Scaffolding one Thai youth's drawing toward resilience

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Abstract
Drawings have been used extensively to explore the psychosocial development of children and youth. Focusing on the drawings of one thriving migrant Thai adolescent, this case study employs multiple sources of data from this youth to ground an integrated interpretation of his resilient processes in ecological context. Our participant, 'Pond', had recently relocated to northern Thailand with his father. Employing reflective interviews with the teenager about his experiences, his sketchbooks and a filmed '*day in his lif*e,' we identified 'promotive' factors contributing to his well-being in the context of strong familial support. During his filmed *day*, we observed him drawing for one uninterrupted hour, the products of which he proudly shared with his artist father as well as the researchers. His sketchbook graphic endeavors included traditional Thai representations, pop-cultural sketches and cartooning, bridging the worlds he navigates as he adapts to his new domicile. Pond's drawing activities and reflections on them confirm his sense of responsibility, self-confidence, positive affect in familial connection and his striving for social inclusion. His use of pictorial language reveals his cultural values and their potential for enhanced thriving. Pond affirmed that his artistic transactions are sources of strength to him in his migratory transition.

Keywords
Drawing, resilience, youth, cultural expression

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This study adopts a sociocultural perspective in exploring the drawing of one resilient Thai adolescent. We seek to highlight the *impacts of the various sociocultural milieu* within which he operated, mediated by his views and beliefs, those of his father and others across both home and extra-domestic settings, and to enucleate the *different functions these symbolic activities* served in the service of his positive development and resilience.

Multiple approaches to the study of youth thriving in ecological context

Resilience as a positive developmental process. The definition of resilience most broadly accepted today is one that highlights it as a process or a constellation of processes (Cameron et al., 2013; Masten, 2013; Sameroff, 2010) that effectively enhance the potential for an individual to surmount adversity. Processes associated with the concept of resiliency have notably focused on individual difference variables. But the long history of the study of the developmental capacity for surmounting adversity has moved from explorations of personal strengths in isolation or in interaction with each other to the investigation of such positive assets deeply embedded in ecological context. Interactions are now seen as *transactions* (Cameron et al., 2013; Sameroff, 2010), and rather than risk factors, investigators seek to investigate such *promotive* variables as those that potentiate thriving 'against the odds'. While there are now known to be many individual difference factors associated with psychosocial thriving, the search is increasingly to locate thriving in ecological context. In the present study, the drawings, the graphic representations, of our participant are examined within the personal, familial, peer and sociocultural contextual levels that he reflects upon, pursuant to his engagement in the filming of one '*day in his life*'.

Contextualizing thriving using a visual methodology. Developing new approaches to the study of resilience in context has taken many forms. The present authors (Cameron, Theron, Unger & Liebenberg, 2011; Chen, Lau, Tapanya & Cameron, 2012; Gillen & Cameron, 2010; Pinto, Accorti Gamannossi & Cameron, 2011) have filmed children and youth in their seminatural environments (a '*day in their lives*') and, as an interdisciplinary, multicultural team, we have interrogated participants, their families and peers as to the strengths that were displayed and the cultural implications of these contextualized findings. In-depth open-ended interviews are examined as the data are deconstructed. A critical feature of the '*day in the life*' (*DITL*) methodology resides in its iterative protocols, as participants from many perspectives, in front of and behind the camera locally, and abroad, collaborate to examine the visual data. The local investigators assume ultimate responsibility for ensuring interpretations accurately represent the cultural values of their communities.

Drawing and human development. In addressing the psychological functions of drawing, researchers such as Gardner (1980) have explored its role in human development, presenting theory and research on artistic development as a cultural

and creative endeavor. Researchers have also explored how cultures exploit the arts to give expression to values, social practices and traditions, highlighting the process of becoming an artist and exploring the role that education plays in its development (Milbrath & Lightfoot, 2010). A particular focus is on how art emerges in cultural groups, especially in marginalized groups (Herbert & Forman, 2010), and on how empathy and emotional regulation interact with cognitive and affective processes involved in creative symbolization in adolescence (Goldstein & Winner, 2010).

Drawing as a culturally shaped activity. Sociocultural theory, assuming that higher psychological functions, including the use of external symbols, move from the social to the individual during development (Vygotsky, 1978) inspired our research perspective. In this view, drawing development is not driven primarily by endogenous forces, but mainly involves increased experience with drawing devices (Hagen, 1985), commonly shared stock images (Wilson, 1985) and culturally specific artistic ideals (Gardner, 1980). The acquisition of graphic schemas through social means may occur in informal and spontaneous drawing activities, during artistic activities in the classroom (Cocking & Copple, 1987; Gearhart & Newman, 1980) or in interaction with familial adults (Braswell & Rosengren, 2010; Pinto, Accorti Gamannossi & Cameron, 2010), who provide scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) or through guided participation (Rogoff, 1990). According to Freeman (1993), cultural norms shape the creation and use of pictures, providing guidelines for what should be valued or eliminated, who is allowed or prohibited to add to or rework a picture, and the like. Cox (2005) has stated:

> Seeing drawing as an aspect of the interactive, communicative context in which children's thinking develops clearly places the study of children's drawing in a Vygtoskyan perspective..., (focusing on) 'the interpretive context in which their behavior is typically rooted...in terms of their ability to interpret the contexts in which they occur as an integral part of their performance with these tasks [Wales, 1990]'...in...sociocultural context.... The role...is a constructive one. Through it, children purposefully bring shape and order to their experience, and in so doing, their drawing activity is actively defining reality, rather than passively reflecting a 'given' reality. (p. 124)

Drawing and theory of mind. According to a neo-Vygotskian perspective, participation in interpersonal relationships provides the raw material upon which psychological reasoning is constructed: Children appropriate psychological tools in collaboration with others and gradually perform on their own what they initially do only during social interactions. This approach attends to those linguistic, conversational, social and cultural aspects, which characterise children's real lives, and which are presumed to influence theory of mind development and application. Within such a social constructionist and contextual view, drawing is seen as a mediational instrument, a relevant factor in the development of the ability to

discover multiple ways to express an intended meaning. The artist must keep in mind the characteristics of the person to whom the message is addressed and assume the other's point of view as a viewer (Freeman, 1995). Freeman stressed that human beings understand pictures if they conceive of each other in terms of mental states, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and desires. Developmental scientists tend to refer to this capacity as 'mentalisation' or 'reflective function' as well as 'theory of mind', which denotes the understanding of one's own as well as others' behaviour in mental state terms (Fonagy & Target, 1997). The capacity for understanding the mental states that lie behind the viewer's behaviour, or perspective taking, may be particularly important when creating a picture.

Guillemin (2004) asserted that drawing requires knowledge production; so if a visual product is its outcome, a drawing provides insights into how individuals make sense of their experiences, potentially giving voice to knowledge of socio-cultural practice, a factor of cultural significance. Drawings are both process and product for Guillemin and her visual research methodology of choice under such circumstances takes into account the site of production, the image and the multiple sites of the viewer. Guillemin and Drew (2010) argued that participant-generated photos and drawings potentially empower participants, giving unique opportunities for 'voicing' difficult-to-express experiences via images, and possibly putting young participants in fuller control of the research process. Theron, Mitchell and Smith (2011) recently confirmed 'picturing research' to be a visual methodology of choice in enabling participant engagement.

Drawing as a springboard for communication and adaptation. Driessnack (2005), in a meta-analysis exploring new methods for accessing children's voices, documented the facilitative effects of offering children the opportunity to draw as an interview strategy in contrast to a traditional directed interview. Drawing is an activity that taps a variety of senses – tactile, visual, kinaesthetic – in ways that verbal processing alone does not. Drawing is particularly useful because it facilitates children's expressions of their experiences (Gross & Hayne, 1998). It may also offer children and adolescents the means of placing memories in historical context through visual language, avoiding the compelling constraints of verbal language implicated in narratives. Drawing has proven to be a powerful instrument for understanding children's worldviews and exploring their beliefs and opinions in different cultural contexts (Pinto, Accorti Gamannossi, & Cameron, 2011).

The influence of context on drawing development. A recent psychological approach to children and youth's drawing incorporates the assumption that they are situated as learners into the cultural contexts in which they mature: This perspective, originating in the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) seminal ecological model, is supported by studies that have shown children to be ' . . . skilful in negotiating a diverse repertoire of relationships, actively contributing to the process of their own development and recognising that their status and power as social actors varies between contexts and cultures' (Woodhead, Faulkner & Littleton, 1998, p. 1). This perspective also

assumes that drawing, as language, play, objects, artefacts and the meanings attributed to them, are mediating tools within and across cultures in children's learning. Studies of children's drawings driven by a sociocultural approach recognise that youth are co-constructors of meaning in their world, that culture acts as mediator between developing individuals and their environment and that the role of adults and more able peers/siblings is significant in 'scaffolding' such learning (Bruner, 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Sameroff, 2010). Braswell and Rosengren (2010) recently examined through sociocultural lenses the impacts of parental influences on young children's drawing and reported supportive evidence for the notion that drawing is socioculturally mediated in familial interactions.

Drawing to enhance thriving. In recent decades, drawing has become a recognized modality in interventions with children and youth (Malchiodi, 1998, 2008; Rubin, 1984). An overview of the recent literature shows the power ascribed to art making for personal growth, insight and transformation, and the many ways art making can help people authentically express themselves, reduce stress and enhance well-being (Malchiodi, 2008). The relationship between the creative arts and the brain, including the possibilities for reparation through art, music, movement, play and drama has recently been reported. In this study, we operationalize resilience as 'doing well' or 'thriving' under adverse circumstances, and we locate that thriving in ecological context (Cameron & Theron, 2011) in relationship to a case study of one youth and his drawing activities and their associated scaffolding by a parent, peers and the cultural context within which he finds himself.

