

# Unhoming Practices of Enquiry: Seriously Playful and Playfully Serious

## Una subversión en las prácticas de indagación: tan serias como divertidas

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### Abstract

This paper is concerned with unhoming secure ideas and practices of knowledge creation, through non-hierarchical, boundary-crossing forms of pedagogy, in order to attend to how processes of enquiry matter, whenever we engage in the struggle to address injustice, and not only for humans. Entrenched assumptions related to age, phase, or education setting, are brought into question, to blur distinctions such as for/with; child/adult; playful/serious and learning/teaching/research and to explore further possibilities for creative enquiry. Practices of enquiry are theorised through the movement of Philosophy for/with Children (Haynes, 2018), its community of enquiry pedagogy, (Gregory & Laverty, 2017) and philosophy with picturebooks (Haynes & Murriss, 2012, 2016; Murriss & Haynes, 2018). What more can happen, when vibrant matter

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is taken into account, is a driving question. “Thing-power” (Bennett, 2010) and “thinking-through-making” (Ingold, 2013) are activated as part of this exploration. Through accounts of research events from two international projects, the paper draws attention to artists Viviane Schwartz and Paula Rego, their picturebook artworks, and their artistic processes. Each example shows how the artists, artworks and processes came into play through the events, provoking different forms of experimentation. Through exemplification, showing rather than telling, further possibilities for creative enquiry might be inspired.

**Keywords:** Enquiry, unhoming, philosophy-for/with, picturebooks, creative.

## Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es subvertir ideas y prácticas de creación de conocimiento que se dan como seguras, a través de formas de pedagogía no jerárquicas que traspasan fronteras. Ello, con el fin de prestar atención a cómo suceden los procesos de investigación siempre que nos implicamos en la lucha para afrontar las injusticias, también en lo que afecta a los no-humanos. En este sentido, el texto pone en tela de juicio suposiciones arraigadas relacionadas con la edad, la fase o el entorno educativo, para difuminar distinciones como para/con; niño/adulto; lúdico/serio y aprendizaje/enseñanza y explorar nuevas posibilidades de investigación creativa. Las prácticas de indagación que aquí se presentan se teorizan a través de la Escuela de Filosofía para/con niños (Haynes 2018), su comunidad de indagación pedagógica (Gregory y Lavery 2017) y la filosofía con libros con imágenes (Haynes y Murriss, 2016; Murriss y Haynes 2018). Todo lo que puede suceder cuando se tiene en cuenta la materia vibrante es una cuestión determinante. “Thing-power” (Bennett 2010) y “Thinking-through-making” (Ingold 2013) se activan como parte de esta exploración. Con relatos de ciertos acontecimientos fruto de dos proyectos de investigación internacionales, el texto llama la atención sobre las artistas Viviane Schwartz y Paula Rego, sus obras de arte de libros ilustrados y sus procesos artísticos. Cada ejemplo muestra cómo las artistas, las obras de arte y los procesos entraron en juego a través de los acontecimientos, provocando diferentes formas de experimentación. De este modo, mediante la ejemplificación, mostrando más que diciendo, se inspiran futuras oportunidades de investigación creativa.

**Palabras-clave:** Indagación, desarraigo, filosofía para/con, libros ilustrados, creative.

## Introduction

This special issue of *Araucaria* adopts the theme of philosophy *for* peace and creativity, and invites contributors and readers to put those concepts, and their relations, into question. For the times in which we are living, we could surmise that such philosophy is bound to entail practical ways of working through and with pluralities, and including the more than human. Moments such as the now call for creative engagement with refusal, retreat and resistance, as well as with matters of difference and conviviality. This practical philosophy implies alertness and greater efforts to undo old prejudices, pedagogical habits, and authoritarian epistemic relations (Murriss & Haynes, forthcoming).

Imaginative struggles with plural perspectives and the ground of dis/agreement are things that children, young people and adults report that they particularly value, through opportunities to philosophise with their peers and with educators (Haynes, 2002; 2007), as well as in informal inter-generational and community contexts (Tiffany, 2009). Right now it is the ground of dis/agreement that demands more attention; dis/agreement that expresses relations of plurality, difference, connection and possibility. Simone Thornton and Gil Burgh (2017:60) argue for “a conception of peace as the ability and disposition to cope with conflict as a democratic community through environmentally and socially embedded inquiry”. They further propose that, “in a world where peace is never finally achieved, always struggled for, we need an educational process that embodies this struggle”.

Following this line of thinking, perhaps it might be useful to consider the notion of peace/ability, as we explore what kinds of educational and research processes might embody these “struggles” in the now. Through what kind of democratic communities? Unhoming established practices of philosophical enquiry is part of such a struggle. The “for” of philosophy “for” peace is a reminder of the (never finally achieved) peace of the future – while the struggle “with” peace/ability takes place in the now. This movement of for/with echoes the “for” and “with” of Philosophy for/with Children. It implies communion with dis/agreement, with possibilities for becoming peace-able, with present/future relations.

With the title chosen for this paper, “unhoming” denotes global and local ruptures for people, animals, places and matter; shifts of in/security; the precarious, changing condition of the world. Unhoming signals the shaky ground of the unfamiliar *and* the oddly familiar, the strange in the ordinary, the taboo; experiences that might be resonant, edgy, eerie, unsettling or uncanny. Through unhoming, familiar systems, structures and relations are brought into question. This includes anthropocentric dimensions of humanist thought and action, with all their destructive consequences. Unhoming might provoke discomfort and uncertainty, perhaps shame, fear or excitement, making cracks in the taken-for-

granted: cracks to sense a something else. Unhoming pedagogical and research enquiry is a response to precarity, as well as to injustice, and might lead to unexpected or hopeful possibilities.

