

# *Rhizomatic Writing and Pedagogy: Deleuze & Guattari and Heidegger*

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**ABSTRACT:** This essay offers a scope, or a kaleidoscope, for questioning and challenging accepted structures and practices within education. By enacting a philosophy of education inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) figuration of a rhizome, I map a pragmatic territory in which rhizomatic learning is a field for students to experience meaning in education. I will explore how becoming more rhizomatic in pedagogy might liberate educators and students from arborescent and replicable ways of thinking. Rhizomatics, as used in this paper, is an attempt to burrow holes in the educational subterranean, move through current pedagogical concepts and invisible mental landscapes, and horizontally connect thinkers. In particular, this paper posits the convergence of Heidegger's (1971) ideas on truth and being, and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) philosophies on thinking, learning, and the rhizome.

**RESUMÉ:** Le propos présent offre une portée ou un kaléidoscope qui met en question, voire conteste, les structures et pratiques acceptées au sein du système éducatif. En adoptant une philosophie inspirée des propriétés du rhizome dans le système éducatif de Deleuze et Guattari (1987), je dresse un territoire pragmatique dans lequel l'enseignement, selon les propriétés du rhizome, est pour les étudiants un domaine où l'expérience est importante. Je montre plus loin que le fait d'adopter davantage la théorie philosophique du rhizome en pédagogie, pourrait libérer enseignants, et étudiants, des principes de pensées arborescentes et récurrentes. Ici, à l'appui de la théorie du rhizome, je tente de creuser des trous dans la plaque souterraine de l'enseignement, de me déplacer dans les concepts actuels pédagogiques, dans les paysages invisibles du mental et de rapprocher les penseurs à un niveau horizontal. Cette analyse rapproche particulièrement les idées de Heidegger sur la vérité et l'être (1971) avec les philosophies de Deleuze et de Guattari sur la pensée, l'enseignement et la théorie rhizome (1987.)

### *Introduction*

In this essay, I argue that an important aim of education should be to embrace rhizomatic learning; that is, to grow away from a pedagogy based on a linear, top-down approach in which apical knowledge is represented and finite, and move toward a pedagogy in which learning is a horizontal, diagonal, and axil process that involves continuous engagement with the unknown. I base this idea of the unknown on Heidegger's (1971) philosophical inquiry into being and truth Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) philosophies on thinking, learning, and the rhizome.

This essay is also a rhizomatic experiment that takes sail from Deleuze's argument that a work of philosophy should be, in part, a kind of a science fiction. In this project, the rhizome is not used theoretically, metaphorically, or hypothetically; it is plugged into and worked from the middle. This essay attempts to simultaneously spell a theoretical thesis and become rhizome. There are two planes to this essay: one that is formalized, organized, and developed, and one that is written in footnotes, introducing voids, jumps, and encounters with the uncanny. The interpellation of the academic with authentic voice is indicative of becoming between rhizomatic and arborescent, self and other, student and educator, and the plane of immanence and the plane of organization. Although my paper can be read in a linear fashion with the footnotes at the end, I also encourage my reader to include them. I have taken heed of the words from Gergoriou (2004), a Deleuzian scholar: "The goal is not to represent the rhizome but to implant it in thought. The effect they [Deleuze and Guattari] are after is not the understanding of the rhizome but a functioning, a whole apparatus that connects disparate, linguistic and non-linguistic things" (p. 240).

### *The Rhizome*

In her essay, "Commencing the rhizome: Towards a minor philosophy of education," Gregoriou (2004) investigated the Deleuzian idea of becoming and rhizomatic thought within philosophy of education. When Gregoriou (2004) examined pedagogical research done on rhizomatic learning, she complained of the multiple educational theory essays that use the rhizome as a metaphor for delivering normative statements for regulating educational practices. She argued that the attempt to codify the rhizome into a normative pedagogy ignores its nature: A rhizome is an a-signifying multiplicity; it is in the *and*, always *in between*. A rhizome connects any point to any other point. It has a relational ontology, not a substantive one. It is not a Lockean substance that holds its attributes; instead, it is the Humean "bundle of perceptions." In Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) definition of a rhizome it becomes evident why a rhizome resists codification into a normative pedagogical statement:

The rhizome multiple must be made . . . a rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes. . . Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelters, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout. The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other. The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed. (p. 7)

The rhizome can be mapped, not as a metaphor but as a setting into work of uncentered growth without foundation or essence; it is a multiplicity and its principle characteristics are connection and heterogeneity. It is contradictory to the nature of the multiplicity to engage with it through substantiation or codification; this is to rob it of its creative force and the nature of becoming.

