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HOW MIGHT ASSEMBLAGES EXIST BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY?

¿Qué relaciones podrían existir entre la escuela y la comunidad?

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ABSTRACT: This research is framed within the context of sociocultural theories of learning, where understanding is a relationship between people and their environment. The paper examines how the researcher generated conditions which created connections between a school and its local community in rural Thailand. The research experiments with the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and an encounter with contemporary art to problematise existing thought and build connections and new relationships with place. The research takes a qualitative approach and the report, written in a narrative format, analyses and discusses the impact and value of critical events. Observation, and sensory and emotional data inform the narrative. The research demonstrates the deterritorialising power of an art encounter, which slowed down perception and created the need to invent new concepts. An assemblage of connections emerged resulting in a rhizocurriculum that moved beyond the walls of the classroom to create new dialogues between school and community. The research shows how the world of possibilities that emerges from art encounters are not easily manifested in practice and recommends continued experimentation with bodies that have the power to affect and be affected.

KEYWORDS: Assemblage, Learning, Contemporary Art, Community and school connections.

RESUMEN: Esta investigación está enmarcada en el contexto de las teorías socioculturales del aprendizaje poniendo énfasis en las relaciones que se establecen entre las personas y su entorno. El artículo muestra cómo el investigador creó condiciones que generaron relaciones y permitieron establecer conexiones entre la escuela y la comunidad local en la Tailandia rural. Algunos



conceptos filosóficos de Deleuze y Guattari y un encuentro con el arte contemporáneo permiten problematizar el pensamiento existente y construir conexiones y nuevas relaciones con el contexto. Se adopta un enfoque cualitativo y se construye un texto en formato narrativo con base en la observación y en la percepción sensorial, en el cual los eventos críticos se analizan y discuten por su impacto y valor. La investigación demuestra el poder desterritorializador de un encuentro artístico, ya que éste ralentizó la percepción y comprensión de lo que estaba aconteciendo, creando la necesidad de explorar nuevos conceptos. En el desarrollo del proceso se crearon un conjunto de conexiones que se pueden entender como un *rizocurrículo* que fue más allá de las paredes del aula creando nuevos diálogos entre la escuela y la comunidad. La investigación muestra cómo las posibilidades que emergen con los encuentros artísticos no es fácil que se manifiesten y concreten en las prácticas educativas y recomienda la experimentación continua con aquellos cuerpos que tienen el poder de afectar y ser afectados en los contextos de aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Ensamblaje, aprendizaje, Arte contemporáneo, relaciones entre escuela comunidad.

RESUM: Aquesta investigació està emmarcada en el context de les teories socioculturals de l'aprenentatge posant èmfasi en les relacions que s'estableixen entre les persones i el seu entorn. L'article mostra com l'investigador va crear condicions que van generar relacions i van permetre establir connexions entre l'escola i la comunitat local a la Tailàndia rural. Alguns conceptes filosòfics de Deleuze i Guattari i una trobada amb l'art contemporani permeten problematitzar el pensament existent i construir connexions i noves relacions amb el context. S'adopta un enfocament qualitatiu i es construeix un text en format narratiu en funció de l'observació i de la percepció sensorial, en el qual els esdeveniments crítics s'analitzen i discuteixen pel seu impacte i valor. La investigació demostra el poder desterritorialitzador d'una trobada artística, ja que aquest va alentir la percepció i comprensió del que estava esdevenint, creant la necessitat d'explorar nous conceptes. En el desenvolupament del procés es van crear un conjunt de connexions que es poden entendre com un *rizocurrícul* que va anar més enllà de les parets de l'aula creant nous diàlegs entre l'escola i la comunitat. La investigació mostra com les possibilitats que emergeixen amb les trobades artístiques no és fàcil que es manifesten i con-



creten en les pràctiques educatives i recomana l'experimentació contínua amb aquells cossos que tenen el poder d'afectar i ser afectats en els contextos d'aprenentatge.

PARAULES CLAU: Assemblatge, aprenentatge, Art contemporani, relacions entre escola comunitat.

Introduction

This narrative-based research examines how I created conditions for learning that generated connections between school and community through contemporary art and the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Deleuze and Guattari's writings are known to be difficult as they use newly created terminology or distort the way philosophical terms have typically been used in western thought (Fleming, 2020). However, as Deleuze and Guattari are experimental thinkers, their concepts carry the potential to transform and create new innovative practice for teachers (Waterhouse, 2020). This paper begins with an introduction to some of the key terms and relevant concepts that feature in this paper and shows how they relate to the methodological decision of a narrative report. The research was conducted in Thailand and interviews with local citizens give the reader a better understanding of this context. The research demonstrates how a contemporary art stimulus deterritorialised the pupils' existing understandings and generated more critical and reflective dialogues with place (Silva and Jove, 2019a). I conclude that the results cannot be generalised as the outcomes are emergent to the specific elements and interactions of each educational encounter (Waterhouse, 2020).