The movement of Philosophy for/with Children and Communities<sup>2</sup> has enquiry at its heart. Its dialogical and participatory pedagogy seeks to engender critical, caring, collaborative and creative thinking, through community building. Typically, philosophical enquiry demands active engagement with concepts<sup>3</sup>, including those associated with epistemic practices, positions and relations, such as thinking/thinker, knowing/knower, theorising/theorist and researching/researcher<sup>4</sup>. The reflexive and dynamic pedagogy of this movement, the community of philosophical enquiry<sup>5</sup> (Sharp, 1991), is one that also includes the *possibility* for the very processes of enquiry to be called into question, reviewed, checked for inclusivity and fairness, and adapted or changed to satisfy any concerns. In any educational practice, including one that intends to be liberatory, epistemic violence might be present, either hidden or overt. It might reside in the choice of texts, the silencing or diminishing of certain voices, the dismissal or exclusion of certain ways of knowing or practising philosophy – a failure to be sensitive to relations of power and authority or to recognise that the venue is not necessarily a safe space for enquiry.

The flourishing of the community of enquiry depends on the rights, freedoms and relationships of power operating in particular contexts *and* the practical, material and social conditions created for involvement: what matters, who can speak, with what authority and by what means; in which spaces; who listens; and what actions should follow? Even as we hope for inclusivity, silences and absences go unnoticed, contributions are misunderstood or undervalued (Chetty & Suissa, 2017; Lin & Sequiera, 2017; Murriss, 2013; Reed-Sandoval and Sykes, 2017). This is not a matter of merely amending procedure, but of deep attention to the removal of obstacles; whether located in prejudices and/

<sup>2</sup> Philosophy for Children is often used as an umbrella term for practices of philosophical enquiry in schools and also refers to the programme of novels and teacher manuals, originally created by Matthew Lipman with Ann Margaret Sharp at the IAPC (<https://www.montclair.edu/iapc/what-is-philosophy-for-children/what-is-the-iapc-curriculum/>). The term “Philosophy for/with Children and Communities” aims to reflect the broader band of practices with family resemblances, but that can take place in different settings, formal or informal, with adults and children, and opening the politics of children’s roles and participation in philosophical enquiry by toying with the prepositions “for” and “with”.

<sup>3</sup> A term given to this investigation is cracking concepts, as Kennedy and Kennedy, (2011:272) put it “*This crack in the concept is where contradiction is encountered, problematisation begins, and where its propositional content breaks open into a question, or series of questions*”.

<sup>4</sup> Interweaving epistemology with ethics highlights how categories of difference shape conceptions of knowledge, the knowing subject, and practices of enquiry. Some practices can lead to exclusion, denial of epistemic authority, dismissal of particular ways of knowing; representing women/the feminine, people of colour, children and elderly people, and differently abled people, as less than fully human, or mattering only in the ways they serve dominant interests.

<sup>5</sup> Some writers and practitioners use the spelling “inquiry”, as does Ann Margaret Sharp in her 1991 essay: *The Community of Inquiry: Education for Democracy*.

or un/conscious bias; institutional discourses; a lack of imagination, spaces or materials. It means asking, what are the limitations of the process; what else might be possible? Hence, the need to disturb and *unhome* notions of “community” and “enquiry” as being secure, predictable or trouble-free. This paper is part of an on-going critical exploration of enquiry processes, and how they come to matter.

This writing springs from related encounters with fellow academics, educators, postgraduate students, picturebook creators and researchers, one in Spain, one in South Africa and one in the UK, all incorporating philosophical enquiry with creative workshops. The particular focus of this paper first emerged through a Philosophy for/with Children course held at UJI, Castellon, where I had the good fortune to work alongside tutors and students from different parts of the world enrolled in the University’s postgraduate International Peace, Conflict and Development Studies programmes<sup>6</sup>. During the workshops, enquiries, informal conversation and meetings with colleagues, a particular question took shape and this was about the intra-sections of pedagogies related to three areas: Philosophy for/with Children, creativity and peace (-ability).<sup>7</sup>

Through involvement in two international research projects, Decolonising Early Childhood Discourses in Higher Education (DECD)<sup>8</sup> and Unhoming Pedagogies: teaching ethics and global literature<sup>9</sup>, I have been party to re-thinking knowledge creation practices as forms of collaborative enquiry and creative experimentation. Both projects are concerned with struggles for justice. This paper includes examples of these playful/serious approaches to enquiry, which emerge through philosophy with picturebooks. Each example has been inspired through the entangled relationships between an artist, her picturebook artworks and her creative processes. The first example features Viviane Schwartz and the second example engages with the work of Paula Rego. This paper explores creative enquiry through associations made between art practices, pedagogy and research, to consider what these associations bring to embodied struggles for justice and/or peace/ability.

The paper begins by discussing unhoming methodologies at work in the projects. Next are the two accounts of playful/serious research events. The paper includes discussion of what artists, artworks and artistic processes bring to enquiry and concludes with thoughts about enquiry for/with creativity, justice and peace/ability.

