

**150 YEARS LATER:
COLLEGE STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF
HENRIK IBSEN'S “*FRILUFTSLIV FOR MY THOUGHTS*” OF 1859**

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Abstract

This paper aims to elicit today's students' understanding of Ibsen's poem, *On the Heights* (Paa Vidderne), and his use of the term '*friluftsliv*', as well as the student apprehension of *friluftsliv* as an actual phenomenon in everyday life.

Data for the students' appreciation and understanding of this concept were collected in the one-year specialized programme in *Friluftsliv* at Finnmark University College in Alta, Norway, located in the extreme northern part of the country, well above the Arctic Circle. The investigation included the teaching of the Ibsen poem as part of the course. Findings from the inquiry were used in the institution's examination of the students in March, 2009.

The students displayed a wide range in their comprehension of *friluftsliv*, both in Ibsen's work and in their own lives. Their views ranged from the aesthetic experience of the natural environment, to its value for recreational purposes, to its importance for personal development, and even further, to a holistic view of society at large and how individuals conduct their lives.

CLASS OF 2009 STUDENT COMMENTS ON IBSEN'S 1859 CONCEPT OF 'FRILUFTSLIV'

Introduction

The history and ideology of *friluftsliv* is a component of the one-year specialized study of *Friluftsliv* at Finnmark University College. Ibsen's poem, *On the Heights* (Paa Vidderne), however, has not been a part of the curriculum. In January, 2009 I offered to teach the students a module on this subject, to which the administration agreed, provided it was not a mandatory component and that no remuneration were to be involved

Method of Investigation

To commence the project, a lecture was delivered on *friluftsliv* ideology in the 19th century, focusing on the themes of romanticism and nationality. I played a taped reading of *On the Heights*, and a week later brought the students on a walk into the woods. After building a campfire, we discussed the importance of *friluftsliv*, the students' experiences with nature, and the reasons behind their choice to study *friluftsliv* at this time. Could there be any parallels with Ibsen's main poem character, who needed to find solitude in nature to clarify his thoughts about his future?

Eight students in total participated in these events. I interviewed them afterward (taking notes in the mode of classical anthropological field work) about their reflections on the proceedings, as well as their understanding of the *friluftsliv* concept. They gave their consent for the use of their responses, given anonymity, in the present paper.

Some time after these experiences, the administration chose to include an understanding of '*friluftsliv*' as a component of the final examination for these students. I reviewed the test results for the nine students who received the highest grades: three were awarded an 'A' while six received 'B'. Upon analysis, the examination responses were found to fall in four theme categories. Below follows a discussion of the student reflections within this framework:

- I. Student interpretation of the Ibsen poem.
- II. Student understanding of Ibsen's 'friluftsliv' concept.
- III. Student understanding of 'friluftsliv'.
- IV. How the students would use their understanding of Ibsen's 'friluftsliv' in teaching.

The remainder of this paper will focus first on the conversations I had with the eight students I had in my teaching sequence, and then on the examination results of the 9 highest-grade students.

The gallery of students

The importance of experiencing nature in the choice of the one-year study of Friluftsliv

The frame of reference for the conversations was Ibsen's poem. The main character of the poem needed time alone in the mountains to be able to decide what life to choose. The students in the class have chosen to use one year of their lives to learn how to better manage life in nature, to learn the history and ideology of friluftsliv, and to learn how to teach this subject in an educational environment. **Had their experience of life in nature influenced their choice to spend one year on friluftsliv studies?**

Their decisions showed to be the result of three forms of motivation:

- A. Pure self interest; taking a year off.
- B. Taking this programme as part of their teacher training.
- C. Deeper eco-philosophical thinking.

Some students' responses indicated more than one factor.

A. Motivation based on pure interest

Student A grew up in southwestern Norway, in the rural area of Bryne in the Jæren region. He said that his love of nature began when he in his early teen years started hiking, as exercise, with friends. They liked hiking very much and began to take longer treks, eventually up into the mountains, seeking physical challenges like mountain climbing. Now he is really looking forward to the one-year course in this northern environment.

Student B was also raised in southwestern Norway. He enjoyed many fishing and hunting trips with his family as he grew up. His father was from Finnmark in the far north, and he had spent many holidays in his home village with his grandparents. He said they went fishing very often!

As I grew up I embraced the sport of football because it was so competitive. It was very important to win. I eventually grew tired of that attitude, with some poor soul always sitting on the reserve bench while others played. I experienced a big change in my thinking. In friluftsliv there is no competition. No one is on the reserve bench. Everyone is equally important, and that is what I appreciate.

Student C grew up on the west coast, in Bergen, Norway's second largest city. As a teenager she was a girl scout and active in friluftsliv, which she enjoyed greatly. Later on she joined the DNT, the Norwegian Trekking Association.

My experiences with DNT really showed me the importance of nature in my life, and that is why I applied for this course. I wish to expand my skills in managing nature. I may also choose to become a teacher, so this course will help me in that regard as well, as schools do teach friluftsliv.

Student D grew up in Denmark. He said that there is not a lot of forested environment in his country. Most of the land is controlled, and one must apply for permission for almost everything.

When I was young, I went fishing with friends, even if it was forbidden. We enjoyed the challenge of doing something that was forbidden. We were spontaneous!

*Danes use nature in terms of short walks, perhaps bringing a cake and having a picnic. They don't view it as Norwegians do, which is going out on a trip and not complaining about rainy weather and so on. I want to explore nature more than I have done before.*¹

B. Motivation in relation to professional career

Student E grew up in West-Telemark, a rural region in southern Norway, but had little experience with friluftsliv as a youth. She plans to become a teacher. She knows that many children learn better in practical situations than in theoretical ones, and she recognizes the value of friluftsliv in teaching and wishes to learn more skills.

