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ARTICLE

Growing Grass between Concrete: A Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Game for Rewilding Literature Pedagogies

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Abstract
Wild pedagogies invites educators to engage with more-than-humans as co-teachers and co-researchers. In collaborating with city grass, this paper blends rhizomatic thinking, literary ecocriticism, and the rewilding of pedagogy within severely constrained circumstances. Citing cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits of engaging with free and flourishing nature, this research asks: How can the severe constraints of particular sociopolitical circumstances and disciplines, such as postsecondary literature courses, be creatively encountered to support engagement with flourishing more-than-human kin? It also asks: What would grass do? This paper walks readers through many barriers faced by city college humanities courses and suggests practical, creative work-arounds that, while focused on college literature classes, can be adapted to educators in diverse disciplines and contexts. Because we need playful thinking to think creatively — even on the brink of catastrophes — this paper is written as a choose-your-own adventure game. Educators will be invited to consider the institutional, geographic, academic, political, personal, and social barriers impacting their pedagogical choices. Ecologically concerned educators need pragmatic, creative, and compassionate support to envision how wild pedagogies pathways can be applied to their course loads. Here, these explorations are designed to be experiential and experimental, open-ended, and ultimately mutually liberating.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; environmental education; higher education; literature; rhizomatic thinking; wild pedagogies

Introduction

There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in. (Leonard Cohen)

On a city college campus, blades of grass wend through cracks in the concrete, they huddle in waiting in browned clumps beneath cold winter puddles, and they develop seed heads on abbreviated stems to accommodate excessive mowing. College instructors walk over, on, and nearby these grasses, sharing and sometimes dominating spaces in unarticulated relationalities. The genre of scholarly writing calls on academics to frame research in the context of related research conversations, so can I begin with the murmurings grass? The *wild pedagogies* project (Wild Pedagogies, 2024) encourages educators to consider more-than-humans as literal co-educators and research collaborators (Jickling, Blenkinsop, Timmerman & Sitka-Sage 2018). This effort can expand beyond compelling ways to think *about* more-than-humans. Instead, it can

offer a provocation to think *with* them, to understand their experience of the world, to register their *umwelts* (Yong, 2022) and work to grasp something of their onto-epistemologies.

Even if not specifically motivated by wild pedagogies conceptions, many educational researchers have been forming multispecies collaborations in provocative ways with compelling results. Here, I point to a few select examples to illustrate the variety of possibilities. From a postmaterialist perspective, Karen Barad (2015) teamed up with light and electrons to make queer alliances and explore political imaginings, and Sarah Crinall (2019) practiced playful, artistic, and embodied *being-with* waterways in sustainable education. In ecoportraiture, Laura Piersol (2022) modelled research findings after the shelled home of a caddisfly while Michael Dé Danann Datura (2022) wrestled through the process of data presentation with the guidance of mountains. In botany (Gagliano, 2018; Ryan et al., 2021), forestry (Simard, 2021), and anthropology (Kohn, 2013) researchers are studying plant ways of thinking, making, and doing — by thinking, making, and doing *with* plants. In their rewilding work, Hawke and Spannring (2022) recognised nature and waterscapes as "sentient and intelligent creators, and conveyors of knowledge — beyond most human conceptions of what constitutes sentience and intelligence" (p. 198). Scott Jukes (2023) reconsidered the processes and potentials of methodology by thinking with and like a river.

Working within the dual fields of environmental education and literary ecocriticism, this article draws inspiration and direction from the intelligence, sentience, fortitude, patience, creativity, adaptability, and energetic pursuit of life embodied by common grasses in the city of Vancouver, including rye grass, blue grass, finn fescues, and others. These grasses work within what *is*, the nowness of present realities, even when those realities are cold, grey, rough, massive, abrasive, and literal concrete.

