Anger, I wanted to make use of symbolism as well as colour to create a kind of filmic poetry; a poetry of the landscape of cross-cultural education that exists in the exchanges between people, and a site for transformation in and as the moving visual image (be it hallucination, vision or the process of looking at a film) and seen by a range of poets including Duncan and Keats, as ‘a point of entry into a state of consciousness free from binaries’ (Kane, 2008, p. 35). My ‘poetry’ however, unlike that of Anger and Duncan, was not to challenge the viewers’ resistance to heightened sensuality and pleasure in an erotic sense⁴, even though the desire to rebel, defy order and reject Cartesianism in an effort to experience ‘integrality’ or

⁴ In other chapters I made reference to intimacy and the fear thereof, which I believe is a core ingredient of disturbances in cross-cultural exchanges. Intimacy for me relates to eroticism, but does not focus on it. The link becomes clear however in respect to a viewpoint offered by Aurora van den Hout, founder of the Westvest Academy in The Netherlands (where I did some training). She suggests in her course on ‘colorlightology’, that the root-chakra (red) and the heart-chakra (green/pink) correspond with each other.
connectedness, as in Anger and Duncan (Kane, 2008), played a key role in the lives of the research participants including myself. This desire seemed to both delight and create tension within and among us, which I felt I could best represent by juxtaposing a series of contrasting elements such as ‘static’ and ‘moving’ imagery, colour with black/white passages, clips with layers of colour and single colour, and natural and heavily manipulated sequences.

Similar to experimental film-makers such as Anger (Lucifer Rising), Brakhage (The Dante Quartet, Facebook, Glaze of Cathesia) and Demy (The Umbrellas of Cherbourg), colour is crucial to my artistic work, not only because I deeply resonate with colour, but also because it goes beyond the clash of opposites and movements and has a direct appeal to feelings of wonder, freedom and deep content (Dacre, 1971, p. 60). Film-makers, says Johnson (1966) use colour to evoke emotional responses in a spectator, which is possible through colour because it affects us as a subjective experience in response to a particular wavelength of light that is reflected or refracted by the object. For physical and physiological reasons, colour forms complementaries, contrasts, harmonies and clashes that strike the viewer as more or less pleasing depending on his/her associations. All the visual arts make use of those relationships (1966, p. 5).

Other than colour what deeply resonates with people including myself as an artist is light and movement, and for example Brakhage’s Mothlight (1963) I find particularly appealing in this respect.

In a spontaneous hand-held camera type of filming I played or ‘drew’ with light (including colour) in the tradition of Man Ray and Fernand Leger in the 1920s. Also similar to Man Ray (i.e. in his 1928 film L’Etoile de la Mer), I filmed in trains, buses and on roads with low shutter-speed. And similar to R. Bruce Elder’s and John Parker’s work, I rotated with the camera and used low shutter-speed so the images blur and whirl into a kaleidoscopic stream of circular coloured motion (Hamlyn, 2007/2008).

The film editing process initially was less exciting for me than filming itself, especially when I devoured a landscape or the colours and shades of light on trees, plants, or when I filmed research participants with the camera hand-held. Being in the editing room itself made me feel too separate from the space outside, but when I had access to a laptop and the software on an external disc with all the data in it, I began to experiment and thoroughly enjoy the editing process. I discovered I could do so much more with this software than I initially realized, and wanted to do a similar thing to my film-clips as what I had recently learned to do with my art photographs: heavily manipulate the images and produce an expressionist type of art the way I used to paint.

Film-clips that already had very interesting abstract lines and movements in them I could now intensify and manipulate in ways that some viewers may consider as ‘fakery’ and jarring as such, or as ‘decorative wrapping’ that is either or not to their enjoyment, others might consider the use
of colour deviates attention from the film as a whole to the colour for colour’s sake (p. 18), as Johnson (1966, p. 18) argued against Antonioni’s Red Desert. But I am confident the viewer will respond keenly to the specific colouring I offer on screen, and speak to the viewer as artist/filmmaker. Besides, I had intent behind making use of for example my favourite colour-combination of orange/red and blue/indigo, which connotes for me the earth/heaven (vertical) axis that I contend throughout this thesis, deserves more attention than green/yellow tones that connote (for me) the horizontal axis. My sense is when I work with these colours, my root-chakra and head-chakras open up, and then almost automatically the (green/yellow) middle chakras ‘come out’ and extend out into the space.

I was also pleased to be able to invert images, as I so loved to do with my art photographs for reasons as explained below. In the film I used the inversion-effect to give a sense of what I felt when the conversation between one participant and myself fell still and into a quiet space; a beautiful and precious moment that felt to me the same as when I look into the world from the ‘third field of attention’ (Sills & Lown, 2008, see Chapter Four) and as such see it as if inverted, from the inside-out. Brakhage (2001) similarly talks about this sensation, suggesting that for example the sun is black and the sky is yellow. For me, when I change focus, for example the trees are red and their leaves a darker hue of blue.

From my diary, 3 January 2008:

Eureka! I saw it all this morning… A few days ago, running on the road and letting my mind wonder whilst observing it doing its thing with the space in which I run, I more deeply recognised why I feel so blessed with my body’s ability to run for such long distances. Because running allows me to see what happens when inside a space. It is that phenomenon of which Fritjof Capra (1982) speaks, that particles move faster when they are enclosed in a space. My thoughts run faster when I am inside a space too, and units of attention ‘go all over the place’…

