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Why Wild Pedagogies?

The Crex Crex Collective

Abstract Given the sense of ecological urgency that increasingly defines our times, this chapter seeks to look beyond current norms and worldviews that are environmentally problematic. With this thinking in mind, wild pedagogies, first, aims to re-examine relationships with places, landscapes, nature, more-than-human beings, and the wild. This requires rethinking the concepts wilderness, wildness, and freedom. Second, this chapter contends that educators need to trouble the dominant versions of education that are enacted in powerful ways and that bend outcomes towards a human-centred and unecological *status quo*. With this in

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mind, wild pedagogies seeks to challenge recent trends towards increased control over pedagogy and education, and how this control is constraining and domesticating educators, teachers, and the curriculum. Finally, given that the dominant current human relationship with Earth cannot be sustained, we posit that any critique suggested must be paired with a vision—and corresponding educational tools—that allows for the possibility of enacting a new relationship.

Keywords Anthropocene • Control • Education • Environment • More-than-human • Pedagogy • Wild • Wilderness

The earliest experiments with wild pedagogies were, at their core, about reimagining and enacting alternative relationships. By alternative, we mean relationships that fall outside of mainstream business, politics, and education. Given the sense of ecological urgency that increasingly defines our times, it seems important to look beyond present norms and worldviews for our responses. With this thinking in mind, our first aim was to re-examine relationships with places, landscapes, nature, more-than-human beings, and the wild. This required rethinking notions of wilderness, wildness, and freedom. The second aim was to challenge recent trends towards increased control over pedagogy and education, and how this control has been constraining and domesticating. The third aim was to offer something to educators—something that would propose a possible path forward. This book thus builds on past work with the aim of more thoroughly articulating the theoretical roots and offering practical strategies for enacting wild pedagogies.

It is tempting to say that Earth is in terminal decline. Climate change appears to have reached, or perhaps even crossed, the threshold of irreversibility. Many scientists and environmental historians are carefully arguing that Earth is about to, or is already, transitioning into a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene, or the “age of human impact.” If we are indeed at the threshold of a new epoch, we are equally at the threshold of an emerging geological conversation. A new geo-story is transpiring on the ground beneath our feet, in the atmosphere around us, and in increasingly warm oceans. It is being communicated through climate change, increasingly fierce storms, and mass species extinctions. The first to suffer, as always, are the marginalized and disenfranchised. This includes many from our human species—especially within oppressed communities—but also the staggering loss and suffering of other species. This suffering of more-than-human beings seldom registers in public discourse and is often downplayed. However, the situation appears to be worsening. Science is inherently sceptical, cautious, you could even say conservative. Yet, with each passing year we hear news reporting that the situation is even worse than previously predicted—more species annihilated, more glacial ice melted, and more topsoil lost to the sea.

As frightening as this is, Earth has seen large-scale extinction events before. In fact, there appears to have been five of them. If another drastic change is imminent—in geological time—Earth will survive. It has before. Many existing species will not; others will be diminished—and this includes humans. Yet, it is not humans as a whole that are the source of this problem. So what is the trouble? We argue, what is really at issue is a troubling kind of relationship with Earth. This relationship is reflected in the ways that many of the most affluent and "developed" nations have lost the knowledge of and, subverted the social structures for, living well with place—to live within their means, to live with care and compassion for other beings, and to live with wonder in Earth itself. Unfortunately, this relationship appears to be spreading across the globe.