Collaborating with more-than-humans like this through research and teaching constitutes part of the wild pedagogies call for radical changes to education. Through these and other practices, wild pedagogies is "challenging existing assumptions, rethinking possibilities, pushing open doors to educational opportunities, exposing the limitations of current ways of knowing and being in world, and embracing learning opportunities arising from engaging with the more-than-human world" (Jickling, Morse & Blenkinsop 2023, p. 4). These efforts may include but are not limited to particular forms of postmaterialist pedagogies, but where postmaterialism tends to emphasise matter and porosity, wild pedagogies may instead or in addition foreground kinship, relationality, or even shared cognition (Kuchta, 2022a; Malone et al., 2024; Riley et al., 2024). In this article, I align with the original wild pedagogy theorists' (Jickling et al., 2018) calls for a *re*-wilding of education, wresting it out of excessively taming control and domination of humans (Jickling, 2018, p. x ; Jickling et al., 2023). Jickling (2018) contends that a crucial dimension to this work involves locating the wilderness, and "requires learning from place and landscape," and "attending to the untamed" (p. x).

To *re-wild* means first to come to grips with what *wild* means, yet both the definition and the push to locate "the wild" are contested. The wild has been conceptualised as both a condition and location of at least partial freedom and autonomy (Cookson, 2011; Jickling et al., 2023; Vannini & Vannini, 2021). The *Wild Pedagogies* authors (Jickling et al., 2018) identified *wild* and *wildness* with places where more-than-humans are "self-willed" (p. 31). Similarly, Lawrence Cookson (2011) links *wild* and *wildness* to *wilderness*, a system where nature exists "on its own terms" (p. 187). However, Fletcher et al. (2021) argued that by implying the absence of humans, these conceptions of "wilderness" fail to acknowledge the long-term impact of Indigenous peoples in shaping ecosystems. Thus, what may appear from settler perspectives as "wilderness" exists as a nonbinary site of entanglement and mutual flourishing. Indeed, in some locations, ecosystem flourishing depends upon more, not less, human intervention, such as with controlled burns (Bartel and Branagan, 2021). Malone (2016) also pushed back on the perceived human-nature binary, arguing that the mission to locate the wild is romantic, outdated, centred in white, male privilege, and hurtful to parents who cannot accommodate particular renditions of a nature-filled childhoods.

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While I agree that the 21st century requires new ways to conceptualise and engage with more-than-human kin, I frame my own understanding of *wild* in the context of the lived realities of increasingly controlled and dominated humans and more-than-humans who live in ever diminishing terrains of mutual flourishing. The wild, as I engage it, is a conceptual framework wending through places, people, characters, and cognition. *Wildness* is not simply about the happenings of material bodies of beings and places; it contains associations which, when defined generously from an ecological perspective might include "spontaneity and instinctiveness" and responsiveness to an inner "clarity" (Cookson, 2011, p. 188). *Wild*, as used here, is internal, entangled, geographic, responsive, and freedom-oriented.

Thinking while on a heap of garbage (Morton, 2010), contemplating human domination within cities (Derby et al., 2015), or analysing a toxic waste (Schmidt, 2022) may be worthwhile endeavours, yet those activities differ biologically, cognitively, and relationally from encountering a living, breathing, communicating tree (see for example: Li, 2010; Hägerhäll et al., 2018; Kimmerer, 2021; Kuchta, 2022a). Honeyford and Watt's (2020) writing course in a local park changed when they left the asphalt and steer off "into the wild growth" (p. 45). They noted, "the agency of place began to work on and through us" and "Several participants talked about this experience being a turning point for them" (p. 45). Importantly, exposure to nonhuman nature — and particularly wild nature — offers humans robust and far-reaching physical and mental health benefits (Bratman et al., 2019; Engemann et al., 2019; Kuo, Dettweiler, Faber-Taylor, Jordan & Wells 2023; Kuo, 2015;), benefits which, by design, imply human involvement with wild nature is mutually beneficial (Blenkinsop & Kuchta, 2024). Thus, wildness here is understood rhizomatically as linked to an assemblage of terrains: ethics, psychology, geography, education, and human health. Which brings us back to grass. Because grass can and does spring up in unexpected places.