In drawing out the importance of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome in learning and pedagogy, Gregoriou rightly explained that the rhizome must be rescued from its "literary over-coding in a pedagogical discourse as a metaphor for excessive multiplicity and radical openness. The rhizome *must be made*" (2004, p. 246, emphasis in original). Any interpretation of the rhizome that uses it as an icon for anti-hierarchical systems that move against traditional linear knowledge is contrary to the *becoming* of the rhizome and the project that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) try to unfold. The rhizome cannot be pinned down; it is always already something else, always becoming. The rhizome has a relational ontology; it is a multiplicity.

Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "[the rhizome] is a multiplicity—but we don't yet know what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed [—] that is, after it has been elevated to the substantive" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 4). Because of the unsubstantive nature of the rhizome, it is impossible to represent or replicate it as an instructive code for teaching. Instead, in order to engage with the rhizome, teachers must use it, not as a metaphor, but as a way of pedagogy.

### *Modernity: Critiques from Deleuze and Heidegger*

Didactic teaching, recursive learning, grand narratives, and linear papers are perhaps the prerogative of the arborescent disciplines that memorize facts. Semetsky (2003), an educational theorist and Deleuzian scholar, described differences between factual knowledge and the experiential process of knowing. Factual knowledge is acquired through modernity's arborescent, linear education method. Teachers and/or the curriculum design a question, or create a problem, and students are expected to discover and reproduce a pre-determined answer. Knowledge becomes a possess-able, clear, and distinct object. Factual

knowledge lends to recursive learning because it is a pre-disclosed object of knowledge that is acquired through a pre-established linear path.

Recursive learning has modernity's quest for certainty at its roots—Descartes' proof of existence, in particular. He claimed the presence of an 'I' or a subject before he pronounced his existence. Thinking in the Cartesian sense is not a process but an already pre-established proof of existence. In this way the process of thinking about one's being or allowing openness to what is unknown (existence) is closed off in the Cartesian Cogito. Instead of encouraging an openness to the unknown and deterritorialization, Descartes falsely closed it off.

Both Deleuze and Heidegger critique this method of discovery. Deleuze (as cited in Semetsky, 2003) asserted that "problems must be considered not as 'givens' [—] that is, requiring the Cartesian method as the search for the clear and distinct solution. Learning is infinite . . . [and] of a different nature to knowledge" (Deleuze, 1994), but of the nature of a creative process as a method of invention" (p. 25). Factual knowledge, in which students discover solutions to the problems posited by teachers, denies subjective experience and the chance to encounter the unknown nature of truth. Learning is a way to place the student in awe of being and existence; this encourages invention and discovery more than repetition of fact.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *When I first began to study philosophy in 1996, in the cement basement of the Clearihue Building at the University of Victoria, I was intrigued to learn that some of the questions that I spent a lot of time thinking about were legitimate questions to be pursued. One of the most important questions I found was in the last essay of my philosophy text book, an essay we did not have time to discuss in class: "What gives life Meaning?" by Camus (1955). Camus posited a problem that I considered very real:*

*There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging by whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest—whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories—comes afterwards. These are games . . . And if it is true, as Nietzsche claims, that a philosopher, to deserve our respect must preach by example, you can appreciate the importance of that reply, for it will precede the definitive act. There are facts the heart can feel; yet they call for careful study before they become clear to the intellect. (p. 601)*

*As I completed my undergraduate years at UVic, and by the time I was accepted into grad school, I realized the higher level of education I had in philosophy, the further I was removed from these fundamental questions. Questions that were of importance to me, I was not qualified to discuss. What was recommended to me by my professors was to find a problem within Kant's philosophy of space for*

In Inna Semetsky (2003) essay on "Deleuze's new image of thought, or Dewey revisited," she underscored an important connection between education and Deleuze's work. In this particular work of Deleuze's, *Spinoza: A Practical Philosophy*, he discussed the Spinozist's idea of freedom of thought from obligations to the state, but in Semetsky's (2003) essay, she has insightfully drawn a parallel to education. She claimed that:

Education, at present, is [a] student's discovery of problems posited by teachers. In this way, pupils lack power to constitute problems themselves, and the construction of problems, for Deleuze, is tantamount to one's sense of freedom. (p. 24)

Only if and when "thought is free, hence vital, nothing is compromised. When it ceases being so, all other oppressions are also possible" (Deleuze, 1988, p.4).

