Wild Pedagogies: Opportunities and Challenges for Practice

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INTRODUCTION

We live in extraordinary times. The stories of our age are being written in mass species extinctions, catastrophic events, and accelerating climate change. It is also a time of social upheaval. Justice movements, such as #BlackLivesMatter, #IdleNoMore, #MeToo, school strikes for climate change (#FridaysForFuture), and the COVID pandemic make it clear that normalized social practices are troubling and inadequate. We cannot continue as we are; the current path is not sustainable. Social distress is increasing, and nature is crying.

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We recognize that the term Anthropocene, which many are using to describe our times, is controversial. It sums up all humans together without separating perpetrators from victims. The Anthropocene does not adequately reflect the complexity of phenomena at play. There is the danger of attempting to predict an epochal change when most major changes—whether we call them tipping points, gestalt shifts, or paradigm changes—only become visible after the fact. Could this be an additional act of *hubris* as we humans attempt to take control of a geostory that is really being co-authored by all earthly forces?

While we are sympathetic to the critiques, we also assert that Anthropocene narratives have significant impacts: they remind us of three critical ideas. First, Earth is in a climatic state that threatens myriad species, including our own. Second, any effective response will require a radical rethinking of ideas and ways of being that run counter to many dominant cultural narratives. Such narratives have been framed in a number of ways—modernist, globalized, westernized, euro-centric, neo-liberal, colonial, Cartesian, anthropocentric—yet collectively these framings are entwined in knitting a resilient status quo that seems difficult, if not impossible, to shake. Third, we live in unprecedented times. Our children and grandchildren will grow up in a very different world. We can no longer prepare students for a "business as usual" world that claims confidence in its learning outcomes. We, as educators and scholars, must be differently as well.

Educational Responses: A Scholarly Ethos

To move cultures from where they are—epistemologically, ontologically, ethically, metaphysically, and practically—we, as educators, researchers, and teachers cannot continue to repeat the same established narratives; we cannot continue to be the *same* people, the *same* educators, and the *same* researchers. We hold that education must be a necessary part of any response that requires such a fundamental rethinking of ideas and practices.

This is not to suggest that there are not already many incredible teachers—across a variety of educational settings—pushing limits, defying the status quo, and persisting in offering radical and hopeful alternatives. We think of them as "rebel teachers" (Blenkinsop & Morse, 2017). Similarly, we join with other researchers—including our colleagues in this book—seeking to break free of normalized scholarly practices that hold us back (Jickling et al., 2018b).

We have called our response to educational demands of our times *wild pedagogies*. In the next section we describe key underpinning ideas of wild pedagogies and include more practical *touchstones* intended as provocations and reminders of what we are attempting to do. But we also ask—through two vignettes of practice—whether such attempts, guided by theory, are enough? When the reimagining and rethinking required runs so counter to cultural ways of being, significant pedagogical challenges in practice are inevitable. Such cultural change cannot be achieved simply through a theoretical shift; ontological alternatives can be difficult to sustain, and "wild" educational experiments may seem fleeting.

Enacting these experiments requires determination and practice. Deep cultural assumptions are often hidden from view in pervasive language choices, hierarchical social structures, and the scope of knowledge and understanding considered neutral. These assumptions constantly and silently work to bend educators back to the status quo. Indeed, these cultural forces can be the "real authorities." How might we meet these challenges and enable productive and hopeful pedagogies? Part of this task must involve naming the challenges and being ready to offer alternative responses.

Consider the challenge of communicating across borders in a transdisciplinary seminar comprised of eco-literary critics, educators, and a curious engineer. Interestingly, such a gathering did take place a number of years ago. However, the engineer, in particular, could not penetrate the polysyllabic words—code, we think, for barriers created through nearly impenetrable dialects (Braidotti, 2019). Sadly, he chose not to return the following day.[1] This incident is a reminder that in academia, we can easily forget how difficult it can be to communicate effectively beyond our comfortable and established bubbles. The point is that this kind of border crossings does not come easily; we must learn how to do it.

In this chapter we will attempt to address this issue by writing in a way that we hope is more inviting and readable—as if we were keeping cross-border allies in mind. The task at hand is formidable and complex. No one will succeed alone. We suggest that a new ethos will require more collaborative research attitudes, generous scholarship, and an assemblage of scholars gathered to build a community of rebel researchers.

Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss puts difficulties in building community this way: "we tend to specialize. With this specialization there is a tendency to feel opposites instead of feeling the complexity of the relations and complementarity" (Næss & Jickling, 2000, p. 50). In a nod to how

we might learn to think and do things differently, he recalls his experiences as a young scholar amongst the Vienna Circle of philosophers. In the end, he rejected their logical positivism; however, he greatly admired their searching minds. They were very different personalities, yet they were constantly helping each other, with invitations to try things differently and to look for new meanings. This ethos constituted what Næss called a kind of "research attitude" (Næss & Jickling, 2000, p. 51). Perhaps such a collaborative shift in research ethos, together with a dose of generous scholarship (Russell, 2006), would go a long way toward building the kinds of community that are required for our times.

We aim to open some space for movement in these directions by presenting wild pedagogies as a heuristic—that is, an agent of discovery rather than a rigid framework or plan of action. In this spirit we invite educators and scholars to experiment with our ideas, to try them out in their own places in the world, to look for new meanings, and to suggest ways that this work could be done differently, expanded, and even undone. Similarly, we encourage readers to seek convergences amongst all the chapters in this book, and then, to celebrate divergences as creative opportunities to take excursions together in new directions.

Wild Pedagogies

Wild Pedagogies arises within a complex of concerns about control. These concerns are about the ways in which cultural controls do violence to many and restrict the ways that we can think, act, live, and respond to possibilities for change in an era of uncertainty. We believe that current times require responses that are imaginative, creative, courageous, and radical.

Wild pedagogies is a relatively new term that has simmered since 2014. Initial experiments with wild pedagogies occurred during international gatherings of like-minded educators who sought to explore and expand this idea as an agent for educational change. By 2018, a small group of wild educators and scholars, affectionately called the *Crex Crex Collective*, banded together to publish a provisional gathering of ideas in the book *Wild pedagogies: Touchstones for re-negotiating education and the environment in the Anthropocene* (Jickling et al., 2018b). These heuristic-spirited gatherings have since continued and generated a growing body of literature that has been represented in a number of journal special issues.[2] These works rest upon two key premises. First, modernist relationships with the

world must change; and second, education is a necessary, even fundamental partner in the project.

The work of wild pedagogies has been to reclaim language and reconceptualize ideas about the "wild" and wildness. And it has been driven by the frustratingly difficult task of enacting meaningful change, particularly in formal schooling settings (Aikens, 2021). What unites this work is a persistent concern about how issues of control can shape possibilities for change—explicit control, as well as more implicit controls embedded in contemporary language, metaphor, and cultural practices.

Wilderness, Wilding, and Will

Inspiration for wild pedagogies comes from ideas of wilderness, wildness, and will. We are well aware of critiques leveled against "wilderness." We understand that as a colonial tool, it has been used to disenfranchise people and cultures the world over (Bird Rose, 1996; Cronon, 1996). We also recognize that wilderness can be presented in a way that reduces its value to that of a backdrop for human-centered, self-serving, and colonial ends (Stewart, 2004). Yet we have also long known that there is more to wilderness than an absence of people, and a playground for heroic adventures.

Thus, despite its liabilities, wilderness still seems to be a potentially useful concept. There are places where more-than-humans flourish and where humans enter on terms that are more equitably dictated; wilderness is more than just an idea. At the same time, physical wildness is being located and encountered much closer to home—including in colonized urban areas—by those who are looking. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) idea that concepts are constantly being created and re-created, it seems timely to think again about how wilderness can be reconceived. We argue that a robust conception of wilderness does not necessarily rely on disenfranchisement of people from their homelands (Jickling et al., 2018a, 2018b).

In making this renewed case for wilderness, we appeal to Old English etymology. Here the word "wildoerness" can be said to derive from "wil" which in turn can be linked to wild or willed. "Doer" can be linked to beast, and "ness" is linked to place or quality. Putting these together suggests that wilderness can be thought of as a place of wild beasts, or more evocatively, *self-willed land* (Foreman, 2014). When this idea of self-will is juxtaposed against domestication, where "domesticate" is used in the sense of having been brought under control by humans (Livingston,

1994), the inherent agency of wilderness is given weight. Its wildness is celebrated; it informs us, and indeed, it teaches us if we watch, listen, and feel.