This article asserts the need for re-wilding at multiple potentially overlapping levels: re-engaging with free and flourishing more-than-humans; rewilding pedagogical activity through creative play; rewilding theory as an experiential experiment; and becoming responsive to the wild inner impulse. Grass is always moving toward wild flourishing, but due to excessive pressures and control, humans risk self-imposed domestication in their thinking, expression, and capacity to sense the flourishing-urge of the inner self. Additionally, practical considerations may be considerably limiting depending on the field of study, locale, sociopolitical contexts, and other circumstances. Outdoor and environmental educators in places such as Canada, Sweden, Norway, Scotland, and Australia, might engage with free and flourishing more-than-humans by leading students into the campus oak grove, local park, or farther afield to swampy tundra, forested rivers, rugged beaches, and big-sky outback. But environmentally minded educators in other disciplines and contexts may face nearly insurmountable barriers to stepping outside the classroom (as explained in the next section). Yet, to have meaningful import in radically changing education and, thus, culture, wild pedagogies must find ways of grappling with all kinds of barriers.

How, for example, might a postsecondary literature class take up the call to locate free and flourishing nature? Literature classes are infamously oriented around stacks of bound paper and, increasingly PowerPoints and other technological media, rendering literary lessons unfit for rain, wind, dew, and, more generally, places lacking electrical plugins. While a student, I attended well over a dozen of these classes in three different geographic locations, and as an English instructor, I have taught well over a hundred literature classes in three different countries. In my experience, coursework almost always consists of chalkboard/whiteboard/powerpoint lessons along with group and class discussions wherein everyone is holding paper (book or sheets) and/or laptops. At the most basic level, these courses require close analysis of printed words on paper, conceptual framings (typically imparted through written examples and definitions) along with quotation, citation, and essay writing strategies. Compared to literature classes, writing classes, especially creative and nature writing classes, appear much easier to negotiate and numerous pedagogues have compellingly undertaken that task (Honeyford & Watt, 2020, 2024; MA Wild Writing, 2025). As the wild pedagogies authors wisely noted, listening to the voices of oceans, trees, clouds, and

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others "requires time and openness" (Jickling et al., 2018, p. 39). Surely, a once or twice a term venture onto the school lawn for class discussion (i.e. students staring at books while outdoors) insufficiently meets this mandate. What, then, can be done to meaningfully engage these classes in wild pedagogies practices?

This paper aims to highlight a plethora of substantive barriers preventing particular postsecondary instructors from engaging with rewilding practices — and rhizomatically illustrate creative healings, work-arounds, redos, re-envisioning, and multispecies collaborations to attend to these barriers. This paper leans into wildness with assemblages of diverse literatures, geographies, personal experiences, and critical pedagogical circumstances linked through brief descriptions and creative choices. Because of my own expertise and pedagogical worries, this article orients around literature classes, but, more broadly, "literature classes" constitute a placeholder for "typically indoor disciplines," including math, computer science, and political science. Simultaneously, the imaginal qualities of reading literature (Kuchta, 2022b) can benefit outdoor and environmental education courses. In other words, while specific suggestions here focus on literature courses, the bigger goal is to illustrate how to creatively locate and support free and flourishing more-than-humans and selves. Physical limitations along with contemporary senses of identity, belonging, and relationality and their epistemological implications wend together, tangling up one another, so too do these themes throughout the paper. Because my own deep engagements with the wild lead me to believe humans need relational healing as a first step to ecological healing, many of the suggested activities focus on human healing. This paper calls on outdoor and environmental educators to reconsider the depth of barriers facing those in other disciplines in our post-pandemic, warring, globalised, and polarised world, and to be active and creative in offering practices for a wider diversity of pedagogues.