Through Deleuze and Guattari (1987), we learn that the tree image is the representational image of modern thought. Gregoriou (2004) eloquently unpacks Deleuze and Guattari's use of trees and explained that "trees are hierarchical structures and stratified totalities that function on binary logic and impose limited and regulated connections between their components. This kind of structure, according to Deleuze and Guattari, has dominated Western thought" (p. 240). Deleuze accorded the old Cartesian model of thinking with a tree model and as Semetsky (2003), elucidated for us, "if a tree is a symbol for the history of philosophy that planted its roots firmly into modern soil, then rhizome belongs to philosophy-becoming: it is more like grass than a tree" (p. 18).

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*example, and then research everything that was written on the problem, preferably finding journal articles written by authors who had responded to one another and then after reading those I could respond. In the midst of my academic disillusionment, I stumbled upon this quote:*

*A formidable school of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought—but which also makes those who stay outside conform all the more to this specialism which they despise. An image of thought called philosophy has been formed historically and it effectively stops people from thinking. (Deleuze & Paraneet, 1987, p. 13)*

*It really is a formidable school. How does education render me unqualified to posit my own problems? In some ways this is how education can suffocate our natural creativity, childlike curiosity, and essentially our process of thinking, by burying it beneath the thoughts of specialists. Gregoriou asks: "How can Philosophy of Education renew its ties with what Lyotard calls 'the season of the childhood, the season of the mind's possibilities' and resist its interpellation as a foundations course when interpellated by the 'terrible lunette'?" (2004, p. 236)*

Deleuze's critique of modern thought has congenial roots to Heidegger's (1971) critique, in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, of science and western metaphysics's annihilation of thinking, truth, being, and the "thing."

According to Heidegger (1971), the conceptual framework in which science has examined the "thing" is carried over in the way philosophy has explicated art and truth. Heidegger claimed that science loses sight of the thing: "Science makes the jug-thing into a non-entity in not permitting things to be the standard for what is real" (p. 168). Science always encounters only what its kind of representation has admitted in advance as an object possible for science. For example, a jug becomes only a conglomeration of atoms, and the history, geography, and culture of the wine are ignored.

In a similar vein, Heidegger (1971) began his examination of truth with a critique of western metaphysics because it views truth as a correspondence between knowledge and fact. The fact is the disclosed object into which the subject can gain full access: "Truth means today and has long meant the agreement or conformity with fact" (p. 53). The fact, however, Heidegger argued, must already show itself as a fact if knowledge is to conform to it. In this way, the fact must already be unconcealed. A thought or a proposition is true when it conforms to the unconcealed—that is, to what is true. Thus propositional truth is correctness because it only reinforces itself and this correctness stands and falls with the truth as the non-concealment of beings (Kockelmans, 1985).

Fracturing and organizing this knowledge results in the concealment of being and closes students off from access to truth or to an intelligibility of their own being. Heidegger (1971) exposed the conceptual schema of western ideas where truth is forced into a preconceived framework, thereby obstructing our access to it. What is essential here is that thinking has been closed off in place of the acquisition of knowledge or facts. Facts are already revealed within a pre-established schema made by a curriculum. But the non-concealedness of the fact never reveals the concealedness of it. The traditional view of knowledge does not allow that at the same time that truth is the concealedness—it also unconceals.

Heidegger (1971) concluded that "the nature of truth is, in itself, the primal conflict in which that open center is won within which what is, stands forth, and from which it sets itself back into itself" (p. 53). In other words, truth is an open place in which the conflict between concealment and unconcealment is experienced. It is the place where that which is, that which stands unconcealed, is the same place where it can return back into the concealedness of itself. Truth is not correctness. Truth is not correspondence with a fact that is already present and available. Heidegger wrote, "setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the unfamiliar and the extraordinary and at the same time thrusts down the ordinary and what we believe to be such" (p. 72).