Student F grew up in southern Norway, and enjoyed nature trips as a child with her parents. They had a family cabin to go to for weekends and holidays.

In high school I chose athletics not only for the sports but for the many trips we took in nature. This made me think more about our relationship to nature. I want to be a teacher, and friluftsliv is an important subject in school.

C. Motivation based on deep eco-philosophical thinking

Student G grew up in Middle Telemark, in rural southern Norway, and in her region utilizing nature is a way of life.

I believe that nature should be protected at all costs; the consequences of not doing so are catastrophic. Modern society destroys nature. Mankind is the species most capable of destroying nature, and therefore has the responsibility to care for it. I want to work in nature conservation and contribute to balancing humanity with nature.

It is a striking difference in children's contact with nature during upbringing at different places on earth. Many children in Norway are nurtured with abundant natural surroundings while children in New York are not. Norwegians can roam freely, while Americans in many places are constrained by fixed camping sites and hiking areas. How does these different situations contribute to their different understandings of nature?

Take a look; here we are on the Komsa summit, just 1km from the town center and 200m above the sea, with a great view of the Alta fjord. This is one of the most popular destinations for people in Alta. There is one main trail to the top, though many people hike off the trail, eroding the soil. The question is: should people have the freedom to walk wherever they want, or should they be required to stay on the trail?

¹ Note that this Danish student used 'they' about the Danes. He seemed to identify more with the Norwegian way.

Student H was raised on a small farm in northern Norway. His family earned their living by keeping sheep and fishing, a way of life for centuries along the coast. All of their equipment was non-motorized until 1960.

My father's 'friluftsliv' was in sheep herding, which I helped him with. We spent many hours walking through the mountains.

My parents and others quickly became attracted to snowmobiles and motorboats when they were introduced. The mentality in the north is to do things the quickest and easiest way, and struggle the least. My trips since I was 5 years old were by motorboat or snowmobile.

I spent some years in the army and learned how to stay outdoors for long periods of time without getting cold or wet. This gave me a good understanding of nature. We learned to cope with nature and avoid destroying it. On one field exercise I was required to be quiet in the woods, which was a new experience for me, and it opened my ears to hear in another way. And then suddenly a beaver appeared in the river nearby. A fantastic experience! And then the silence was broken by the sound of an airplane taking off (this was close to Oslo's Gardermoen Airport). That destroyed the experience totally! My immediate thought was that I wanted the plane to drop from the sky, of course not seriously meant, but it describes the feeling I had when my good experience was destroyed.

In the last five years I have been more conscious of noise, and I try to avoid it when I go out in nature. I appreciate silence in nature most. Mechanical noise ruins the natural experience. I have learned to appreciate the physical struggle involved with a good hike. I have also learned that people are entirely dependent on nature for their survival, and that we are at nature's mercy. Now we must 'play the same game' as nature.

My values have changed in these five years. Certainly I admit to enjoying snowmobiling! Most people who snowmobile believe that the tracks will disappear when the snow melts. And they don't consider the exhaust emissions a problem. When I have kids, I will take them on skiing trips rather than snowmobile trips in the forest and mountains.

Take-home examination: 'Friluftsliv, Nature, Culture, Society, and Pedagogy'

The examination text was the following:

'This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Henrik Ibsen.² By writing the word 'friluftsliv' Ibsen has had a strong influence. He first used it in the 1859 poem *On the Heights*'.³

*Here in this deserted dwelling
I have housed my wealth of treasure;
There's a bench, a stove, sweet smelling
Air, and time to think at leisure.*

*In the lonely seter cottage
My abundant catch I gather;
There is hearth, a stool, a table,
friluftsliv for my thoughts.*

² The College made an error here as Ibsen died in 1906, 103 years before the examination.

³ The translation on the left is by John Northam. The translation on the right is closer to the original, and was done by Nord-Trøndelag University College for this conference.

1. Outline the development of friluftsliv since Ibsen's time, with a focus on values that have been and are connected to the concept. Give your interpretation of how friluftsliv can be understood today.
2. Discuss how you would teach Ibsen's understanding of friluftsliv today, taking into consideration each of the three learning dimensions.

Results and commentary

A summary of the students' responses follows in Table 1.⁴

⁴ The author applied to the University College administration for information concerning candidate gender, but these data were not released. The names used in the present paper should, therefore, be viewed as gender neutral.

Table 1. Summary of examination responses: Ibsen's friluftsliv in *On the Heights*

Candidate Nr.	Understanding of the poem	Ibsen's friluftsliv	Own understanding of Friluftsliv	Use of Ibsen's 1859 poem in teaching
8 Evelyn Grade: B	Nature: Aesthetic view. Withdraw from society. Birdsong is more musical than church bells.	See nature in all its beauty. Get away from daily life. The journey is the aim. Friluftsliv is defined by this poem.	Nature experiences. Have fun. Paradox: Half of Norway is 'attacked' by red trail markers. Shall all of nature be accessible for all? Shall there be no overgrown mystical wilderness to discover? Nansen, 1922. Næss.	First, teach theoretically about nature, then let pupils experience it. For younger children, experiential training is more important. Most important is that pupils learn to take care of nature and learn respect for it.
6 Nickie Grade: B	One's personal experience with nature. Reflections on life in the valley.		Includes many aspects, but not sports. Take trips, struggle a bit. Eilertsen, 2007. Mytting & Bischoff, 2008.	Thoroughly: 'In'-dimension. 1. Find out what pupils know. 2. Get away from noise, focus on nature, learn by doing. 3. Dramatize themes from the poem.
10 Carlie Grade: B	Nature: Aesthetic view. Seek freedom individually. Only men were included.	Body, thoughts and feelings. Aesthetic and spiritual. Developing one's identity.	The official definition: Faarlund (no date).	'About'-dimension: Give the historical background. Reflection through creating a drama.
19 Oiky Grade: B	He no longer sees meaning in the stressful life in the valley. Critical view of civilized life. He feels 'lost' in nature.	Simple life. Joy and enthusiasm about life in mountains.	Traditional vs. extreme. Core values: contemplation, heartiness, experiences, health, identity, challenges, excitement, recreation, harvesting food, and living 'the good life'. Non-motorized. No reference for definition	'In'-dimension. Experience nature. No tight time schedule. No equipment pressure. No competition. Cosiness. High quality of life.
16 Bobbie Grade: A			'Non-competitive life, walking in nature, in harmony with nature'. Find oneself, free from the demands of society. Nansen, 1921. Faarlund, 1989.	'In'-dimension: 8 th grade: One week trips. Eco-philosophy, wisdom.