Rhizomatic theory reminds us that everything can connect to anything (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). Like grass and rhizomatic thinking and a choose-your-own-adventure game, this paper is not a "one," a solitary and independent strand. Although it emerges above ground, it has not started at the beginning, nor will it end at the end. Rather, it reveals a partial and interconnected middle with filaments and offshoots in unexpected directions. I don't believe grass takes itself as seriously as most of us humans do. Grass does not seem to sit around theorising or pre-emptively grieving future catastrophes. Rather, it experiences, emerges, encounters, adapts, adjusts, waits, rests, and digests light in the now. Learning from grass, this paper blends levity, creative adaptability, and experiencing into a non/method of wilding within sometimes severe constraints. Inspired by others who have questioned the centrality, legitimacy, blindspots, and limitations of normative methodologies and paradigmatic thinking (Gough & Gough, 2022; Haraway, 2016; St. Pierre, 1997; Weaver & Snaza, 2017), Jukes et al. (2023) asked, "How might we think and do methodology differently in environmental education research?" (250). This grass-infused paper attempts that differentness by linking rhizomatic theory, wild pedagogies conceptions, literature, and an experiential game. Like a rhizome, the game may suddenly map to different geographies or contexts while innumerable offshoots remain unarticulated here. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) noted, "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (p. 12). Like Jukes et al. (2023), I "embraced process ontologies and relational ways of thinking, where a theory of life and knowledge production are entangled in practice" (p. 256). Thinking itself, as we know, can become conformist and imitated. Words on screens can become static, unanimated, flattened staccatos of muted sound. In academic writing, content and form can sometimes constitute uncomfortable juxtapositions, wherein, for example, generosity may be written about with righteous hostility — or freedom described with oppressive prosaic constraint. Grass might ask: Why think theory when experiencing theory is more alive, sensual, active, and immediate? This paper pairs rhizomatic thinking with conceptions of wildness to playfully and meaningfully explore multiplicities, authenticities, connectivities, limitation, constraint, catastrophe, and freedom. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) stated, "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and

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circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (p. 7). The divergent intersecting paths within this experiential paper are a multiplicity — lateral extensions and connections. This paper aims to bring content and form into better alignment by inviting readers into a sort of choose-your-own-adventure game (Packard, 1982).

Are you ready to begin? If yes, begin below.

Choose your own adventure

1. Imagine you work as an educator in a region where toxic pollution clogs the air over the entire accessible region.[1] Nearby factories choke out unidentified, metallic-smelling fumes. Blue sky, sunsets, and stars are a memory for adults and storybook fantasies for children. Wealthier countries set up nearby factories that do not adhere to loosely enforced government regulations. The region's waterways, you might read in an (illegal?) magazine, may be so poisoned that dipping in a finger could be deadly. The same magazine reports that local soil has been treated with concentrations of pesticides and herbicides sufficient to render locally grown food inedible for the region's rich and mildly toxic for the hard working and poor. Only the heartiest of trees twist trunks and branches up from the river's edge where only the most resilient bird survivors alight to catch their breath above sparse and sickly tuffs of grass.

Inviting students outdoors in this area poses significant health risks and ethical concerns. To what degree can any individual or community of species be said to be free or flourishing in such a locale? These students already exhibit suspicious ailments and illnesses. Many have dark bags under their eyes, stacks of tissues on their desks, and perpetual sore throats and asthma during the heavy pollution months of the year. On multiple occasions, you find one keeled over in the stairwell due to severe and inexplicable pain. They confide in you about their aunt, their neighbour, and their childhood best friend who all died of cancer. Jenn Schmidt's (2022) practice of critically examining social, historical, and ecological sites of ruin would pedagogically offer these students rich ways to engage with place — except that directly pointing to the problem might result in the instructor being reprimanded or even arrested. At all times, all classrooms are under heavy surveillance.

If you live and work in a place such this, go to #11. If not, continue to #2 below.

2. Some educators teach in areas with relatively hospitable natural environments — campuses, for example, surrounded by oaks, yucca plants, prickly pears, and terrifically shy rattlesnakes in tolerable climes. And yet, they may lack permission to take students outdoors. In theory, engaging literature students with embodied, multispecies collaborations might align with the institute's strategic plans and motto. But in reality, other priorities may prevail. Perhaps administrators note a history of lawsuits about x, y, and z. And even if x, y, and z have nothing to do with going outdoors, any change to curriculum risks additional lawsuits as the absurdity of lawsuits x, y, and z attest. Moreover, these administrators may be preoccupied with dodging figurative and literal projectiles from student protests or lobbing their own at educationally antagonising government bodies.

Alternatively or additionally, administrators may be locked in conference rooms waving (figurative) magic wands over exhausted budgets after sudden reversals in government policies may have pushed them to the edge of (literal) bankruptcy. Between the additional ChatGPT ethical collapse, increasing polarisation, and even the occasional bomb threat, actual bomb, or school shooting, they may simply lack the time or the urgency to attend to your request for permission for fieldtrips and outdoor class time. Furthermore, they worry that you overlooked issues of the inclusivity. They ask: *How will your plans attend to those students who, having grown up in densely packed urban areas in other countries, are uncomfortable outdoors? How will your*

[1]The author lived and worked in this region and had these experiences but is legally bound to omit the location. Very little research is permitted into these issues, and the author cannot risk revealing the location by citing any.