We wonder what the world could look like if humans, afflicted with such relationships within their place on Earth, enacted different ways of being in the world. What is not clear is how, exactly, it would mean to "be differently" within the world. It seems that the most common suggestions, which range across various new attitudes, prescriptions, warnings, restrictions, summons, sermons, and threats, seem to be out of sync with the magnitude of changes required. Changing relationships within our place on Earth or being in the world differently entails far more than using a different kind of light bulb. Something more fundamental must be disrupted[1] and something significantly different must be offered. Such a disruption will not be achieved through appeals to rationality, duties, or facts alone, nor will it be achieved by humans on their own. It is more likely that changing relationships with Earth and its other beings will require learning through active engagement with the natural world. The return could be rich—for example, in increased sense of well-being, decreased sense of alienation, and an expanded range of what it means to be human. Thus, this conversation about change is about doing, not just thinking. And, doing things differently will mean being different in our orientations towards nature, our language about nature, and our responsibilities with nature. This suggests that we must practice a kind of environmental etiquette. Here etiquette is not reserved for elites, but it is rather a kind of everyday manners amongst beings and places. This move to being differently in world also suggests that we are tasked to engage in face-to-face "re-negotiating" of what it means to be human and to be a citizen in a more-than-human world. All of this is, at least in part, an educational project. Big changes are needed and with big changes bold educational approaches are required. In this book we propose some bold—and wild—ideas.

Before launching into wild pedagogies, we need to acknowledge the way in which education has typically been conceived is in trouble. Kris Gutiérrez,[2] former President of the American Educational Research Association, provided a good summary of this problem when she described her most persistent concern:

> Our inability to intervene productively, at least in any sustained and transformative way, in the academic lives of so many youth today—to imagine new trajectories and future forms of agency.... we simply cannot rely on efficiency and market-driven models of education that are certain to bankrupt the future of our nation's youth. We need models for educational intervention that are consequential—new systems that demand radical shifts in our views of learning....

For Gutiérrez, current models of education are part of the problem. Her vision of education demands that she enact pedagogies that challenge dominant models. In doing so, she is simultaneously being the change in the very process of enabling change to occur.

Gutiérrez's own pedagogy reflects a view that learning and developing agency requires doing, engaging, being the change—and, indeed, being in the world differently. Her own educational experiments point to wonderful pedagogical possibilities when university students and school children work together. In her words, “They were brought together through an intervention that privileged joint activity, playful imagination, and a vision of teaching in which an imagined or projected future could influence activity in the present.”[3]

We prefer to think of Gutiérrez’s pedagogies as well-crafted experiential learning opportunities—rather than interventions. Here we draw attention to the word “intervene.” Intervention implies that we can actually pinpoint a problem and, through a diagnostic process, treat the condition and stipulate the outcome. Our worry is that the language of “interventions” can easily slip into a good idea gone awry whereby, in this case, humans educators are seen as “thinkers and fixers”—they remain in control. This does not appear to be what Gutiérrez does in the wonderful examples she offers from her own practice. However, the persistence of this kind of language and thinking, in more general educational conversations does not, we fear, offer the kinds of resistance that can enable entry into a bold alternative discourse.

Consider UNESCO’s response to a need for educational change. Irina Bokova,[4] the (former) Director-General of UNESCO sheds light on the persistence of the educational problem, as we see it. In the foreword to her agency’s recent report, *Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All*, she asserts, “we must fundamentally change the way we think about education and its role in human well-being and global development.” However, she offers the same tired old rhetoric. For her, educators have a responsibility “to foster the right type of skills, attitudes and behavior that will lead to sustainable and inclusive growth.”[5] This suggests, to us, that Bokova is proposing an interventionist strategy that is, in all likelihood, not adequate for achieving the deeper and, indeed, transformational change that we believe is required. Sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman challenges this conventional, and indeed delusional, vision of educational “innovation.”

Bauman[6] claims that approaches like Bokova’s are habitual and tired answers to “the wrong kind of behavior.” Bauman is doubtful that social realities can be unsettled, dislodged, or even radically changed by simply attempting to instil in learners “new kinds of motives, developing different propensities and training them in deploying new skills."[7] He insightfully asks whether educators performing in this way will ultimately "be able to avoid being enlisted in the service of the self-same pressures they are meant to defy?"[8] This question goes to the heart of the task before us. And, a further look at Bokova's comment, as a common example, underscores key issues.