Thanks to this newest version of Photoshop with which I started to play a few days ago, I discovered the tool in which you can invert images. And so I played with that tool in the act of editing my old ‘artistic’ photographs. And I felt tickled pink with the results. By using the process of manipulating and/or inverting the colours, I created an image of a tree the way I used to try paint them, with the colours inside-out. I cannot remember which artist this makes me think of, but I know I know that person well… After that Photoshop-experience, and on my run the next day, I realised that my running-experiences are so fantastic because in the process of running and looking about in my mind and the landscape at the same time, I reverse inversion-processes I tend to adopt when I am ‘inside a space’. I practice changing focus from my frontal lobe of my brain that allows me to have to peripheral vision, to the back of my head to get an inner and vital look of the world. The result is that which Merleau-Ponty (1964) calls double-vision, and explains why I dreamt that word that night in August 2005… I had no ‘physical’ idea of Merleau-Ponty
having used that word, until I bumped into it again in this article written by Brodsky (2005, in Visual Studies, Vol. 20, No. 1, April 2005) on Paul Cezanne’s self-portraits… After which I started googling this word, and voila, found this article in Diacritics, Vol. 15, No. 2, written by Giuseppe Mazzotta (Summer, 1975)... After this Photoshop ‘inversion’ experience, and then this realisation on my run that I turn around the inversion-process during the process of running, which in turn allows me to get insight, recognitions whirled around in my brain-space and connected with my tummy, I thought of why I felt so distraught when I read this article of these runners who wrote about their thoughts on hills that they consider as ‘hard going,’ and dogs that they consider as ‘a nuisance’. Anyhow, to come back to the running-experience and thoughts running around in my head and the sensations in my tummy, I thought: This is what I used to call seeing the dark as the light, or the negative as the positive, and vice versa. It is that turning-around knack of which Carl Jung spoke, it being something the ego does. And in terms of A Course of Miracles (Schucman & Thetford, 1992/2004, p. 594): ‘The dreamer of a dream is not awake, but does not know he sleeps… In the dream, the dreamer made himself. But what he made has turned against him, taking on the role of its creator (with) figures in the dream (whose) vengeance on the body appears to prove the dreamer could not be the maker of the dream. Effect and cause are first split off, and then reversed, so that effect becomes cause; the cause effect.’ This beauty of a text ties in with Ruiz’s (1997) idea of the dream of the world… Anyhow, on this run I also thought: Could I not do a Photoshop-process on the clips in the documentary, to show how the world looks in a reversed manner, with the positive as something that really is negative and vice versa… Something also Stan Brakhage (2001) seems to ‘see’ when he talks about the sun that is actually black and the sky yellow. And not only in a horizontal way, but also in a vertical way, and so effectively seeing the human body as that which lives underneath and upside down in horizontal space, and ‘essence’ as that which lives ‘upside down’ and ‘on top of’ horizontal space. That is why the cross is non-linear and fractal… There is no North-South-West-East. There is only a mirror image, and a whirling space, or a range of vertexes that are seen as stable but isn’t. So last night I got into Final Cut Pro and tested out a few clips… and whooptydoo, what I found was I NOT ONLY was able to create images in inverted colour, but that also make the clips moving with whirlly spaces… the ‘ugly’ now turned into beautiful fractal imagery! Yeehah! I also recognised this morning that there is power in the metaphor ‘oil’. Like a painter uses oil to bind the pigments to the canvas, we use ‘oil’ to bind separate pictures into a movie that plays in the mind over and over again. Until we recognize we do not need to use ‘oil’ to bind separate pictures because they are manufactured in the mind anyhow. About a year ago I recognised (or had the felt experience, as Gendlin (1996) would call it) that the ‘binding’ factor is the perceived need to build up a world of pictures. I then experienced that factor as hard, like glue that hardens over time the more we place significance on the pictures we create. This morning, and I guess also after reading the essays in the Course of Miracles on ‘Memory’ and ‘Reversing Effect and Cause’ and experiencing
the effect of saying that I am determined to see a different world, that provided I acknowledge myself as part of creation and Creator, that this glue softens into, what I now experienced as warm oil. Then, when I pondered on that image and sensation, I thought: Do I need to believe this oil is true? I felt I am the oily substance... I am that warmth and constitutional power. And I felt myself soften... my skin soften... my perception soften... I knew I had found the cross, or the Heart of Matter... I now know something more, and by no means is the picture complete, neither can an image ever be complete perhaps, but at least now I know the significance of my study, and of placing the metaphor cross at the centre of dialogue, and focusing on and experiencing the centre, the Heart of that which we perceive as Matter. This is essentially that which Capra (1982) talks about as the 'Turning Point', which is what experience as a point of recognition, in which the 8 becomes visible with the 'I' at the Centre of the twist (the contradiction), and the choice to both re-establish diversity and connect as One.

6.6 Confronting time

Because from the offset I had no idea how to go about filmmaking nor about what I was going to produce without even a dim image of it, I needed to trust my intuition yet again and that the final product would 'just' emerge like my paintings, drawings and photographs used to do. Similar to the research process as a whole, also now as an artist I needed to be attentive and let myself be evoked by that which 'pulled in' my attention. I was to be the medium that materializes the 'numinous': something in which 'simple cause and effect relationships are not involved' (Reader, 2008, p. 301).

Image 34: Not desire but Desire

Intellectually I knew I could not abstain from telling 'my story' as if personal and separate from the larger community, and that my 'interwoven' self would expose the deeper layers of the collective
psyche that ‘weaves’ the plot in and of itself. But it demanded I surrender to the dynamics in a confronting repetition; an element of ritualistic practices that are either used as a medium for social coherence or as a means for coming to grips with chaotic forces or sources of power and authority out of society’s immediate control (Schneider, 2008, p. 14). As the filmmaker Bill Viola in for example ‘The greeting’ (1995) made explicit, there is a lot to be learned from confronting repetition: the static and the moving worlds become visible as overlapping interactions. Making the film confronted me with my impatience and frustration in an attempt to find some sort of harmony in the gamut of ‘messy’ data I had at my disposal and produce some sort of a coherent and comprehensive account. When I recognized I was essentially protesting this complex process, I could drop the significance I placed on it and with that a sense of time pressure. This is when I began to experientially understand bricolage as a timeless process of ‘playfully piecing together’ (Levi-Strauss, as cited in Vaughan, 2005, p. 16) whilst creating something: a product that demonstrates a kind of intertextuality (Stewart, 2000) if not an intertextuality of life (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 135) in the paradoxical sense of being simultaneously the same and different to traditional and established models of doing and reporting on research (Stewart, 2007, p. 126).