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plan address the needs of physically disabled students? Or students who struggle with extreme anxiety, for whom, they contend, *a shift to outdoor learning may signify too great a disruption?*

Of course, you have research-backed responses to all these concerns (e.g. Beeman, 2021; Blenkinsop & Kuchta, 2024; Kuo et al., 2023), but the administrators are, frankly, too busy coping with other crises to hear you out. And let's face it, your own journey toward understanding the need for deep cultural transformation in human relationships with the more-than-humans was a long, involved process too, including many years, possibly all of childhood, and much unlearning. Perhaps one can't expect highly stressed and preoccupied administrators to comprehend the importance and practicalities or healing potential of wild pedagogies practices.

If these circumstances are relatable, go to #5. If, on the other hand, your administration is both understanding and sufficiently supportive of your outdoor aspirations, go to #3 below.

3. Your administrators support your efforts to take classes outdoors on campus, but street noise and nearby construction make these excursions machine-centred cacophonies of stress. Go to #4 below.

4. Your campus contains at least some areas free from auditory pandemonium, but your students or you are physically disabled and unable to venture outdoors off the concrete paths.[2] If yes, go to 11 (for contemplative activities) or 12 (for articulating frames) or adapt the list on 10 to suit your needs. If you and your students are sufficiently able-bodied, go to #8.

5. Although your school administrators cannot support you in taking students outdoors at this time, your classrooms have windows looking out onto trees, waterways, birds, or other flourishing beings. If yes, go to #12. If, on the other hand, you regularly teach in windowless classrooms or in classes with views only of human-made objects and structures, go to #7 below.

6. Whether juggling family demands, job insecurity, excessively high workloads, lack of research funding, unsupportive administrations, or even workplace bullying (Hodgins et al., 2024; Tight, 2023; Zábrodská et al., 2017), a significant number of postsecondary faculty face burnout every year. If you have little or no time for leisure, if your family life is suffering from your stress and absence, if you feel unable to cope with the day-to-day burdens of work, it is simply not possible to launch major initiatives, such as the deep work of restructuring educational foundations for a nature-centred way of teaching. Such endeavours take time, space, and at least some degree of stability. Go to #13. If you are not approaching burnout, continue to #7 below.

7. Does your school have the budget or the fundraising capacity for living walls? (For inspiration, see: Clay, 2023; Concordia University Library, 2023; The Urban Botanist, 2023). If so, the process of building and engaging with the wall might (rather obviously) be informed by Kimmerer's book *Gathering Moss* (2003). If your school does not have the budget or if you, simply put, are so completely exhausted and overworked that you can't wrap your mind around how to launch such an endeavour, return to #6 (above). If that is *not* your situation, see 10c, d, e, and g for wild pedagogies practices that can be adapted to indoors and in-commute-only activities; then continue to conclusion.

8. Students today, but all of us to some degree, suffer from living in an era of performativity and surveillance. Many young adults in postsecondaries have had their whole lives documented on various social media. Instead of keeping diaries like kids of the past, they keep public records of their lives, visible for all (or at least, all their followers, which may number in the many 1000s). These activities may increasingly compound "the violent expunging of our inherent wildness" (Sheridan as cited in Jickling, 2018, p. x). With such an outward focus on identity, these young adults may well have lost touch with their own essential natures, intrinsic gifts, and genius impulses. What contrast might be created by bringing outwardly oriented young adults to the spaces where the plants, animals, and land itself experience largely free and wild flourishing?

Perhaps, the notion of *encountering wildness* can encompass teaching to encourage inner wildness, a way of flourishing that foregrounds the unique qualities, skills, and beingness of each

[2]The author spent a year teaching on crutches and an additional two years recovering from severe long COVID.

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individual, which — just like ecosystem diversity — can result in greater collective flourishing. In writing classes, this could look like practices of private-only writing. Or, writing without prescribed forms being imposed. As one of my own inspirational college instructors used to explain: "Say what you mean, and mean what you say" and "Start at the beginning, and end at the end." While working to write from more authentic place in themselves, students might become better at hearing the authentic voices of the more-than-humans around them.