In an interesting twist, Norma Kassi, a member if the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in northern Canada, reached out to wilderness advocates in a different way. She affirms that there is no word for wilderness in her language; however, she does assert that there is a word for freedom (Kassi, 1996, p. 24). In this offering she suggests that in her culture, freedom overlaps with the best qualities of our own conception of wilderness.

Hints to Norma Kassi's understanding of freedom may lie in the hurt she expresses when humans "manage and study" animals. For example, she has spoken of a caribou that her brother once hunted that had been fitted with a radio collar: "under the collar," she said, "was covered in worms, it was tight. I do not know how the caribou lived, it was skinny and segregated from the others" (Kassi, 1994, p. 215). Kassi's freedom is not a freedom of individualism or economic imperialism. Rather, is seems aimed at an inherent freedom of self-determination and a freedom to flourish—even a kind of intrinsic value.

We acknowledge that wilderness and domestication should not be thought of as absolute qualities; wildness occurs in varying degrees of freedom and will, perhaps along a continuum. Still, for wild pedagogies, it helps to problematize ideas related to control while at the same time acknowledging the wild *agency* of the more-than-human world (Abram, 1996). Given the evolving ecological crisis of our times we suggest that ideas about a self-willed wildness can provide leverage in rethinking human relationships with the more-than-human world in ways of being that are less anthropocentric, less hierarchical, and more equitable for all. In the heuristic spirit of this project, we do acknowledge that this work is far from complete. See for example recent work on wilderness and wilding by Irwin (2021) and Quay (2021).

Wilding of Pedagogy

The desire for control often plays out in our educational institutions in ways that make things measurable, routine, universal, and that work to delineate ways of being. It is made manifest in many ways—often working to push educational practices into particular rationalistic ways of seeing the world. Such worldviews frequently run counter to the lived experiences of educators, learners, and parents, and serve to limit and domesticate

educational opportunities. Impulses to push toward more radical reimagining of educational possibilities are tamed. There are too few possibilities for relational engagements within the natural world. The epistemological positioning required for mutual flourishing in a more-than-human world is often absent (See for example, Au, 2011; Jickling, 2009, 2015; Smith, 2016, Spannring & Hawke, in this volume).

Wild pedagogies is inspired by wildness. It represents a desire to let go of an overabundant sense of control, to invite the places we visit to become an integral part of our work, and to respond to provocations in spontaneous, and at times unforeseen, ways. A wilding of pedagogy rests on the premise that an important part of education can include intentional activities that provide a fertile field for personal and purposeful experience without overly controlling the environment and its actors, learners, or educational outcomes.

Problematizing control does not mean aiming for a directionless free-for-all. Rather we wish to challenge existing assumptions, to rethink possibilities, to push open the doors to educational opportunities, to expose the limits imposed upon epistemology, and to embrace the learning opportunities arising from being present to the more-than-human world. Thus, we are interested in how we might start pushing back on domestication and the desire for control in education.

Crucial to any success of wild pedagogies will be making concrete links between ideas and practice—pedagogies on the ground. We need to understand that social systems are often hostile to change, and subject to forces that bend actions back in the direction of the status quo. It is easy to lose sight of progressive, and indeed rebellious aims as we try to work out how change might manifest itself in what we do (Blenkinsop & Morse, 2017). We have been developing what we call touchstones to aid in this process.

TOUCHSTONES

In linking theory and practice, the touchstones described below aim to provide reminders, challenges, and a place to return to for educators interested in experimenting with wild pedagogies. They offer questions that educators can ask every day to remind themselves of what they are trying to do in their daily activities. For some, wild pedagogies will provide recognition of what they already do. For others it might inspire a wilding of

their practice—providing opportunities to attend to the wildness of places, themselves, and their students in a deeper way.

Importantly, these touchstones are not static. They are provocateurs to be read, responded to, and revised as part of an evolving, vital, situated, and lived practice. What follows is our summary of those touchstones as we currently see them and one sample for each touchstone of the kinds of question posed for practitioners to consider. They rest on a substantial corpus of previous work, yet as this summary shows they continue to grow and change. (Blenkinsop et al., 2018; Jickling et al., 2018b; Morse et al., 2021).