The challenge in producing a continuous and growing intersubjectivity and multisensory experience autoethnographic account that also would induce in the viewer a desire to contemplate the dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges, demanded that I re-contextualise images and concepts and work with the tension between the duration of the film and the degree and amount of colour-shifts (Johnson 1966, p. 11), but also the colour transitions from scene to scene (ibid, p. 13) whilst making sure there was some sort of a flow in the story-line. This process took considerable time and demanded I actively confront what Schon (1983/1991) calls a fear of paralysis that ‘may spring from worst-case analysis which ignores opportunities for reflection within the action-present... from an inappropriate dichotomy of thinking and doing’ (pp. 281-282). In other words, I had to confront the inclination to give up too early and as such apply double vision: to not stop and think but keep alive in the midst of action. Schon argues that if we do not confront this dichotomy, we create and represent empty dreams that in turn reinforce ideals that do not exist. Effectively a piece of performance art, the film became a montage of moments-induration: a continuous and growing intersubjectivity and a multisensorial expression best expressed in experimental documentary film (Butler, 2008, p. 4).

The weakness of what I produced and I needed to come to terms with from a positivist viewpoint, was that the film also leaves out complete narratives. In other words, it does not offer specific points of view and some research participants’ voices are even completely left out. Only small bits of conversation were used of what most research participants presented as a ‘theme’ as a result of talking about the cross: ‘slipping communication’ as a result of ‘seeing as a camouflage’; communication that does not always ‘grab into each other but slips past each other’. In other words, communication that is ‘murky’ and cannot be grasped intellectually but only sensed.
Though the ‘cutting out’ of much data left me with a sense of guilt on the one hand, on the other as I suggested earlier, I wanted to produce an autoethnographic film that took away a focus on individual narratives and highlight their collectively produced and negotiated dimensions that cannot be reiterated but only sensed as both a personal and a shared experience.

After various draft versions, I created a filmic sense of duration by using my monologue as a ‘base-line’ story kept untainted by video filtering and continually running in the background of research participants’ snippets of narrative interspersed with long and ‘slow’ shots of natural landscape to tell the ‘visible’ world. Though not ‘planned’ at any point but driven by a sense of aesthetics, I ended up making a product that keeps the viewer ‘awake’ whilst drawing him/her into a ‘crazy-quilt of juxtapositions’ (Rose & Kinchloe, 2003, p. 68). Perhaps I managed to achieve this effect by ‘coincidentally’ experimenting with video filters and ‘feeling into’ what filters suited the segment I was exploring at the time. By varying black and white with tinted and solarised passages in an otherwise colour-film, I produced a visually dramatic effect though subtle and effective as a whole (Johnson 1966, p. 14) because offering fresh contrasts. As such, I believe I have been able to allude to the ‘sense of a Beyond’ which Alma (2007, p. 48) suggests, can be experienced in various ways and is not necessarily religious as if something related to God or the Divine. The filmic account with its images and sound shape an autoethnographic present and fleshes out sensory, emotional and kinaesthetic aspects of a narrative that is essentially social science material (Berridge, 2008). It ‘draws us, by definition, to those evanescent and inaccessible realms: the psychic, the subjective, proximal, emotional, and intuited. Human interaction, although occupying a range of tone—in some cases overt and dramatic, while in others subtle and removed—is always potentially revelatory’ (Butler, 2008).

Thinking performatively is about putting aside that analytical part of ourselves that normally deals with data and such, and moving to the other side of the equation and getting in touch with that earlier place where we were energized by the data itself—how it was sparking ideas that were coming from our own personal experience which, every creative person will tell you, is the fount of all creativity. It’s also about communication; it’s about how we are going to develop our skills in collaborating with someone who is speaking a different language, coming from a different background; going through that learning process is almost as important as the end product itself.

Gergen & Jones, 2008, p. 4

From my diary, 20 November 2007:

Ouch… I feel deeply stirred after the end bit… and makes me look at the Introduction again to contextualise the whole journey I’ve just experienced watching the ‘main body’. I’ll leave it as is for now, because the whole thing does seem to weave into and out of itself… need to sit on it a bit more and write… The strange thing is that the feeling it leaves behind is that I/ one wonders
what the heck all the fuss was all about… it is as if nothing has happened but just a little breeze has run through the house… but the house still stands… and that is exactly how it is in a way.

6.7 A mixed approach

This hybrid dissertation could be considered an application of two models which Milech & Shilow (2004): the Context and the Research Question models. Context models are applied in most universities and its advantages are that a context model ‘enables practices that respond to the needs of both students and supervisors in the creative and media arts and to the requirements of universities for research degrees, conditioned by academic understandings of the nature of research but also by governmental regulations for funding to universities. They deal with theoretical, historical and disciplinary matters in a fashion to contribute to knowledge in the discipline, and possibly social capital. Even better, it encourages research students to think about connections between practice and institutional, social or disciplinary contexts’ (p. 6). The disadvantage of this model, the authors suggest, is that ‘it leaves unresolved the questions of why there are two parts to a creative- or production-based thesis; it leaves research students to imagine that the two parts are the product of two different institutional demands rather than two parts that form a whole’ (ibid). It was precisely this ‘disadvantage’ I was ‘forced’ to deal with and which ultimately worked for me, because it aptly contextualised the cross in cross-cultural education: the friction between the mental and the artistic.

The other format, the ‘Research Question model’, Milech & Shilow (ibid) suggest is ‘perhaps the most difficult format for students to negotiate’ because ‘both the written and creative component of the thesis are conceptualised as independent answers to the same research question-independent because each component of the thesis is conducted through the “language” of a particular discourse; related because both “answer” a single research question’ (p. 7).

This hybrid dissertation, like the Research Question model, sought to ‘mediate the split between theory and practice that tugs at research;’ but unlike this model my dissertation explicitly and clearly relates the two by considering cross-cultural education as both a science and an art and respects the autonomy of each; a hybrid approach I confronted as neither a visual arts nor a social sciences ‘expert’ but a teacher in E&C whose thinking saw ‘similarities in dissimilarities’ facilitated by aesthetic experiences that link the rational and the intuitive (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003, p.136). The approach appropriated the tension between fragmented thinking and feeling as part of aesthetic relationships and wholesome life ecology; a tension I contextualised in the research-questions and which I explored in a felt sense and in maieutic inquiry, and to a degree resolved by contextualising the cross in cross-cultural education as a thinking/feeling dialectic: a dialectic that is largely absent in contemporary cross-cultural education and contextualises the split in cross-cultural exchanges. Due to my lack of experience in filmmaking, the film’s stylistic commitment ended up being for better or worse consistent and in a way reflects this tension.
Conversation fragments were used to emphasise the dynamics inherent to the subjective voice that is both personal and shared; a voice that reflects the written part of the dissertation that poses dynamics in cross-cultural exchanges are felt experiences and subjectively/collectively communicated as part of a group mind.