If you've made it this far, go to #9 below.

9. *Glimpsing beyond the limitations of privilege*. In East Vancouver, a singular pairing of ravens inhabits the couple block region between Broadway and Grandview Highway. Every year, their new junior raven(s) set out on their own to look for a foothold within the community, but bands of crows, worried about the fates of their own offspring, harass them out of the area. Meanwhile, more than a thousand kilometres south in Mendocino, California, the opposite situation has occurred. Coordinated communities of ravens have driven out the entire crow population. All of which is to say, privilege in one territory does not necessarily translate to another (Nelson & Drew, 2024).

The *Wild Pedagogies* authors contended that educators engaging in wild pedagogies work from within capitalist-industrial nations "have been privileged" and as such, "likely will have different work to do than those who have been disenfranchised, marginalised, and colonised" (p. 24). While true on many levels, those of us within these privileged situations often struggle to glimpse around the epistemological limitations of our own rationalist, left-brain educations. In other words, we may be epistemologically limited (Kuchta, 2023) in ways that we "reason" are not limitations at all but just common sense.

Epistemological limitations might be glimpsed by reading Vine Deloria's (2006) *The World We Used to Live in* or Malidoma Somé's (1997) *The Healing Wisdom of Africa* or Stan Rushworth's (2020) *Diaspora's Children* and, for fiction, Leslie Marmon Silko's (1977) *Ceremony*. In what ways might we be deliberately numb and dumb? Or blunted or camouflaged? What do you know but you pretend to yourself that you don't know? What invitations and collaborations might be being offered to you from the plants, animals, and land that you have not yet acknowledged? What acknowledgements and healings might need to occur with the land right under your feet? How might you control your own self in ways that parallel control of societal control of ecosystems and more-than-humans in your community?

Go to #10 below.

10. *Engaging literature students with wildness*. The following suggested activities can be adapted to a number of conditions, locations, and needs.

A. Read Wohlleben's (2015) chapter on "The language of trees" (pp. 6–13). Then sit near the trees and try to translate into human language their pattern of communication. Try to reflect both content and the form, consider their processes, relationships, contours, and intentions. Continue to B.
B. Write using the language of trees or the language of plants or the ways of water. Read Erin Robinsong's (2022) poetry collection, *Wet Dream*. Create new word collaborations. What are we unable to say but need to say? For inspiration, read about Ogham, "the Celtic alphabet of trees" (Beresford-Kroeger, 2019, p. 189) or Monica Gagliano's (2018) explanation of "oryngham," meaning "thank you for listening in the language of plants" (p. 9). Create a glossary of the best words to pass along to future students and others. Continue to C.
C. The English literary canon is awash with anthropocentrism. Analyse literature by flipping anthropocentric stories inside out. For example, analyse the values, relationality, and anthropocentrism of Jack London's (1902) protagonist in the short story, "To Build a Fire." Rewrite the story with a relationally oriented character who values his dog companion as a respected knowledge holder. Rewrite the story from the perspective of the dog or landscape. Identify the many and varied ways they signal to the human. How might more-than-humans

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be signalling to you right now? Go for a walk, then write down the story involving those messages. To avoid linearity, continue to E.

D. Draw a circle on a large piece of paper (or on a sandy beach). Inside it, write down (or in sand, make a symbol for) everything you believe about the current state of the planet (climate change, biodiversity loss, ongoing environmental degradation, etc.). Read the novel *Flatland* (Abbott, 1884). Go back to the circle of beliefs. Expand your thinking. What might be just outside of your field of vision? What alternative possibilities might also exist? Write these outside the circle. Draw a second, larger circle to encompass those and expand beyond that. What, if any, nighttime dreams have you had that may defy your own understanding of the world? Continue to F.

E. Walk through or spend time in spaces where human needs are clearly at odds with more-than-human needs (e.g. through densely urbanised and concrete cities, beside polluted rivers). Read Bayo Akomolafe's (2018) article, "When you meet the monster, anoint its feet." In what ways is ongoing ecological destruction forcing/issuing forth brilliance and creativity? Consider the personal level, as well as the social, artistic, spiritual, philosophical, and ecological and the intertwining thereof. Return to D.