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<sup>6</sup> UJI runs Masters and Doctoral programmes in International Peace and Conflict Studies <https://www.uji.es/estudis/oferta/base/masters/actual/centre/fchs/pau-2013/?idioma=en>

<sup>7</sup> Both leading tutors on the programme, Sofia Herrero Rico and Sonia Paris Albert, have a strong interest in enquiry based and creative approaches to teaching and Sonia has written about the value of children’s creative thinking in enquiry in a scholarly review of perspectives on childhood (Paris Albert and Haynes, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.decolonizingchildhood.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/internationalhumanities/globalchallengescollaboratory/#a2>

## Unhoming enquiry – working creatively with/through texts

Bringing together “child” and “philosophy” goes *some* way towards dislodging habits and assumptions about communities of enquiry, (whether or not they involve child/ren). This is particularly the case as we question developmental, linear accounts of fixed and idealized child/hoods and unsettle the child/adult binary. We can consider *childing* as a playful *and* serious way of being in the world that we can *all* do, as (to) “child” shifts from noun to verb (Kennedy and Kohan, 2008).

In something of an affirmation of this proposal, many contemporary picturebooks are age-transgressive and unhome artistic and literary form/genre<sup>10</sup>. Through philosophy with picturebooks, we have argued for child to be taken seriously as a category of exclusion from the figure of the fully human, normally depicted as white, male, able-bodied and adult (Haynes & Murriss, 2016; Murriss & Haynes, 2018). I have also made the case that children are “already able” to philosophise (Haynes, 2014). It could be argued further, that child/ren are more-than-able, when Western adultist definitions of ability, including the ability to philosophise, are similarly unhomed. Picturebook philosophy engages serious/playful enquiry with literatureartworks: conceptually, affectively, creatively and practically. Our collaborative research analyses connections between artists and artworks, the avoidance or disturbance they provoke, and the many controversies they “allow” to be aired (Haynes & Murriss, 2012; 2016; 2017). This paper continues to push at the boundaries of philosophical enquiry. In addition to the picturebook artworks of Viviane Schwartz and Paula Rego, two other texts have been part of the generation of lively possibilities, in the process of re-thinking what creative philosophical enquiry might become.

Part of our reconfiguration of enquiry must involve important thinking about how communities of enquiry involve the more-than-human. Jane Bennett’s book *Vibrant Matter* (2010) is a powerfully moving text/thing. Her work is an investigation of what matters and of agency, and a re-thinking of their complex politics: a political ecology of things. She uses the term “thing-power”, to assert their connectedness in mutually affecting relationships, including the human and the more-than-human. In much Western thinking,

<sup>10</sup> Picturebook artists, such as Maurice Sendak and Shaun Tan, for whom the picturebook is an art medium of choice, also reject the notion of their being “for children”. Shaun Tan writes on his website:

Rather than talk about the differences between older and younger readers, however, I would prefer to consider what they might actually have in common. In particular, we are all interested in playing. [...] I draw pictures and make up stories, and they don’t necessitate a consideration for any particular audience. What matters are ideas, feelings and the pictures and words that build them. How can they be playful and subvert our usual expectations? What are the ways that something can be represented to most effectively invite us to think and ask questions about the world we live in? (<http://www.shauntan.net/about.html> accessed 7th August, 2019)

Tan demonstrates the playful/serious dimensions in his attention to subversive interpretations of play and in asking questions about the world.

human/being has been habitually portrayed as operating “against” a wider “backdrop” of the more-than-human, as if the world is a kind of “scenery” for human actors. Instead of this anthropocentric position, via congregational agency, “a wealth of agential entities [...] surface” (Rautio 2013:397). A distributive understanding of agency involves both diluting and shifting the agency of the foregrounded human (Bennett, 2010: 20-24). Bennett’s concern with thing power is an ethical one. She argues that, through attending sensitively to compelling experiences with thingmatter, humans might become more attuned to the vital materiality they share with the nonhuman. They might come to understand that humans are matter, and treat the nonhuman, such as animals, plants, the earth and commodities more mindfully, more strategically and more ecologically (Bennett 2010:17-18).

In keeping with de-centering the human, ecological sensitivity and peace-ability, Tim Ingold writes, “knowing is movement to be taught by the world” (2013:1) and “we owe our very being to the world we seek to know” (p.5). He advocates a form of enquiry that is thinking-through-making and making-through-thinking, a kind of experimentation, “prising an opening and following it where it leads” (p.7), and moving in real time. Making, for Ingold, is not a “project” of linear transposition from idea, to choosing material, to artefact creation, but rather a confluence of forces and materials. This text is a call for humans to co-respond *with* the world. Such practices of correspondence are not about describing and representing the world, but rather opening perceptions to the world, in order to respond. Making as a process of correspondence is not “the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance, but the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming (p.31). To respond to Ingold’s call is to commit to attunement, to attend to the affective correspondence of bodies and things and bodies as things, and to recognise their leakiness. Making, as a co-responding process, has been noted through the research events exemplified in this paper.

Ingold describes the organism not as a thing that moves but as composed in movement and engaged in a dance of animacy. Animism surfaces in discussion of the art practices of Schwartz and Rego, later in this paper. Philosophy *for/with* creativity and peace-ability turns to processes of animated, materialised methodologies of enquiry. Roz Birch (2019:32) has coined the term “pluri-versal” to characterise the desirable space/relations of creative, materialized philosophical enquiry. These methodologies variously work to dilute human-centeredness.

Working with/through these four books, I am curious to explore how dynamic engagement with artists, artworks, and mapping artistic processes (Rees-Jones, 2019:11), all come to matter in the pedagogy of the events reported in this paper. Research events have different constraints and opportunities of

time and space. Human participants are students, researchers, technicians, and academics from different disciplines and countries, and the many people that make the spaces welcoming, provide refreshments, cook the food and prepare the rooms. People continue to get more attention, at the expense of places and things. How to make these matter more?