Candidate Nr.	Understanding of the poem	Ibsen's friluftsliv	Own understanding of Friluftsliv	Use of Ibsen's 1859 poem in teaching
12 Putte Grade: B		Experience nature with one's own body	Friluftsliv is not constant. 1. Urban. 2. Rural. 3. Extreme. Self-realization. Ecological, –Næss	A two week programme: Experience farming as it was done a hundred years ago. Give the pupils tasks. No competition. Aims: Learn to live now, good nature experiences, identify with nature, environmental consciousness.
17 Sammy Grade: B	In the mountains to think more clearly about life. Spiritual values central. Focus on what can be achieved. Nature, – symbol for building a national identity, a political project leading to dissolving the union with Sweden	Body, thoughts, and feelings. Attain personal development and strength.	Culture bound, – Pedersen, 2002. By simple means. Experience for personal growth.	'In'- dimension. Understanding presupposes practice.
20 Hoover Grade: B (Should have had an A, in my opinion)	To cope with the challenges of life, one needs to get away from the village and discover places in nature of solitude, silence, and tranquillity.	Be alone. Plain, simple friluftsliv (~ not much equipment). Suitable challenges. Learn to master situations.	Nature experiences, self realization, and physical exercise. In sport: exercise is the focus. Several values, classified under: Personal, social, cultural, aesthetic.	In-dimension. The pupils (15 – 16 years) should be out as much as possible during the year. Part 1: Indoors: point to possibilities, inspire curiosity. Part 2: Groups of 7 – 8, 'learning by doing'. Give the pupils challenges, as Ibsen stressed. No tight time schedule. Sitting around the fire, the teacher reads verses from Ibsen about nature. Concluding moral: Nature takes care of us, therefore we must take care of nature.
9 Freddie Grade: A	Build upon Kierkegaard's existentialism. Be redeemed from ordinary life in the valley and achieve a higher insight. Close to God.	Friluftsliv has a religious meaning. Inner growth.	Body and soul. Connections to all life, – Næss. The paradox: Friluftsliv is a search for nature, while society depends on destroying nature, – Zapffe. When one argues for friluftsliv for my thoughts => one should have tolerance for others' thoughts.	Aim: emancipation of the spirit. 1. 'About': Challenge pupils to think. 2. 'In': Let the pupils experience, and support them in this. 3. 'Through': Create a meta-consciousness.

These 9 responses, from the students with the best grades, vary greatly. Some wrote nothing about the poem and Ibsen's understanding of friluftsliv, but had well considered views on pedagogical issues. Others gave a broad account of the poem but were weaker on pedagogical issues. I account below for each sub-theme separately, beginning with the examination papers with the shallowest understanding, then moving onto those with a deeper analysis, exhibiting more threads of significance and meaning (Geertz, 1973).

I. Student interpretation of Ibsen's poem

Bobbie and **Putte** have no descriptions of the poem at all.

Evelyn focused on the aesthetic aspect: *Ibsen sees a waterfall as more beautiful than a church choir, a bird song as more tinkling than church bells.*⁵ The poem is characterized as *nature friendly*.

Carlie shared this opinion: *Ibsen asserted the aesthetic values of nature, inspired by national romanticism. He appreciated the twilight by sunset and the moods of stormy weather.*

Following this, the experiences in nature were viewed to influence the individual; *he finds freedom and individuality*. **Carlie** made a gender comment here:

A paradox is that in Ibsen's day women did not have the option of choosing this life style. Ibsen points out that the option to free himself from his mother, his beloved, and society, belongs to men. Friluftsliv from the beginning was associated with such masculine values as individuality and being one's own master, without obligation to society.

However, **Carlie** did not refer to the only article in the curriculum that discussed the gender issue (Pedersen, 1999).

A few of the students saw that the poem is about the protagonist's reflections on his experiences with nature. He was alone and could reflect on life in the valley, **Nickie** wrote, but did not go on to elaborate on what sorts of reflections.

Oiky, however, did elaborate, citing identification with nature: *The poem is about a man who is absorbed in nature and life in the mountains. This has consequences:*

After he has experienced the beauty and seduction of nature, he no longer sees the meaning of a stressful life in the valley, filled with hustle and bustle. He becomes critical of civilized life.

In spite of that he hesitates about deciding to become a free man in the mountains due to his promise to his mother and his beloved to come back to them.

Oiky viewed this reflection on society as a **consequence** of experiences in nature. **Hoover** perceived that Ibsen had understood this dilemma beforehand, and stated that Ibsen described *a need to get away from people in the village, and discover places in nature of solitude, silence, and tranquillity, in order to cope with the challenges in life.*

⁵ Author's translations of the student texts.