The importance of revealing Truth outside of factual knowledge is so paramount that Heidegger began *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1971) and *Being and Time* (1962) with critiques of metaphysical thought in order to "keep

at distance all the precepts and assaults of the above mode of thought, to leave the thing to rest in its ownself" (p. 31). Both Deleuze and Heidegger critique this method of representational knowledge and open us towards the unknown. This idea is unpacked further within Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome.

### *Rhizomatic Learning*

Rhizomatic learning has far-reaching implications for education. The rhizomatic process of knowing is elucidated through Deleuze's metaphor of swimming. For Deleuze, learning to swim is based on a deterritorialization with one's own body. It is throwing oneself into the unknown and in the process becoming other than what one was. It is not repetition or representation. As Deleuze (1994) claimed:

Learning to swim or learning a foreign language means composing the singular points of one's own body or one's own language with those of another shape or element, which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown and unheard-of world of problems. To what are we dedicated if not to those problems which demand the very transformation of our body and our language? (p. 192)

Semetsky nicely unpacks Deleuze's metaphor of learning to swim:

The swimmer struggles against the waves because she is facing the unknown, which includes her not-yet-knowing-how-to swim, and the swimmer's movement does not resemble the movement of the wave. Nor does it imitate the instructor's movements given while not in the water but on the shore. (2003, p. 19)

Semetsky (2003) rightly points out that Deleuze's example illustrates the experiential process of learning because the novice swimmer is placed in the unknown space of swimming; she is going beyond her knowledge. The swimmer is learning not through repetition or by reproducing the action of an instructor, but by grasping the unknown, the other, or what is different from her, and this is where her learning takes place. This learning exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome because it is a-signifying, not pre-determined, and non-linear. Because of the swimmer's encounter with the unknown and her improvisation of swimming, she learns in a non-linear, rhizomatic way. The rhizome has an a-signifying structure that embraces difference, originates in real experience, and embraces encounters with the unknown.

However, the rhizome does not present us with a utopic pedagogy reinforcing traditional dichotomies between good and bad pedagogy or arborescent and rhizomatic; it is a becoming between dichotomies, as exemplified in the case of the swimmer: a becoming of self and other, and of the



subject with the object. It is neither absolute subjectivism nor pure objectivism, in which students are empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, but a becoming subject with object and object with subject. This becoming is allowed by opening the self to encounter the unknown and become deterritorialized.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *I was born on a barely inhabited island off the coast of Vancouver Island, called Maurelle Island. In those days (1978) my parents had to row a boat to Quadra Island and from there they would take a ferry to Campbell River to get supplies, if they had the money. It terrifies me when I look back upon it. What if something had gone wrong when I was born? They were at least 12 hours from any sort of hospital or help. My dad, who is no doctor—not even a high school graduate—delivered me, cut the umbilical cord, and popped the water sack in which I was born. When I asked him, years later, how he knew how to deliver a baby, he said, “I read a book on it.” My mom tells me the story this way: earlier that day, my dad’s dog Joe had been eaten by wolves in the forest outside their house. There weren’t many people on that island, maybe six including my family. They had friends over in the small one room shack that they built, and my dad and his friends were drinking home brew, and playing cards. My mom went into labour in the loft, she climbed down the ladder and told my dad that she was about to give birth. My dad got hold of the book. I came out all right, while my brother, a terrified three-year-old, watched from the loft.*

*I wasn’t the sunshine boy, or the Buddha baby that he was, but I survived. And, strangely, being born on a tiny island with no roads and no electricity is one of my biggest accomplishments.*

*The schoolhouse was on Read Island, an island next to ours. If my parents felt like it (they usually didn’t), they would row us to school to play with friends from that island. The schoolhouse was an A-frame, shingle-roofed house with a kitchen and a wood stove. I remember having to chop wood for this stove over school lessons there, but I rarely went to school.*

*Later, my mom, my brother, and I moved to the Boundary area. We moved 21 kilometers up the Christian Valley on the Kettle River. Here, we went to school every week day and we rode a school bus—one and a half hours one way. It wasn’t easy, going from living wild on the coast of Maurelle Island, running around barefoot over rocks and barnacles, jumping into salal bushes, and swimming in the lake, to taking a bus, sitting at a desk, and listening to a teacher. There is a real distinction between coastal and interior people of BC. Something about the ocean relaxes people and something about that dry dusty rancher’s air makes people uptight. We had a hard time fitting in—my brother and I. We were still wearing cedar woven hats that my mom made, clothes that she spun from wool, dyed and knitted. She made us pretty funky sweaters and toques. She’d make us deer liver pate sandwiches that I thought were good until the other kids at school told me they weren’t. My brother had an even harder time. Three years older than me, he went a longer time without school. The things he had learned were different: he caught his first salmon at age three, he learned to swim when he fell off the dock into the cold water of the pass,*



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because in those days kids didn't wear life jackets. At least, that's what my parents told me.