In-between Deleuze and Guattari and education

This research is framed with(in) the work of Deleuze and Guattari and I draw on their concepts to provide ways of thinking differently about teaching and learning (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). The first concept is heterogeneity, which involves accepting and facing the complex realities of learning



encounters (Roy, 2003). Ryan and Amorim (2005) argue that for teachers to create new and innovative practice, they need to demystify the totalising representations of existing ideas to see the heterogeneous elements and movements in a process of becoming multiple (Ryan and Amorim, 2005). One means may be through contemporary art as it is irreducible to signification; the heterogeneous nature of art means that any description or analysis always leaves something out (O'Sullivan, 2010). This implies that the potential for learning through art is not primarily in the concepts that the artist promotes but rather the multiplicity of connections that can be made in an encounter (Jove and Farrero, 2018).

To take advantage of this and make it a productive force for learning, teachers might promote the problematisation of existing concepts through processes of questioning, experimentation and creation (Roy, 2003). Problematisation guides learning as it invites pupils into an encounter with the new and different, generating conditions for rupturing existing structures and creating something new (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). Loponte (2013) finds contemporary visual arts to be the most productive for destabilising conventional notions of teaching practice and everyday life. Contemporary art can therefore serve as a tool in the process of problematisation to escape the hegemonic learning of schools, museums and galleries to occupy different spaces in society (Silva and Jove, 2019b). This suggests that one of the teacher's tasks is to emit heterogeneous signs through the introduction of problematic texts and explore difference together with the pupils (Waterhouse, 2020).

However, Deleuze argues that problematisation is not the application of existing thought to a situation, but rather that to think is to create (Bangou et al., 2020). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) propose that thought generates in the form of a rhizome, a network of perpetual growth, in contrast to the binary logic of the tree of knowledge. A rhizome is defined by its connectivity, non-linearity, and its capacity to rupture and transform continuously (Allan, 2008; Acaso, 2011). Problematisation might bring the diverse heterogeneous elements of teacher bodies, pupil bodies and text bodies together into inter-related overlapping connections, which can result in networks of rhizomatic growth (Ryan and Amorim, 2005; Jove and Farrero, 2018). The model of the rhizome might amplify possibilities in education as it has no beginning or



end, one can enter at any point, and ruptures create alternative paths and new ways to proceed (Acaso, 2011).

The Deleuzian-Guattarian notion of an assemblage is also adopted in this research, and can be described as a temporary grouping of relations (Bangou, 2020). An assemblage is dependent on the rhizomatic connections which emerge between expression and content and is qualitatively different to the sum of its parts (Allan, 2008; Waterhouse, 2020). As an educator this means recognising that in a learning encounter nothing is occurring in isolation, it is an emergent happening, a collective assemblage one inside the other within an immense outside that is a multiplicity (Sellers, 2010). Teachers might embrace the experimentation part of working in the rhizome by reading the assemblage and attending to the heterogeneity through novel connections (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). Indeed, if teachers can create encounters with the power to affect and rupture existing ideas, new assemblages can form towards unfamiliar but more productive ways of being (O'Sullivan, 2010).

The final two concepts I introduce concern how this rupturing movement might exist in the form of the triad of de/re/territorialisation, and becoming (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). When teachers and pupils venture outside of what is familiar and comfortable, they must be active participants in the invention of new concepts for unknown lands, as they continuously escape the stable order (Allan, 2008). In education this process of deterritorialisation can disrupt existing structures and categories of being and understanding, and take lines of flight to new, more inclusive possibilities (Roy, 2003; Allan, 2008). This behaviour might be more common in the arts, where contemporary artists often rupture dominant regimes made of our daily habits and create new possibilities for life (O'Sullivan, 2010). This triad might be considered as a movement which produces change, and as exposure to the new occurs it is followed by stabilisation, after which the process may begin again (Bastien-Valenca, 2020).

For the individual person or entity, it is a process of becoming which embodies the dynamism of change, as they are in a continuous state of re-creating what they can be (Sellers, 2010). Yet this practice is not exclusive to artists; anyone can break their habitual patterns, anyone can experiment with the available materials in the present and produce not only something new



in the world but themselves anew in that world (O'Sullivan, 2010). Perhaps for Deleuzian-inspired educators it means reframing themselves as processes, always becoming as they try to intensively read the assemblage and engage in a relentless problematisation of signs to prevent boundaries from forming (Roy, 2003; Jove, 2011).

A research of experimentation

This research is a reflection on the multiplicities that I connected and saw over the course of the academic year 2020–2021 (Ryan and Amorim, 2005). The research recognises the uncertainty of professional practice by recording what occurred in the classroom, without reducing the events to transcendental findings (Coles, 2002; Phelps and Graham, 2010). It combines data, findings and analysis as sense can emerge from the connections between heterogeneous elements at any moment (Clough, 2002; Bangou, 2020). Furthermore, it incorporates transgressive data, which is usually out of category for qualitative research, such as emotional data and response data in rhizoanalysis (Masny, 2013). What follows is a descriptive and analytical narrative of the elements and disruptions which occurred in the assemblage (Atkinson et al., 2007). The data included and reported on is not inclusive of all that happened; rather, moments were selected according to their power to affect (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). To maintain criticality the emergent happenings in the data are continuously compared to existing literature on the subjects (Bolivar, 2017; St. Pierre, 2018).