Given the multiple ways drawing can be considered both as a product giving access to the drawer's mind and as a process that activates various cognitive, affective and communicative transactions, the contribution of drawing to development is far from being under one cover. These different foci, what children express through their graphic representations and what effects the activity of representing the world have on self and others, need to be interconnected. There is still insufficient understanding of the dynamic interaction of these factors, their roles in different contexts, their expression and their original sources. From this perspective, the study of everyday lives represents a relevant and potentially generative focus for research in this psychosocial domain. For this reason, we analyzed one resilient Thai adolescent, Pond, his experience of drawing within the participative frameworks in which he operated, through detailed observations of his interactions at home during an ordinary day. The investigation of the structure and meaning of interpersonal behavior in one *habitus* is promising, if we assume that culture and interpersonal behavior constitute each other (Theron et al., 2011).

The role of the visual arts in Thai culture. The long heritage of traditional graphical art forms, typically of Buddhist spiritual origins have played powerful roles in Thai culture and society right up to the present day (Pazzini-Paracciani, 2012). The arts and religious iconography of the culture play out in sculpture, architectural forms as well as in graphic representations and is promoted by royal as well as religious

leadership (Birashri, 2013a). School children are encouraged to adopt traditional styles as their graphic skills are developed educationally (Birashri), although in recent decades, more modern graphic expression is promoted by contemporary artistic leaders (Birashri, 2013b). Examining the extensive range of artefacts produced and reflected upon by one resilient Thai adolescent, who has extensively explored and practiced his drawing skills was hypothesized to be a promising avenue for inspecting the relationships between that teenager's transactions with art and other core strength-based aspects of his well-being.

Art's transactional power: Pond's case

We do not analyze the contents of Pond's drawings for artistic or developmental accomplishment, although that would be a valuable project in itself, nor to diagnose the relationship between our participant's drawings and his resilience; rather, we examine his reflections upon how his drawings enhance his strengths in the contexts of his home and with his peers (the most intimate of the ecologies Sameroff, 2010 identifies) in his migratory transition. We see drawing as a systemic process, not a unitary ability (Toomela, 2002) and seek to demonstrate its contributions to resilience functioning more in the processes than in the products.

Methodology

Participant

Pond had just turned 14 years old when he participated in this study. He was the younger of two adolescents in his family, and was chosen to be a participant in this ecological study of resilient migrant youth by a local advisory committee experienced with mobile at-risk youths in his new Thai home community. He was identified by this advisory team to be notably thriving, both personally and academically, in spite of significant adversities associated with his relocation, including poverty, family disruption and language challenges. Pond lives with his father beside their noodle shop in a northern city in Thailand. They recently (during the current school year) made a difficult move there from the capital city of Bangkok leaving behind his mother (who did not want to abandon her government job) and older (also employed) sister, so his father could pursue his career as an artist doing stone carvings in temples. Despite the relocation of father and son, the parents still worked towards common family goals. To earn an immediate living, the father had opened the noodle shop where he and his son devote long challenging hours to support themselves. While income disparities are common in Thailand, this family unit was, as least temporarily, particularly vulnerable due to the father's being unsalaried, living and working in rented facilities, and having only resources for basic necessities (which included Pond's education but not medical emergencies). They were neither receiving sustenance from the land nor were they struggling to make ends meet in the capital, so the relocation created at

least transitional social and economic stress for the family, and income was not yet accruing from the father's artwork.

Pond's father, being a dedicated artist himself, appreciates and encourages his son's creative initiatives and supports him by providing materials for the development of his artistic talents and whenever feasible, provides time for his son to devote to the development of his talents as well. Pond attends a well-established government-funded middle/high school of about 1200 students from low- to middle-income families. The school is considered to have good-quality facilities, resources and supports for its pupils, but deals with many migrant students, often stretching its capacities to respond to extraordinary individual needs.

Procedures

Pond is one of a group of 16 youths in eight locations around the globe that have been studied by an international, ecological, resilience research team (Theron et al., 2011). The visual methods used to examine youth well-being in this study were: filming a full '*day in the life*' of participants and in-depth semistructured interviews to determine the contexts within which participants were locally claimed to thrive and to gain insight from participants on the inter-actions that were observed during the filmed *day* to represent well-being in spite of adversity. These exchanges gave the youths an opportunity for reflection, which contributed to our developing grounded perspectives on their strengths. The focus on Pond's engagement in drawing emerged from the full hour he spent during his filmed *day* quietly following his own highly skilled, indeed talented, artistic proclivities. Traditional Thai drawing is considered an essential part of cultural studies in Thailand. Students are required to learn traditional forms in art classes in school. Traditional art is integrated into Thai architectural styles and objects in everyday life. The lines and forms are intricate, complicated, reflecting different artefacts in nature such as flames and fiddleheads (vegetable), lotus flower, jasmine, bamboo, etc. and often represent Buddhist themes. Students are encour-aged to practice until they 'make the lines come alive, as if they are moving or flowing', (Art Group, 2013). In this respect, Pond exceeded the expectations of his teachers.

