The Paradox of Wild Pedagogies: Loss and Hope Next to a Norwegian Glacier

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Abstract
This paper, an experiment in human and more-than-human multi-vocality, derives from the contributing authors' experience of a Wild Pedagogies colloquium in Finse, Norway. Five creative responses to visiting the disappearing glacier, Midtdalsbreen, are offered. "Norway Grey" contrasts usual conceptions of drab grey with other colours that emerge from it upon closer examination. "We thought we needed" matches the imagined, wretched incompatibility of immediate human need with what a dying world can give. "Lonesome Wanderer," originally an audio file, tells the story of collegial and family glacier visits and poses questions about ethics and self-representation. In recounting an incident on the day of our visit, "Hope" explores the movement from sadness to trust within humans. "A Sense of the Sacred" weaves ecopsychology, emotion, and ancestral family together on a hike to Arne Næss's cabin.

Résumé
Le présent article, qui traite de la multivocalité humaine et extrahumaine, découle de l'expérience vécue par les auteurs lors d'un colloque sur les pédagogies de la nature tenu à Finse, en Norvège. On y propose cinq réponses créatives à la visite du glacier en fonte de Midtdalsbreen. Le « gris norvégien » (Norway Grey) *contraste avec les conceptions usuelles de gris morne, et d'autres couleurs en émergent lorsqu'on l'observe de plus près. L'idée que « nous pensons toujours avoir besoin de quelque chose »* (We thought we needed) *véhicule l'incompatibilité, imaginée et destructrice, entre les besoins immédiats des humains et ce que peut leur fournir un monde qui se meurt. Le « Vagabond solitaire »* (Lonesome Wanderer)*, un fichier audio à l'origine, raconte l'histoire de visites du glacier en groupe et en famille, et pose des questions sur l'éthique et l'autoreprésentation. Récit d'un incident survenu le jour de notre visite, « Espoir » (Hope) explore le passage de la tristesse à la confiance chez les humains. Prenant comme cadre un périple vers la cabane d'Arne Næss, le « Sens du sacré »* (A Sense of the Sacred*) tisse ensemble écopsychologie, émotion et famille ancestrale.*

Keywords: wild pedagogies, glacier, environmental education, climate change, emotion, wild co-researcher, poetic inquiry, deep ecology

Mots-clés : pédagogies de la nature, glacier, éducation à l'environnement, changements climatiques, émotion, co-chercheur en pédagogies de la nature, recherche poétique, écologisme fondamental

Introduction

This paper is an experiment in human and more-than-human multi-vocality. Better yet, it is an attempt at rhizomatic and entangled theorizing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)—an unusual assembling agentially cut by a Norwegian glacier. Best of all, it is an adventure in wild co-researching (Blenkinsop, 2018). It involves five humans and a glacier playing with language, rolling in place, listening carefully to the past, present, and future, and noting connections, gaps, limits, and possibilities. Our hope is to invite the reader into the discussion while at the same time allowing them to consider and create a space of their own version of hope.

The form this paper takes arises from our own creative processes as a group gathered in Finse, Norway during a fifth Wild Pedagogies northern gathering in the summer of 2019. The organizers tasked us to find a way to share our experiences of place, of each other, and of wild pedagogies with the larger environmental educator network. We realized immediately that this was beyond our ken. How does one gather the complexities, the characters, the encounters, the emotions, the particularities, the intensities of this experience into a single 6,000-word shared document? In response, we chose to spend time contemplating this challenge individually, as humans, in selected places—namely, either next to or near the Midtdalsbreen glacier, or while hiking to Tvergastein, Arne Næss's cabin situated above Ustaoset—and then reflecting and ruminating together on the results. Thus, in the paper below, we used two lenses as we wove the individual reflections together with some of our shared discussions. The first lens attempted to focus on the place and its myriad denizens as actively present, as co-researchers and vocal partners; the second lens attempted to aim attention at how our results do and don't map onto or connect with the theories of wild pedagogies, and their touchstones.

The view through the latter lens was clear, as may be seen later in this paper. To the former, it might be argued that what was viewed through the first lens, by humans raised in the cult of the modern West, can never make an equal partner of what is foreign, even antithetical, to this upbringing: the world itself. To this we can only respond, "Agreed." But to stop there is to kill our attempt before it has a chance to try. A radical human-place division is at least challenged when we attempt to engage with the world differently.