The research involved seventy-one participants. These were sixty-seven Thai children aged between 6 and 9 from grades 1 to 3, and three adults working in the location of the research who took part in recorded interviews about the local context. I include myself, an English researcher, as a participant as I was also becoming and transforming with other elements as part of the assemblage (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). The research was conducted in the English programme of a large semi-private school and occurred during a curriculum subject titled *English project*. This paper does not cover how the research facilitated the pupils' language development because it falls outside the scope of this article, although this was occurring simultaneously. It is



enough to say that children do much more than speak languages; they learn and become through them (Vygotsky, 1986; Piccardo et al., 2011). The study took an action-oriented approach which claims that authentic language use to complete real-life tasks facilitates language learning goals (Piccardo et al., 2019). The deconstructive narrative written below documents my experimentation in my attempt to create real-life tasks and action in relation with the spaces the participants inhabited (Goodson and Gill, 2016).

With(in) context

The research was conducted in Takhli, Nakhon Sawan Province, in the lower northern region of Thailand, 200km north of Bangkok. The school is located within the town area, which covers 16km² and has a population of 23,901 (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2017). To describe the area, recorded interviews were conducted with three local citizens. I decided on this approach because as a foreign national my observations and language may have a European perspective which is not shared by the inhabitants of the place (Fielding, 2004; Waite, 2013). The participants, who chose their own pseudonyms, were Kan, a 26-year-old man working in advertising, Hermione, a 32-year-old doctor, and Sukdee, a 40-year-old director of a kindergarten school (Waterhouse, 2020).

In Interview 1 Sukdee's description focuses mostly on the people and their interactions, as shown in the transcribed excerpts. R: Researcher, S: Sukdee, H: Hermione, K: Kan.

R: Describe Takhli.

S: Takhli is small town, very very small town and small town but so many people in Takhli and Takhli is quite like peaceful and people in Takhli is so kind and simple life [....].

R: And if someone is coming to visit Takhli, let's imagine someone who is not even Thai, never been to Thailand, how would you describe Takhli to them.

S: Yeah, I would told, I will tell them about Takhli is a has so many culture. Chinese, quite Chinese and Thai together and Takhli has something like a, like a natural. And, so, um, how to explain, and, is different culture in Takhli



but it's like can live together. The people can support together everythings. we kindness all the time.

R: Ok, ok staying with the idea of culture, if someone is visiting Takhli and this person is interested to learn about the history and culture of Takhli, where would you take them?

S: Um, I would, I would take them to the temple. Because its everything we will start at the temple, so many people go to the temple for, make a good [....].

In Interview 2 Hermione, who is from Nakhon Sawan city but lived and worked in Takhli hospital for two years, puts the physical size of the town in context to the rest of the province and expands on the occupations of the population.

H: [....] so I have to describe Takhli?

R: Yes, please.

H: [.....] it's the biggest, so it's the, the biggest district of Nakhon Sawan, except Nakhon Sawan, and, in, and the population too, and as I see, most of population work as, in the field as farmers, but Takhli still has industrial too, like the cement factory and sugar factory, and it has big school [.....],

Interview 3 is with Kan, who has lived in Takhli all his life. Although he mentions the district museum of history his account favours culture as stories and actions over place.

R: And can you describe Takhli, describe Takhli to me?

K: [....] ah Takhli, is how to call, like uh, mythology, you know mythology, about the name of Takhli, it's from Mythology of Thai, it's from about some sport, like a polo, in Thai we call Teeklee, and they change to Takhli, we have lot of alleys, of you call like a street, name of character in that mythology, like, Phra Sang, Rodchana, and a lot of from there [.....].

R: What about if they're interested in history and culture? Where would you take them?

K: History, I don't know if it's in Takhli, Chansen have museum of history of Thai people about, I don't know how to call it in English, *สำริด* age, stone age, then *สำริด* age (Bronze age) [.....] copper? [....] I forgot



your question.

R: Place of history and culture.

K: Culture we can obviously. That I can call, like see around, around Takhli because this is not a citizen's town it is a traditional culture in here, you can see the monk in every morning, how people get their daily life in the morning, everywhere in Takhli is culture [...].

The interviews show that for the local Thai citizens heritage and culture were less bound to tangible places and more embodied in the traditional way of life of the monks, farmers, and Thai-Chinese population and the mythological stories that they told (with the exception of one small out-of-town museum on local bronze age history). This prompted me to ask how the concept of place might be conceptualised differently so that it can produce new ways of interacting with(in) this particular environment (Silva and Jove, 2019a; Bastien-Valenca, 2020).