Touchstone #1: Nature as Co-teacher

This touchstone asserts that education is richer, for all involved, if the more-than-human-world is actively engaged with, listened to, and taken seriously (Blenkinsop & Beeman, 2010). At one level this touchstone seems easy to understand and to put into practice. The claim is that the natural world is a vibrant, active, agential place that is worth listening to and learning from. Accepting this claim means that educators will spend more time outdoors and access different pedagogical possibilities. However, this touchstone also has implications for what knowledge is and how learning happens. If nature is embraced as co-teacher then the human is de-centered and learning becomes a shared project that is no longer ever complete or human-based. With this discussion as background, consider the question: How can I invite and provide space for the natural world to be present as a co-teacher in my practice?

Touchstone #2: Complexity, the Unknown, and Spontaneity

Education is richer for all involved if there is room for surprise. If no single teacher or learner can know all about anything, then there is the possibility for unexpected connections to be made, unplanned events to occur, and simple explanations to become more complex. Knowledge, if given space, is wondrously dynamic. This touchstone celebrates the unpredictable as it pushes back against the desire to categorize, limit, and contain. It listens for a diversity of voices, especially those that are marginalized or lost in learning environments where the standardized, the measurable, and the definable are the focus. For educators, this involves risk. Emergent approaches tend to complicate situations and curriculum design can no

longer rely solely on desired learning outcomes. The suggestion here is that the world does not work in a clean, predictable, linear fashion and that something important is lost when we assume that it does. With this discussion as background, consider the question: How did my practice today take risks in moving away from full control of assumed ends?

Touchstone #3: Locating the Wild

The wild can be present everywhere but difficult to find. It can be made hard to see by cultural tools, by colonial attitudes, and, in urban spaces, by concrete itself (Derby et al., 2015). This touchstone cautions against the cultural constraints of much of modern public education and the often-present colonial orientations toward the natural world and many peoples. It challenges educators to think about their own privileges, including those related to the more-than-human world. It requires educators to be constantly aware of how language, metaphors, the structures they work within, and the tools they employ, can either challenge or sustain the status quo. It pushes back against the desire to control—both as humans controlling the more-than-human world and as centralized institutions controlling learners and educators. The wild, like freedom, runs contrary domestication and can be located anywhere, in the rural and the urban spaces, but also in individuals and their own acts of resistance. With this discussion as background, consider the question: How can I provide ways to acknowledge the wild and wildness in everyday encounters?

Touchstone #4: Time and Practice

This touchstone acknowledges that building relationships within the more-than-human world takes time and discipline. This touchstone focuses on both the processes and practices involved in building and maintaining these relationships, especially with those denizens who live near us. This process requires significant amounts of time immersed in particular places, listening to the world. For many, this will also require slowing down, changing habits, and listening to our own bodies and those others around us, in different ways. In practice, this requires work and discipline, much the same as developing a meditative practice. It will also take work to develop the one's own pedagogical practices—the how of one's teaching and the assumptions and habits that motivate that our work. With this discussion as background, consider the question: How might I leave space

in my teaching to allow for meaningful engagement with nearby places and the beings living there?

Touchstone #5: Socio-cultural Change

We assert that the way many humans currently exist on the planet needs to change. This change is cultural and education is necessarily political player in this process. This touchstone begins with the radical premise that much of current educational practice is anti-environmental. It will not be enough to simply tinker with its edges. These premises, place the teacher in the role of activist, who recognizes that choices made in classrooms have explicit and implicit implications for how learners come to understand themselves and the natural world. This touchstone also recognizes that the future is no longer easily predictable, and that children are not growing into the same kind of world that their parents or grandparents did. Thus, educators need to challenge children to respond to uncertainty with creativity, visions for change, and building of shared community outcomes. With this discussion as background, consider the question: How can I actively make choices that provide students with possibilities for alternative relational ways of being and knowing while not furthering a sense of catastrophe fatigue?

Touchstone #6: Building Alliances and the Human Community

This touchstone seeks to build strong alliances and flourishing communities in a more-than-human world, but also not to forget to build human alliances in environmental and social justice communities. The goal is to push against individualization and alienation while resisting colonial moves to separate marginalized groups and place them at odds with each other (Simpson, 2017). We must listen and learn from each other while creating equitable and flourishing communities. Diverse platforms bring more perspectives to our conversations and can lend support to each other. Through such alliances, educators can learn from others—environmental educators from critical race theorists, community organizers from experiential educators, popular educators from gender theorists and more. And, there is much to be learned from alliances inclusive of the more-than-human world. With this discussion as background, consider the questions, When I think of educational possibilities, which communities do I reach out to? Who is not included? And, who might I add?