This paper attempted to be conscious of our position as humans in conversation with the more-than-human world; we had a sincere wish to be open to the unguided influence of the world, and the emergent possibilities facilitated by unstructured time spent on the land. Perhaps this paper takes one of many preliminary steps on the path to altering humankind's current inability to listen and hear. Taking the time to listen, as the contributors to this paper did during their time with a fading glacier, reveals a deeply emotive aspect of the more-than-human world that otherwise goes unnoticed by humans. Not only do human listeners experience excruciating pain, guilt, sorrow, and loss through

hearing the slow decay of the iced structure and the eroded landscape, but the landscape also offers a playful response to our bleak emotions. In our own experience in the north, a few snowflakes teased our devastation of witnessing a melting glacier by reminding us of the cyclical nature of life—an ebbing and flowing of things that cease to exist and things that are brought into being.

Reflection #1: *by Sean*

Norway Grey

It is morning and I am just coming into that liminal space before full wakefulness. Last night I slept well on top of a vibrant forest of dwarf arctic willow. It took some time to find a spot protected enough from the evening wind that I wouldn't spend my night on constant alert, worrying about a rising gale flattening me inside my delicate nylon cocoon.

I love sleeping immersed in the world, embraced by this landscape, and softly held aloft by these tiny trees. The weather has changed this morning. I heard waves begin to lap on the near shore of the lake just below me in the middle of the night and knew I would emerge into something different. The partial clouds and deep blues of yesterday have given way to myriad greys. In the East I can just see the yellow glow from the rising sun but that is being pushed away by the deep slate of a saturated sky. To the south the cloud base has dropped and I sense, with some trepidation, that we will soon be enveloped by this fog. Lighter than the sky above, this living wraith slides over the landscape and makes route finding a more conscious, careful, and—when the trail turns quickly or skips across a boulder field—difficult process. I am quieted by the prospect of a day in fog, by this place where I paradoxically sense myself as both isolated and encountered, lonely and exhilarated. I love and fear the prospect.

Below me small wisps of mist glide across the silver grey of the becalmed lake. I can see them reflected like skeins of floating wool in its liquid eye. I move quickly to relieve myself because I feel the creeping cold. The moisture of the place and a temperature that hovers not far above zero means I need to monitor myself carefully today—to note inputs and outputs and respond to needs as soon as possible. To lose track of oneself in weather like this is like losing that tiny line of cairns across the plateau. As I lower the tent, eat, and locate my travelling companions, I am drawn into dialogue with the landscape, again. This is a place of ice and snow, of water and rock and I have been told that this will be a boulder-strewn day. We will be wending our way around, over, and through tons of rock arranged across the alpine by forces that are larger than I can comprehend. Here too, I encounter the deep greys of granite and gneiss. I am chastened by how well they carry their age. For though my own head is greyed with age and, apparently, over-exposure to particulate pollution, I am but a blink of an eye in this geo-storied world.

An hour into our day the wind and rain arrive in full throat. Thus far, I have noticed the tendency for this place to squall and then calm, like a small child seeking

its own way and then becoming distracted by an intriguing toy. But today the tantrum has settled upon us and we must continue on until it cries itself to sleep. But in spite of metaphors of tantrum and crying, clichés about weather that my culture invariably uses when it isn't sunny and warm, or at least "climate controlled," I feel enlivened. If I continue to move I will stay warm and dry and the caress and spatter of rain and mist on my face and hair makes me feel loved and I want to sing.

Grey is the day's operating motif. Although, to be fair, I am drawn into the struggles and successes of the greens, browns, umbers, ochres, brilliant flashes of yellow and pink, purple and even blue. The rocks themselves glow from the neon green radiance of high alpine lichen, symbiosis in action that makes room for other life. And in pockets protected from the wind or next to the creek there are all kinds of flowering plants, and ferns, and grasses, creating lives and being themselves in whatever ways they can. All are soaked in the celestial lake but whereas the rain and mist "beads" upon or "soaks" into my clothing, it shimmers and sparkles on the vegetation and bubbles and gurgles in the burgeoning creeks. But back to the grey, this is not the monolithic homogeneous colour of the ceilings in my grade school classrooms but a subtle, nuanced, rainbow of grey. Each is dynamic, active, and bearing messages of further rain, of obscured cliff or hidden lake, of high wind or thinning cloud. I try to follow this deluge of information and feel my emotions move and flex, become fluid and blend into one another as things change through shades of light and dark and as the wind rises and falls, the fog lifts and descends, and the rain strengthens or dissipates. And it is to these emotional inflections, nuances in my own systems of weather and changes in temperature, that my attention turns.