F. Go birdwatching after reading Luis Alberto Urrea's (2005) *The Hummingbird's Daughter* and consider the role of magic and the supernatural and supernatural interspecies entanglements in ecological wellbeing. Enter risky terrain — and grasslands — while reading Jiang Rong's (2009) *Wolf Totem* and consider the fragile balances of predator-prey, courage/fear, respect/distance in ecological wellbeing. Visit old growth, caves, or starlit vistas after reading *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock, 1996), which was translated from Mayan hieroglyphs hundreds of years of ago and is often considered the very first book of the Americans. Consider the ways in which origin stories do and don't function as seeds for the present world, laying a foundation or blueprint. What of the *Popol Vuh* origin story survives? Replicates? And what origin stories — seeds — are being planted right now, wittingly or not? Write aspirational future origins on seeded, biodegradable paper and plant them. Go to H.

G. Most of the suggested activities in this section were developed in spring and summer, with the scent of change and growth on the breeze. As such, they engage themes of expansion, play, work, activity, yearning, proliferation, and grass pollen. What would autumn and winter activities look like? In other words, try playing with themes of pruning, decay, dormancy, hibernation, overwintering, silence, stillness, ice, insulation, and incubation. Suggested readings might include the novels: *The Fox Wife* (Choo, 2024), *Thinner than Skin* (Khan, 2012), *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (Rice, 2018); or the poetry collections: *The Great Enigma* (Tranströmer, 2006) or Han-Shan's *Cold Mountain* (1962). Go to I.

H. Go to where the more-than-humans are calling you and from that locale, come up with your own list of wilding activities. Or go to your bookshelf and decide which wilding spaces the literature can go. What are your own ways to adapt or vary literary analysis for burnout, indoored, disabled, unsupported, colleagues in windowless classrooms and/or toxic environments. Return to G.

I. For additional suggestions or to learn what adaptations less privileged colleagues may use, continue reading #11 below. Otherwise, go to Concluding Thoughts.

11. *Meditation with a winged seed.* The Earth's earliest winged seeds understood something about collaborative potentials (Wang et al., 2024). With a wing, a seed can ally with wind current in active passivity to a new locale and a new promise of life. Due to sociopolitical and economic constraints, however, humans do not always have the freedom to physically move away. Yet, imagination can also be understood as a collaborative current. Indeed, Sheridan and Longboat (2006) asserted, "Conceiving of imagination without sourcing its ecological origin contributes to and extends anthropocentrism consistent with minds unwilling to naturalise to their surroundings" (p. 365). In places with toxic outdoor spaces, students might be invited to emulate the active passivity of winged

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seeds and visualise a form of collaborative drifting to new and more supportive terrain. (Actual seeds might be brought into the classroom for students to touch and hold as tangible reminders of the possible.) That terrain may consist of a nearby accessible future, a shift in the current ways of doing or being. What additional activities might invite students into multispecies currents of creativity? These activities might be paired, for example with the novel *Watership Down* (Adams, 1972) which illustrates the intuitive, courageous, strategic, new-home-finding efforts of a down-and-out drove of rabbits.

Conception and birth are, broadly speaking, tremendously easy experiences, given how often they occur among diversities of species every single day, from sea turtles to dandelion puffs. Even the rivers and rocks are in a constant state of reconstituting themselves with evaporation and pressure respectively. Although exceptions exist, for most, processes of conception are alluring and highly compelling. Witness the drive of salmon, the bonanza of chestnuts, the prolific sporification[3] of mushrooms. These Earthly kin hint that the fruitful path is often the most compelling one. Likewise, conceptions of new possibilities can be guided by a kind of inner pull or calling, and by exuberant celebrations of abundance and flourishing. To see more suggestions with possible indoor adaptations, go to #10. To finish, see Concluding Thoughts.