Two other students shared this view that the main theme is the individual's progress towards adulthood. According to **Sammy**: *He sets out for the mountains to think more clearly about life.* But in the process his objective changes. **Freddie** followed this line of thought to its logical conclusion:

The closing verse shows that the main character has been redeemed from prosaic life in the valley and has achieved a higher insight. He lives a balanced life in nature, depending on nature's goods for survival. He wants to live his life alone on the heights, as close to God as possible.

Freddie believed the poem has an autobiographical element: *Ibsen has a transcendental view of nature. Man should strive throughout his life for emancipation of the spirit.* Ibsen was regarded as building on Kierkegaard's existentialism: man must move through different stages of life - aesthetic, ethical, and finally religious, - and the last is the highest.

Sammy brought in another element, the political context vis-à-vis Sweden. Ibsen ascribes a symbolic value to nature. In nature man can find freedom. This is seen as intentional in light of the political situation:

*In the 19th century **nature** was a central symbol for building a national identity, a political aspiration which led eventually to dissolution of the union with Sweden.*

II. Student interpretations of Ibsen's friluftsliv

Two students, **Nickie** and **Bobbie**, made no comment on Ibsen's friluftsliv-concept.

Putte stated it clearly and simply: *According to Ibsen it is important to experience nature with one's own body.*

Several of the students believed Ibsen has a recreational view. According to **Evelyn**, friluftsliv means:

To go out in nature to get away from daily life. One has what one needs in one's pack and a rifle in hand. One wanders in the heights, eating and sleeping when necessary. There is no aim or meaning except the outing itself.

However, Ibsen was given strong credit: *Friluftsliv received its form from this poem. (sic!)*

Similarly with **Hoover**: *One has to get into nature on one's own, and find challenges that suit one's level, thereby acquiring the ability to master situations.* This was not linked to future life and society.

Although **Oiky** noted the potential conflict between a man's ambitions for the future and the expectations of him from society, the same connection was not made in the analysis of Ibsen's friluftsliv concept: *Ibsen shares his joy and enthusiasm about life in the mountains. Ibsen promotes a simple, beautiful, and seductive life in nature.*

Sammy perceived another aspect: *The expression **friluftsliv for my thoughts** shows that activities and experiences in nature are not the main point. Ibsen focuses on thoughts, feelings, and spiritual values.*

Carlie commented more deeply on this:

Friluftsliv, of course, strengthens physical and mental health. With the expression 'friluftsliv for my thoughts' Ibsen includes much more than being out-of-doors, observing and enjoying nature; he also embraces feelings and thoughts.

Reference was made to the work of Breivik (1978). But the analysis was taken further; there is more to it than feelings and thoughts; the spiritual realm is included. One can wonder about God and his creation, and develop one's identity.

While **Carlie** appeared to think that the different aspects are equal, **Freddie** argued that spiritual growth is the most important part of 'cultural friluftsliv'. With reference to Kierkegaard's existentialism, **Freddie** stated that friluftsliv at its core has a religious meaning. He identified with Tordsson's statement (2005) that *outer simplification is a precondition for inner growth*.

III. The students' own understanding of friluftsliv

To give an account for one's understanding of a concept, a delimitation must be made of the phenomenon from other phenomena. Two issues have been central in defining friluftsliv: Drawing a line between friluftsliv and sports, and whether motorized movement could be accepted. The debate on the first issue started a hundred years ago (Nansen, 1900, 1922).⁶

This debate received new impetus in the 1970s, as friluftsliv gained popularity in many schools as clearly something different from the established school subject of 'gymnastics' / 'idrett' (physical education). The Norwegian Department of the Environment had the responsibility for friluftsliv and arranged specialist seminars, working out reports where hallmarks of friluftsliv were elucidated (1971, 1983, 1985a, 1985b). Also, mentors in friluftsliv, – especially one individual – worked on delimitation of the concept (Faarlund, 1973a, 1973b, 1974, 1978).

The delimitation of friluftsliv vs. sports has been made on the basis of activities. Walking in the forest is friluftsliv, while running a 5000 meter in competition is sports. However, some activities can be classified both as friluftsliv and sport: Using map and compass to find your way, orienteering, could be one example; downhill skiing is another. To distinguish, one has to go 'deeper'; to the purpose. The established distinction is that nature experiences are central in friluftsliv, while focus on the activity is sports. Another agreed-upon distinction is: There is no competition in friluftsliv, while competition is crucial in sports. A third distinction is that friluftsliv is characterized by norms while sports are regulated by rules (Elgvin, 1981).

The second issue relates to snowmobile riding. In the 1960s Saami reindeer pastoralists began to use the snowmobile. Ordinary people soon saw the usefulness of this vehicle as a means to come easily and quickly into the mountains. By 2010 there are more than 65.000 snowmobiles in Norway, in a population of 4.5 million. Many snowmobiles are in the northernmost province, Finnmark, where a trail system for recreational riding has been established. From 1980 to 1990 the number of snowmobiles grew from 4,300 to 10,500, and by end of 2006 there were 14,315 such vehicles in Finnmark. The population of this province in 2010 is ca. 73,000.

⁶ Norwegian language has two words that need to be distinguished here; 'sport' and 'idrett'. 'Idrett' may probably best be translated as 'athletics'. Nansen (1900, 1922) argued that 'idrett' contained the old ideal of 'a healthy soul in a healthy body', while 'sport' was dominated by competition and records. He favoured 'idrett' and regretted the growing interest for 'sport'. His influential 1921 speech has been reprinted several times: in *Nansens Røst* [The Voice of Nansen], 1943 (a Nazified version); a shorter version in *Eventyrlyst, Artikler og Taler* [Spirit of Adventure, Articles and Speeches] (Aschehoug, 1962); in *Friluftsliv fra Nansen til Våre Dager* [Friluftsliv from Nansen to Our Days] (Universitets-forlaget, 1978) (the 1943 version); in *Fridtjof Nansen* (Aventura, 1988, the 1922 version); and in *Eventyrlyst* [Spirit of Adventure] (Cappelen, 1995) (the 1943 version).