He failed his grade when he entered school and developed a stutter. Years later, when I was in my late twenties, I saw his teacher at a coffee shop in Victoria. I recognized her, and I introduced myself as Forest's sister (that's my brother's name). When I mentioned his name, I could see she still felt guilty, for failing my brother, almost 30 years later. "Oh Forest, he will always be one of my favourite kids. He didn't belong in school, he belonged in the forest. That's why they named him that."

I adapted to school more easily. I got it. In the summers we would return to Maurelle. The release I felt when I got there. Away from the strict watchful eye of my step-father, the skinny fir and pine trees, the dry grass of the boundary area. Here I could stop brushing my hair and start living again. My dad never worked in the summer, so he had time to show us lots of things. My days there were precariously limited and I knew they were going to end. My brother and I spent our days fishing perch off the dock, turning over rocks to pick up crabs, wading in tidal pools to catch tiny bullheads and putting them in a plastic tub. We built a tree fort, swings, stilts, and wood boats. We swam in the lake, and we fished.

I go back there to visit my dad and my two half-sisters. There is a sense of returning to what is real. It's a feeling I can't describe or put into words. I feel it when I take the ferry from Campbell River to Quadra Island. The workers on the ferry are different. I don't know how they are different, just different. And when I hitchhike across Quadra Island and drive out on to the dirt road, past all the rainforest, my whole body feels it. My dad comes in on the open skiff to pick me up at the end of the road on Quadra. My mind is full of chatter and gossip. It is wound up tight from driving, friends, school, thesis, work, people, money, research, Internet. It's hard for me to notice things when I first get there: marbled murreletes in the water, eagles nesting in trees, the sounds the varied thrush makes as it hits every note. I am thinking too much.

We go through Beasley pass, past our old fishing hole where we used to catch salmon and cod. My dad says that there's no salmon there now, and you can't fish because it's a rock cod conservatory, but I like to go there and look at the Indian painting on the rock. It's been there for a long time. My dad says a couple of hundred years at least. He said it took him 15 years before he realized it was a painting and now he can see the head with ears and eyes. How did they get it to stay? My dad says they probably used salmon roe and clay. He said they painted it in a perfect spot to perch on and spear seal from. It reminds me of when we used to fish there when I was younger and we would jig for cod, and let the tide pull us down and then row back up, over and over until we had enough cod for dinner.

His house is a lot different now when I go back. He's built a new one, with a big extension on it. I sleep in the guest room instead of under the skylight in

his room. He has electricity, thanks to a water wheel, solar panels, and an inverter. We bathe inside now, but still use an outhouse.

My sisters, now 15 and 18, were born in a hospital in Comox, but they grew up on Maurelle. They remind me of the childhood that I never got to complete. All this unlearning that I have done in school: I have lost sight of how to tie a clove hitch, how to run the boat, how to spot a yellow-bellied sapsucker.

When I go to Maurelle, I want to do all the things that I did as a kid. I usually have four days to make up for the all the time I wasn't there. I want to fish the sea cucumbers up from the bottom of the ocean so I can fry them up and eat them, but my dad says they're all gone. I want to put some prawn traps down and he tells me the natives and the prawn fisherman have open license to scoop them all. I want to hike up the hill and go swimming in the lake behind their house. My family and a few friends are the only ones who know about this lake. Dad says he wants to build a cabin up there just to get away from it all. I laugh because he tells me this as we as we are sitting on the porch steps with no one around.

"Away from all this?" I say.

We both laugh; he gets it. But he says,

"In the summers now the Octopus Islands across the channel can get busy with boats."

I know what he means. You will never see another sign of a human up at the lake.