In the first place, nothing in Bokova's statement suggests a need to fundamentally disrupt, and re-negotiate humankind's relationship with Earth. As Stephen Sterling observes, "UNESCO has been suggesting the need for a 'new vision' of education for some time yet what is often missing is a sufficient critique of the dominant cultural worldview."[9] Without such a critique it is hard to imagine how UNESCO's initiatives will do anything other than succumb to the *status quo*, as Bauman warned. Second, Bokova's interventionist solution assumes humans can somehow control and correct their own fate without accounting for the volatility and turbulence of our times, or the role the natural world is likely going to have to play. Absent from the United Nations and UNESCO's discourse is any serious reflection about what education is, or could be.[10] Implicit in this omission is an assumption that mainstream education as presently conceived is, for all intents and purposes, largely adequate. Finally, Bokova's statement is all about humans—particularly human well-being that is linked to global development. There is no concern for what well-being means in the more-than-human world and no suggestion that Earth can have educational agency.

We contend that educators need to trouble the dominant versions of education that are enacted in powerful ways and that bend outcomes towards the *status quo*. But, troubling dominant language, norms, and practices is not enough. These actions, must also be accompanied by a new vision and new actions. And these actions need to recognize the challenges inherent in transformative projects and the situated realities of the people involved. If the collective human relationship with Earth cannot be sustained, then critique must be paired with a vision—and corresponding educational tools—that embrace the possibility of enacting a new relationship.[11]

Moving Forward

The first wild pedagogies colloquium was canoe-based and hosted on the Yukon River in 2014. This proved to be an important catalyst for the work of this book. It was premised on the idea that in order to engage with alternative relationships with place, and our own work, we needed to conduct ourselves differently. Only in this way could we gain access to thinking and being differently in the world. This initial effort revealed some interesting teachings. It is true that the group was immersed in a relatively wild place, but, in some ways, the colloquium was still structured like a traditional conference. In particular, presentations were organized in a more-or-less predetermined sequence, and in most instances, they were not particularly responsive to the places where they were delivered.

Sure, being on a riverbank or in a canoe added additional elements to the work—the content and the venue were better aligned. And, surely the river added inspiration to the reflections, but in most instances, actual voices from the land were not recognized in the presentations and did not significantly shape the nature of the colloquium. We could not honestly claim that place was a co-teacher or co-researcher. This realization provoked the question: Could a colloquium be structured in a way that "voices" from the land and its more-than-human beings were better heard, and then play an active role in informing and deepening discussions?

Deliberations about the past colloquium gave rise to four important themes in the planning the May 2017 *Wild Pedagogies: A Sailing Colloquium*, hosted off the West Coast of Scotland. First, it was important to improve on our manner of scholarly interactions as experienced in the previous colloquium. An aim was to get beyond the stiffness of individualized presentations. We wanted to find a shared project that would allow conversations and thinking to grow and build, and that could actively press back against the isolationist tendencies of scholarship. Then, if this colloquium was to result in a collaborative book project—how were we going to write it? What processes could lead the collaboration and consensus required to give the theme "wild pedagogies" some depth and coherence? Second, enabling new relations with place would need to begin by recognizing other-than-human agency in a similar sense to the notion of nature as co-teacher or co-researcher. This would require deliberate daily activities during the colloquium and a move away from the human-centredness of most scholarly activities. Achieving the second theme could be more easily achieved by, third, placing the colloquium in a relatively wild place, far beyond the typical conference centre. This could allow our group to immerse themselves in a landscape and alter the dynamics between humans and the rest of the world. Fourth, this colloquium needed to be located some place where participants could be inspired to interrogate their own cultural norms, as colloquium participants were all privileged professionals and scholars from industrialized western countries. Ideally this would be a place that had already undergone a critical conversation within the context of such norms.

Scotland: A Sailing Colloquium

Colloquium planning rested on the premise that the design and place of a wild pedagogies gathering would ultimately shape the nature of discussion. Mindful of this inevitability, the colloquium activities and the Scottish location were purposefully chosen. In important ways, the planning process began with the word "colloquium" itself, which was wonderfully described by Louise Profeit-Leblanc:

> I found it intriguing that a colloquium basically means "in and of talk"; in other words, familiar speech or "talk-speak" if we can coin it as that! A place where people come to learn by listening and speaking with each other about the subject at hand.[12]

As an Indigenous storyteller deeply connected with her oral traditions, it is fitting that Profeit-Leblanc should have expressed this so well. A colloquium is meant to be far more conversational than a conference. Here conversational meant listening carefully, responding with open minds, and understanding in good faith. It is also about learning together and, these days, this is often framed in terms of social learning—or even better, eco-social learning. Finally, Profeit-Leblanc locates conversation in a place. For our purposes—and we expect for her, too—choice of place is integral to the kinds of conversation that can occur. If we are to make a move towards eco-social learning, where more-than-human others have a place in our conversations, then it matters where we have them.