This hybrid approach clearly does not cater for the rational mind; however it does promote an interior dialogue between intellectual knowledge and a felt experience that pertains to the educator as an artist where both communicate in different languages. But both also honour expressiveness as a path for learning that is denied by technologies that focus on information in an age of distraction (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003).

To make visible the bridge between the research practice of making an experimental autoethnographic film and the theoretical version of this dissertation, I felt it would be useful to include a ‘third’ voice: A meta-narrative of my conceptual thinking which I felt could best be represented by including a slideshow of material from my Creative Diary. This slideshow – appended to the DVD – makes the abstract more concrete (materialized) and accessible for further inquiry (Pauwels, 2008) and future research, not only in cross-cultural education but other contexts that do not ‘tease’ ‘group mind’ and group thinking, and that resist and censor those who seek to challenge the limitations of intellectual culture and fundamentally leave unclear what we are evolving from or towards (Pushkin, 2001).

I also appended to the DVD an ‘explanation’ of how I spatially/visually imagined cross-cultural exchanges; a vortex-ring formation I talked about in depth in Chapter Three.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed how and why I made the film an autoethnographic and experimental account, and that it was made to trigger a rethinking of cross-cultural education both in theory and practice and another way of thinking and seeing. I said that the film was made by bringing ‘uncertain’ skills into production and as such reflects a culture of Performative Socials Science in which I used the power of art that works like a double-edged sword and helps not only educators and students but also researchers think outside the box and challenge ethical values and unchanging positivist notions.

I argued for a performative approach in the process and reproduction of research to both create and represent a dialectic between theory and practice; a Performative Social Science that identifies another side of language in cross-cultural exchanges and at once irritates and ‘reports’ the tension between thinking and feeling. I said I was able to do this by making use of maieutic inquiry and with intent to make visible the cross in cross-cultural education as a thinking/feeling dialectic that in turn accredits feeling and intuition and enhances conceptual thinking. In this ‘space in-between’ it is possible to come to understand and work with the dynamics in cross-
cultural exchanges away from limitations of intellectual culture and fundamentally leaving unclear what we are evolving from or towards.
In the following and concluding chapter I will focus on key questions I have asked, the usefulness of the theory I have applied, and the strengths and limitations of the methodology. This is then followed by new questions and suggestions for future directions.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Reflection on the key questions and ‘results’

It is hard to capture in a few sentences all the different dynamics that became apparent in this study, as it revolved around the research question: How does a sample of holistically oriented educators understand and work with complex dynamics as they teach and learn across cultures? Subsidiary questions that helped to clarify this problem were: 1/ How do cross-cultural educators approach the crux of the matter, where the split or the divide, or in terms of chaos theory bifurcation, is experienced? 2/ How is the split contextualised as a web and the dynamics that support it? 3/ How might wholesome life ecology re-energise understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics in a cross-cultural context?

The questions were answered in the chapters, but not in a clear-cut way: they were contextualised by data which I collected to reflect the landscape of cross-cultural education as one that is dynamic and fluid: an evolving practice.

Crudely it could be concluded that:

1/ contemporary cross-cultural education is dominated by academic cultures in which scholars from all over the world share a culture that concentrates on what are considered ‘higher’ mental functions such as literacy and numeracy; functions that require cognitive skills, not the supposedly ‘lower’ mental yet universal functions such as sensing (visual, auditory, kinetic) and aesthetic perception (such as colour, movement, pattern, balance, tone). These ‘lower’ mental functions however are exactly the functions which holistically oriented cross-cultural educators apply to be able to understand and work with complex dynamics. They build on ‘uncertain’ skills and processes to be able to ‘move with’ the landscape and nurture the body/mind/spirit connection.

The holistically oriented cross-cultural educators who participated in this study appeared to understand and work with complex dynamics more often than not, in a sensing way, in the sense that they seemed to prefer the process of feeling into situations, and employ their emotions and imagination and at times rational logic to ‘move with’ and ‘move forward’. Their direction in general was not fixed in ‘certain’ outcomes, though it was ‘certain’ in an intuitive and felt sense. Their direction revolved around health and well-being: a being in relationship with oneself, with others, with the wider community and with the planet at large. Some more than others
emphasised personal development, but all suggested that professional development cannot exclude a focus on the self: self-study is paramount.

They approached the crux of the matter where the split is experienced, more often than not, in a ‘blunt-rocking’ effort as bricoleurs, in the sense that they embodied interdisciplinary boundaries and used creative methods, but not to create innovation necessarily. They suggested a change in attitude is much more important.

2/ the split appeared to be contextualised as a web with associated dynamics whenever self-protection was not recognised and, as such, a more ‘passive’ and ‘fixed’ approach was employed. Then, ‘blind spots’ were kept intact and there was no deep inquiry. The split was also contextualised in one-way communication styles that emphasise information, and not interpersonal communication and personal development. Though research-participants appeared to prefer two-way, organic, intuitive and creative forms of communication that emphasise interpersonal communication and personal development, the web’s sometimes appeared too (socio-politically) attractive, possibly as part of the compulsion to self-protect. Similarly, to the degree holistically oriented cross-cultural educators (including myself) bought into ‘boxed’ thinking, and cause was seen as different from effect and contact with existential dynamics was cut. The greatest unknown influence appeared to be the group mind, which is a concept rarely discussed in literature or in the field at large.

The web of relationships in which the split is either or not contextualised became particularly clear by focusing on the ‘plek der moeite’ [the area of difficulty] (Van Hoorn, 2007)¹. In other words, by focusing on the friction at the centre of the cross, the web with associated dynamics was able to emerge. Employing the cross also revealed the ‘web’ in which the human psyche is interwoven in religiously/culturally imposed upon and negotiated ‘building-blocks’ – all part of the compulsion to self-protect: judgments, blames, expectations, attachments, significances, criticisms, finger pointings, protests, give aways, buy-ins, beliefs, viewpoints, intolerances, denials, assumptions and limitations.