I was recently on Maurelle for my 33rd birthday. I went back to where I was born, in Steam Boat Pass. The shack in which I was born isn't there anymore; now there are only salal bushes in that spot. My dad and I sat on the mossy rocks where my mom had the garden and watched the harlequins on the kelp-covered rock in the middle of the pass. He tells me stories of an old killer whale that was caught in that pass for days.

He points across the pass to an island on the other side. He says, "That's where I first tried to grow pot. There's an old Indian midden on that island and it was great soil for putting plants in. After I planted them, I had to row five gallons of fresh water across the pass and lug it up to the top of the island every other day for a couple of months. One day a helicopter flew over, and the next day, a zodiac came in and they pulled out all the plants."

My dad doesn't grow weed anymore because nobody wants to buy outdoor.

My sister has made lunch for me when I arrive. She made a rooster curry. They killed the rooster the day before I arrived and had to pressure cook it because it's a tough old bird. At first I felt bad about that. At night they lock the chickens in the hen house and during the day they let them run free. But they battle with it, because the hens will roost in cedar trees, if they don't watch them, and then they don't get any eggs. I tell my dad that I feel bad about the dead rooster.

"Oh Chloe, you are so sensitive" he says.

I reply, "I guess it doesn't matter too much; chickens aren't that smart."

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*"Oh, you'd be surprised" he tells me. "I snuck in at night, when they were all sleeping and grabbed the rooster. And the next day, all the chickens were eyeballing me. They were really suspicious; they didn't want to get too close to me. They knew I had something to do with the rooster's disappearance."*

*My dad has this way of telling stories about animals and nature that makes it seem as if they are all living together, and they are. My dad has lived on the island so long that his eyes are the colour of the ocean and his feet look like the roots of the big fir tree that he squats under for shade. Sometimes I think he might not die but just get absorbed by the salmon berry bushes on that island. For 37 years he has lived there. Sometimes I think Walden Pond is a total joke.*

*Two years ago, he told me this story: He was sitting outside his workshop watching a spider catch a fly in its web. As the fly flew into the web, it struggled and buzzed and flailed about. The spider climbed in closer to it in the web and as he approached the fly, its wings were buzzing so hard it smacked the spider straight out of his own web. I laughed so hard when he told me that story. He also told me another story about how when he was drifting in his boat, trolling at Bute Inlet, he heard crashing in the bushes on both sides of the bay. He watched a deer come out on one side and a grizzly bear on the other. They both reached the beach at the same time and when the grizzly bear looked up and saw the deer appear out of nowhere, he was so startled that he took off running, and the deer, unstartled, continue to walk the beach. These stories are really funny when my dad tells them, but when I reiterate them or put them into writing, they kind of lose their humour. That's what my family talks about mostly.*

*I can't really ever talk to them about what I'm doing in school. I can see the disappointment in my dad at how over-educated I am, but unlearned in so many ways. I don't even know what I would tell them. I am doing my thesis on existential phenomenologist's meaning ontology and its relation to rhizomatic pedagogy. Well, they would know what a rhizome is because there is lots of chick weed around there but . . . I don't have any stories about animals either.*

*When I leave there, it's a sad feeling. I always get tears in my eyes. I feel as if my reality has shifted and now I have to go back to all this stuff that's not important. As he's driving me back in the boat and I see the shoreline move past, I feel that's my life and my childhood moving past. It's a good precursor to the change in time. My life is about to speed up again. My sister Frieda packed me a lunch and gave me stuff from the garden. I eat the sandwich on the bus: she made the bread herself and the eggs are from their chickens and she's given me rhubarb from the garden. I also have a salmon that I caught up by Stewart Island that needs to stay cold. My dad made me a homemade cooler out of a piece of Styrofoam that he found floating in the bay. He cut it to fit inside of a cardboard box. I told him how great it was because he was reusing old Styrofoam and cleaning up garbage from the ocean. He gives me a weird look, like I am acting like an environmental city girl. He doesn't do it because he's trying to be an environmentalist.*

There is a continuous becoming between dichotomies. And Gregoriou (2004) rightly warned us against reinstating a dichotomy between rhizomes and roots: "It is not a matter of exposing the root and announcing the rhizome, there are knots of arborescents in rhizomes and rhizomatic offshoots in roots" (p. 244). There is also an organism that resists binary classification. In the Quaking Aspen reside both the arborescent and the rhizome. It propagates using a rhizome; this colony of trees is believed to be more than a million years old and owes its longevity to its ability to survive root diseases that kill only non-rhizomatic trees. This is what Gregoriou called the rhizome's tragic paradox: at the same time that it subverts one hegemony, it reinstates another. This is the paradoxical occurrence when the multiple reaches the substantive. This idea of paradox is not detrimental to rhizomatic pedagogy, but part of the rhizome's ontology. As soon as we try to represent the rhizome, it hides behind itself and appears other than it is; it becomes a congregation, a tree, or a node.