To meet the needs of conviviality and conversation amongst humans, and others, and to position the colloquium in a relatively wild place, we travelled through a landscape on the West Coast of Scotland on a large ship, *The Lady of Avenel*. During the week we participated in sailing the boat, being in land and seascapes, living and eating together, engaging in activities planned to further knowledge and connection, and following a facilitated plan that helped to frame colloquium discussions. The colloquium was, thus, designed as a "total immersion" experience that allowed opportunities to interact with the landscape and deepen the theories of wild pedagogies in a shared and organic way. While living on *The Lady of Avenel*, the landscape had a more active role and the sea was ever-present in the rocking motion, the creaking of the hull, and the sounds of wind in the rigging and sails.

From the Ship's Manifest: Wild Pedagogies Version

May 8th, 2017

Captivated by the activity of sailing.
Setting and trimming the square sails.
Climbing the mast. Sitting in the sun.
But still, the wind shifted, telling us to descend.
Before reaching the deck that square sail—the course—was billowing against the shrouds.

* * *

May 12th, 2017

Sleek boat pushing through smooth seas, manifold greys in the sky, shifting dimensions in tone, wave, wind, cloud, islands. We sneak through a narrow passage in the midst of the Garvellachs. P- waxing lyrical about glacial till during lithification of seabed, which settled 935 million years ago and was later thrust up through the crust at oddly wave-like angles. The islands dance. The Lady of Avenel surges through the sea gracefully, so close to rock, shags, seals, and eider ducks.

Image 1.1 Wind change in the rigging. Photo credit: Aage Jensen

Individual space on sailboats, even large ones, is always limited—someone is always nearby. This can be an ideal venue for conversation. Our design included opportunities for structured conversations and a great deal of time for reflection and more casual chats. Rather than having formal conference-style presentations, two facilitators were recruited to create activities and track questions that provoked thoughtful conversations throughout the day. They provided periodic syntheses of preceding conversations for the purposes of furthering the joint writing project that was to become this book. They also actively created space for on-going check-ins, programme adjustments, avenues for furthering important or incomplete elements of the syntheses, and finally they encouraged us all to be continuously more aware of the place itself. This allowed for themes and discussion points to arise not just from within the group of humans but from the landscape of our travels as well.

Travelling this way also contains design pitfalls. While there are always compatibility risks, we would like to focus on one of the items central to our project that required some intentionality. Here we are talking about how we set out to make the voices of the Scottish landscape more manifest—how we set out to actively listen with better attunement. Our hope was to see what we had not seen before and to allow space for more-than-human discussants to take the fore. All this, we believe, is a necessary prelude to recognizing nature as co-teacher and conversationalist.

Those with experience travelling in groups know that companionship plays an extraordinarily important role—so much so that it can easily displace experiences of being present in a place. Having fun together and engaging seriously with human counterparts is an important part of the experience, but wild pedagogies suggest there should be more to an educational experience. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the threat of our own writing project becoming insular, and isolated from the landscape—despite our expressed interest in nature as co-teacher, and in collaborative scholarship. It is easy for us to slip into "living in our heads" while only focusing on the human. We think that being physically located in a landscape is important, but not enough.

Our response to this human-centred pitfall was to set up some concrete activities and to encourage spontaneous attention. First, cultural and natural historians were invited to join us. Their observations and insights drew our attention to the place and its beings. They participated fully in our discussions and were constantly available "on deck" for impromptu talks and casual conversations. Their presence and participation was an important aspect of our journey.