One of the images from this reflection that drew our attention was the idea of a "rainbow of grey." Usually grey is thought of as an inconsequential colour—one that we so often encounter as a homogeneous, boring backdrop to the more vibrant foreground. And yet, in this reflection, the grey is diverse, complex, and singularly important to better understanding what is happening all around the observer. Sean's comparison to classroom walls and ceilings, to the greys and lime greens of institutions everywhere, pushed us to think about how wild pedagogies seeks to challenge the desire to control, to normalize things, to create efficient structures and systems, to seek uniformity (Jickling et al., 2018). And this search includes not only uniformity of colour, but also uniformity of answer, of teacher (witness how school districts simply move teachers and principals through schools and classrooms as if they were completely interchangeable), of curricular content, of learner, etc. But this reflection of immersion in the natural world challenges that project.

The second discussion that arose from this reflection was about how the various shades of grey map onto the diversity of one's inner emotional landscape. Emotions, in this case, are not simply a question of sadness or loneliness but rather a complex, roiling mix. It is another push against the desire to homogenize the human state and even limit emotional diversity through squeezing the rainbow of grey into a single shade.

Reflection #2: *by Chris*

We thought we needed

Of all that was, this was all that was left:
apart from ashes,
a little bundle of green, rush-like things
and hidden deep inside
something we couldn't see
something blue and grey-flecked
a little like the colour of a distant, dying glacier.
And you, trying to make a fire with the rushes.

We were hungry, you and I.
We needed food; we needed fire.

So much fire.
Now all that could be burned
had burned
and all that was left
– these little, rush-like things,
the only greening lives
in a greyed-out land –
would not.

But you kept trying
hands shivering.
A match caught some thin or drier edge
and for a moment there was smouldering.
And then fluttering.
A bird emerged.

I saw her first
drew her out.
Tiny feathers near her eyes
rose up like shields.
A child playing peek-a-boo
– but then again
a child blinded by fire –
head still shimmering with heat:
a perfect, melting glacier.

The little bird whimpered –
I have never heard a bird do this –
and I cried with her.

Blue bird of happiness
green earth of plenty
wounded by our need
yet more by our desire.

We were drawn into this poem by our shared histories and by the potentially troublesome—even apocalyptic—result of one-directional desire disguised by the rationalizing smoke of need. There is a recognition of human responsibility at both the micro level—one tiny bird—and the macro level. The poem drew us into discussion about the colonial and imperialistic part of the modern western relationship toward other-than-humans (and toward many humans as well).

Wild pedagogies posits two touchstones (Crex Crex Collective, 2018) that relate to these ideas: The first names the colonial relationship with the natural world (Blenkinsop et al., 2016) and challenges educators to become activists (in whatever form they decide), ones who seek to adjust their own language and practices, who seek out allies and support, and who are willing to critically examine and imaginatively re-create the systems within which they work; the second seeks to deepen a human relationship with the natural world, to do this with a sense of humility, to find ways that shift the human from the centre of every equation, and to hear the voices of the natural as equal, agential, and important parts of one's community, culture, and decision making. This move in and of itself might push us to reconsider those things that we desire, particularly when it becomes clear that those desires are not vital to our own well-being and, more importantly, are detrimental to the flourishing of others.

A dream inspired this poem. The dream had a deep sense of reality: that what we were doing—burning what we needed in the long term because we had to have fire in the moment—was such a characteristically human blunder. To live, we now had to do what would destroy the world even more. We were incapable of discerning what could happen to other creatures, and we were only able to know the damage we had caused after it had occurred. We recognized too-late that, in our need to survive, we had destroyed such beauty. With this recognition came the feelings of longing and of loss—the sense that our identity had been shifted by our carelessness. This was the carelessness not so much of overlooking the bird-glacier hidden in a handful of rush-Earths, but of not noticing the difference between what we actually needed at this final hour—heat—and what we had thought we needed for so much of our earlier history: the burning with which the poem begins.