3/ wholesome life ecology is an integral teaching/learning practice that requires a looking within whilst looking outside. Assuming that what we see out there is a projection/reflection of what is ‘in here’, it requires a willingness to ‘move with’ and feel into interchanging dynamics to avoid single-paradigm myopia: it requires a whole sensory experience. But on one occasion, I was not able to participate in events that witnessed participants’ application of a methodology that could be seen

¹ Van Hoorn (2007a, pp. 135-136) expands on the idea ‘the spot of difficulty’ as presented by Kooistra (1988) and Wierdema (1999), and refers to this ‘spot’ as that place where people invest more energy into differences in making meaning to create new meanings, by for example leaving space for intuition, experience, love and that which ‘escapes words’, and ‘light emerges’ (Van Hoorn refers to Simone Weil in this respect). At the centre of this ‘spot’ lies the willingness to truly hear and understand the other without really knowing where the interaction ends, and also asks from the other to enter into this space and be prepared to feel insecure.
as associated with wholesome life ecology (WLE) to know the effects of their efforts in their field. This one occasion was too short in time to include in the analysis. However, if the dynamics of the exchanges which took place among and between research-participants including myself, could be considered as reflective of a re-energised understanding among human beings and the ability to work with complex dynamics, then it was witnessed in the inner ‘urge’, the inner direction that drove the exchanges: an inner urge that created a sense of ‘finding-onself-in-relation’ (Todres, 2007) whilst ‘moving with’ opposing dynamics. But the –re-energising effect can also be sensed in some of the exchanges I included in this thesis, as well as in what I describe in section 7.4 below.

7.2 Strengths of theory/methodology

My initial hunch that this research would be different and significant in the sense that it focused on and applied the cross appeared correct: employing the ‘cross’ as a Point Of EnTry (P.O.E.T.) as part of bricolage seemed to be able to facilitate dialogue. It also permitted the space in-between established paradigms to be looked into whilst engaging in deep and embodied inquiry. It further facilitated a feeling into what is said but also what is not said: spaces that are ‘normally’ bounded and kept intact by ‘fixed’ images that cannot be separated from individual and social identities and their quest for stability of identity (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 2-3).

Similarly, fuzziology enabled a looking and feeling into the ‘Schil’ but also into ‘sticking sides’ and ‘blind spots’: aspects to fuzziness which, as Dimitrov (2005) explains, is an essential characteristic of the images that raise and dissolve in our thoughts and have blurred boundaries and immaterial substance. Fuzziology also enabled a clarification of this fuzziness when ‘murky’ communication was employed: it permitted a flow of communication where solid perceptions of space, time, subjects and objects seemed to dissolve. It opened up a flow, and the cross appeared not as something fixed but a kind of a funnel through which communication was able to flow. As such forming an imbrication of place (Offord, 2002) of sorts, a sense of place (Schroeder, 2008) came about that is not culturally/religiously bounded: not part of group mind. This space could be referred to as the ‘Schil’ (AVEK, 1972): ‘the transition between i.e. inside and outside, I and the Other, space and the Other’.

Wholesome life ecology (WLE) – a concept developed by Dimitrov & Naess (2005) that intersects with fuzziology and maieutic inquiry – was useful largely because of the emphasis on the relationship between the researcher and the researched as well as the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, it was useful because WLE does not negate but employs friction, assuming that without it, we are not able to walk (ibid, p. 47): currere is not practiced without friction. This methodology then sits well with bricolage: a methodology that, like WLE but also Expression & Communication (E&C), is holistically oriented. They hold a similar philosophy that focuses on flexibility and working with the resources at hand, including: human resources, health-promoting
activities, the body/mind/soul connection, cooperation, self-awareness and synergy. They accentuate relationship, self-inspection and confronting ‘blind spots’. They seek to help alleviate tensions in hard negotiation situations by bridging the thinking/feeling gap. They support creative practice to unleash the confinement of soul. They permit a blending of social science with complexity theory and centre on understanding as a performance: a pragmatic, organic and creative approach applicable to new and different situations and building community. It is assumed people benefit and learn more from close than distant relationships, so all parties are engaged in projects from the beginning.

I believe the above methodologies also permitted me to produce a dynamic reflection of a dynamic field, and one that essentially is not an individual journey but a collective one, which is why I produced an auto-ethnographic account. They also helped research-participants –including myself- to reflect on how holistically oriented cross-cultural educators understand and work with complex dynamics, to tinker at the edges of fixed viewpoints. They further inspired me to employ creativity in the thinking space of writing and the feeling space of filming.

Other strengths of WLE (including fuzziology/maieutic inquiry) and bricolage can be considered in terms of what I learned from applying those methodologies:

- I learned to accept that my intention in the research-process was necessarily paradoxical, ambivalent (in two minds) and ambiguous as I confronted and embraced a range of viewpoints and practices. Upon sufficient application of those methodologies, I was able to ‘walk’ the road and fine tune at points of bifurcation (at crossroads).

- I learned that it is an honorable albeit often challenging experience to be in deep inquiry with research-participants from the very start onwards.

- I learned the significance of creating a safe space which I discovered does not limit itself to ‘listening’ but includes bringing in my own experiences: it permits attention to be paid to what is normally ‘cut off’ in conversations, and as such a tinkering at the edges of established paradigms to assist evolving education.

- I learned how much I as a researcher am able and willing to learn from research-participants. They were my teachers in more than one way, but most of all they taught me about humility and compassion. The learnings were greatest in situations when participants and I felt challenged in our beliefs. What I learned was to be more patient and practice compassion. It further permitted me to identity as a reflexive project: an ongoing 'story' about the self.

- I learned that not only ‘contemporary cross-cultural education’ lacks an attentive approach, but that also I inhabit that space when I assume a righteous attitude. It is not
what we say but what we do that counts. ‘Blind spots’ are created often in very subliminal ways.

- I learned death-oriented dynamics are subject to a far greater group mind than I had expected, and is central the ‘friction’ which the brain or the conditioned mind creates: a mind also I am coming to terms with.

- An inspiring side effect was that I acquired a more sensitive and perhaps generous approach towards life generally and people specifically.