Second, participants were invited to take time to be on their own both on the ship and ashore. Sometimes this also included opportunities to write short vignettes to describe moments when their experiences on our physical journey resonated with moments in our wild pedagogies journey. Some of these are sprinkled throughout this text to collaborate with the wild pedagogies ideas, and to make present the landscape and its beings for the reader, and as active members of our conversation.

Third, and slightly more structured, we kept a ship's manifest of our own design. It functioned in some ways parallel to the ship's official log.

In our case we requested daily entries that made explicit the wild voices and presences that we encountered. Some of these entries, too, will be presented as vignettes when aligned with our reflections.

Finally, we encouraged disruptions. We often stopped our conversations, or had them stopped for us, in the presence of birds, blooming bluebells, and when joined by porpoises. We looked, listened, marvelled, and tried to make sense of the more-than-human voices we encountered. We paused, took deep breaths, and sometimes smiled. Though, to be honest, nothing unfolded as perfectly as it sounds when written here. Sometimes our agendas were at odds. Sometimes the intensity of our conversations turned inwards and overwhelmed the presence of more-than-human-others—but not always.

Collaborative writing was also embedded in the design of this project and included a writing retreat at the end of the boat journey. Everyone stayed on for at least three days on the small island of Luing, and some stayed for nearly a week. Academics often—though not always—withdraw from their colleagues to write, and we are typically evaluated on our individual contributions. This can be the case even in multiple authored papers and books, where distributed components of the product, and edited drafts shift electronically from office to office at something like the speed of light and often our individual fragments are, in the end, patched together as best they can without sustained efforts at a more ecological kind of thinking. And, we often write for each other, less often trying to bring our ideas to the general public. Even less often will a voice *from* (as opposed to *about*) the more-than-human world enter the narrative. In all of this there is, of course, implicit irony. As educators, we are more comfortable experimenting with our practices, trying to transcend conventions, and taking pedagogical risks. As writers, this seems harder. So, this proposal gave us permission to experiment with scholarly conventions.

The previous paragraphs have spoken to the intertwined way that three of our thematic aims were framed. We have touched on how we aimed to work together in ways that could take us outside of scholarly conventions, open up opportunities for meaningful interactions with the more-than-human world, and position ourselves in a relatively wild place, ever-further from conventional conference centres. In the decisions that were taken, we aspired to align the collaborative processes with the aims of the wild pedagogies project. Still, given our fourth conviction, that the specific location of this colloquium would shape the nature of discussions: Why Scotland?

Recognizing that we were culturally, economically, and educationally a fairly narrow band of humanity we took to heart the suggestions of anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose.[13] For Rose, cultural change can be supported through active engagement with and reorganization of one's narratives. She suggests that within any culture there are histories, ideas, memories, even myths that do not align with the dominant narrative. And these might become elements for beginning to tell a different story of one's culture. Thus, in Scotland we found intertwined narratives of colonial appropriation of land, and lingering traces of deep relationships to land and that, in the end, brought us to the crofters, and some sixth century monks. These histories proved to be good grist for our work.

Contemporary conceptions of wildness and wilderness are linked to a nexus of ideas about geography, natural history, and landscape intersecting with political history, particularly that of imperialism and its twin, colonialism. This brew has often provided fanciful and idealized versions of wilderness. Scottish writers have been actively engaged in a critique of wilderness for a long time. Indeed, in the 1950s the renowned ecologist Frank Fraser Darling coined the phrase "wet desert" to describe areas considered by many to be wilderness when, in fact, those same areas were characterised by intensive land management practices including deforestation, soil drainage, muirburn, and grazing.[14]

Scottish historian James Hunter wrote a powerful version of wilderness critique in *On the Other Side of Sorrow*.[15] In this book, he argues that Scotland was a training ground for developing British imperialistic practice. And, once Scotland was subdued—and cleared of many of its Indigenous residents—it was a character no less than Queen Victoria that was at the forefront of idealizing a pastoral view of the resulting "wilderness."[16] As it turns out Scotland has a story to tell. Hunter's work provided a counter-narrative within the cultural norms of the colloquium participants. And, his Scotland provided a place to reflect on this counter-narrative, complete with suggestions of historical locations that could be visited from the *Lady of Avenel*.