Reflection #3: *by Marianne*

Lonesome Wanderer

Link to audio file: https://www.wildethic.com/media [1]

Experiencing nature is multi-faceted and complicated. To convey how we experience nature is even more complicated. There are many languages, many experiences and feelings, and many ways to communicate them. When trying to describe my *experiences*—my feelings and meaning making in an encounter between nature around and within me—I can only convey them in my mother tongue, in the language of my heart. My personal contribution to this paper lies in the audio file, where not only the language but also the voice, the sounds, and the feelings are sought and then communicated through the language of my heart rather than the foreign language (English) of my strict scientific profession. A translated version of a transcription would, however, be something like this:

On a sunny, beautiful, autumn day, we walked up towards the glacier in search of a good place to bring the others who attended the workshop. We were going to Midtdalsbreen, a glacier that very clearly melts. I was well prepared. Having read up on the field I knew that this arm melts considerably. And that I had lots of exciting things to talk about, if we just got up there.

I've been on the glacier here many times, but not so often in recent years: it's not as much fun anymore. The glacier is so much smaller. It's just sad.

We set off, emerged from an unusual angle, and crossed over a ridge. I thought: "we will be there soon." But where I believed we were approaching the glacier, there was another mile left. First, beautiful scenery with cotton grass rolling in the wind. Moss in all shades of green, some grey, and some red. And then everything turned grey: grey stones and grey rock, a little grey moss in the beginning, then moor, silt, gravel, sludge. Large amounts of muddied melt water.

As we went through the lunar landscape, it became clear in all of its horror: There is no hope. Nature is changing too much. It is not a question of whether we can reverse the climatic changes, neither if we can stop them. There is no hope. I was not afraid for my great-grandchildren, not even for my grandchildren. It was clear: these changes are now, and they will be huge in the time of my children. Then, the tears came.

How can you bring strangers to visit a dying friend?

We found a great place to walk up to the glacier. We even found a safe piece of the glacier we could stand and walk on. But could I bring a group of people I didn't really know up here? Would they, who have never stood at the foot of the glacier and seen it rise high above Jøkulen (because it no longer does), those who have never played in its cracks, who have never swung down its snow-covered arms and tumbled, halfway in a Telemark turn: could they understand? Was it possible for them to understand? That this flat, sad, grey mass had once been a beautiful, rugged, majestic glacier, which automatically fostered respect? And without that understanding, what would they be left with? Did these academics, these poets, these great persons, but strangers, really deserve to join us on the death bed?

Of course, we went up together. The front had changed dramatically in the two days that had passed. But some of the impression remained. I tried to describe how the glacier had been before and how it had changed, and how it changed me when I was there two days earlier. Then we stood there. For some of us, our tears dripped in drops, while the glacier melted in cascades of melt water.

Visiting the glacier made an impression on my companions. I'm glad I brought them, because it was important. Maybe it can help us to manage to turn back time. In time for some, if not for the glacier.

A few weeks later I did what I really wanted. But not without torment. I took my family to Midtdalsbreen. Would I scare the kids? It wasn't what I wanted to do, to scare, yet I wasn't sure of my purpose. Maybe to let my kids greet my dying friend before it's too late? Most of all it was about letting my children play with the glacier. To smell, feel and listen. To share the good experiences that set themselves in the spinal cord. To feel what a glacier is and can be.

We saw the magic. We let the weekend be filled with the experiences that emerged. We played, we took pictures, we listened to the sounds, felt the cold and the heat, and we found great stones. We had a splendid family weekend in a tent, but the seriousness was there with us too. My son, who has given up his old dream of becoming a glaciologist, may have said it best: "Mom, there will be no glaciers left when I grow up."[2] *Now he is seventeen. He does not know what to become instead of a glaciologist. I hope and believe he will be among all those contributing to change.*

We were drawn into the intimacy of this reflection, the depth of the relation, the desire to represent the glacier, the place, as holistically as possible. But we were also drawn into Marianne's profound sense of not wanting the glacier to be ignored, misunderstood, slipped back into a cultural narrative of inert rock and ice. The glacier is an animated being, and its death is one that is significant and painful, not only for the glacier itself but also for those who are in relationship with it. The question in the reflection is whether strangers will recognize and honour the solemnity of death and the end of this relationship. For us, as we explored the feelings so intimately shared in this reflection, we heard reverberations of those "sensitive" students who are often told not to feel what they feel with regard to trees being cut, ants being squashed (Blenkinsop et al., 2018), or frogs being dissected. We also wondered at the difference between the sight-seer and the witness, and we heard echoes of Indigenous educator Leanne Simpson's (2017) point about coming to the natural world with the right intentions—with an orientation of respect, and even good manners.