7.3 Limitations of theory/methodology

Some readers or viewers might consider this study a bricolage of little value, because it has characteristics that Hatton (2000) subscribes to this practice: 1/ conservative even where adaptive, 2/ creative but a limited response to circumstance, and 3/ non-principled, thus producing theory not deployed to generate practices in question, nor suggesting how they might be developed, suggest modifications, or predict their success (p. 1364). It may be marked as such a work closer aligned to the technician than the craftsperson in a search for strategies and methods that work for certain limited purposes’ (ibid, pp. 1365-1366).

Others might consider this study of little value because it is an auto-ethnographic account that is about personal and/or a collectively assumed anguish, and not a rigorously ‘proven’ account. Yet others might feel the whole account is not an auto-ethnographic but a deeply personal account.

In a sense I would agree with these considerations. The account now is fairly general and I have been unable to present a complete picture of the different aspects that emerged in the research-process: many pieces of the puzzle are missing, not only because the whole picture is not there yet, but also because I approached the landscape from one angle: I did not query into the limitations of holistic education and as such, this study is one-sided, not only in theory but also in methodology.

Other considerations:

- I presented a rather idealistic picture and as such shaped a ‘fixed’ landscape that I treasured in my mind and felt attached to. With that I realised the possibility that this thesis may be considered a reflection of ‘slipping communication’. The pay-off however was the ability to acknowledge that I am not free from the different aspects of the conditioned mind I have sketched in this thesis. In fact, I would have been unable to write about those aspects had I not recognised them personally.

- Bricolage but also fuzziology including maieutic inquiry and embodied enquiry are methodologies that take a lifetime to become good at. This means asking for problems when doing a PhD. There is little problem if self-study and self-realisation are encouraged
in the environment in which the study is done. But when the environment is not completely supportive, and that includes a self-reflective if not creative attitude, the struggle is at times too hard and has a bad effect on one’s health and well-being. There is also a serious risk of limited success at the end.

- I have not been able to make use of all the data: audio-visual material is multi-interpretive and as such, I believe, demands a collaborative and not an individual investigation.

- I interviewed a relatively limited number of people who cannot be representative of ‘a’ landscape. They can but reflect a drop in a large energetic ocean. At the same time, because the focus of this study was not outcome-related but focused on dynamics, and because it considers what occurred in this one ‘drop in the ocean’ as fractal to a larger dynamic, this study still contributes to the (dare I say this) ‘bank of knowledge’.

- I had hoped participants would talk about dynamics at some point, but perhaps the concept of ‘dynamics’ itself was too ‘fuzzy’ to permit in-depth exploration. Though this permitted ‘grasping’ dynamics to come into view, it was also a pity that it was not until well after field research had completed that I read about Sheldrake’s (2004) notion of ‘vision’ that pertains to the eyes not only as passive instruments but active emitters of energy. This concept might have added to the exploration in dialogue with research participants. It also was a pity that the time-frame available to me did not permit an exploration into concepts which I believe would have provided more in-depth insight into how the split is contextualised in cross-cultural exchanges. Though it has become apparent that the crux in cross-cultural education is formed in the approach itself, a dialogue on ‘the sleeve’ but also the ‘vortex-ring formation’ may have contributed to the capacity to understand and work with situations in which ‘sides stick’ and when ‘blind spots’ deserve clarification. This kind of insight would have been useful for instance in situations of peace-negotiations.

- The literature I used to contextualise this study were rooted under a broad range of disciplines. This could be seen as evidence of lacking expertise in one area and as such as a trivial study too general and artificial. The risk is that this study will be placed aside, especially in places that perhaps could benefit most of taking note of what this study does reveal, rather than what it fails to reveal.

- Most literature focuses not on dynamics in human exchanges but on the what, the fixed ‘visible’ world ‘out there’. The how, the ‘moving’ and the more subler ‘worlds’ that pertains to the senses and to subtler forms of communication are largely ignored and left to the more ‘occult’ sciences and/or the artistic world. With that, the separation between education and communication studies is supported in theory: a separation that denies the
human capacity to unfold and expand, but also transcend meaning-making processes and paradigms. Such a separation between education and communication pretends cross-cultural exchanges are something other than a creative experiment that can never be finished, if indeed it should or could be. Bricolage and fuzziology, like education and communication and the arts, are lifetime endeavours and spaces of improvisation that are difficult to measure, capture and perhaps even fully appreciate and validate.

7.4 Strengths and Limitations of the filmic work

The filmic work was, upon reflection, an absolutely joyful and complete experience that rekindled my love for art, philosophy and education and to a degree managed to fuse those into something of a synaesthetic ideal: and ideal that values aesthetics and reasoning, not as ends in themselves but as tools important since matter affects spirit (Elder, 2008). As such I reflect back on what I suggested in Chapter Six and other chapters, that my work as a teacher/researcher in E&C – as different to a teacher in art, communication and/or media-studies – does not consider art (including for example film, photography, drama, dance, prose) in terms of end products, but as a medium of expression & communication aimed to facilitate self-realisation.

The weakness in the filmic work is obvious: a lack of experience, knowledge and skill is evident in the end product:

- Hesitant movements that dominate the film communicate an ‘uncertain’ approach. As such, the film’s stylistic commitment also coheres with the written text and is for better or worse consistent. Admittedly, this commitment may create a sense of frustration in the reader/viewer who expects other than a ‘messy’ account when ‘certainty’ is desired.
- The sound quality is at times problematic, as are some visuals in the film, and perhaps those mistakes and ‘uncertainty’ that here are not a positive because reflective of personal insecurity, can be understood and taken into account upon evaluation from the perspective that I started film making from ground zero. Had I had much more time and experience in film making I may have been able to produce an account that would have been ‘uncertain’ in the correct context of this dissertation; that is, conducive to evolution.

As a whole however, I feel confident that future research in which audio-visual material will be used to make a film will allow for relief and juxtaposition and evidence of a greater palette with which to communicate.

I also feel that the filmic work reflects the main theme that emerged in the research-process: that ‘attention’ is to be high on the agenda in a new type of scholarship in which theories are generated about the practice from inside the practice, and where at least an interior if not also exterior dialogue between intellectual knowledge and a felt experience is facilitated: a dialogue
where people communicate in different languages but also honour expressiveness as a path for learning that is denied by technologies that focus on information in an age of distraction (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003). Such a dialogue, as I argued throughout this dissertation, is necessary to counteract matrices of control, but also to encourage exchanges that are not necessarily smooth and where full translation may not be possible (Richards, 2006, p. 6).