The graphic representational activities embedded in Pond's day were recorded on film, identified in field notes, analyzed by the local research assistants and international coinvestigators and discussed with him during two in-depth inter-views (Charmaz, 2006). One week in advance of our filmed *day*, we conducted a first open-ended interview, identifying his family's demographic background, his personal history and experiences in relocating, and his appreciation of his personal situation. After an entire *day* of filming, a half-hour compilation of exemplary clips from that *day* was created. Approximately one month later, Pond viewed the compilation and was invited to offer his reflections, shedding light on his percep-tions of his drawings and other artistic activities and their roles in his life.

At that time, he also shared his drawing notebooks as he discussed his work, providing examples of the points he made about his current preoccupations in the development of his art. Pond's interviews and filmed *day* were translated, transcribed and socioculturally interpreted by the local investigators before being shared with the international team.

The procedures used in the present visual case study were reviewed for ethical acceptability at Chiang Mai University and the Behavioural Ethics Review Board of the University of British Columbia. The youth's father provided signed informed consent and the youth offered informed assent. 'Pond' is his self-chosen pseudonym. They both volunteered release for scholarly dissemination purposes all images of his work and of his daily activities. Pond's drawings were analyzed, as would be recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998), in the light of his introductory interview, the experience of having been filmed for one day in his life, and his iterative interview reflections on the compilation film of that day. Further, he offered for mutual analysis, comment, critique and reflection on his drawing notebooks.

Findings

The themes generated from specifically analyzing Pond's drawings in relationship to his reflections upon them and their relationship with his thriving were not independent of the knowledge of other themes apparent in his *day* that we have described in other research papers. These include his emotional security (Cameron, Lau & Tapanya, 2009), his cultural roots in resilience and his daily experiences in cartooning (Cameron & Theron, 2011), his expression of multiple identities on several ecological levels (Chen et al., 2012), and our visual perspectives on his thriving in the majority world (Cameron et al., 2013). The following additional themes of strength emerged from the data with specific respect to his drawing and are here described in the context of his other strengths. The major theme of his taking personal responsibility in daily life for his graphic representational transactions in cultural context was substantiated by the subthemes that are ordered in reference to his levels of socioecological engagement from (1) the personal (achieving self-confidence), to (2) familial (maintaining his filial relationship), through (3) peer sociality to (4) his sociocultural recognition, reflecting the frameworks of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Sameroff (2010).

Major theme: Taking personal responsibility in daily life

Pond was determined to be a responsible youth by his schoolteachers, by his father and by himself. When asked whether he resented his hard work at school, home and in the noodle shop he replied that were he ever inclined to complain about his load, he just looked at his father who carried so much heavier a load and he lost any inclination to complain (Cameron et al., 2009). During the filmed *day*, not only

did he cook, clean and serve in the shop, but he also took about one hour to iron his and his father's laundry (Cameron et al.). This mutual regard and his high expectations are also reflected in his respect for his fathers' superior knowledge and experience, and especially with respect to art. He honours his father's judgement and internalizes his choices, accepting his greater authority with no expression of resentment during our interview process.

Pond's father's, contributions of supplies for painting, ensures breadth of experience and depth of opportunity as an entitlement for his son. His father contributes to Pond's sense of responsibility for making choices by setting out reasonable contingencies in his engagement with his drawing.

Extract 1. *Taking responsibility* from Interview 1.

Interviewer	I notice that you are very good at drawing, do you like doing that?
Pond	Yes, I do.
Interviewer	Are you diligent about it? Do you do it often?
Pond	During Saturday and Sunday when I am free I draw.
Interviewer	What about weekdays?
Pond	I am not quite so free; have to do homework, so I don't have time to draw.

Figure 1 is a grabbed still from Pond's filmed *DITL* as he voluntarily engaged for over one hour in drawing. Pond's situation is reiterated and clarified in the second interview with respect to his drawing activity during his filmed *day*:

Figure 1. Assuming responsibility, Pond spends considerably more time drawing than his father requires of him.

Extract 2. *Assuming responsibility* from Interview 2 while viewing the compilation film.

Interviewer	Ok. Please explain what was happening here.
Pond	This is during my free time and my dad asked me to draw some pictures.
Interviewer	He asks you to draw.
Pond	Yes, and then show them to him . . . and only after this does he permit me to go play games (meaning computer or video games).
Interviewer	So he allows you to play games afterward.
Pond	Yes, I must draw first.
Interviewer	Does this happen often?
Pond	Yes, often.
Interviewer	How many times a week?
Pond	4–5 times.
Interviewer	4 or 5 times, what days of the week?
Pond	Saturday and Sunday.
Interviewer	What about week days?
Pond	Monday to Friday I rarely get to do it because by the time I finish preparing for the next day after coming back from school I run out of time.