What does it mean to be asked to stand with a dying elder? To be present when their immediate family and community begins the process of saying goodbye? These questions of life and death are big, but wild pedagogies (Jickling et al., 2018) calls on us to support our students as they explore these questions, as they build relationships with an animate, living, teaching, speaking world and as they, in building these, become exposed to death and the pain of destruction.

There are important lessons to be learned from the literature on solidarity and allyship but also close examination of our own moral responsibility when it comes to exposing others to the pain that comes along with the joy of being in deep, intimate relations with natural beings and places.

Reflection #4: *by Erika*

Hope

Rolling landscape,
decorated with hunched over bodies
of academics (or perhaps children?)
Investigating leaves in the small forests of moss,
the maps beneath our feet.
And sharing stories
of ancient lines in rocks.

Roosting above:
a frozen giant,
disappearing before us.
Our tears melt,
feeding the cloud berries.

The small moments of sunlit leaves
grinning green.
The birds dance around us
as if engaged in some belly-full
game of life I could only
wish to understand.

Yet somehow, the burden of
destruction weighs on me
in this open afternoon:

Oh, to be human
in a world
that desecrates
those who are not!

In spite of the gloom, I tuck
myself beneath the glacier
to discover the
illuminating blue.

Flinching when
rocks fell,
my giggles echo
through the cavern.

Remaining
knelt over,
smiling.
Amid chaos.

Drawn as we were to the paradoxical nature of hope and sadness, of life and death, of child and adult, this reflection led us to thinking about responsibility and engagement. Wild pedagogies ask adults to consider developing a practice (Jickling et al., 2018, pp. 91-97) of building and enhancing our relationships with the natural world, and it is maybe to children and "the birds … engaged in a belly-full game …" that we might look for advice. Children might help us find ways to bring the joy of discovery, the wonder of play, and the fullness of attention to bear on our growing practice. They might guide us in encountering nature without the weight of a culture focused on separation.

Wild pedagogies also remind us to be critical (Blenkinsop & Ford, 2018), to recognize not only that there is sadness for humans because of our seemingly enforced alienation from more-than-human others, but also that we are responsible, in our actions and in our quiet acquiescence to our cultures and institutions, for the violence wrought on that which is greater than us. But this knowledge cannot be allowed to incapacitate us: for us to stop responding, witnessing, and resisting because of this knowledge is to allow the destruction to continue and to place oneself back in the centre. For what are one's own struggles in the face of both loss and culpability when the victimization of the natural world is continuing? Especially when there is so much joy, beauty, laughter, and paradox happening amidst the rubble, in the protected spaces within the storm, in the wild lives amongst the controlling uniformity of human expanse, in the small moments of mystical hope.

Reflection #5: *by Lee*

A Sense of the Sacred: Deep Ecology and Emotion

The fog envelops me, as though the weight of the sky has settled on the earth. Thick cloud parts to unveil Arne Næss's cabin, a human offering on this alpine plateau. Tvergastein, his "benevolent, protecting father," (Næss, 2008, p. 53), both cabin and mountain, the birthplace of deep ecology. This human-built sanctuary disrupts the river-riven wilderness, yet in Næss's mind nature and culture blurred. Humans, rather than being a species apart, were woven into the web of life.

Inside, we hear the story of Naess's final visit to the cabin. Wheelchair bound, this proved an arduous journey for the 96-year-old. He settled one last time next to

his large window—famous for its spectacular view of the Norwegian landscape, and views into new philosophies—and then Næss did something that astounded them all. He stood up.

Naess wanted to check on the wood stove.

Something about the place shook him alive. His idle muscles and nearly centenarian physiology, previously wasting away in a hospital bed, felt reanimated. Perhaps, too, he was reminded of his responsibility for this place. As Naess (2008) wrote, "What does a gallon of boiling water mean in the cities? Nothing. At Tvergastein, it is a formidable luxury, enough to satisfy a host of essential services, a gift of nature of the most astonishing character" (p. 60). To elicit such gifts of nature, one needs to work for them. To offer what we can, and be grateful for what we are given, and live "in solidarity with, and respect for" (p. 54) this place, is to enter into a reciprocal relationship with the other-than-human.