7.5 A sense of a new direction

Perhaps the most exciting result from the research process was the bringing (back) to life an ancient universal symbol that, over time, has lost its dynamic meaning and become stifled: the cross. With that, I have learned that we are not free to the extent that we identify with the part of mind that is structured in time and space, and subsequently see subjects and objects but also symbols – including perceptions of what people are – as physical and mental structures. I have learned to be more mindful, with thanks to what research-participants were willing to share. I believe we have come to recognise the cross as other than static, but a medium, a facilitator, a dynamic flow that propels us forward in the process of meaning-making but also meaning-deconstructing. I cannot vouch for the effects the exploration had on research participants, but the communications below indicate that the space we explored nurtured or otherwise enriched all of us:

In.: I would have very much enjoyed another moment of peace and reflection (as I imagine it would be) with you.

M.T.: The cross is in my heart-area, there where the vertical axis between heaven and earth cross with the horizontal cross between my inner- and outer-world. When I am really centred in the cross, I feel present in myself and the other... My sense is that someone who is able to be earthed and centred within is able to create a basic focus in the contact-boundary, just like I experienced in the meetings with you... I now sense that my attention moves within the cross, then to the earth-pole then to the external world and so on. It shoots around and about very fast... What I found really exciting was that by being open to a real meeting and being present ‘in the cross’, an atmosphere came about in which emerged exactly that what was happening for us. Your attitude was characterised by a complete trust in whatever was needed would emerge for research to develop. A very organic happening. I know deep within things work like that, and I experience it more and more, but through your attitude I learned this to be true. I have also learned that ‘culture’ and ‘cultural differences’ occur in many more areas and within close distance: it is not just somewhere ‘out there’. And what I already knew but saw also confirmed is that what happens in macro- is the same as what happens in micro-circumstances; between myself and other individuals. Everything relates back to and is dependent on the degree in which the individual person or group of people is willing to open up for growth, self-realisation, a raised

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consciousness. It confirmed for me that by being completely present in the ‘cross’ in the here and now, whatever manifests is exactly what is needed in the here and now.

M.: Your questions got me thinking. And so many things that I haven’t talked about for so long!

Jo: It was a very special experience.

Ros: … the same ole same ole… lets just have another billionth discussion about how well we do the integration thing NOT. Its a work in progress or a dead loss.’

Cl.: Reflecting on the idea of words not matching actions as I rode the train way home, I thought about the postures and attitudes of superiority and separateness that we all adopt from time to time. I thought how much further I had to go to be able to just accept someone’s contribution, to lay it alongside my own without judgement and just be. I thought about hearing, really hearing. I thought about understanding and I thought about letting go. I tried to listen to the phrase again, with new ears and heard a new message. I heard that we are all one and that we are all separate.

That we hurt one another, because we don’t understand this. That we need to be aware and go gently, protecting ourselves while remaining open and willing to be touched. It was good.

Mar.: As I am reflecting on the experience, I am aware how I needed to bring the discussion back to a bigger picture, i.e. the bigger game that is afoot here, so as to not get into righteousness and protest. Have also have been thinking on some of the discussions between Ros and Cl. about otherness and separation and if this isn’t simply an expression of the animal nature that is a part of human nature as well, thus need to be acknowledged and then moved beyond rather than a 'should not exist/should not be like that'.

7.6 In conclusion and new questions

The weakness of this research is that it has not offered a finished account. Many gaps are left open and no ‘quick fix’ or complete solutions have been presented: only points of view that sought another, perhaps better, approach. As such, this dissertation may be considered more of an exposition than a critical account. This weakness however may also be this study’s strength, with its emphasis on listening in and generally subtler forms of communication as part of an evolving education (Gidley, 2007). This new direction appears to emphasise a going within: the more deeply we are willing to go within, the more a community builds. But it may also emphasise more of a going without: a being ‘Earth-wise’ (Bird Rose, 2008) which is a form of dialogue that entails a reflexive mutuality as a continuity across death and life in country that is all about keeping things alive in their place. And perhaps with this comes a being time-wise also. And I think of words of Soesman (1990) in reference to Steiner’s notion of ‘a timestream going from life to death [and] back from death to life’ (p. 38): a stream perhaps similar to what is known in Vipassana meditation: that at a deeper level the reality is, that the entire universe, animate and inanimate, is in a constant state of rising and passing away. ‘Each of us is in fact a stream of
constantly changing subatomic particles, along with which the process of consciousness, perception, sensation, reaction change even more rapidly than the physical process’ (Goenka, in Hart, 1982, p. 29).

From this I conclude that ‘vision’ and more generally, perception of perception may require deeper insight and more attention, and not only in future interdisciplinary and holistically oriented cross-cultural research: a research that warrants the acknowledgement of the human capacity to feel deeper into geo-social landscapes and the dynamics thereof, and a looking into practices that aim for a healthy community. A research also that warrants a focus on the subtler energies in practices that celebrate the ‘untutored eye’ and help students plunge into perceptual and conceptual deep ends in order to learn trust their senses and intuition (Zryd, 2007, p. 110).

As such it would include Sheldrake’s idea of extramission to deepen insight, and perhaps also the ‘sleeve’ and the ‘vortex-ring formation’.

Questions I present in the film could be explored and, similar to this study, be videotaped. Questions such as: What does it mean to share? What does it mean to receive and to take, to own and to disown, to have and not have? Other questions that could be explored: How does filmic work assist dialogue? How is it different to an audio recording of dialogue?

The significance of such research and dialogue could trigger a more collective awareness of what and how we ‘see’ and otherwise perceive, which may assist an evolving cross-cultural education that includes and nurtures people’s capacity to communicate on many more and subtler levels than hitherto accepted: communications that can be sensed but are difficult to put into words, and communications that help us enact a new space whilst closing a book that was written in a particular way.

And so another kind of story could emerge … in the doing… in the being…
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APPENDIX ONE

INFORMATION STATEMENT for RESEARCH-PARTICIPANTS

Understanding and Working with Complex Dynamics in Cross-Cultural Exchange.