An encounter with contemporary art

In the first English project lesson of the semester a video artwork was projected in the classroom to arouse the desires necessary to move into situations of uncertainty and the vulnerable and creative process of transformation through learning (Jove, 2017; Fleming, 2020). The specific artwork was selected because the artist was exhibiting at the Bangkok Art Biennale in the same year, and it seemed important to select content relative to the space that the research inhabits (Waite, 2013). In addition, I hoped that the video game style would be aesthetically pleasing and at the same time rupture existing ideas on a form of representation familiar to the pupils (Williams and Burden, 1997; Eisner, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2010). This perhaps demonstrates a relational aesthetics approach to contemporary art, where works are more about use rather than contemplation (Bishop, 2004). Indeed, Bourriaud (2002) argues that a work of art should not be seen as complete within itself but as an encounter, and manifests from the relationship between the space, the intervention and the audience. In this case Lu Yang's contemporary art was being utilised for its power to affect and amplify curricular possibilities (O'Sullivan, 2010; Jove, 2017).

The artwork *Electromagnetic Brainology* (Fig. 1), while presented in a media style familiar to pupils, shows Tibetan Buddhist deities as virtual characters in the afterlife of a digital world. In this moment my role was not to present or teach these concepts but rather to introduce a contemporary artwork as a problematic text to invite difference and an awareness of the heterogeneity (Ryan and Amorim, 2005; Waterhouse, 2020). The research sought to investigate whether the projection of the artwork in the classroom facilitated new dialogue, where the pupils would ask how they relate to the space it defines and enter into divergent and unpredictable networks of growth (Bourriaud, 2002; Jove and Farrero, 2018). This required my intervention to consider how to mediate the art encounter so that it might rupture the pupils' unconscious ways of being, to open up new possibilities for more productive ways of interacting in daily life (O'Sullivan, 2010).



Figure 1. *Electromagnetic Brainology* by Lu Yang, video from MetaObjects (2018) <https://vimeo.com/273066578>.

After viewing the artwork, the pupils' task was to draw the experience (Fig. 2), to elicit their personal responses to the encounter so that the curriculum could build from the difference amongst them (Roy, 2003). Here my role was not to ask the pupils if they found what they were looking for but to ask what they had found, what the outcomes, perhaps unexpected, were and to follow the pupils on their own journey (Ranciere, 1991). The act of drawing allowed the pupils to embody creative representation to enhance thinking,

reflection and development (Trimis and Savva, 2009). Furthermore, drawing can provide a material reference between minds to verify the pupil's attention and vigilance in learning (Ranciere, 1991). Following the completion of the task and an analysis of the children's work, a discussion with the pupils as co-participants in the project determined the direction of the developing curriculum (Fielding, 2004).

Task:

1. Write your name on the paper
 2. Draw and write about Lu Yang's art.
 - What can you see? -What do you like?
 - What do you think? -What do you feel?
- *Use colours to make your picture the same as Lu Yang's art.
**Use the word list to help you with spelling.

Figure 2. PowerPoint slide of the lesson instructions created by the author and displayed to the children immediately after watching Lu Yang's art.

Assemblages in action

An apprenticeship through problems

The initial encounter with the twenty-four grade 2 pupils generated a situation of contention and antagonism in the space that the art had created (Bishop, 2004). Some children argued through their drawings that the art was about place, cities, planets and volcanoes, while others contended that it was about the giant anime style characters (Fig. 3). Trimis and Savva (2009) state that when engaged in artistic experimentation, learners naturally make connections between the art and elements of their reality. The children saw their personal interest in television series with(in) the art but did not agree if they were Japanese robots from mecha anime or titans similar to those in the series *Attack on Titan*. I did not intervene to solve this debate as the relentless problematisation of signs is one strategy to prevent boundaries of knowledge

from forming (Roy, 2003). In fact, this was precisely my aim as the emitter of signs to guide the pupils through an apprenticeship in the art of discovering problems (Waterhouse, 2020). I mediated a democratic vote as to what the primary expression of the art was, not to subsume difference to the majority but to hear the multiplicity of voices and seek a potential space to deterritorialise and take lines of flight (Roy, 2003; Fielding, 2004).



Figure 3. Collage of children's initial responses created by the author, 2020.

The resulting winner –Japanese anime robots– was not the answer to the problem but rather the start of the exploration; as Ranciere (1991) states, it is not helpful for learners to just give opinions: all statements should be evidenced within the material itself. I provided a framework for the pupils to generate their own concept of robots, drawing what they understood by the term and writing the qualities that their representation embodied in simple sentences (North and Piccardo, 2016). Importantly, the activity mediated the experience in the pupils' developmental zone, and as their concept of robot developed in light of the task and discussion, the children rejected their claim (Vygotsky, 1978). The pupils now appeared to be working within divergent networks of growth, as they quickly switched direction to the problem of titans (Jove and Farrero, 2018). This may not have been a demarked change in topic from the study of robots, but a line of flight as the pupils' concept development underwent qualitative transformations, as we compared everything we encountered to what we already knew (Vygotsky, 1986; Ranciere, 1991; Allan, 2008). This might be what Jove and Farrero (2018) refer to as rhizomatic wanderings, where pupils enter a journey through uncertainty

without any definite purpose, which has the potential to disrupt conventional knowledge and the way it is systemised.