Rhizomatic pedagogy is a way to engage the student in discovering how to encounter the unknown. Within this unknown or unearthing of being, a learning takes place. This is not at the level of territorialization or organization, in which the truth is already decided in advance, but a deterritorialization that ungrounds the teacher and the student because they both enter into an unknown space. Allan (2004), whose research focuses on inclusive education, suggested that rhizomatics is a form of empiricism in which we privilege experience and experimentation over interpretation of theory: "the key question facing student teachers is how to engage with the marginalized or silenced other without trying to assimilate or acculturate that other" (p. 425). Allan (2004) wrote that one might think of the teaching zones "as spaces of engagement with the other" (p. 425). It is the only way to avoid dictating to others what their truth will be. It is a place of engagement, of encountering an unknown. "It is a place we create when

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*When I get home, I cook the salmon and bake a rhubarb crisp, but they seem so out of place on my electric stove. I planted the foxglove they gave me but it didn't survive. I really want to hold on to the realness of Maurelle. I collect items and bring them to my house. I don't want to lose that part of me when I come back to the mainland but it slowly drifts.*

*At first, I am irritated by all the people around me, and I know what Holden Caulfield means when he says these guys are a bunch of phonies. I'd rather sit with the seagulls. The ferry gets to the other side and I enter Squamish. Normally I love this place. Today I hate it. McDonalds right at the turn to go into town. I can smell that old deep fried oil; usually I don't notice it. I have this feeling like Gulliver did when he returned from his trip to the island of horses where the humans are underdeveloped greedy yahoos, and the peaceful horses run the island. He describes the feeling when he comes back to his family: that he cannot stand the stink of them; they smell like the deformed yahoos on the horse island. That's a feeling that I have when I return from Maurelle. But it slowly drifts as I learn to live in Squamish again.*

hosting others we change, hybridize our discourse and identities, and let others teach us, from the beginning, how we are different and multiply in ourselves” (Gregoriou, as cited in Allan 2004).

It is important to put into practice this so-called theory of teaching because writings remain purely theoretical until one puts them to work. Similarly, Gough (2007) elucidates that concepts for Deleuze and Guattari cannot just be thought, but must also be used as a way to think and act:

These concepts do not ask of us our epistemic consent; indeed they ask nothing of us. Rather they are offerings, offerings of ways to think, and ultimately act, in a world that oppresses us with its identities. If they work—and for Deleuze, the ultimate criterion for the success of a concept is that it works—it will not be because we believe in them but because they move us in the direction of possibilities that had before been beyond our ken. (p. 293)

### *Conclusion*

I have attempted, through writing, to explore rhizomatic pedagogy—the becoming of the organized with the unknown and the uncanny. I used my own personal experience in the footnotes, in addition to the linear structure of the essay. This is to emphasize that rhizomatic pedagogy is not only emergent or experiential learning, and not merely learning without structure; it is a learning that is always a becoming.

It is important, when encountering this idea of rhizomatic pedagogy, not to view it as a prescription for a new curriculum, because it is always becoming between dichotomies: a becoming of self and other, and of the subject with the object. It is neither absolute subjectivism nor pure objectivism—in which students are empty vessels to be filled with knowledge—but rather a becoming subject with object and object with subject. And this becoming is allowed by opening the self to encounter the unknown and become deterritorialized.

A rhizome has a relational ontology, not a substantive one. The unsubstantive nature of the rhizome renders it unrepresentable or unreplicable as an instructive code for teaching. Instead, in order to engage with the rhizome, one must use it, not as a metaphor, but as a method of pedagogy. Rhizomatic pedagogy is a way to engage students so that they can encounter the unknown. Within this unknown or unearthing of being, a learning takes place. This is not at the level of territorialization or organization, in which the truth is already decided in advance, but a deterritorialization that is a becoming.

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