Pond's father promotes a familial work ethic by developing independence and responsibility in his personal responsibilities, including his artistic endeavours, through encouraging Pond to draw and rewarding him. Pond articulates that he sees the virtues of his father's strategies and that the 'system' has flexibility within it.

Extract 3. Continuation of *responsibility* discussion from Interview 2.

Interviewer	You said only after you do the drawing does your dad give you money to go to the game shop, right? What would happen if you didn't do it?
Pond	I wouldn't get to go.
Interviewer	Has that ever happened?
Pond	Yes, it has.
Interviewer	And you didn't get the money?
Pond	Yes, I still did.
Interviewer	How come you still got the money when you didn't draw?
Pond	Because that time there were many customers at the shop and I didn't have time to draw, and when we finished with the shop sooner he allowed me to go.

At the end of the filmed *day*:

Interviewer   Did you draw some pictures this morning for your dad to look
                at?
Pond   Yes, I did, and he will come and ask for them.

Figure 2. Father carefully adjudicates Pond's drawing. Pond respectfully attends to his father's careful review of his artwork.

Here, in Figure 2, Father examines Pond's *day*'s work:
The father's sensitivity to his son and his own artistic competence, are an important contributors to the success of his mentoring. Opportunities to nurture and develop his creativity are scaffolded. The father teaches Pond how to select tools (by providing them and giving him scope in selecting them); to work intensively for long periods without the need for adult intervention and to make thoughtful decisions about the direction of his work at the end of the *day*.

Extract 4. Father's artistic preferences from Interview 2.

Interviewer   Which type of drawing can you do best?
Pond   Traditional Thai style line drawings.
Interviewer   Why do you think that?
Pond   I am doing ok with them.
Interviewer   Which type (of drawing) do you like best?
Pond   I like cartoons better, but dad likes me to do the Thai drawings.

Pond balances his personal preferences against his father's more experienced preferences. He exploits the strengths of both in taking responsibility for his

daily comportment, weighing his preferences against those of his father's to accommodate both 'better judgements'.

Visual communication plays an important part in the lives Pond and his father, both in private and public contexts, providing a partial overlap between their domestic and workspaces. For this family, art is part of a universal language shared between individuals with wide-ranging ages, abilities, interests, language and social and cultural backgrounds, which we demonstrate with what follows.

1. Resilience on a personal ecological level: establishing self-confidence

Pond's confidence in his role in the family as his father's assistant is clear in his assuming many responsibilities at home without necessarily being requested to do so. For instance, as documented in the footage and reported by Cameron, Lau and Tapanya (2009), he not only simply assumes unbidden many household chores but also voluntarily gathers slops in the kitchen during the day and at the end, independently takes a bucketful to stray dogs at the nearby temple, he says, just because he feels sorry for the strays.

Pond's sense of self-confidence is rooted to some considerable extent in his father's helping him establish both an internal sense of trust in his own ability/talent and identification with his family's (specifically, his father's), and his community's cultural values. Collaborative planning scaffolds the sensitive match between father's skills and son's capabilities and promotes communication and adaptive, personal and social development. When asked about his father's input in his graphic representational developments he responded:

Extract 5. Establishing confidence from Interview 2.

Interviewer	What did your father say about it?
Pond	He was supportive and bought me pencils and other things.
Interviewer	Does he support you in other ways?
Pond	Yes, he does by showing me how to draw and start making sketches.
Interviewer	That means your dad knows how to draw?
Pond	Yes.
Interviewer	Did your dad motivate you to draw, or was it something else?
Pond	My dad did too.
Interviewer	What else did your dad do for you?
Pond	He bought some Thai design books for me, when I was around 11 so I could try to draw.
Interviewer	For you to use as a model?
Pond	Yes, so I could try to draw them.
Interviewer	Do you think you have improved much?
Pond	Yes, a lot.

Figure 3. Establishing a sense of self-confidence in his traditional artistic expression. Pond spends a good deal of his time advancing his traditional graphic skills.

Pond's self-evaluation reflects his recognition of the high level of skill demonstrated in his traditional drawings. Figure 3 is an example Pond provided from his note book to exemplify this skill in traditional Thai drawing.

2. Resilience on a familial ecological level: reinforcing his filial relationship

While Pond's relationship with his father is strong on many levels from noodle shop collaborations, to housework, to simple recreational time spent watching television, all observed during the filmed *day*, the intensity and affections are most profoundly expressed in the context of their mutual artistic pursuits.

Pond is privileged in the experience of well coordinated, sensitive interactions with his father. Showing his interest in Pond's drawings, the father deepens their relationship by serving as a significant positive adult role model. Pond learns how to empathize and productively interact by the example of his parent. During the course of the day, Pond was observed to spend significant time with his father sitting comfortably beside him, demonstratively cuddling up beside him and casually watching television with him.