The children knew the term titan from the anime series *Attack on Titan*, which features giant humanoids that attack the human race (Netflix, 2021). I respected the child-conceived notion of this term into the developing curriculum but also introduced the Greek titans side by side with the Japanese anime characters, to expand perception (Trimis and Savva, 2009; Sellers, 2010). Deleuze and Guattari suggest that we move beyond the acquisition of existing concepts towards inventing new ways of thinking (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). I therefore generated the conditions for pupils to create connections between the various titans (Greek and Japanese anime) and Lu Yang's artwork, to develop concepts to move our thinking forward, while always demanding evidence in the materials (Ranciere, 1991; Piccardo, 2020). This was achieved through the same task used previously to define robots, followed by the positioning of Lu Yang's characters beside the children's representations of titans (Fig. 4) and asking: what is the same and what is different? (Ranciere, 1991). In this instance the pupils concluded that their descriptive qualities to understand titans were also embodied by Lu Yang's characters in *Electromagnetic Brainology*.

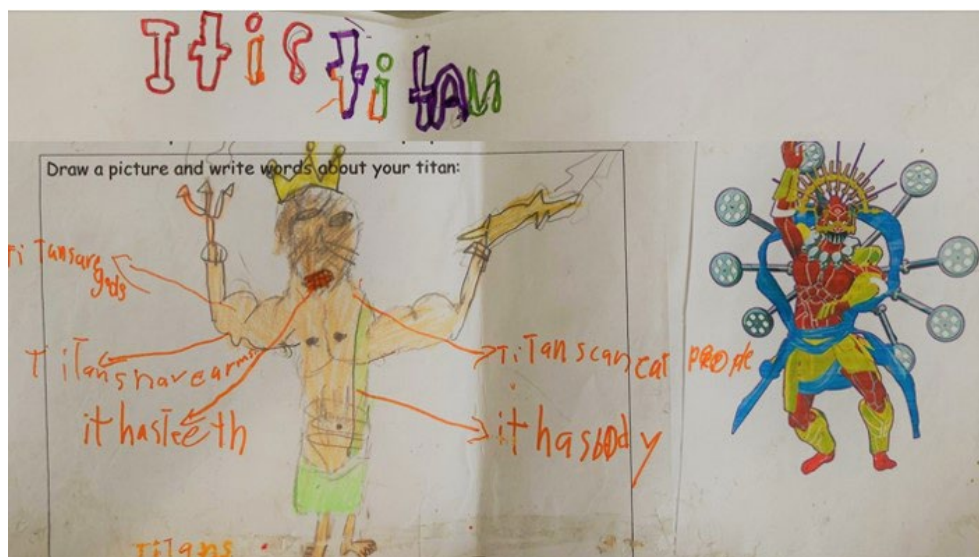


Figure 4. Children's work showing a comparison between their notion of titans and Lu Yang's characters, 2020.



This appeared to be a critical moment where sense emerged from the intermixing of heterogeneous elements (Bangou, 2020). I recognised the children's curricular performativity as their knowledge of the anime series they watched at home, their collective deliberation on the notion of titans and the art encounter came together to form an assemblage for our becoming-project (Sellers, 2010). Furthermore, my aims, the structured planning of the school and the identification of the pupils' language needs coincided to form additional connections manifesting uniquely in response to the children's desires (Bastien-Valenca, 2020). For example, while the pupils negotiated the nature of the characters within Lu Yang's artwork, the materials used to mediate their thinking were not random in content but contained language structures and vocabulary from the school prescribed textbook being studied simultaneously (ibid). We could not have predicted that the pupils would relate the art encounter to a specific anime series viewed at home, showing that the assemblages were dependent on the rhizomatic connections made with(in) the multiplicity of elements at play (Bangou, 2020).

An emerging rhizocurriculum

Bastien-Valenca (2020) presents the idea of rhizocurriculum, which recognises that learning encounters are not tied to teacher-pupil binaries, physical spaces or curriculum documents; rather a rhizocurriculum makes connections between multiplicities and permits the power of affect to disrupt and create new transformations and becomings. When the pupils' expressions on titans intermixed with the art content mediated through the teacher-researcher, the state standards and English textbooks, the resulting emergent assemblages might be considered a rhizocurriculum (Bangou, 2020). This is perhaps nothing new for the pupils as children's expression on content is often rhizomatic, yet as a teacher-researcher this meant allowing the structured planning to be affected and ruptured by the children's desires (Sellers, 2010). This created situations of uncertainty as where the intensity of affect is variable, potentially anything can happen, meaning that specific outcomes could not be predicted and the precise encounter could not be repeated (Bangou, 2020). As a result, I did not necessarily initiate a rhizocurriculum; rather it happened



in response to heterogeneous elements coming together in the context for learning (Waterhouse, 2020).