Our storyteller, Per Ingvar Haukeland, when explaining Næss's last Tvergastein visit, breaks into tears. He cannot hide, nor does he want to, his profound feeling of wonder and loss. Exposed on the alpine landscape, the elements reveal something raw. You cannot hide from the mountain, from the colour of the smallest flower, from the forms of every cloud.

How can the outdoors facilitate heightened emotional states? Perhaps movement provokes body memory. Perhaps the wind and rain tug at the layers beneath the surface, teasing out dormant feelings. Or the breeze-blown oxygen, birthed from leaf and seaweed, allow us to breathe deeper, to expand our felt experience and bring clarity to mind and heart.

Our time at the cabin feels short. The thirty adventurous academics trek single file down the slope like the sheep that graze on this mountain's flank. Mist swallows the cabin. As one ethereal figure fades, through my fog of emotion another ghostly figure appears. My grandma.

In my Norway journal, I wrote about Grandma Norma appearing at Tvergastein: "Before she arrived, there was first the river, and nature, and song and fog." These were gifts bestowed by my grandma, who died 120 days prior to my landing in Oslo. This quartet of prerequisites, once fulfilled, permitted her arrival.

The first two prerequisites for arrival, river and nature, I accomplish by following the web of rivers funneling toward Finse and discovering the verdant moss and sapphire glaciers that call water family. An hour earlier, I sang Morning Has Broken *in honour of my two departed aunts, Betty and Chrissie. I sang as their ashes flowed in the currents not far beneath Næss's cabin. Fog, the final requirement, now hangs about me in a cloak of memory.*

My paternal grandma, born in 1927 as Norma Dora Herbert, grew up on a farm near Carrot River, Saskatchewan. Not the city, the actual *river. As a child, she and her brothers once walked into a wall of rain. They ran in and out of this rain, over and over, delighted to be in a downpour one moment, and rainless the next. It had never occurred to her that rain has a beginning and an end. Did she also realize that life has an edge?*

In her youth, Norma spent endless days outside, chasing piglets, yelping back at coyotes, and skating the frozen river. One day, on her way to school with her younger sister, she stumbled across a white wolf. The wolf stared them down, unblinking, canny eyes both thoughtful and predatory. Norma gripped her sister's hand, crossed the road, and walked on. She never forgot that encounter, relayed to me more than eighty years later. In fact, of the dozens of stories she told me, nearly all took place outside. And nearly all were tightly bound to a happy emotion.

These memories fall upon me now like sunlight on the sea. As a child, Grandma saw the world infused with a wondrous light that she thought everyone could see. As a matriarch, she brought our family connection and joy. She and I both experienced poignant—albeit divergent—moments in fog. But why, in Norway, is her presence so strong?

At Tvergastein, the vista is wide. Valleys, lakes, and mountains offer the eyes a long gaze. There is both a sense of geographical awe and a leafless vulnerability. Arne Næss lost his father when he was young. He came here, to this paternal mountain, to find what he so desperately sought: a "symbol of everything good that was lacking in the world and in myself" (Naess, 2008, p. 53). Tvergastein gave him clarity of thought, philosophical meditation, and a sense of being held by something larger than himself.

Per Ingvar, channeling Naess and his ecosophy, spoke to "renew[ing] a sense of the sacred" (personal communication, August 2019). I first stumbled upon deep ecology in an environmental ethics class during my undergrad at UBC in Vancouver. After four years of scientific study, from chromatography to carving up cats, the idea that all life could be held as sacred rang clear as a songbird at daybreak. After Naess grew empathy for the lab rats he worked with early in his career, he stopped doing experiments with caged animals.

The recorded benefits of nature experience are many: improved mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Epinephrine and other stress hormones stay nestled in their glands, while oxytocin—the calm, loving hormone—flows into blood's current. Being in nature can reduce feelings of anger and fear. Perhaps, too, this leads to an increased sensitivity toward other feelings, those often masked by anxiety. Kathleen Dean Moore (1995), in her book Riverwalking, *speaks of feeling emotion "seeping into cracks between boulders" (p. 154). Held in the gentle yet rough-skinned hands of nature, a window opens toward vulnerability.*

On the way down Tvergastein, our path winds with a mountain stream. I lose the trail for this river road, paved with mossy stones and glassy current.