The imaginary of the artist's studio, as differently depicted in the practices of Viviane Schwartz and Paula Rego, has been an inspiring part of the pedagogical mix in these philosophical enquiries beyond words (Giorza & Haynes, 2018). With this imaginary, the lowly workshop comes into its own in the encounters giving rise to this paper, not as a lesser practice of enquiry to presentation of "completed" papers, but incorporating the sharing of collaborative writing-in-progress alongside the making and thinking-through-material, blending academic, creative, practical and affective ways of knowing. Like the best kind of serious/play/enquiry-based early years settings, workshopping fosters movement and new connections through the fluid use of inside/outside spaces and the offerings of seductive craft materials: experiences of thinking together through eating/food walking/ground, swimming/water, dreaming/sleep. Each event is an invitation to think *with* the material environment in enquiry, to let the material have us, to be affected. In contrast to an artmaking process, where participants might *use* materials and objects to re-present concepts or dialogues "about" concepts, the provocation in each of these events was to think *with* and *among* what is at hand: spaces, materials, ideas and conversations.



Figure 1 - Materialising enquiry – workshop at UJI, Castellon, Spain, May 2019.

## Unsettling enquiry in higher education – pedagogies and research practices

How do the examples work in this paper? The two research events depicted are not intended to model or illustrate an idealised process of creative enquiry, a “method” to be followed or imitated by others, such as readers of this paper. Bringing age, phase and context into question allows us to re-think what kind of enquiries can take place, with what texts, spaces, materials, processes and modes of exploration. Can teaching, learning and research take place simultaneously? Do enquiries have to be (taken) serious(ly)? Is it only children that learn through play? What happens when we seek to learn from children’s literatures and/or their enquiries? The work of the examples is to provoke and encourage different connections, new possibilities, and further enquiries.

The two research projects featuring in this paper share some characteristics of creative enquiry and research creation. Springing from similar desires, they speak to each other. Both projects anticipate trouble: some *un*-doing, as well as

doing. Both adopt the position that enquiry and research take place in real time, whilst also playing with time and sensing movement in multiple directions. There is a sense of sorrow about unjust aspects of the past, a struggle towards, and a longing for, a “better future”, but without knowing what this looks like or expecting to finally arrive there. Both projects are concerned with what often remains unacknowledged, squashed, hidden, silenced or missing from humanist practices of enquiry. They are concerned with what we might have overlooked in previous re-researches, particularly where the focus has been rather singular, and exclusively on the human, whether linguistic, behavioural, cultural or social. Both projects seek to challenge the injustices associated with the “fully human” ideal of humanism and the epistemically authoritarian perspectives of anthropocentrism (Braidotti, 2013).

The examples from each of the projects involve narrative art and fantasy: stories and their dramatic (re)tellings and material re-shapings. In these examples of research creation, the research enquiry is simultaneously involved with particular picturebooks/artworks, with “portraits” of their creators, and through mapping creative processes associated both with the artists and with the enquiries. The artworks are living, graphic, textual and material products brought into being through intra-action with machines, processes, materials (“natural” and “fabricated”), environments and relations. The artists’ lives, stories and experiences are “folded in” to the artworks. Their artworks and creative processes both materialise and dramatise these intra-actions. The re-researches emerge through different dynamic connections across times, places, things, atmospheres, conversations, memories, and so on.

### Example One: Decolonising Early Childhood Discourses Workshop

The first example comes from an international research project led by Professor Karin Murriss,<sup>11</sup> and involving national and international experts from the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences<sup>12</sup>. This project explored how critical posthumanism contributes towards a reconfiguration of childhood in postcolonial curricula, pedagogies and research. Posthumanism critiques the Eurocentric character of knowledges and their norms of whiteness, maleness and adulthood, assumed to be applicable in all contexts; norms that have been universalised and led to the subjugation of other knowledges (<https://www.decolonizingchildhood.org/>).

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<http://www.education.uct.ac.za/edu/staff/academic/kmurriss>

<sup>12</sup> I was involved in presenting and taking part in webinars, supporting doctoral students in various ways, sometimes joining the reading group, as well as attending residential workshops in South Africa and co-editing and writing for a book published out of the project (Murriss & Haynes, 2018)

One major published output from this project is an edited book (Murriss & Haynes, 2018) and the example of creative enquiry offered here comes from one of a series of residential workshops where more-than-writing of this book was in process. In telling the story of this example, I want to focus on what we might term the “pedagogy” rather than the “methodology” of the research, those “ingredients” that particularly inspired and provoked multiple enquiries: a picturebook called *How to Find Gold*, (2016) the author/illustrator of the picturebook, Viviane Schwartz, and our “mapping” of her particular creative processes. Many other things were involved – but I pay particular attention here to these three inter-related dimensions of a seriously playful and playfully serious enquiry. This writing, right now, is like pulling out just a few of many possible threads of a research tapestry, in order to examine them closely.