Those who use snowmobiles argue that this is **their** form of friluftsliv. This point of view conflicts with the traditional view; which sees friluftsliv as non-motorized; drawing a clear line between transport (motorized) to the starting point of a trip, and the friluftsliv activity in itself.

In the following I will first provide a rather thorough representation of each student's views, to show how the perspectives vary among these Norwegian college students with the highest grades in the subject. Then I go on to present their views in a table, using the categories: activities, values, purposes, sport, and motorized movement. Subsequent to this there is a discussion of the students' understanding of friluftsliv. The distinction of friluftsliv vs. sports and snowmobile riding are discussed separately after this main account.

Curriculum literature emphasized that friluftsliv is a culture-bound phenomenon that, therefore, changes with time (Breivik, 1978; Pedersen, 1995; Tordsson, 2005). Most students followed that line of thought starting their discussion of the delimitation of the concept through describing **activities** rather than **values** connected to the activities.

Approximately half of the students referred to the Norwegian official definition of friluftsliv⁷.

Most of the students defined friluftsliv by listing activities. Many of them saw the dilemma that some activities could be both friluftsliv and sports, and thus discussed purposes to deal with this. Further, a majority of the students claimed that the notion of purpose embodies values, arguing, therefore, that **values** define friluftsliv.

This was in line with traditional friluftsliv: People sought contact with nature to reach something they could not achieve in the 'modern' society of their time. There was a purpose; values were the foundation.

Student delimitation of the concept

Carlie saw friluftsliv as a positive concept, but confessed initially that this understanding is ...*somewhat general. It embraces many values because so many activities fall under this concept*. Friluftsliv was characterized as 'traditional' (hiking, skiing, canoeing, picking berries, hunting) and 'modern' (kiting, wakeboarding, rafting, river kayaking, parachuting, base jumping).

Carlie mentioned Arne Næss' ecosophy whereby wisdom is connected to relevant actions on earth, but honestly admitted having had no experience of this. Instead it was proposed that friluftsliv has more to do with personality than activity: **Carlie** concurred with Faarlund who has argued that humans are adapted to a life in nature, but modern development has subdued these conditions. Agreement was also voiced with Nansen's view that urban life obliterates personality, and that friluftsliv can help humans experience their real personality. In conclusion, the mission of friluftsliv was stated to strengthen our fundamental personality. This closure is firm in spite of the vague introduction.

Nickie also related to the Norwegian official definition of friluftsliv, stating that the aim is health for all, meaning that everyone can take part and that it should be a friluftsliv that is gentle towards nature. However, not only are the traditional forms of friluftsliv seen today. Without specific examples it was noted that Faarlund is critical of the modern forms, such as machine-made ski-tracks, what Faarlund calls 'tram-tracks'. The ongoing discussion as to whether motorized activities, broadly speaking, should be

⁷ The official definition: *Friluftsliv is abiding and being physically active in the open air in leisure time, with the purpose of environmental change and nature experience.* (White paper for Parliament Nr. 39, 1986). Author's translation.

included was referred to, once again pointing to the critically oriented Faarlund: *As this destroys nature and the aim is to express oneself, it should not be included in the concept* (Interview by Eilertsen, 2007). The issues of sports and motorized riding will be further elaborated upon later.

Instead of describing all activities which should be included in friluftsliv, **Nickie** found it more important to tell what is NOT included. However, no activities were listed. Friluftsliv was declared to have a value in itself; it is a wholeness including activities, personal encounters, actions, feelings, and nature experiences⁸. All these elements should be included if something is to be called ‘friluftsliv’ (Mytting & Bischoff, 2008, p. 46). **Nickie** identified with the ‘traditional’ variant; stating: *One should struggle a little to get to the destination*. To travel to a luxury chalet could not be called ‘friluftsliv’. To be on one’s way is the aim in itself.

Putte had a ‘tolerant’ opinion of what is included in friluftsliv; the concept was broadened and included both plain variants and types demanding much equipment and resources. Friluftsliv was argued to have become ‘common property’; it has been regulated by law; it is included in the curricula for elementary schools, high schools, and in teacher training. In addition some colleges give special courses in it. It is used in the social-work sector for therapeutic purposes, and the tourist industry concentrates substantially on this area. It is also used for team building in industry. It appears to embrace all society.

Putte established two categories of friluftsliv: The urban variant stressed nature experiences, while the rural type emphasized hunting, picking berries, and taking care of grazing animals.

Secondly, a split was made in the ‘traditional’ form; the first focuses on the simple and the good; silence, animal life, and environment. The other type aims on action, adrenaline, and transcending limits, including activities such as kayaking, glacier travel, and mountain climbing. Such ‘extreme’ friluftsliv is not of new date; it began with Nansen’s crossing of Greenland in 1888. The intention was to immerse deeply in one’s leisure time and activities, and thereby to ‘exhibit’ identity and to strengthen social esteem.

Putte disapproved of the consumer culture with its focus on equipment, and connected to Arne Næss’ idea of self realization. Hope was expressed for a future growth of a more ‘ecological’ friluftsliv.