Whether by choice or circumstance, my ancestral family is stitched to rivers. Grandma spent countless hours exploring Carrot River, and later in life lived on a houseboat on the Fraser. On my mother's side, her grandparents emigrated to Canada to escape a domineering Catholic family. They left the affluent inheritance of vineyards and stables to arrive in worthless scrubland near Cowley, Alberta. I recently found my great-grandfather's 1906 signature on his sworn statement for application of purchase. The address? Southwest of ¼, section 32, township 7,

range 1 North of the 5th meridian. This birthplace of my maternal grandmother is hugged on the north and east sides by a massive tributary, half a kilometre at its widest, minutes before it joins Oldman River, which links the Rocky Mountains to Hudson Bay. In southwestern Canada, my Dad and I have walked many mountain streams, scurrying up these meandering lotic paths through coastal rainforest. Lest there be any doubt, my son's middle name is River.

Emotion can be fluid as a river: tranquil, raging, and reflective, all in one day. As Moore (1995) writes, "Water is an agent of distortion and change, forcing a person to see things in new ways. Each turn of the river opens out a new landscape … a sense that the important facts are hidden from view" (p. 145). Water moves in, between, over, under and through. Like my grandmother, water holds it all together. Rain, glacier, stream, lake, falls. This network trickles down life from ice to ocean. I want to follow these currents to find the currents they support. To walk these patterns of Earth-veins coddled by moss. Like our bodies, the moss holds onto water.

Sitting riverside, I'm inspired to scrawl down a few poetic words. The next day, I return to the river to try and find the rest of my poem. Fragments of phrases and metaphors leap to mind. I try to capture these on the page, but the rain is insistent that I put my pen away. With my smudged ink pages stowed in my pack, I sit with the current. I am called to move closer. From the wet grey riverbank, eddies start to curl into my mind. The sound of these glacial tears flooding past is constant yet never the same. Perhaps my grandma has brought this rain, to awaken an ancient memory.

Time passes. My body opens. A stillness emerges in the whitewater rapids. Questions pour forth. I hear Arne Naess (2008) ask, "What would the place require of me?" (p. 55).

River Walker

I will walk
this river
until I finish
this poem

such incessant noise
but beneath your current
a bed of stillness
meditative babbling
submerges my animal murmurings

River, what do you carry away?

Listen

each moss stone is a page
I riffle through volume after volume
fluent with your furrows
this currency of cloud
quivered by sky
swallows me whole

Listen

your Earth vein taps my heart
my blood gasps for breath
a flood of release
like an iceberg calving
into melted memorial

River, can you bear my grief?

glacial memories pool in my gut
tears the mountain cannot hold
is this guilt?
humans love to damn things

Listen
There is more

I strain every sense
stretch the cilia of my eustachian
into your torrential artery
yet all I hear
is the steady beat of my heart

thu-thump thu-thump thu-thump

this is why I follow you, River
to heed my voice within
a deep well of silence
going dry

Listen to what you already know

In this final reflection, we come full circle into greys and fogs. And yet, we spiral off as well, reminded that time is not so linear as we have come

to expect and that knowledge is not so easily compartmentalized or readily transferred. Poetry and prose written upon us by the natural world changes the metaphors and slides the human from the centre and the top into community. To change the nature–culture divide is to change the metaphors, the language, the positioning of *Homo sapiens*, and—as wild pedagogies suggests—the culture (Jickling et al., 2018).

Lee's reflection has drawn us into conversations about the importance of time spent immersed in the outdoors, how it appears in so many of our key moments even if we pretend not to notice. And how the affordances it provides, especially in the company of an Elder, of spirit or the more fleshy kind of animate beings, are still somehow more engaging, imaginatively expanding, than the best nursery school. We are brought up short by how important it is for us, as educators, to role model our relationships and to share our love(s) for the natural world with our students. More than anything, such sensorial, immersive, emotional nature experiences will resound for our students. In fact, it may even be the radical act of confessing one's love for the natural world—in a place, a school, where it is rarely even recognized—that might be the crack, or gap in the pavement, where wild pedagogies can find fertile ground.

Conclusion

As we prepared to leave Finse, there was a smattering of snow at the train station—the first of the season. And while we waited, we could see it was snowing directly on the dying glacier. A kind of hope, a kind of renewal, touched us all. The overall direction the glacier is going may be known, but the natural systems of renewal were, for the moment, countervailing. Just as the writing of this paper can only happen through the lens of the human, the photograph below shows tourist bicycles foregrounding the glacier. Yet, the *subject* of the photograph is the almost miraculous, gentle, cool renewing of the glacier, despite the necessary veil of the human-lived-world.