#### Portrait of an artist

German born and London based artist Viviane Schwartz makes comics, books and games and designs interactive installations. She teaches illustration and game design at Kingston University, London. A graduate in American Literature and Linguistics, she has a Master’s degree in Authorial Illustration. Her website biography page tells us about formative influences on her practice:

“I was born in Germany. As a child, I spent a lot of my time inventing and making things with my family. I developed a strong interest in science and technology as well as traditional methods and crafts. My mother is an author and editor of primary school textbooks, and I began to learn how to teach art and literacy by assisting her from an early age” (<https://www.vivianeschwarz.co.uk/biography/>).<sup>13</sup>

Viviane Schwartz reveals certain things about her childhood, her family and the combination of her artistic and educational skills and interests, what calls for her care. On her biography webpage, she tells us about her pedagogic aims, “I make things that encourage and facilitate creativity, courage, thoughtfulness and glee.”

The DECD research project recorded conversations between artist Viviane and teacher Sara Stanley about one of Viviane’s picturebooks, *How to Find Gold* (Schwarz, 2016). These include discussions of Viviane’s creative processes of picturebook-making and Sara talking about what informs her ways of teaching and being in the classroom. They talk about the making of the picturebook, the text, characters, settings, and Viviane shares experiences that have shaped the imagery of the book: a toy crocodile, a park bench, childhood memories. They talk about being barefoot, about feet, and what feet express.

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<sup>13</sup> Since her first book was published in 2001, Schwartz has written and/or illustrated over a dozen picture books and a graphic novel, some have been translated and published internationally. Awards include two shortlistings for the CILIP Kate Greenaway, winner of the 2016 Little Rebels Award and an IBBY Honour List nomination for illustration in 2018.

### *A picturebook and a literacy lesson*

Project “data” also included film footage of teacher Sara leading a class of children in philosophical enquiry with this picturebook. This session with a Grade 2 class in a South African school, was recorded in multiple ways<sup>14</sup>. From the beginning *How to Find Gold* unsettles the taken-for-granted. It tells the story of Anna and Crocodile’s adventure. They decide to go looking for gold, (reported as a happily difficult and dangerous thing to do), and to keep this plan a secret. Pronouns “she” and “her” are associated with Anna, while Crocodile is Crocodile. Three times the size of Anna, one image shows her lifting Crocodile onto her shoulders, in an exploration of the relative weights of crocodiles and gold. They talk of gold being hidden, and create a map of the world with a cross to mark the hidden place. The text and imagery play between the map and the hidden places explored “through” the map. When the gold is found, Anna and Crocodile talk about what to do with it, deciding that the gold and the map must remain concealed. Otherwise, people will know that they have gold. Equally spending the gold would mean no longer having it.

Through multiple recordings (and viewings), the Grade 2 literacy session, (prompted by the picturebook, Sara’s invitations and moves, the space and things in it, the bodies of the children, bodies of the adults), takes the form of creative, entangled material-discursive intra-actions<sup>15</sup> (Reynolds and Peers, 2018). The classroom enquiry is physical, linguistic, material and atmospheric. Children wriggle and move their legs, sitting in a circular wall of chairs. They pass around a secret, cupping their hands. Children make different connections in the enquiry, through talking, reading, drawing, moving; with marine biology, with experimentation, with gold, with secrets, with the wealth of the president of South Africa. The children and teacher Sara move onto the floor and collaborate in the making of a large treasure map<sup>16</sup>.

### *Mapping Viviane Schwartz’s creative processes*

Schwartz describes herself as inventor, author-illustrator, game designer, performer and teacher. Her artwork is philosophical, playful and serious, full of humour, vibrant and alive. Her studio is a playground, storeroom, laboratory, museum, cinematic, comic memoir writing space, living-working space, an

<sup>14</sup> See for example Murriss and Babamia’s (2018) Chapter 6 noting the “entanglement” of researchers and recording apparatus, how recording practices matter.

<sup>15</sup> Intra-actions, rather than interactions, a term coined by Karen Barad (2007:19), cited in Reynolds and Peers (2018:129).

<sup>16</sup> The classroom session was filmed with a standing camera and technician, go-pro cameras, and I-pad at floor level. These footages of classroom activity and conversations between artist and teacher were all part of the “data”, playing and re-playing during the residential research workshop, sometimes avidly watched, sometimes in the background.

ever-changing installation. She makes records of incidental everyday life, the coincidence of material in and around her studio. The “things” she makes with include, for example, her hands, head, mobile phone and laptop, cat, furniture, music, memories, movement and light, paint, a blackboard, rolls of paper, the internet, things found on outings. The artwork emerges through all of this and keeps moving, is animated. Her website features her picturebooks, cat knitting patterns, an animated rapping bird, and videos (<https://www.vivianeschwarz.co.uk/fun-and-freebies/videos/>). In one of the films, we see her head bent over and hand drawing on the page with pen and ink. As she draws, the scratch of the nib on paper is audible and Viviane exclaims with surprise, as the drawing seems to draw itself onto the page. “What is it?” we hear her say, laughing but also uncertain about what is appearing. These films communicate Viviane’s co-responsive approach. To see or read Viviane in action is to appreciate that she has ideas but also that ideas have her - a dynamism that ebbs and flows in the vital materialism of her practice.

### *Reverberations in a residential thing-play workshop*

Our research workshop with all this “data” (book, artist, video-footage) was all about shifting attention beyond its habitual focus on the narrow immediacy of word-text-reader interfaces, whether the readers are child or adult. Swimming through the data/events of the recorded literacy lesson, we noticed how the “classroom” becomes much more dynamic than “scenery” for human agents, or a static “space” in which we “deliver” lessons. Equally, our research workshoping studio/space took on an eventful atmosphere that belies linear research phases, where data would be processed and re-presented.