While **Putte** excluded paid work in nature from friluftsliv, **Sammy** included this by expanding the public definition through including **professions** in nature, if they comply with specific other criteria. Examples offered were nature guides, traditional forest workers, and those working in nature kindergartens. The choice of criteria for friluftsliv were influenced by upbringing and background, including the urban friluftsliv tradition, impulses from Romanticism and ecological ideologies, thus mirroring holistic thinking about lifestyle and choices for life.

Sammy also provided some interesting reflections on ‘values’. Values are culturally and socially constructed. To say that something has ‘value’ presupposes value **for someone** and **for something**. Further it presupposes a being who has the ability to choose alternatives and who acts when confronted with a situation (Rand, 1961). ‘Value’ tells about what is wanted and influences the person’s choice of aims and acts.

⁸ The English word ‘experience’ includes two aspects that have different words in Scandinavian languages and German. The first is what happens immediately when you ‘sense’ nature; by sight, smells, or sounds. In Norwegian: this is ‘opplevelse’, in German: ‘erlebnis’. The second aspect comprises what you process afterwards, ‘collecting’ what you learned from an event. In Norwegian: ‘erfaring’, in German: ‘erfahrung’ (cf. Hans Gelter, this volume). In this quote the student used ‘opplevelse’, ie ‘experience’ in the first meaning.

The majority of the students emphasized that the core values have been the same from Ibsen's time to now, even if the content,— the activities called friluftsliv, have changed. Some did not use the word 'value', but called it 'characteristics' or 'common traits'.

Oiky was one of those who started by describing changes in types of activities. Friluftsliv is no longer as simple as before, with a cotton anorak, wooden skis, and knickers. It has grown into an advanced and materialistic hobby. He finds this 'natural'⁹ when viewing development in a society with a growing amount of money in people's pockets. Expensive equipment is an important part of friluftsliv, – for some, while it is contrary to traditional friluftsliv.

By such a line of thought it seems clear that **Oiky** has accepted that all activities people call friluftsliv, are friluftsliv. An acknowledgment is made that risk activities such as climbing and kiting would not fall under the public definition. However, the argument is made that excitement and challenges have for long been important values in friluftsliv. By this, **Oiky** defended modern activities because they exhibit the same values as have been included for a long time.

Oiky listed up other values: Contemplation, heartiness, experiences, health, recreation, and harvesting food. The most important values were nature experiences and freedom. However a backside of the coin was also expressed: the rush towards material aspects, and people's chase for magnificent deeds and endeavours; go the highest, longest, coldest. Values of excitement, identity, and challenges have come to the fore. This can be good for health, **Oiky** claimed, and people can still be fond of nature. But it may take the focus away from nature experiences and environmental change, it was argued.¹⁰ Probably these are the two core values. In summing up: Friluftsliv is 'the good life' (Rønbeck, 1990).

Most people have clear and immediate associations of friluftsliv, therefore **Bobbie** thought *it may be unwise to give a firm and limiting definition of friluftsliv*. However, it was noted that it may contain everything from base-jumping to moose hunting.

A contrasting definition by Goksøyr (1994) was referred to; non-competitive leisure time activity, and Breivik's (1978) broadening of the concept to include food gathering among rural people, was also brought into purview. **Bobbie** questioned further whether it is still friluftsliv if one earns money on the activity. No answer was given. An issue was raised concerning the friluftsliv programme at Finnmark University College, where reindeer husbandry is included. This was defended as being a role model for modern society in its need to function more in harmony with nature.

After these reflections **Bobbie** found that **ecological sustainability** must be the hallmark of friluftsliv. However, the difficulty of defining the limits within which encroachments can be accepted, was understood. Particular problems are motorized traffic and competitive activities.

Bobbie then concluded with the following definition: *Non-competitive movement and abiding in harmony within the nature setting*. Values were seen hidden in the purpose: Recreation, mastering, nature experience, discoveries, and social gatherings. Faarlund's statement of friluftsliv as *a way home* (1989) was concurred with; however, no discussion was offered of Faarlund's critical comments on the ideology of recreation.

Hoover's point of departure was the 'official' national definition. Friluftsliv was then divided into three categories, (Pedersen, 1995):

⁹ This is a common way of using the word 'natural' in the Norwegian language, although not logically when it applies to social, cultural, or historical phenomena.

¹⁰ 'experience' in the first meaning; see note 8.

- a) Classical friluftsliv: Trekking in forest and mountains to experience nature; to be in the midst of nature, and to feel nature's silence and peace.
- b) Harvesting friluftsliv: In addition to the search for experience, the wish to harvest nature's goods; - picking berries and mushrooms, fishing and hunting.
- c) Extreme friluftsliv: The excitement experience.

Common for all three types is the nature experience, self realization, and physical exercise. Sports were distinguished from friluftsliv.

Hoover categorized the values of friluftsliv into four entities:

- 1) Personal values: Joy, benefit, recreation, harvesting nature's food, silence, reflection, and deeper insight into self.
- 2) Social values: Feeling of belonging to or identifying with a group.
- 3) Cultural values: Caring for tradition, interdependence between humans and nature, nature's value in itself, identity.
- 4) Aesthetic values: The good feelings received through nature experiences.

Freddie took a sociological perspective by viewing modern society as polycentric; it does not have one single set of values. This makes people want to define themselves, meaning that we put weight on differences, endangering solidarity in society. Therefore, friluftsliv should ideally embrace all who feel connected to nature.

Just as society has changed, **Freddie** noted that friluftsliv has never been static; it has always been dynamic. However, two core characteristics have been the same: nature experiences and physical challenges. These were stated to be common, for example, for both skier and snowmobile rider.