The pupils had made connections to their own reality and personal interests, yet this remained relative to a foreign (Japanese) anime series. As the researcher and expert apprentice with(in) the rhizocurriculum, I sought new content related to the pupils' expression to be problematised once more (Trimis and Savva, 2009; Waterhouse, 2020). In a visit to MOCA Bangkok, one of the largest contemporary art museums in Thailand, I observed how many of the works were representations of giant mythological characters from Thai literature and Buddhist creation stories (Willis, 2019). This led me to introduce the Thai literary characters into the project, with the aim of advancing learning in the pupils' development zone through the discovery of new problems connected to our art encounter and the culture we inhabit (Vygotsky, 1978; Waite, 2013).

The pupils were asked: Are there titans in Thailand? The children immediately responded that there were not; however, I treated this as a provisional answer, asking the children to provide evidence against both Lu Yang's artwork and their own working concept (Ranciere, 1991). Images of Thai literary characters such as Kroot, Hanuman, Thotsakan and Phra Narai, all of which the children instantly recognised, were intermixed with characters from *Attack on Titan* and Greek mythology. What occurred as a result of this mediated experience was a rupturing of the existing structures and categories that the children held, as the concepts of Thai literary characters and titans were deterritorialised (Fig. 5) (Roy, 2003). Lu Yang's contemporary art had caused us to slow down and become aware of the heterogeneity and in response, create a concept of titans to make sense of the form and content expressed by the work (O'Sullivan, 2010). Through planned interventions and spontaneous rhizomatic connections, the children now found that the characters in the traditional tales of their culture also embodied many of the same qualities as the artwork and thus the idea of becoming-Thai titans emerged (Sellers, 2010).



Expressive outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I started the class sitting and speaking in a low voice and the children responded well to this -we repeated the trajectory we have taken and the children repeated this -I asked what is a titan and children showed understanding of this. -I asked if there are titans in Thailand and they said no. -We watched the Thai animation which hooked them in and some agreed that some of the characters fitted the description of a titan -the children worked independently in groups to complete the hit and miss and it resulted in diverse answers which they then contested -In light of the input and the hit and miss activity the children changed their provisional claim and included several Thai characters as titans -The most common identified titan was colossal from attack of the titans which demonstrates the pupils understanding as this was the original reference. -the second most identified titan was Thotsakan who is a Thai character. After this Atlas, Kroot, Thor, Yak, Phra Narai were all voted as titans. -Kroot was voted the titan who was liked the most, after this Phra Narai and Atlas were also popular (Hanuman was also popular but not voted as a titan). Zeus, Thor and Thotsakan also got a like. -the children also showed application of their English language learning with many children using can in sentences and questions.
New Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -children questions included: Can titans jump? 3 Can Kroot fly into space? 2 Do titans eat people? What titan is the strongest? What caused the titans to fight gods? Are titans real? Are giant animals' titans?

Figure 5. Final section of the lesson plan after recording events in the lesson on 27th August, 2020.

Connections between school and community

The pupils stated that the becoming-Thai titans could not be found in the countryside town of Takhli, and although I have lived in the town for over four years, I had no evidence to refute this claim. I then re-visited many well-known locations to see the potential for affect of various spaces, as understanding is created through action (Jove and Farrero, 2018; Bangou, 2020). This was an awakening of the infra-ordinary as it became immediately apparent that iconography representing the same characters the pupils were discussing in the classroom could be found in many locations near the school (Silva and Jove, 2019b). I selected the largest temple in town as a site to visit with the pupils, as it not only contained a range of representations connected

to our project but was also familiar to the children. Wat Sawang Wong (Fig. 6) is a central space in the Takhli community with large playing fields used daily for exercise, football training, festivals and fairs; it is also the starting point of the school sports day parade.



Figure 6. Wat Sawang Wong temple, Takhli, image from YouTube, 2020.

<https://youtu.be/CMVBaGnGTtM>.

I was aware that taking pupils to learn outside the classroom would not necessarily result in new relationships with place as often teachers continue conventional pedagogy in different spaces (Martinez, 2010). However, this visit was not a lesson to be experienced outside, but rather a deterritorialising movement out of the school as the children sought to verify concepts created through dialogues between art and culture, namely Lu Yang's work and Thai mythology (Silva and Jove, 2019a). I hoped that the pupils' desires could mediate the conditions where participants were vulnerable and receptive to, and passionate about, their surroundings (Larrosa, 2003; Ryan, 2012). This was evident in the children's behaviour when they excitedly pointed out examples of becoming-Thai titans from the bus before we even arrived at the temple. This observed passion perhaps demonstrates the affirmative action of becoming, as our understanding of people and the world begins by understanding ourselves relative to the places that we inhabit (Waite, 2013).