Having watched the video-recorded intraview between artist Viviane and teacher Sara, we formulated questions, seeds of enquiries emerging in small groups. These were concept-cracking enquiries with gold, secrets, feet, shoes, assemblage, the often quietly slipped in authority of the “we”. Like Anna and Crocodile, we became explorers, inspired by Viviane’s account of herself as inventor, author-illustrator, performer and teacher. Noting the sensibilities of “childlike” and autotelic practices (Rautio, 2013), we were drawn into fascination with objects and bodies, with light and dark, with fabrics and string, experiencing them as clues to the material vitality shared with them. Viviane’s artwork, Sara’s teaching, the children’s responses and movements all inviting dives into this world of vibrant matter, diving for treasure. We became quite intoxicated with the potency produced through this materialist approach.



Figure 2. Becoming crocodile/crocodile feet - DECD residential workshop, Stellenbosch, SA

The book *Literacies, Literature and Learning: reading classrooms differently* (Murriss & Haynes, 2018) is a collection of offerings to the concepts, matter and affects mobilized through this project, each warranting more substantial exhibition than can be included in this paper. Encouraging for the author/participants is the variety of conceptual/material writings the collection brings together: themes of decolonial reading practices; erasures, silences and secrets; chairs and questions at work in literacies; philosopher children moving through spacetime; the difficultation of enquiry; bodies with legs fidgeting; how recording practices matter; the play of things.

Participants at the residential workshop had a sense of their chapters “writing themselves”, through the connections established between places and experiences that became the “world” of the book:

“A teeming, swarming congregation of seductively playful things: people, wool, skin, smells, sounds, surfaces, scissors, ears, feet, stomach and and and the forces in-between have created, in Viviane’s workshop, in Sara’s grade two classroom, and in our conference studio playspace, energetic milieus with a

special feeling (Bennett 2010: 35) and products. We don't know where the boundaries of these things, times and spaces are but there is a mutual and transforming affect that changes everything" (Giorza & Haynes, 2018:108).

## Example Two: Unhoming Pedagogies Workshop

The second example is associated with an international project led by Dr Natalie Pollard<sup>17</sup> called *Unhoming Pedagogies*<sup>18</sup>. I met Natalie in November, 2018 as we were leaving a creative research event at Exeter University<sup>19</sup>. Our brief exchange led to discoveries of shared interests, and possibilities for collaboration. The *Unhoming Pedagogies* project and Natalie's connections with her former colleagues at the University of Cape Town, coupled with my involvement with the DECD Project discussed above, led to the proposal for a one day research workshop, to be held at University of Cape Town, in July 2019. We took two works of literatureart as provocations for this event. It is not possible to do justice to both here and this account includes only the picturebook example<sup>20</sup>.

Browsing bookshelves through the ethos of the *Unhoming Pedagogies* Project, surfaced many examples of uncanny, shadowy, sometimes troublesome picturebooks, (Haynes & Murriss, 2012). This search prompted memories of on-edge readings, reaching back into childhood. I returned to an outstanding collection of nursery rhymes illustrated by Paula Rego (1994). It was this picturebook that suggested itself as a provocation for the research workshop.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/english/staff/pollard/research/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/internationalhumanities/globalchallengescollaboratory/#a2>

<sup>19</sup> The Creativity and Emergent Educational Futures Network has published a literature review Pluriversality [https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/education/research/centres/cence/CEEN\\_Report\\_Interactive\\_PDF.pdf](https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/education/research/centres/cence/CEEN_Report_Interactive_PDF.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Workshop co-presenter Natalie Pollard worked with video and text from poet Caroline Bergvall's poemartmusic piece Drift <https://vimeo.com/86554191>



Figure 3. Some sources and materials - Unhoming Pedagogies workshop - University of Cape Town, SA, July 2019.

Paula Rego is a renowned artist, widely celebrated for her powerful, complex and taboo-breaking work. No kind of biographical “portrait” of Rego, with implications of fixity, is attempted here. Instead the re-turn to her Nursery Rhymes collection prompted renewed interest in Rego’s life and her pre-occupations with stories. In her wonderful book about Paula Rego, Deryn Rees-Jones talks of mapping an artist’s creative processes, rather than documenting an artist’s life, a different approach to biographical analysis (2019:11). Rego’s creative processes are embodied, relational and practical; enfolding lived experiences, memories, dreams and stories with materials and methods of artistic creation. Rees-Jones’ distinction between “portraying” and “mapping” is a helpful one, in this exploration of a single collection of Rego’s illustrative work. These emergent and animated processes communicate a vivid sense of the agency of the material and of the thinking-through-making of Rego’s artwork, of her being in/with the world (Auerbach, 2009; Rees-Jones, 2019; Willing, 2016).

Born in Portugal in 1935, Paula Rego’s growing up was influenced both by her liberal immediate family, more traditional Portuguese grandmother, and a

wider climate of repressive, authoritarian politics and state-led Catholicism. As a young woman, Rego moved to study/train at London's Slade School of Art. She spent long periods of adult life in Portugal too, as complications of her British husband's long-term illness and the family business unfolded. Commentaries on her life refer to her sense of being neither one thing nor another, neither Portuguese or British, often moving between, part of a permissive, middle-class intellectual family in a repressive culture and society. In Paula Rego's art, this perpetual unhoming permeates the literal and the imaginative, the preoccupation with re-interpreting stories, whereby the domestic/family context is entangled with politics. This art works through materialised and embodied dynamics of family *and* state (Rees-Jones, 2019:75). Rego's art is characterised by courage and humour. Refusal and resistance infuse her work. There is this sense of her being compelled to create art to address injustice; whilst always refusing to ignore emotional and political contradictions, rather bringing these to closer attention, always unsettling.