Therefore we should be open for changes to come. **Freddie** related this to Ibsen's *friluftsliv for my thoughts*. In this expression lies freedom of spirit. Accordingly, I should be open for the existence of *friluftsliv for others' thoughts*. There must be room for different opinions, requiring tolerance and responsibility of the individual, and, what may be more difficult: One should have empathy for persons with other thoughts on friluftsliv.

Freddie believed Ibsen was inspired by Kierkegaard's three stages in life. As a parallel, friluftsliv was argued to encompass a similar development of body and soul. This student was clear in what is most important: *Without the latter, friluftsliv would be of no interest*.

A paradoxical situation was then perceived as inescapable: Friluftsliv appeared as a reaction to the life style in the era of industrialization; in a society which was dependent on the extraction of natural resources while simultaneously destroying that very same nature upon which friluftsliv depended. It is still the same way today, though nature exploitation has gone so much further, and urban humanity's need for a friluftsliv in nature yet so much greater.

Friluftsliv is still a search for free nature in a society characterized by industry exploiting nature and destroying nature. **Freddie** displayed a pessimistic life view, inspired by Zapffe (1933), perhaps the most original Norwegian philosopher of the 20th Century. Humanity has eaten from the tree of knowledge and is expelled from Paradise. *The Last Messiah* (Den Sidste Messias) was cited: Man reaches out his arms to be reunited with nature, but nature does not answer. Humanity has lost the right of residence in nature.

From this view, **Freddie** declared a personal conception of friluftsliv: To share what is left on Earth in such a way that most people can enjoy it; – as long as there is free nature left to enjoy.

Evelyn identified with Nansen's ideology of friluftsliv because Nansen (1922) was the one who awakened and inspired the Norwegian people to engage in friluftsliv. Concurrence was also voiced with Nansen's view that 'sport', – going out in nature to do physical exercises, – has grown too much and become too predominant. This is not the genuine and classical friluftsliv.

Friluftsliv is about having fun and joy in nature, without focus on the materialistic goods one has in daily life. It should be enough to experience the primary needs; food, drink, and sleep; and manage well with that.

Evelyn made an interesting comment on **language**: One does not say, *I go out for some friluftsliv*. Rather, *I go out for a trip*. The conceptual phenomenon has ramifications; snowcave-trip, climbing trip, dog sled trip, etc. Therefore, **the aims** are decisive for the definition. Friluftsliv is about nature experiences.

Evelyn, observantly, also noted a paradox. DNT has covered 'half' of Norway with red 'T' route-markings. Only Finnmark in the north and Børgefjell in central Norway are not totally 'attacked':

Should there be red marks everywhere? Is that what we want? Should all of nature be accessible for all? Shall there be no overgrown, mystical wilderness to discover?

In **Evelyn's** opinion the aims should be pure nature experiences: *To hear the brook run, the ice creak, and the birds sing; to see the flowers blossom and smell the spring coming.*

Conceptions of the relation between friluftsliv and sports

As some of the students made such relations explicit, these opinions are accounted for separately.

Carlie wrote that some activities have been turned into competitions, and thereby 'sports'. These, then, should fall outside the conception of friluftsliv. Competitions in nature were defended by stating that *the community feeling in sports is great*, and followed up with: *direct contact with nature can make it possible to experience a deeper level of oneself*.

Nickie delimited friluftsliv from athletics (Norwegian: 'idrett'), which has the focus on **activity**.

Putte declared that activities demanding a substantial amount of equipment should be classified as 'sport'; for example, river kayaking and mountain climbing. Further, it was argued that some grouse hunting done nowadays is not in harmony with nature. The stock is almost extinct in some areas, and to continue hunting would be bestial/brutal sport.

Bobbie referred to Nansen, who complained that athletics (a positive concept) had turned into sports (a negative concept). This attitude still often prevails in Norway. Competitive activities in nature should be classified as **outdoor activities**, not friluftsliv, it was stated.

Hoover asked: Skiing in the forest close to the capital city, Oslo: Is that sports or friluftsliv? To be able to answer, it was found to be necessary to look behind the activity; search for the intention, the motivation, and the aims. The distinguishing criterion was found to lie in the purpose: When nature experience and self-realization is in focus, it is friluftsliv; if exercise is the aim, then it is sports.

Evelyn commented that civilization is expanding and encroaching on nature also when it comes to leisure activities: Ski tracks are prepared by motorized means. Electric light-poles have been set up. Tracks for

running in nature are built. Skiing and running can be good activities to keep in shape, but when experiencing nature is not the aim, then it is not the pure and classical friluftsliv.

The purposes are decisive, according to **Evelyn**, for drawing the line between friluftsliv and sports. *Taking your dogs out to have fun and maybe explore a new nature area, is friluftsliv. Taking your dogs out to get fit for a dogsled competition is not friluftsliv. That is 'sport'.*

Conceptions of the relation between motorized travel in nature and friluftsliv.

Some of the students discussed this explicitly.

Sammy excluded motorized movement in nature, – based on the official definition of friluftsliv as activities in nature with ‘simple means’.

Nickie referred to the nation’s aim of friluftsliv *for all*, and pointed to the need handicapped people have for motorized assistance for nature excursions. It was asked whether this is sufficient reason for including motorized riding in the friluftsliv concept. The question was only posed; it was not discussed further.

Putte excluded motorized riding, – without explanation.

Oiky stated that motorized traffic falls outside the friluftsliv definition, as it disturbs animals and humans, leaves tracks and pollutes.

Bobbie excluded motorized traffic, since friluftsliv should be **in harmony with nature**.

Freddie stated that both the skier and the snowmobile rider share the same two core values; nature experiences and physical challenges. When there is, according to Ibsen a *friluftsliv for my thoughts*, we should be open for *friluftsliv for others' thoughts*. This requires tolerance to others’ views, it was argued. The criterion posed is freedom of spirit.