Touchstone #7: The Imagination—Limits and Possibilities

This touchstone aims to increase the imaginative range and the creative impetus in wild pedagogical work. Change can only happen when we can imagine alternatives, while also seeing ourselves as capable of acting in new ways. Yet, imagination is not unfettered. The edges of imagination are drawn by complex combinations of culture, experiences, histories, and our own creative practices. Working with wild pedagogies thus requires spotting our collective limits, then finding ways to offer our students and us experiences, encounters, and content that might expand imaginative ranges. As our work involves cultural change, we must extend our own imaginations in ways that penetrate existing cultural frames—including moves beyond current anthropocentric limits. With this discussion as background, consider the questions: Where are the edges of my imagination that limit my ability to create different kinds of education? And how might I expand my own, and my students', imaginative range?

Considering Wild Pedagogies in Practice

These touchstones and the kinds of question arising from them are a first step toward linking theory and practice. In the following section we consider some practical examples and consider further steps. We offer two vignettes of engagements with wilding pedagogy in practice. We acknowledge that these are locally based examples from the authors and that each attempt to work with wild pedagogies will be situated in different local contexts.

In offering these vignettes we include elements of the experiences that appear to tame the experiences and bend learning opportunities back toward the cultural status quo. Significant challenges are inevitable. However, enacting these experiments is exciting work that can provoke change. The question we ask here, though, is can we be better equipped to meet these challenges and enable hopeful pedagogies?

Vignette #1

We are sitting in the sun in a big circle on the well-manicured grass of a large urban park. It is late May on the west coast of Canada. The grounds are immaculate, and we are surrounded by a cascade of flowers, carefully cropped shrubs, and a bevy of unusual, non-Indigenous, tree species. The noises of kids

playing team sports floats in the background like a babbling brook. This is pre-COVID picturesque. The group I am working with is made of 25 practicing teachers who are in their third semester of our nature-based experiential learning graduate diploma. This two-year program seeks to support teachers in becoming wilder, even rebellious, in their practices. It also seeks to sustain intriguing concepts such as nature as co-teacher, nature as colonized, and teacher as activist. This is the semester where teachers have been immersed in the ideas of wild pedagogies and are being asked to implement more nature-based lessons in their classrooms. This is the move from theorizing to practicing, to taking the ideas of wild pedagogies and trying them out in real situations with real kids, real families, in real schools. It is also the semester when we start to talk about the challenges, the push back, and our own limitations.

*   "Any challenges, discoveries, learnings arising from trying to get outside and implement wild pedagogies in your classrooms?" A hush falls. Folks are thinking but also worrying about being the first to speak; maybe everyone else has had a great time and things are going swimmingly. Ben, as he often does, is the first to break the ice and tells us a story of how one child asked why he was lying to the class about nature being in trouble. "My Dad says there is no climate change and that you should stop teaching lies." The group lets that one land, gathering before discussing, but this is tough to hear. Jennifer, always full of extravert energy, dives into the silence and tells a story about when she came upon two students killing ants and disturbing a third student, who was in tears. It was clear that her reflective-self regretted not dealing with the ant death at all. "I haven't really thought about how to deal with death in my classroom and not only that I totally forgot about nature as having rights and that living beings were actually being killed in all of this!" She had, by her own admission, slipped into both anthropocentrism and "old teacher habits" focussing solely on the emotions of the situation, the bullying, and the humans involved. Alyssa is next to speak and in her quiet deliberate way shares with us her sense that she is still "too controlling" to let learning emerge, to trust nature to "teach," to see time pass where it looks like kids aren't doing anything. "I know, in my head, that allowing them to build relationships with the natural world is a good thing. And I know learning is happening, because I have seen it, heard it, and documented it. And yet, there is voice inside my head that still questions this. I hear my colleagues wondering if we are just playing outside and I wonder if the community just thinks I am weird."*

As the reader will note through this vignette there is a lot that can happen as teachers experiment with less mainstream, more outdoor, and

wilder forms of education. While the teachers' excitement in wilding their pedagogy was profound, such attempts run up against elements of the political, cultural, and individual status quo that can frustrate and even stop the work. Below we highlight some of these in an attempt to be pro-actively prepared for them.