Extract 6. Familial relations from Interview 2.

Interviewer	Who are you closest to?
Pond	Dad.

Pond's closeness, both emotional and physical, to his father is apparent in this grabbed still from his *day*, after their sober discussion and evaluation of the merits of the major drawing of the *day* shown in Figure 2, we see Pond's snuggling towards a comfortable and closer physical connection (hanging on his father's

shoulder), shown in Figure 4, as they appear mutually satisfied by the day's end evaluation. Nevertheless, all was not entirely consensual that *day* as he did negotiate quite vigorously with his father at the end of the day to make a trip to Bangkok to visit the rest of the family.

In spite of his father's preference for traditional Thai art, he had framed and hung on the wall of their sitting room, along with more formal portraitures, one of Pond's colourful cartoons, as seen in Figure 5 which stretched his father's

Figure 4. Reinforcing familial connection together. Once his father adjudicates Pond's drawing, Pond draws very close to his parent as they jointly inspect the product of their mutual professional and personal pride.


Figure 5. Cartooning finds a home. This cartoon is framed and displayed in the sitting room despite Pond's father's preference for more traditional art.

boundaries of traditional depictions for interior decor. Pond's father modulated his professional sensibilities by encouraging his son's talents that were more in tune with his peers' graphic representational preferences.

Extract 7. On the emergence of his talents from Interview 2.

Interviewer	Since when did you start learning to draw?
Pond	When I was seven or eight.
Interviewer	What did you start with?
Pond	Cartoon characters. Some older kids showed me how to do them and I liked them so I bought my own drawing pads and started doing them.

3. Resilience on a social ecological level: striving for peer inclusion

Although Pond expressed profound feelings of social isolation from his peers in his new school due to his lack of fluency in the local language, he used his previously honed knowledge of art and artistry to connect with those new peers. Pond's art made an important contribution to the development of his social inclusion because it gave him an opportunity to communicate and contribute to his social networks through popular visual media. The contents of these sorts of drawings attracted the admiration and the interest of his peer group.

Extract 8. Challenges to inclusion from Interview 1.

Interviewer	What was most challenging for you in moving to this new school?
Pond	I can't understand the local dialect here.
Interviewer	Are there others around here who have similar experiences like yours? Like moving here recently.
Pond	There are very few, because they are mostly from the north.
Interviewer	After moving here how was your relationship with the community?
Pond	I don't really know anybody around here yet.
Interviewer	You told me there is something.
Pond	About the language.
Interviewer	Does that make it hard for you?
Pond	A little.

Pond's linkages with his new peer group are a source of some success in settlement acclimatization. He has roots developing in both worlds the traditional art world in which his father is schooling him (as in Figure 3) and the popular cultural world of his classmates as in Figure 6. Both Pond's humility and his openness to celebrate accomplishment in others have led to his acceptance as a valued peer contributor at school, according to our youth advisors in his community.
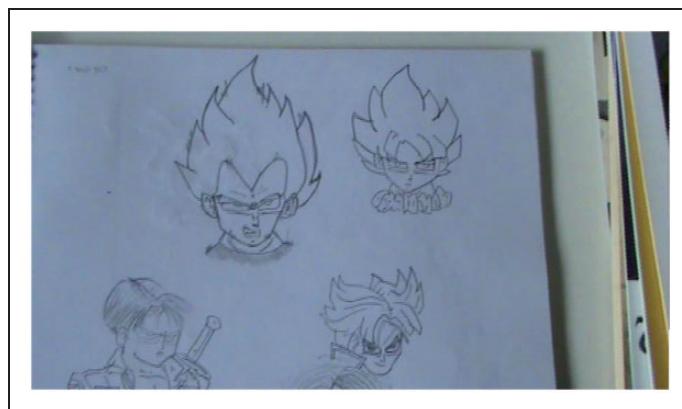
Figure 6. Gaining peer inclusion. Pond reports that his peers admire his cartooning as well, providing an entry to his classmates' popular cultural world.

Extract 9. Pond's social comparisons from Interview 2.

Interviewer	Compared to your friends, how good are you in drawing?
Pond	I should be better.
Interviewer	Have you ever seen your friends' work?
Pond	Yes.
Interviewer	Where?
Pond	At school, during arts class.
Interviewer	Were you impressed?
Pond	Yes, I was.
Interviewer	By whose work?
Pond	My friends'.

Extract 10. Pond's reflections on his own artistic techniques from Interview 2.

Interviewer	How do you feel about drawing?
Pond	It's . . . fun.
Interviewer	From what I see it is mostly line drawing (sketching), do you use other methods?
Pond	Drawing these and drawing cartoons.
Interviewer	Do you use colors or paints?
Pond	Only with cartoons.
Interviewer	Do you enjoy using colors?
Pond	Yes, I do. At the moment I am using water colors.