Image 1.2 The *Lady of Avenel* lying off on Iona. Photo credit: Bob Jickling

Some of Hunter's ideas will be discussed in more detail later in this book. But during the planning stages of the wild pedagogies colloquium, his book offered some concrete grounding in a particular place. First, Hunter builds on the critique of an out-dated conception of wilderness, as was often used in Scotland. What some saw as an idealized wilderness, Hunter saw as a tragic absence of people from their homelands.

Second, whilst others have critiqued the oft-prevailing visions of wilderness, Hunter proposes an antidote to these out-dated visions. For him this lies in inspiration taken from translations of ancient Gaelic nature poetry written in the sixth and seventh centuries. Much of this was composed on islands off the west coast of Scotland. Perhaps the most famous of these islands is Iona. Here, according to Hunter, the monastic community was one of the intellectual centres for all of Europe, and a centre for literacy. These Gaelic-speaking monks were also remarkably at home on lonely nearby islands, such as *Eileach an Naoimh* in the Garvellachs group. It was in such isolated retreats that much of the inspirational poetry was composed. Hunter contends that this body of ancient Gaelic poetry describes fundamentally different relationships that these monks had with their surroundings, especially when compared with those of most humans today. Interestingly, as centres of literacy, these monastic communities drew inspiration and insight from the places themselves; this was not a detached literacy. Accordingly, Hunter's antidote to an idealized conception of wilderness, most often portrayed as land empty of humans, was to look to examples of different kinds of relationships between people and the lands they inhabit. Thus, reading the poetry of these island monks, where relationships appeared immersive, attentive, and respectful, might provide some clues to a better approach for environmental change.

Third, many locations described by Hunter are on accessible islands in what are now known as the Inner Hebrides (*Na H-Eileanan A-Staigh*), off the west coast of Scotland. This meant that our conversations could take place on a large sailing boat while visiting sites of historical, natural, and cultural significance. We could literally visit ancient stone cells inhabited by the monks that are such an important subject of Hunter's interests. Then we could sit in front of these cells and read translations of the Gaelic poems amidst the calls of actual corncrakes and cuckoos, the great-grand offspring of those that filled the poets' lives.

Eilach an Naoimh, in the Garvellachs

We stepped onto Eilach an Naoimh in the Garvellachs group of islands. This rocky place is on the west coast of Scotland. The Irish monk Brendan is said to have preceded our visit by almost 1500 years in the year 524. Later in the 6th Century, St. Columba settled here, too, before moving on to found a monastic community on Iona. It isn't easy to get to this island. Anchorages are exposed to the weather; the shoreline is rough.

This island was a place of retreat. Here, monks lived a solitary and contemplative existence. They stayed in stone cells resembling beehives and constructed of expertly placed flat stones that spiralled upwards and inwards. It must have been a simple—and perhaps lonely—existence. Interestingly, their contemplations were rooted in the particularity of their place. And these, together with their observations, were poetically recorded in the Gaelic language.

*It was a warm May day when visited Eilach an Naoimh. I sat on a flat stone in front of the remains of one of the beehive cells and read a translated, and now anonymous, poem written more than a thousand years ago:**

> May-time, fair season, perfect in its aspect; blackbirds sing a full song, if there be a scanty beam of day.
> Summer brings low the little stream, the swift herd makes for the water, the long hair of the heather spreads out, the weak white cotton-grass flourishes.
> The harp of the wood plays melody, its music brings perfect peace; colour has settled on every hill, haze on the lake of full water.
> The corncrake clacks, a strenuous bard; the high pure waterfall sings a greeting to the warm pool; rustling of rushes has come.

As I uttered its name, a corncrake began to call. We were struck dumb. For in this moment we shared an experience with the poet that stretched across time. We listened silently until it had finished, and then went on.

> Light swallows dart on high… The hardy cuckoo sings, the speckled fish leaps… The glory of great hills is unspoiled.

Suddenly, and again just as its name was mentioned, a cuckoo called out. We listened again, and this time the corners of my eyes began to water. When this voice went silent, I finished reading.