On our arrival a practising monk opened a variety of rooms within the temple grounds and left us free to explore the complex. This was not a heritage site with an education team working in partnership with the school, but rather an open space where assemblages between the social, affective, aesthetic and educational could be built (Silva and Jove, 2019a). The first room we visited was unfamiliar to the children, the school and myself, as it is not often opened up for general temple use (Fig. 7). Characters from Thai mythology were engraved and painted on the doors and walls, and the room contained cabinets filled with a variety of cultural artefacts which fascinated the children. The pupils demonstrated voluntary agency as they immediately asked me for their notebooks to quickly record what they saw in relation to their own personal goals (Ushioda, 2003; Van Lier, 2004). As we moved around the temple grounds, the children were invited to draw something that they found interesting as a means of validating their own experiences through interacting with materials and sign systems (Fig. 8) (Trimis and Savva, 2009).



Figure 7. A room of artefacts unfamiliar to the author at Wat Sawang Wong; photo by the author, 2020.



Figure 8. Shows the checklist for becoming-Thai titans and the children drawing evidence on location; photo by the author, 2020.

Prior to visiting the temple, each pupil wrote an observation checklist that contained nine examples of mythological characters which they considered becoming-Thai titans. To the children's surprise eight of the nine Thai titans were observed on the visit, and the majority of the children chose to draw an example of these in their notebook. This demonstrates how artists and artwork can raise awareness of the infra-ordinary, which might help pupils generate new relationships with place that are more critical and affective (Silva and Jove, 2019b). For example, this encounter produced new desires, as on return to school the children said that while the experience had shown their working concept of becoming-Thai titans in the immediate environment, the style of representation was old (O'Sullivan, 2010). This implies that places in education are not empty spaces or venues for interaction with content; instead, place might be considered an integral element that shapes the identities and the processes of learning through the expression of culture (Wattchow and Brown, 2011). A new assemblage was forming as the children were now in a dialogue with the culture of a local place, asking how they could represent the Thai iconography of the temple in a contemporary style (O'Sullivan, 2010; Waite, 2013).



I guided the pupils to compare and contrast by re-watching Electromagnetic Brainology as well as other examples of Lu Yang's work (Ranciere, 1991). As assemblages are emergent entities, it is not possible to make claims of direct causal relationships between elements and affect (Waterhouse, 2020). However, what is possible is a constant experimentation with the combination of elements introduced and observation of how powers of affect manifest together in the assemblage (Bangou, 2020). The re-viewing of Lu Yang's video game style art perhaps resonated with the pupils' desire for more contemporary representations and the children decided to create Thai titans in the style of their favourite computer game characters (Fig. 9). The dialogue between art and community appeared to support the pupils in the construction of personal knowledge from places, people and objects through interactions which allowed them to explore possibilities for invention and transformation within their environment (Trimis and Savva, 2009).

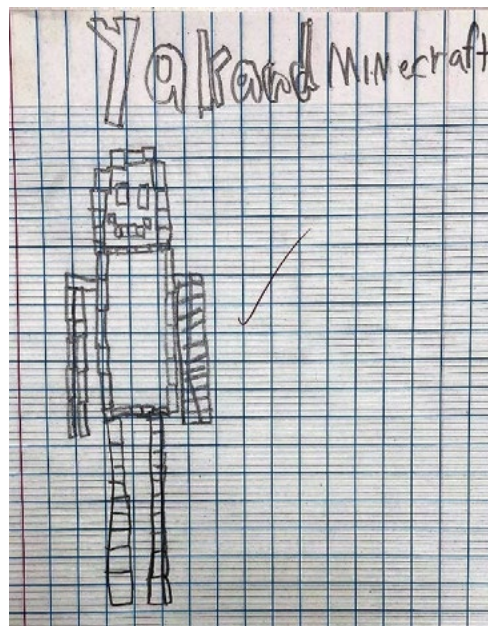


Figure 9. Pupil's notebook showing a proposal to create a Yak (Thai mythological giant) in the style of Minecraft, 2020.



This transformation was initiated at a conceptual level with the idea of titans in response to a work of contemporary art. Connections to Thai culture produced further deterritorialisations at the temple, where the pupils saw what they thought were only literary characters artistically represented in context as protectors of a local place in their daily lives (Pugh and Girod, 2007). This second art stimulus of the temple architecture and artefacts then appeared to generate additional ruptures as the children rejected the existing structures and representations of Thai mythology and took lines of flight to re-create the characters for the digital generation (Ryan and Amorin 2005; Jove and Farrero, 2008). In the classroom I guided problematisation towards artistic materials as the children engaged with the difficulty of representing their working concept becoming-digital Thai titans (Trimis and Savva, 2009). The children re-watched videos of their favourite games from the framework of an artist seeking references, and they worked together through a variety of mediums of their choice to present this idea, which formed the final part of the project (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. Creations by the pupils showing becoming-digital Thai titans with characters such as Kroot, Thotsakan and Singha mixed with Minecraft, Free Fire and Roblox; photo by the author, 2020.