12. *Articulating windows and frames*. One page of Icelandic author Sjón's (2013) novel, *The Blue Fox*, contains only one sentence. It reads, "The night was cold and of the longer variety" (p. 14). In whiting out all other potential words, Sjón gives readers a window into the shared world of hunter and fox during a night when the silence of snow speaks loudest. Windows (literal and figurative) offer creative framings of the world. Do walls offer their own form of silence or are they silencing? Or both? What is it that remains unspoken in their relationship to you and to, say, the flight path of a cloud outside? Perhaps students can be asked to explore the relationships between silences and blank spaces of walls and pages and their relationships to wildness occurring beyond and within them. Sjón's novel, contemporary haiku, and other literary works may help. To adapt more ideas to your indoor spaces, go to #10, or if fatigued, go to #13. To end, see Concluding Thoughts.

13. *Impermanence, with haiku*. If your institution will allow it, you might try scheduling a series of at-home study days wherein students read haiku and spend time contemplating those free and flourishing beings near their own homes. Pair these readings with Simonds' (2021) article "Zen, Deep Ecology, and Haiku" to help students understand the deeply relational onto-epistemological possibilities of haiku philosophy. Even in psychologically and physically cramped spaces, such as dense urban centres, these activities can expand relational and creative thinking processes and ways of being, deepening literary understanding, self-awareness, and human/more-than-human relationships. Try slowing down the rapaciousness of classroom demands and focus on a singular poem, a slow poetry movement. A singular haiku read beneath the stars or the space where the stars would be, offers much complexity and with its permanent impermanence lends to momentary breath, pause, and quiet contemplation. For example, instructors might assign students Ellen Compton's haiku:

kaleidoscope

the little sound of a star

shattering (as cited in Van Den Heuvel, 1999)

Along with the poem, students (who might also be exhausted and overworked) could be asked to relax on their couch, bed, floor, and look up at the night sky — or to close their eyes and envision the night sky if the view is obstructed. What is the sound of actual stars imploding? How

[3]Yes, I made that word up.

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does the inherent playfulness of childhood enable greater connection, understanding, resonance, insight, or creativity to comprehend the micro and macro interconnections within our world? What deaths (burnouts) lead to new births? How is the process of renewal manifesting with, perhaps, the nearby blades of grass and dandelions wiggling up through cracked concrete? Or the rat parents playing with rat pups in the fallen over trashcan? What institutional and psychological concrete needs to crack to allow for more collective flourishing? How might Compton's poem be echo, foreshadowing, and/or prescription? Proceed to the conclusion.

Concluding thoughts

Despite seeming immense barriers, grass regularly finds ways to slip through concrete into the light. At the seemingly lethally toxic exclusion site of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, somehow flora and fauna continue to survive, spread, and reproduce (e.g. Beresford et al., 2020; Webster et al., 2016). Likewise, we frequently overworked, exhausted, *indoored*, polluted, disabled, and/or epistemologically limited educators can find imaginative ways to slip through the metaphoric concrete to become more wild. Creative adaptability and rhizomatic thinking offer one means while literature can open imaginative and experiential spaces. The clumsy, the broken, and the meagre can also be acts of beauty. Michalinos Zembylas (2024) urges us not to see complicity and resistance to violent systems as binaries, but rather to view them as points on a continuum. We are all complicit in violent systems, but we can, and Zembylas encourages, inch closer to resistance.

Education, at least at a conceptual level, promises choices, increased opportunities and options. In reality, the foundations may be so cemented with internal and external complications that room for wildness — freedom and flourishing — appears only in the cracks. At least at first. Indeed, the choose-your-own-adventure game offered by this article also offers only small cracks for those educators in highly constrained situations. But a crack, with the pressure of yearning, the urge for freedom, can become a gap, a gorge, a site of liberation. Because it takes time to locate and imagine our way into these internal and external spaces of rewilding, pedagogues with the privilege of more time might consider offering more suggestions. University algebra, chemistry, or physics class also need the spirit of wildness and wilding encounters. Administrators with zero extra budget or time to externally wild their campuses or internally encourage rewilding of curriculum also need paths forward. Educators — or their students — with fibromyalgia, chronic migraines, or PTSD might also come to encounter wilding spaces as healing places.

In light of their fortitude and resilience, grass would probably appreciate the optimism of the final lines of Edward Packard's (1982) choose your own adventure, *Survival At Sea*: "Pete," you shout, "We're going to make it!" (p. 118).

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