> Delightful is the season's splendour, winter's rough wind has gone; bright is every fertile wood, a joyful peace is summer.

Like the ancient poet-monk, we, too, experienced a joyful peace that afternoon in May.

**From James Hunter, On the Other Side of Sorrow, pp. 45–46.*

Image 1.3 Ancient stone cell on *Eilach an Naoimh*. Photo credit: Hansi Gelter

The landscape was important too. This part of Scotland is profoundly geologic, denuded as it is of most of the tree cover over thousands of years of human occupation. The geology is remarkable, going right back to pre-Cambrian times, with worn and ancient rock, over 935 million years old forming some islands. More recently, Cambrian, and later volcanic "intrusions," have created dramatic layers of lava and quartz crystal, slicing through the older rock. The Isle of Staffa is an example of perhaps the most astonishing geology of all. Its lava flows cooled and cracked forming into enormous—predominantly 6-sided—basalt columns that define the island and give dramatic shape to Fingal's Cave, and provide shelter, nesting sites, and access to rich food sources for myriad puffins, fulmars, and shags.

Thus, many of our conversations, and much learning together, took place on board the square-rigged brigantine, *The Lady of Avenel*. And, a good bit of this book was discussed—and indeed written—on board, amongst these islands, and later on the nearby island of Luing.

Whom are We Writing for?

This book aims to have broad public appeal. And it assumes that educational change will not arise from any particular location. Inspirational pedagogues are found throughout formal education and outside of it, too. So, we aim to meet people where this book finds them.

Education takes place at home, at work, and in community activities—with our children, our peers, our friends, and our neighbours. Education takes place in museums, aquariums, parks, playgrounds, summer camps, and social service agencies. And, of course, it takes place in schools, colleges and universities. There are educational steps that can be taken by parents, students, community educators, and teachers. There are also steps that can be taken by school principals, curriculum specialists, superintendents, academics, ministers of education, business leaders, policy makers, healthcare providers, and politicians. The time for this collective education action is now. It is critical to examine thoughtfully human activities on earth—our deepest assumptions, ideals, values, and worldviews. This is work for everyone with interests in education and who are called to wild ideas about pedagogy.

Given the breadth of the potential audience, this book will endeavour to present serious ideas in a way that has broad public appeal. In this way we are mindful of Canada's public philosopher, John Ralston Saul.[17] He reminds us that reform requires widespread philosophical understanding of the options available, and their implications. Too often, he has observed, important voices are absent from public debate because their proponents are caught up in a world of narrow specializations and impenetrable dialect. With these thoughts we have endeavoured to do better; our aim is to communicate effectively and maximize engagement with allies. Towards this end, we have attempted to write more clearly and more freely of scholarly conventions, in this introductory chapter, and in the last two chapters on "Touchstones" and the "Afterwords." We have written with a little more detail in chapters "On Wilderness," "On The Anthropocene," and "On Education."

It might be tempting to think of wild pedagogies and the touchstones we present in this book as a tight framework for the future, but that would not be correct. Or at least, this is not our intention. We hope, rather, that this work will be seen as a heuristic. These two terms, framework and heuristic, are different in important ways. Frameworks provide more concrete visions about how things are, how they should be, or roadmaps for getting to a new place. As such, they assert more control over analysis and can be more prescriptive in their aims. But heuristics are typically defined as agents in the process of discovery. They can act as aids to understanding or even shortcuts into the work itself. They are provocateurs at the intersection of imagination and praxis. Their aims are more expressive and generative—more attuned to the *wild* reader.

In truth, as we move between geological epochs—between the Holocene and the Anthropocene—we are traversing new terrain. Humans have never before witnessed this kind of epochal shift or had to accept this scale of responsibility. No one knows what will happen or how we will need to respond; uncertainty is part of today's reality. We do hope that the generative intentions of this book will inspire responses that are imaginative, creative, courageous, and radical—because this is what our times require.

The Shape of the Book

Wild pedagogies arose out of a convergence of ideas about wilderness, education, and the emerging realities of a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. In the cases of wilderness and education, this work is at least in part about reclaiming language and ideas that have been put aside and largely discounted for too long. That we are shifting towards something called the Anthropocene is a relatively new idea, but one with grave implications for Earth.