There is something about these natural processes and forms of life that contest and act against our human understanding of the world and our role(s) therein. Once a likely pattern is known in the mind, what we observe tends to be confirming. If we are not careful, fatalism, rather than grief, can take over. Climate change scenarios are well-predicted, but as yet have not all come about, and most people seem unable to quantify what an agential and engaged planet might do in response. We know the likelihood of our current direction, but this need not be debilitating.

Wild pedagogies is about acting. Acting in consort with, in response to, and in respect for the myriad local beings that surround us always. Acting works in partnership with others who seek justice at the ecological, the social, the political, and all other levels. Acting recognizes our sadnesses, our privileges, our responsibilities, our meagre hope. And the act of co-teaching is something we

Figure 1. *The View from the Train Station in Finse, Norway*

can do. Wild pedagogies is not the answer but, like this paper, it is a challenge to act in response to crises we face; it is an active/activist response, a gathering of critical educational ideas, and a modicum of hope. The touchstones of wild pedagogies are built upon these premises, and they are built upon places of departure and return (Wild Pedagogies, 2019).

We felt a kind of delight and surprise when we saw the snow. The snow on Midtdalsbreen said to us, perhaps we may be lucky enough to be just a little bit wrong. Complex natural systems may find ways of acting against not just human activity but also the human mind's pattern-making systems, which can be very clear and useful, but also depressingly unrelenting and deterministic.

If there is anything to be learned from human-world knowing, as this paper purports, it is that we are in the presence of a dynamic other. In concert with this active other, we must act. If we become overwhelmed by tragedy, then our capacity to act is thus reduced. Like the complex tapestry of our emotions, the natural world presents itself in an ironic symphony of satire and grief. Just like the glimpse of sunlight or a genuine smile, the snow reminded us that along with the tragedy of a lost glacier is also the potential for one re-birthed.

Notes

1 The audio file starts with the melancholic song of the Golden plover (Heilo), a local bird Norwegians call the "lonesome wanderer of the mountains." This song accompanied us in our stay at Finse.

[2] Oliver Presthus Heggen, personal communication, September 2019.

Notes on Contributors

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Chris Beeman is Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University in Manitoba, Canada. He earned his doctorate in Education from Queen's University at Kingston. He teaches at the intersection of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies and ecological learning. His research interests include explorations of ontologically-oriented notions of Indigeneity that are understood through a long-term relationship with the more-than-human world. Recent publications may be found in the *Journal of Environmental Education, Environmental Education Review, Policy Futures in Education*, and *Encounters in the Theory and History of Education*.

Sean Blenkinsop is a professor in the faculty of education at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. His current research explores teacher education, school change, and the challenges of justice and the environmental crisis in a rapidly changing world. His most recent book project was *Wild Pedagogies: Touchstones for Re-Negotiating Education and the Environment in the Anthropocene*. His next book, with Peter Lang, due before the end of 2021 is called *Ecoportraiture: The Art of Research When Nature Matters*. It explores, complexifies, and offers examples of what research becomes if human researchers actively seek to engage with the more-than-human community as co-researchers.

Marianne Presthus Heggen is a professor in the faculty of education and sports at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen, Norway. Her background is in ecology and climate related research. She teaches early childhood teacher education, on such topics as natural sciences, outdoor learning, and environmental education. Her research foci are on education for sustainability and environmental education in early childhood, with a particular emphasis on children's reflections and contributions. She is currently engaged with the project, "Being and Becoming Eco-Citizens" at KINDknow – Kindergarten Knowledge Centre for Systemic Research on Diversity and Sustainable Futures. She prioritizes children in her research.

Erika Kazi is a recent graduate of the Master in Education: Sustainability, Creativity, and Innovation program from Cape Breton University in Nova Scotia. She is a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) fellow for Canada's Graduate scholarship. Her thesis research focuses on the mental health benefits of immersive outdoor education across Norway and Canada. Her undergraduate degree(s) from Ohio Wesleyan University are in Sociology, Anthropology, and Environmental Studies, with minors in Psychology and Biology. Erika is now working in the ski industry as a sustainability expert and has started her own consulting firm, Kazi Sustainability Consulting. She will have various works published in Environmental Education journals and looks forward to further collaboration with Wild Pedagogues as their website editor. Contact: erika@kazisustainability.com.

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