Rees-Jones discusses Rego's art-with-literature made between 1987-1994 (2019:117-169) and is a primary source for this paper. The chapter cites Rego as she explains how she responds to well-known tales:

"Loving the stories I want to undermine them, like wanting to harm the person you love. My favourite themes are power games and hierarchies. I always want to turn things on their heads, to upset the established order, to change heroines and idiots. If the story is "given" I take liberties with it to make it conform to my own experiences, and to be outrageous. At the same time above all, though, I want to work with stories which emerge as I go along". (2019: 117).<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between literature and visual art in Rego's work is very striking<sup>22</sup>- blurring boundaries of love and aggression and encompassing themes/practices of animation, animism, anthropomorphism and automatism.<sup>23</sup>

Paula Rego worked on the 35 etchings for *Nursery Rhymes* in 1989, shortly after the death of her husband and around the time her first grandchild was born. Bringing this picturebook to shared exploration with Natalie, in preparation for our research workshop, we were struck by unexpected reversals, the flipped, compound anthropomorphism of humans "animalised" and animals "humanised", without trace of sentimentality. Animals are

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<sup>21</sup> Cited by Deryn-Rees, whose endnotes indicate source as McEwen, J. Paula Rego, p162. Edn. unknown. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition published in 2006 by Phaidon Press

<sup>22</sup> In a film made by her son (Willing, 2016) titled *Paula Rego: secrets and stories*, Rego talks of how, during a very difficult period in the early 1970s, Jungian psychoanalysis aroused her memories of family life and being told stories, awakening the need to turn to imaginative sources and continue with the art, in all its physicality, that she reports as her source of sanity (Auerback, 2009). This turn, enabled by a series of large grants and awards, led to an extended period of literature/artwork.

<sup>23</sup> Her narrative sources ranged from folk/fairy tales from Italy, France and Portugal as well as returning to Disney films, such as Snow White, Pinocchio and Fantasia.

depicted realistically, on a par with and socially integrated with humans. Animals appear as knowing creatures. Rego plays with the size and scale of animal, insect and human bodies. A fiddle-playing cat, a hen or a beetle are portrayed as towering over the humans, and the *Three Blind Mice* are half the size of the knife-wielding farmer's wife who cuts off their tails. An old woman whips the naked bottom of a bending child because of living in a shoe and having "so many children she didn't know what to do" (so the rhyme explains). Diminutive female figures scrub the much larger naked bodies of the three men squashed in a bathtub. The illustration to *Rock-a-bye Baby* induces a kind of nausea, through the juxtaposition of the rocking cradle and the figure of a seemingly disinterested woman, her heavy legs parted, looking elsewhere and beyond. These illustrations collapse binaries of adult/child; fantasy/realty; obedience/subversion; tame/wild; primitive/cultured; familiar/strange; comforting/frightening; art/politics. These are simultaneously comical and sinister depictions with a sense of the surreal. Rego locates her art in the "beautiful grotesque" (Rees-Jones, 2020:23).

During the period of making her illustrations, Rego worked closely with the Opies' (1979) famous collection of nursery rhymes, tuning into, but unconstrained by this source. Rees-Jones writes:

The link between nursery rhymes and nonsense, as well as the frequent subtexts of violence, offered Rego a way of accessing the world of childhood and the pleasures of repetition. By drawing on these forms, Rego foregrounded the importance of communal experience, as highlighted in the folklore tradition (2019:153).

The sense of repetition, the subtext of violence, the allusions to spells, mesmeric movement and dancing of figures underline the physicality and drama of Rego's artistic practices. Her art making involves a wide variety of art media, models, tools, mannequins, things and processes. Her studio is a place of personal and artistic drama, a space for craft, tea-drinking, reading, eating and cutting. It is full of stuff: clothing, textiles, ladders, chairs, stories, visitors, beds, mannequins and beings such as Pillowman (Rees-Jones, 2019:256-7). There is such a strong sense of the agency of these things in her work, and of her body moving, interacting, observing and responding. Striking examples are her cuttings-up of her old paintings to make collage; the physical experience of etching, needle-through-wax-onto-copper, a process edging towards sculpture (p.139). She is not tied to a single method or material and it appears these suggest themselves to her, are played with and improvised, for example through her staging of live models, creating moving tableaux. Her animal-human reversals and her animation of mannequins provoke questions about what it is to be human. Rees-Jones writes that all Rego's work is to do with

metamorphosis: the reinvention of literary narratives, between word and thing, between language and the affective realm of lived experiences, between animal and human (2020:20).

Our invitation flyer for the Unhoming Pedagogies event at the University of Cape Town proposed:

“This workshop engages with artworks and texts that instigate playful, provocative, and uncanny entanglements. [...] The workshop will activate modes of reading, interpreting and educating that are nomadic, wandering, digressive, vulnerably between agencies – unhomed – rather than treating these as secure, domesticated, belonging, or easily graspable” ([https://b143d3e1-4b1a-4b9f-8c09bef260bde6b4.filesusr.com/ugd/8e6b19\\_7e2b21d302324f559e2784cf79a57db2.pdf](https://b143d3e1-4b1a-4b9f-8c09bef260bde6b4.filesusr.com/ugd/8e6b19_7e2b21d302324f559e2784cf79a57db2.pdf) accessed 26th June, 2020).