In a way, we begin by heading down three separate pathways. However, it quickly becomes apparent that there are important points of resonance between these ideas—or, convergences in these pathways. To begin, our first pathway takes us through discussions of wilderness itself. We explore real places and existential experiences with these places. We hold wilderness valuable, and see a need to refresh and reclaim an understanding of the central idea of wildness as uncontrolled—even free.

On a different path there is the seemingly ubiquitous presence of control throughout much of educational conversation and practice. While travelling on this track, recognizing the gates along the way, we wonder about possibilities for a wilder pedagogy, loosed from domesticating—as in taming—forces. The third pathway for our enquiry is the one we seem to be travelling as a species, engulfing everything else in our wake. Here we are talking about the Anthropocene, where the defining epochal characteristics are human induced.

These three introductory pathways are evocative, to say the least, and serve to provide context for our response, and are the basis for Chaps. 2, 3, and 4. In turn, these chapters develop our ideas about wilderness, the Anthropocene, and education, and examine their points of resonance—the interplay between wildness, education, and control,—particularly as they relate to an emerging conception of wild pedagogies.

It is one thing to talk about ever-more wild pedagogies, but it is quite another thing to implement these ideas. Thus, the fifth chapter, "Six Touchstones for a Wild Pedagogy," is framed as a practical guide to help educators think through their actions on the ground as they work at shifting their practices.

The final chapter, "Afterwords," is a collection of reflections on how individual educators see adapting wild pedagogies for their own educational roles, in their own places. The point is that what we have done needs to be seen as consistently troubling the idea of control. We do not want six touchstones to be seen as a rigid framework, but rather, as an agent of continued discovery.

Acknowledgements *Crex crex* is the taxonomical name given to the Corncrake. We have chosen this bird to represent our collective because it was an important collaborator in this project and because its onomatopoeic name beautifully mirrors its call—a raspy crex crex. For some reason, it chooses to fly over England and breeds in Scotland and Ireland. Presumably this is due to loss of habitat in modern England, but perhaps these birds sense some epicenter of empire there? Who is to know?

Notes

1. Here we are riffing off of: Bruno Latour, "Will Non-Humans Be Saved? An Argument in Ecotheology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2008): 459–475.
2. Kris Gutiérrez, "Designing Resilient Ecologies: Social Design Experiments and a New Social Imagination," *Educational Researcher* 45, no. 3 (2016): 187.
3. Ibid., 192.
4. Irina Bokova, "Foreword," in *Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All*, ed. UNESCO (Paris: UNESCO, 2016), 5.
5. Bokova, *Education for People and Planet*, 2016, 5.
6. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Life* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 12.
7. Ibid., 12.
8. Ibid., 12.
9. Stephen Sterling, "Assuming the Future: Repurposing Education in a Volatile Age," in *Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education: Remaking Education for the Future*, ed. Bob Jickling and Stephen Sterling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 31–45.
10. "Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to Transform Our World. Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning," United Nations. Accessed February 5, 2018, http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/.
11. See, for example: Sean Blenkinsop and Marcus Morse, "Saying Yes to Life: The Search for the Rebel Teacher," in *Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education: Remaking Education for the Future*, ed. Bob Jickling and Stephen Sterling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 49–61.
12. Louise Profeit-LeBlanc, "Transferring Wisdom Through Storytelling," in *A Colloquium on Environment, Ethics, and Education*, ed. B. Jickling (Whitehorse: Yukon College, 1996): 14–19.
13. Deborah Bird Rose, "Connectivity Thinking, Animism, and the Pursuit of Liveliness," *Educational Theory* 67, no. 4 (2018): 491–508.
14. Darling, F. Fraser (Editor) *West Highland Survey: An Essay in Human Ecology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955).
15. James Hunter, *On the Other Side of Sorrow: Nature and People in the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 1995).

16. See, for example: T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830–1950* (London: Fontana Press, 1987).
17. John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord, ON: Anansi, 1995): 161–162.

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