The purpose of this study is to explore what happens in the exchange between people from different cultures, and how these understanding apply to cross-cultural education. Dimitrov & Naess’ (2005) wholesome life ecology framework contends that ‘learning to master our capacity for self-awareness and live wholesomely’ is interwoven into the fabric of relationships. To explore that contention in the practice of research, a selection of artifacts such as narratives, life-histories, interviews, group-conversations, video-recordings, creative diaries and archives will be collected during research and analysed to ‘prove’ that fabric. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Should you agree to participate, the following will be involved: There will be 3 interviews of 2 hours each per research-participant and 3 half-day meetings at a location and a time suitable to all research-participants. Each interview and half-day meeting will be video-taped as part of video-research, to ‘experience first hand that "meaning" is something one constructs and that “understanding” is a product.

All collected data are confidential and neither you nor your organisation and community will be identified in any way in the results of the study. You are completely free to withdraw at any time you wish and do not need to tell me, or other people, why. If you withdraw, then any information that has been collected from or about you will be destroyed if you so wish. Research should be completed by 15 July 2007.

I will contact you in the next week to find out if you would like to participate in this study. If so, I will ask you to complete and return the attached Consent Form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about the research.

Ms. Jose van den Akker,
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University of Western Sydney,
Penrith Campus NSW 2773.
Ph: 02-4736 0091.
Email: j.vandenakker@uws.edu.au

Supervisor of this study is Dr. Carol Reid. Contact: 02-97726524. c.reid@uws.edu.au.

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee or Panel (indicate Committee or Panel). The Approval Number is HREC 06/098. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee/Panel through the Research Ethics Officers (tel.: 02 4736 0883 or 4736 0884). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
APPENDIX TWO

CONSENT FORM

Understanding and Working with Complex Dynamics
in Cross-Cultural Exchange.

I practise as an educator and identify myself as holistically oriented.

I understand that I am in no way obliged or expected to volunteer in this study unless I express a personal willingness to do so by signing this form below. It is also understood that I may withdraw my availability to participate at any time, without questioning or further inquiry from the researcher.

I have read the accompanying ‘Information Statement for Research Participants’ and understand that I may not directly benefit by taking part in this research, that there will be no payments made for my taking part in this study, and that information gained in the study may be published, but that my name will not be identified and all individual information will remain confidential, unless I want my personality disclosed in any documentation. In such case, I shall give specific written permission.

*I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.*

I consent to being involved in this project.

Signed: _______________________ Date ____________________

Name: ________________________

Email: _________________________

Phone: ________________________ Contact-times: ____________________
APPENDIX THREE

Understanding and Working with Complex Dynamics
in Cross-Cultural Exchange.

Interview Guide:

The purpose of the individual semi-structured interviews is to explore the crux in and the crux of cross-cultural education. Please take your time answering the following questions.

Opening Questions (setting the scene):

1/ What inspired you to agree to participate in this project?

2/ Can you tell me about what you would like to get out of this participation? Do you expect anything from this project?

3/ What kind of questions and ideas come up for you when you read the research title of this project?

4/ How do you view the way the relationship between people from different cultures takes place?

5/ How do you contextualise this relationship in your contact with people from other cultures?

6/ How do you see that the above applies to cross-cultural education?

Opening up the Area:

7/ I would like you to consider the following notions that underpin this research, and

a/ tell me about how you relate to and weave these notions into your perception of the vocation of an educator in cross-cultural exchange, and

b/ to clarify the construct of the crux/ cross in that exchange, i.e. by describing how this construct feels and perhaps looks, smells, tastes, sounds or anything else in your perception (images are most welcome in addition to words).

Area 1: The Field:
The Academy for Expression & Communication, or AVEK (1972) where I did my teacher-training for 4.5 years, defined the field in the following terms:

1. The field exists everywhere and always,
2. The field is the carrier of the total of the appearances,
3. None of these appearances have a set place or shape (they are not things) and they do not exist apart from one another; there are reference-points and movements within the field,
4. The field consists of the four elements time-space-energy-substance and the processes in between these.

Area 2: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Subject Culture

Habitus was defined at the Academy for Expression & Communication (AVEK) in terms of three roles (not to be confused with role-theory!); Roles are positions from which I see the field, do and experience. In the model of a learning-process we discriminate three roles:

1. Member of a/ the collective: This role is operative from magnetic movement; it occupies itself with receiving, making the other of one’s own.
2. Participant: This role is operative from energetic movement; it occupies itself with creating, taking that what is within outside.
3. Member of a/ the society: This role is operative from the whole system: from the core to the outside and back again.

Roles 1 and 2 vary in function. As the one focuses the other expands. The 3rd role takes care of the basis on which this can happen (sets the conditions), and from that position one is continuously at work.

Area 3: Current attitudes to cross-cultural education

Teaching E&C involves the following 6 criteria to measure progress:

- Self-Awareness
- Coming from a space of equal validation
- Developing self and one’s situation
- Motivation from life-experience and knowledge
- Cooperation
- Using expression & communication media.

Teachers in Expression & Communication (E&C) care for the whole person (body, mind and spirit), and assume responsibility for, and works with the tension in between the three roles of the I as an individual, the I as a member of a collective, and the I as a member of society.

Area 4: Contextual understanding/ Complex Dynamics.
Complex Dynamics are energy-forces, in which human dynamics include the
dynamics of the minerals, plants and animals, in interaction with the macro scale of
the universal dynamics and the micro scale of quantum dynamics (Dimitrov, 2006).

By way of maieutic inquiry, conditions can be explored to transform knowledge to
wisdom. Dimitrov & Naess (2005:17-19) explain that maieutic inquiry depends
essentially on the active interaction of the inquirer and the respondent. They suggests:
‘The interactions of sides involved in maieutic inquiry aim at liberating their creative
potential from the pull of forces born out of human egocentricity and egotism, blind
attachments and addictions, social brainwash or power-based manipulations – forces
which are able to convert the fuzziness of knowing into hard-to-surpass ignorance.’

**Conclusion:**

Thank you for your time. I am very grateful for your input and will keep you
informed of the progress of research. May I ask you, but only if you feel so inclined,
to make use of a ‘creative diary’ on how the crux or cross manifests in the exchange
between people from different cultures? These ‘notes’ might come in handy in our
subsequent communications. Media used for this creative diary are unlimited.