The politics of a "neutral" education. Ben's example is a pronounced version of the political in the school classroom, and the way wild pedagogies can push against assumed norms. It provides an example of the difficulties of implementing the critical touchstone of *socio-cultural change*. In many ways the assumed "common sense" idea of public education, what it looks like, what and how teachers teach, is embedded in the mainstream. This means that teachers moving in the direction of wild pedagogies are confronted with the politics of that move. Some see this as bringing an agenda to their classrooms—to manipulate or propagandize. This rests in the assumption that teaching is supposed to be from a position of neutrality. Such a flawed assumption arises from the privilege of being ensconced at the center—the status quo. As the old adage goes, the fish doesn't see the water in which it swims. Said another way, all teaching is political, but what are the politics that each teacher brings, and why? Answering this involves careful thought, ongoing community education, deep humility, and a critical eye. The question, then, becomes what are the insights I am seeking to offer.

Cultural frames of anthropocentrism. Cultural frames echo through each response. In Ben's response, we hear how the dominant culture and its assumptions are more apparent to those on the margins or those who are seeking to change that culture. In Jennifer's we hear a specific encounter with anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism—and of how challenging it is to recognize those habits, and then to change them. Through Alyssa we come up against the assumption that the teacher is the expert. It is also assumed that lessons should be organized to achieve measurable learning outcomes, control is held by the teacher, and students are managed. Implicitly, knowledge is the purview of humans, fragmentable, and distributed in bite-sized chunks. For wild pedagogues this process of encountering culture, of wrestling with troublesome habits, and of discovering ingrained ways of teaching is an ongoing accomplishment. Wilding pedagogies offers teachers opportunities to change in ways that reflect expansive expressions of educational freedom and their inner wildness.

The challenge of self-reflection. Many teachers experimenting with wilder pedagogies confront discursive battles within themselves. For Alyssa there

is an intellectual commitment to being outside, and to working with the *nature as a co-teacher* touchstone. Yet, there is a culturally generated voice inside her that questions this. Alyssa points to a sense of "weirdness" that is likely a response to a western cultural context that pushes way from the natural world. In her context, it is often seen as soft, weird, or crazy to be an independent, autonomous, human who talks to and cares for the natural world. Another piece of this discursive battle lies in finding ways to trust both the natural world to perform as a co-teacher, and the students to be engaged learners, while seeking to create rich educational encounters. A wilder education requires relational alternatives in practice, and these, in turn, require pro-active trust in learners, places, and teachers themselves.

Vignette #2

We are standing on a shingle bank beside the river, looking out across the river towards water-worn features in the cliff wall on the opposite bank. We arrived in this place via rafts, journeying on the Big River in South Eastern Australia, and the group is made up of final year pre-service Outdoor Education teachers and a group of first year university students. It is a teaching opportunity for the final year students to trial outdoor environmental pedagogical approaches in this place. As part of their studies the pre-service teachers have been considering pedagogies that respond to our times—including wild pedagogies. In particular they have been working with the touchstone nature as co-teacher and the implied question of "how can I invite and provide space for the natural world to be present as a co-teacher in educational encounters?"

The experience begins with the pre-service teachers' invitation to consider the formations and imagine ways in which these geological features have been formed. There are several thoughtful responses from the first years that prompt discussions within the group. The idea here is to be led by the place. As the discussions develop the pre-service teachers add in catchment and geological information, including timelines and ideas about layering and metamorphosis. It is a lively and informative discussion based on learning from the place, and through direct first-hand experience within the place. There is a sense of excitement from the students and teachers alike. Yet, at the same time there are challenges in fully enacting nature as co-teacher. At times, for example, when students head off in a previously unimagined direction, they are in subtle ways returned to the view of "discovering" things about the place. "If you look over here you will see…" or "the rock you see here was

formed by …." *In many ways the pre-service teachers are following their lesson plans that were designed to work with the place as co-teacher, but in practice there are continuous cultural temptations to return to teaching about, rather than with, the place.*

In highlighting possibilities and challenges for educators in wilding pedagogical approaches, the vignette above brings into focus some contextual concerns and the critical importance of the touchstone *time and practice*.