We expect that with time, these symbolic practices will affect wider school success, highlighting their role in developing the positive attitudes that underpin enhanced achievement.
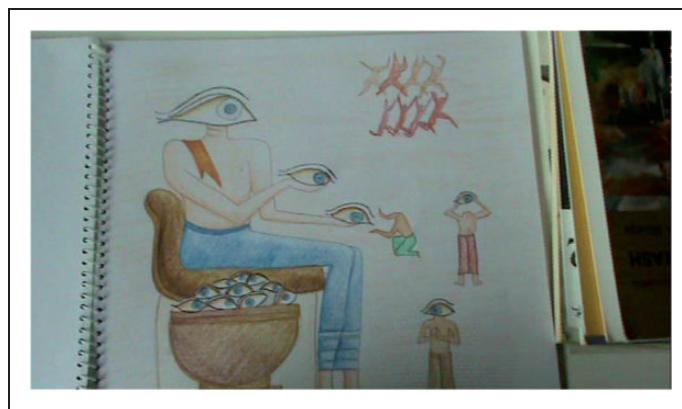
Figure 7. Mediating cultural values. Pond practices graphic representations of iconic figures derived from the drawings he studies in his visits to the library, as well as the images he creates from models his father and popular culture afford him.

4. Resilience on a sociocultural ecological level: mediating cultural values

Negotiating a comfort level when father and son are on somewhat different pages with respect to artistic values provides the son with scope for instantiating his preferences and thus pleasing himself, and perhaps his peers, and at the same time, satisfying his devoted parent.

There are many traditional paintings on the walls of the father's home providing an aesthetic context for their daily-life environment. The father places emphasis on the relevance of iconic culture in the family cultural heritage. Pond's father is very effective in expressing his appreciation for traditional art without preventing Pond from exploring new achievements, enabling him to extend his scope and develop ideas, investigate and make art, evaluate and develop his own work. The father plays an active and expert role, leading Pond to be aware of the need to position his own work in a long-term visual culture.

Figure 7 gives an example of Pond's explorations of cultural representations from a broader sampling of cultural resources. He reported studying representations from other cultures in library books at school and demonstrated his interest in broadening his audience of viewers in such work.

Discussion

The visual methodologies deployed in Pond's case study offer a productive window into particular strengths of an artistically talented youth and a source of information as to the roots of his transitional resilience. Pond is a strongly self-regulated adolescent, with quiet confidence in his own self-worth and who is impelled to produce what he recognizes, though with humility, is work of high value.

It is possible that our interpretations of his self-regulation and pride should be moderated by consideration of his humility and filial piety. He might on other occasions complain of his hard work or the challenges of his relocations but we respected here his reflections, enactments and the transactions he chose to share with us as valid representations of the cultural stance he chose to adopt in participating in our study. Social desirability could of course be a factor in his exchanges.

Pond's high-quality transactions (Sameroff, 2010) and their creative outcomes stem in part from his interactional synchrony with an adult who is passionate about artistic creativity and clear about its value; a father who inspires his teenager by providing absorbing, challenging and open-ended opportunities for learning; a father who exploits his son's interest in visual imagery, and encourages creativity and enhances its progress. Father is effective in communicating to Pond the relevance of art, as well as the value of traditional visual culture. Through contact with traditional art, Pond is encouraged to reflect on his cultural heritage in ways that could ultimately provoke sensitivity to its past and ambition for its future. Pond works hard, develops strength and understands that a creative practice is often challenging, purposeful and collaborative. Consistent with this father's encouraging attitude, this teen appears self-reliant, socially oriented, empathic and furthermore he demonstrates the capacity for the development of deep relationships. His father is empathic, promoting creative behaviours in his son, particularly in a period in which they are experiencing adversity. Nevertheless, the father does not encourage drawing as an escape from reality: in his view, to draw requires attention, concentration, imagery, creativity and the result may be expected to be accurate and of high quality.

These observational data suggest that the parent's sensitivity to the son's attitudes and talent may facilitate the son's general understanding of himself and of his external reality, through the mediation of a congenial context. The process is intersubjective: Pond gets to know his father's mind as his father endeavours to understand and support the mental states of his son, despite the distance that has been reported typical of many Thai fathers and their younger children at least (Tulananda & Roopnarine, 2001). There are no studies in English that we could find of Thai fathers' and their teenagers' relationships. This study potentially commences to fill this gap in the literature by offering a small case study of one father–son relationship.

Drawing helps Pond to create a world in which he perceives he has some power and thus he can thrive in what might otherwise be an alienating environment, a world in which he has high work demands on his time and yet manages to perform school tasks at a high level of proficiency. It has been argued that people who share a culture share similar ways of infusing meaning into sounds (language), movement (dance) and lines (drawings) (Geertz, 1983). Pond, by using visual symbols, joins with others who share the same 'imaginative universe' or 'worlds of possibility'. We could suggest that the artistic endeavours that Pond experiences, embedded with at least one trusting relationship that encourages autonomy, offers emotional support, self-esteem and responsible decision taking, allow him to prevent,

minimize or overcome the challenging effects of adversity (Guillemin, 2004). This paper draws attention to the need to reaffirm or reconsider the place and value of symbolic activity, namely drawing, in Pond's daily life and further to speculate on the potentials of identifying and promoting artistic creativity as a source of strength for vulnerable youth.