The workshop drew a diverse group of teachers, research assistants, postgraduate students, visiting researchers, informal educators and academics. Some of those present in the workshop were also involved in the DECD project discussed in the previous example. Sharing a tasty lunch together was an important part of the day. The room was arranged informally, so that we could all face one another during presentations and the discussion that followed. Space was left to make tea, for movement, for thinking-through-making. In an alcove large cushions and some toys were on the floor where young children sat, wearing headphones and playing with tablets. It was noticeable that, during the presentation, some participants chose to draw, doodle, knit or fiddle/make with materials they had brought or that they had picked up from the table. Photos and videos were made of workshop activities.



Figure 4. Doing something else - Unhoming Pedagogies Workshop, UCT, July 2019.

Having been immersed in various sources about Rego's work in the period leading to the event, the material discussed above related to her art work, creative processes and nursery rhymes formed the basis for an opening presentation of illustrated slides, and ended with the question: "What do Rego's nursery rhymes provoke for you?" As with the UJI and DECD workshops, the invitation was to enquire with the material (including the space, sounds, bodies) and think-through-making. There was no expectation to re-present and summarise these intra-actions. The photographs included here perhaps convey some of the co-responding activities taking place that day, as well as now becoming something else, in the context of this paper.



Figure 4. Inside-outside, Unhoming Pedagogies Workshop, UCT, SA, July 2019.<sup>24</sup>

In the image above there is a dramatic sense of movement through involvement of bodies leaning-in or hanging-on or propping up, legs in dance-like positions, arms and hands wrapped around; the rope, string and the posts that house the wiring in this classroom, perhaps seldom drawn into knowledge making. The rope is taut between the posts. The film footage shows their earlier collaboration to make the curtain/boundary of knotted string, sitting and talking on the floor, through this dynamic exploration of inside-outside.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.humanities.uct.ac.za/news/unhoming-pedagogies-workshop-hosted-uct>



Figure 5. Animated animation - Unhoming Pedagogies Workshop, UCT, SA, July 2019

In another part of the room, playing together with a remnant of fabric printed like leopard skin, a small something has been created and stuffed with some other material to give its body shape. Here in the image captioned “animated animation” participants bring their hands together to bring life to their creation, provoking laughter and humorous exchanges – eyes, eyebrows, hands and mouths arrested in this frame.

Elsewhere in the space, in the image of Figure 6 below, “paper becomes string” as materials merge in an expanding installation that seems to just grow, with few words exchanged between the bodies, whose hands are cutting, tying and weaving.

We look without knowing what these images are “about”. They do not re-present ideas that might have occurred during the earlier presentation, but rather emerge through the intra-actions of presentation, people, space, materials and atmosphere, through unpredictable workshop crafting activities.

The workshop concluded with tea and discussion, which could include reference to small group makings – but it did not have to. This talk was testimony to plural and strikingly different experiences of childhood, schooling and curricula and to the colonisation of education and childhood – exclusion, racism and white privilege; contested ideas of what childhood/s should or could be.



Figure 6 Making paper string - Unhoming Pedagogies Workshop, UCT, SA, July 2019, photo made by Katherine Wilson, UCT

## Conclusions

Paying attention to visual and material detail around us could be useful in pursuit of the kind of educational processes that can embody the struggles to dismantle hierarchical and authoritarian forms of knowledge creation, as we realise that we are not “brains-on-sticks” but feeling, fleshy bodies, with

appetites and inclination to movement, part of a world of vibrant matter. Our adult bodies are typically trained to sit still, receive, and listen, in educational settings. As adult learners, we often do not pay much attention to the materiality of the space (unless we feel too cold or hungry) and just think of it as a stage where we pay attention mostly to other humans, and the words being spoken, or displayed.

There are many examples of creative approaches to teaching, learning and research, and of working with practising artists, for example through residencies, or in partnership with museums and galleries. I set out to show ways in which the entanglement of artists who work with/through literature, their artworks and their creative processes become an integral, dynamic part of the emerging enquiry. This paper has exemplified ageless thing-play enquiry, being taken by ideas, and thinking-through-making. These examples interweave conceptual enquiry with ambiguous artworks, artists and their creative processes. The artists' blurring of domestic/studio spaces encourages unbinding of teaching/learning and research spaces, unsettling their purposeful arrangements. These examples grow out of association with the community of enquiry pedagogy, and a desire for that to continue to expand, shift and grow. In thinking-through-making, the workshop comes into its own, with its more flexible, boundary shifting use of space, time and associations with activism, collectivism and creativity. Workshopping, particularly in higher education spaces, and when it spills out of the designated room, moves furniture aside and makes some mess, is available to disturb and re-configure hierarchical academic practices and re-imagine creative scholarship. Inspired by Rego, unhoming practices occupy the difficult borders of loving and undermining, dis/agreement, turning things on their heads and taking liberties. Emergent pedagogies of struggle are not easily graspable, but precarious and uncertain.

Events related in this paper constitute part of an effort to loosen, dismantle and undo anthropocentric pedagogical and research habits, to dilute and shift the human from the centre, as part of the effort for educational processes that engage with the struggle for/with peace-ability, justice and eco-sensitivity. How might we go further? Through examples of research events exhibited and affirming the movement Philosophy for/with Children throughout, with its pedagogy the community of enquiry, this paper has proposed more expansive, playfully serious and seriously playful processes of enquiry. Through re-imagining and materialising processes of enquiry, inspired by artworks, artists (whether bodily present or not), and their creative methods, the very nature of "community" is also unhomed.

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