Following a plan/avoiding risks. Having a linear lesson plan in place can promote an engaging lesson, but an important question might also be "what opportunities are being missed?" This question is not easily answered, as they may never become apparent without imaginative experiments such as wild pedagogies. What might happen, for example, if we carefully and deliberately set up experiences that welcomed the as yet unknown or unpredictable to occur? What might happen if, instead of working to funnel learners toward designated curriculum objectives, we begin with the quality of the relational encounter and the place itself? How might this look in the example above? Time would be required for students to explore and find things—places and interactions that, on their own terms, draw students' attention. Such points of attention and departure could be discussed using careful language that present materials, forces, and other beings as actively agential. This involves risk; it involves challenging ideas of control, trusting the place and the learners, and shifting cultural ideas about teacher identity (Green & Dyment, 2018).

Sliding into anthropocentric language. The *nature as co-teacher* touchstone asks how might we actively work toward knowledge held by places and other-than-human ecologies? One important response is to avoid sliding into an anthropocentric language of knowledge production. This is difficult work, because it is very easy to fall back into assumed cultural habits as we speak. For example, rather than saying, "the rock you see here was formed by…" we could ask… "if we try to imagine a different timescale, what might these rocks be telling us about how they arrived here and how they continue to influence things and lives in this place?" And critically, then, how might educators respond? Must the conversations lead to a singular compartmentalized knowledge or might it be okay to explore multiple available storylines within a place? To actively promote the *complexity, the unknown, and spontaneity* held within a place? This vignette, and other examples of practice (Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013) suggest that if we listen carefully, stories may bubble up from outside our peripheral

vision. Such stories might be macro—formation/transformation, or micro—spiraling whirlpools that catch insects on currents, or literal. This touchstone encourages students to see things from different angles—to test their own ideas about how things interact. The place might then guide and co-teach through gaining, providing, and becoming with attention.

Politics of knowledge out there. The lesson described in this vignette was considered successful teaching about, and to some degree with, the place. It also revealed an underlying assumption that teachers could ultimately explain the place; that knowledge to some degree exists *out there*, to be explained through a process discovery. Following this assumption, the place becomes a textbook, of sorts. It becomes a place where students can assume to discover a singular and relatively static reality. While this does provide a version of learning with the place, it does raise questions, such as, What epistemological possibilities might be side-lined by this assumption? And, in what ways, might the things, materials, and forces continuously act to produce the place on their own undiscoverable terms? In this way, knowledge might then be considered as situated, partial, dynamic, and necessarily co-produced with the place. We suggest that what are needed are more deliberate acts of pedagogy that place us directly, politically, and relationally within the world.

Concluding Thoughts

We must act differently—we cannot continue as we are—and education must play a role in the cultural change required. David Orr (2017), like many others, calls for serious educational change, because "without exaggeration it will come down to whether students come through their formal schooling as more clever vandals of the Earth and of each other" on the one hand, "or as loving, caring, compassionate, and competent healers, restorers, builders, and midwives to a decent, durable, and beautiful future" (pp. ix–x) on the other. What will it take to nurture caring, compassionate, and competent restorers of the earth? In part we believe this will require shift in scholarly ethos and we turn again to Arne Naess for insight. In the end, he preferred to put aside academic competitiveness, in favor seeking minds, sharing ideas, and a research outlook. At the core of his ethos was "trying to help each other"—to improve each other's work and to find new ways forward.

This book, in itself, steps alongside David Orr's question and toward a research outlook. With wild pedagogies, and with the other chapters

presented here, we aim to provoke opportunities for reimagined relationships, enlarged more-than-human communities, and nurture caring and compassionate educators.

Responding to the ecological and social crises of our times, however, will require more. In working with students and communities to enact such cultural change, educators and researchers are called to rethink education, reimagine pedagogies, and, when needed, to fiercely resist the status quo—to be rebel teachers. By framing key underpinning ideas of wild pedagogies, situating them through the touchstones, and then experimenting with our practices, we hope to have offered a way forward that can provide possibilities for each of us to become better educators and allies of, for, with, and in the more-than-human world.

Notes

1. AHRC network, The Cultural Framing of Environmental Discourse, Workshop I, December 2–3, 2010, in Bath, UK. The Network is part of a programme on "Arts and Humanities Approaches to Researching Environmental Change."
2. See for example, *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education* (2016) *28*(4); (2020) *32*(3); *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education* (2018) *21*(3); *Policy Futures in Education* (2021) *18*(3); *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* (Forthcoming, 2022).

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