We can also draw some implications for the study of the contribution of art to psychosocial development: We would propose more extensive use of the observation of human natural interactions and particularly of qualitative methods in the study of everyday lives of adolescents, in order to better understand the interplay among nature and culture.

As Driessnack and Furukawa (2012, p. 5) summarize their study of youths' drawings, they are usually introduced 'as a catalyst to focus and guide follow-up interviews with the children . . . . The focus in these the Driessnack and Furkawa studies was on the child's interpretation and information surrounding the drawing, not on the child's drawing skills or on the drawing's aesthetic qualities'. However, employing these techniques in research with youth does not mean the resultant study findings will reflect all or even many young people's voices. 'How children's voices are accessed is only one piece of the research design; how their voices are then interpreted and represented in the process of analysis and dissemination of the findings are other, equally important pieces of the research process (Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta & Wintersberger, 1994, p. 5)'. In our research, we tried to refine a qualitative method to interrogate the psychosocial functions of the drawings by taking into account both the processes and the products, contextualizing them within their ecological niches.

Drawing: copying and creating: Pond was given models that he explored, mastered, refined and transformed. He utilized traditional paintings as an inspiration rather than as a 'compelled' pictorial solution. He appeared interested in copying something already created by others using these stimuli as a starting point for his own art. His ability to look critically at traditional art and then explore his own pictorial preferences would be driven in part by his parent's assurance that different solutions are acceptable. The extent to which he is confident of his potential as an artist, exploring new drawing tools and techniques, is linked to the quality of his positive relationship with his father and to his peer's appreciation. His father's own artistic competence and their experience of one-to-one discussions were seen as important contributors to his success.

We conclude that the study of the function of drawing in enhancing resilience could contribute psychological insight by highlighting the depth of interconnections between psychosocial processes in thriving and the cultural processses in which they are embedded. Pond's drawing activities connect traditional Thai art with more popular youth culture giving strength both to his larger community roots and also to that of his peer culture. Pond demonstrates awareness of gaining aesthetic strength from the values of his father and his broader, older, cultural community, while at the same time kinding the support of his peers by cultivating and perfecting adherence to their standards of excellence in cartooning.
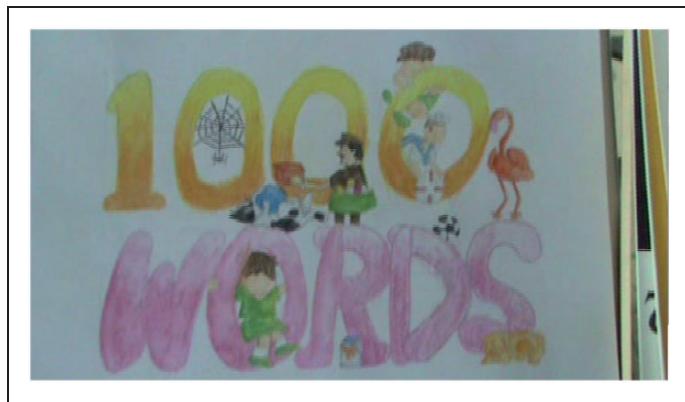
Figure 8. A thousand words. A message Pond shared as to his striving to communicate with those around him when his linguistic skills fail him.

This juxtaposition of cultural forces that Pond negotiates is enhanced by his having a sensitive father he respects who is a skilled artist and who can enculturate his son on a traditional cultural level while at the same time he subtly supports Pond's popular art work, both avenues representing part of well-rounded graphics development. These reflections of artistic negotiations could support the development of cultural theory. In the case of Pond, several of these factors appear to coincide to result in the development of his resilience.

The comlexity of the synergy between all these interdependent factors primes a question as to what sorts of research methodologies might best be deployed to investigate them. We suggest that the quasi-ecological visual procedures of the DITL methodology is relatively well suited to do just this. We were not looking to identify causal variables, but rather to use the multivocal descriptive techniques of a case study to explore the depths and textures of the lived experiences of a mobile thriving youth, more deeply to capture and gain an appreciation of just these complex interconnections.

We thus stress the importance of providing more studies of similar data sets collected around the globe (Cameron, 2011) in order to have a deeper understanding of the texture of adolescents' everyday lives in different cultures and contexts. Milbrath and Lightfoot (2010) revealed 'how cultures harness and exploit the arts to give expression to values, social practices, and traditions and in process create new world-making activities (p. 3)'. Pond shows his understanding of the fact that in many cultures, at home, school and in the community, pictures can be worth a thousand words (Figure 8).

Acknowledgements

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