From a contemporary art stimulus, I was attentive to the heterogeneity and connections that formed the assemblage which led us out of the school (Waterhouse, 2020). Through a sensitivity and responsiveness to place the research seemed to generate transformative experiences where learners produced new relationships with a local temple, potentially developing a deeper sense of belonging (Wattchow and Brown, 2011). Yet Bastien-Valencia (2020) suggests that researchers should not only reflect on the actual but also pay attention to the virtual, to understand the full complexity of learning encounters. This means asking what possibilities existed within the elements and connections



but did not manifest in these particular instances. For example, the pupils created computer game style Thai mythology hybrids as a way of representing old cultural ideas in relation to their contemporary reality. However, within this idea there is also the problem of identity and representation in the globalisation of online gaming. The children's work might also serve as representations of Thai identity for avatars in a digital world. This points to the potential possibilities existing with(in) rhizomatic networks that are generated through dialogues between art and community spaces (O'Sullivan, 2010; Silva and Jove, 2019a).

To other worlds of possibilities

Prior to this research, I wondered: How might the concept of place be conceptualised differently so that it can produce new ways of interacting with(in) this particular environment? (Silva and Jove, 2019a; Bastien-Valenca, 2020). In my mind, place was central in this inquiry and thus the questions and actions that it provoked started with place; What local places can be used to create meaningful learning? I travelled the area seeking locations to use and to find out whether such places existed in the vicinity of the school and what possible relations might be constructed. At the same time, the literature I read for this paper stated that from a Deleuzian perspective a problem cannot be solved, only new ways of being or thinking can be created in which the problem no longer exists (Bangou et al., 2020).

As this research experimented with the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari the questions I asked above ceased to be relevant, as there was no need to determine what kind of place was productive for learning or how to mediate the connections. The pupils' becoming process was already generating desires which extended outside the limits of the school and I had to only follow the pupils on their learning journey as they sought to verify their understanding of the world in relation to their environment (Ranciere, 1991; Sellers, 2010). The pupils' interaction and response to the temple demonstrated rhizocurriculum that embodied critical, reflective and creative thinking (Jove, 2017; Bastien-Valenca, 2020).



Yet the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari also states that such an assemblage is emergent and unique to the elements and connections made and therefore cannot be repeated (Waterhouse, 2020). Indeed, I projected the same artwork, in the same school, with the same drawing task in response, to grade 1 and grade 3 pupils separately. Neither class problematised the characters in *Electromagnetic Brainology* nor made connections to titans; rather, they constructed unique relations to their own interests (Ushioda, 2003; Trimis and Savva, 2009). The emergent assemblage in grade 3 led the pupils to some disused woodland behind the school, as a background for an augmented reality film after observing Lu Yang's use of technology (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. Lu Yang's work inspired the pupils to create augmented reality films with virtual dinosaurs; the image is a still from the children's film, 2020.

This unpredictable encounter slowed down time and perception for the children; as they waited for the camera in an unfamiliar space the pupils started to develop new relationships with the woodland (O'Sullivan, 2010; Canning, 2013). The children became attentive to the flora and fauna and started passionately documenting what they were observing. Similar to grade 2, the grade 3 pupils voluntarily decided to re-present their thinking, some through forest adventure games and others through art (Fig. 12). The same artwork by Lu Yang had generated different connections which resulted in the deterritorialisation of disused woodland, as a film set, and a museum of curi-

osities and source of aesthetic beauty and an adventure playground and so on (Sellers, 2010). This suggested that perhaps new conceptions of place were required, as I did not even consider this disused space a ‘place’; it was the empty space in between the school and the Chinese graveyard (Waite, 2013). Yet it featured as a critical element in the grade 3 pupils’ becoming-pluri-lingual in the environment of which they are a part (Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Piccardo et al., 2019).



Figure 12. Children voluntarily chose to work in photography and watercolour to show the flora in the disused space behind the school during the end of year open house exhibition.

(In)conclusion

Bangou (2020) suggests that we should evaluate elements within the assemblage for their power to affect or be affected. For example, woodland areas have a low cultural density as they do not come loaded with expectations for behaviour, which perhaps makes them open to forces of affect as grade 3’s continuous reconceptualisation of the place suggested (Waite, 2013). The



examples given in this research suggest that working through contemporary art and the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari has the potential to create new dialogues with different kinds of places (Silva and Jove, 2019a). However, it is important to note that the same artwork and task was mediated in grade 1 and while connections were made, none led to relationships with places outside the school. Although I attempted to introduce new elements to generate these possibilities, I was incapable of making them manifest (Bangou, 2020). This critically demonstrates that this research is not a 'how to' guide for generating links between school and community (Waterhouse, 2020). The use of a contemporary art stimulus and attending to the assemblage both permitted these connections to happen (grade 2 and grade 3) and at the same time not happen (grade 1). I have no answer for this. (In)conclusion: I can only recommend a practice of experimentation, to show the affects the various bodies have upon an encounter and find out whether particular combinations with(in) the assemblage increase or limit the capacities for the different entities to transform or be transformed (Bangou, 2020).

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