Interestingly, each student chose **one** criterion for drawing the line between friluftsliv and motorized traffic. No one debated several criteria against one other.

The students’ conceptions of friluftsliv are summarized in Table 2 on the following two pages.

Table 2. Summary of examination responses: Ibsen's friluftsliv in *On the Heights*

Student	Friluftsliv encompasses:	Activities	Values	Purposes	Friluftsliv vs. sports	Friluftsliv / motorized travel
Carlie		Traditional: hiking, skiing, canoeing, picking berries, hunting. Modern: kiting, wakeboarding, rafting, river kayaking, parachuting, base jumping.	excitement	Experience a deeper level of self. Strengthen our grounded personality and find our genuine personality. Nature experiences. Therapy.	No competition, vs. sports have competition.	
Nickie		'My' = Traditional: A Sunday trip, cabin trip at Easter, hunting, fishing. Trip along beach in summer. Should be physical toil. 'Others' = Kiting, mountaineering, free skiing, kayaking.	Has value in itself. A wholeness including activities, personal experiences, actions, feelings, and nature experiences.	Experiences, excitement / suspense. The search for 'the good life'.	Friluftsliv focus is on experience, while athletics' focus is on the activities.	The state's aim is friluftsliv for all: Motorized travel for handicapped people should possibly be included.
Putte		Traditional: picking berries, hunting. Modern: Kayaking, climbing, glacier trekking.	Silence. Border breaking. Exhibit identity and strengthen social esteem. Consumer culture. Hope for more 'ecological' friluftsliv.	Nature experiences. Therapeutic. Tourism. Team building. Action, adrenaline.	Activities with high demand for equipment are sport. Hunting above nature's limits is bestial sport.	
Sammy		By simple means. Work in nature can be included if it complies with the definition. → Ex: Nature guide, traditional timber rafting, work in an outdoor kindergarten.	The values define friluftsliv. Official definition is modified by adding: 'and personal growth'. A comprehensive total development of the self.	Nature experiences and personal growth.		Motorized travel is excluded, – based on the official definition of friluftsliv as activities in nature with 'simple means'.
Oiky		Traditional: Harvesting food. Modern / advanced: Telemarking, snowboarding, kiting, ice climbing, white water kayaking.	Nature experience and freedom are most important. Contemplation, heartiness, health, identity. Taking risks, challenges, excitement, life-setting change.	Living 'the good life'; high life quality.	No competition in friluftsliv.	Motorized traffic falls outside, as it disturbs animals and humans, leaves tracks and pollutes.

Friluftsliv encompasses:	Activities	Values	Purposes	Friluftsliv vs. sports	Friluftsliv/ motorized travel
Student					
Bobbie	Hiking, abiding, and social gathering in nature, in harmony with nature . Ex: Riding, sailing, dog sledding, base jumping, moose hunting.	In harmony with nature. Ecological sustainability.	Find oneself, free from the demands of society. Recreation, mastering, nature experience, discoveries. => A way home for a culture astray.	Friluftsliv is non-competitive. Competitive activities should be labelled as outdoor activities.	Motorized traffic is not acceptable, as friluftsliv should be in harmony with nature.
Hoover	a) Classical friluftsliv: trekking, ski touring, paddling. b) Harvesting: picking berries, mushrooms, fishing, and hunting. c) Extreme and excitement friluftsliv.	a) Personal: nature experiences, self realization, physical exercise, aesthetics. b) Social: group belonging c) Cultural: interdependence between human and nature.	a) Experience nature. Feel nature's silence and peace. b) Harvest nature's goods. c) Excitement experiences.	Friluftsliv: Nature experience and self realization are in focus. Sports : Exercise is in focus.	
Freddie		Society is polycentric; then friluftsliv is too: Tolerance, empathy, and freedom of spirit. Friluftsliv encompasses all who feel connected to nature. Core values: Nature experiences and physical challenges.	In recognition that humans destroy earth: A search for free nature, sharing what is left of it. Connect to all life. Develop the soul.		Motorized travel should be included. As Ibsen argued a 'friluftsliv for my thoughts ', then we should be open for 'friluftsliv for others' thoughts.'
Evelyn	Experiences: Hear brook run, ice creak, and birds sing. Smell spring coming, see flowers bloom.	Nature experiences. Discover free, mystical nature without route signs.	Experience joy of life with few material goods. Have fun and joy in nature.	Sport: Exercise & competition focus. Ex: Taking your dogs out to get fit for a dog-sled race.	

IV. Teaching their understanding of Ibsen's 'friluftsliv'.

All the students did thorough work on this segment of the examination text. All gave an account of the learning dimensions from the course text (Vingdal & Hollekim, 2001):

1. The 'About'- dimension: Learning theoretical aspects.
2. The 'In'- dimension: Learning practical aspects.
 - a) Basic skills,
 - b) Contextual aims: Be able to handle unforeseen situations.
 - c) Expressive aims: Creativity, mood, fantasy.
3. The 'Through'- dimension: Reflections; achieving other objectives.

However, they differ on which dimension they judged to be the best. The students fell into the three groupings according to whether they showed preference for the 'about', the 'in', or the 'through' dimension.

a) Preference for the 'about'-dimension:

Carlie stressed the importance of giving the historical background for friluftsliv. Theoretical teaching, it was believed, can show the consequences of living outside nature. Although the poem *On the Heights* was declared to depict the advantages of moving into nature, practical friluftsliv was not in focus in the teaching plan presented.

However, it was contended that it is **possible** to use the 'in'- dimension, for example in creating and acting out a play, and in the reproduction of the content of the Ibsen poem. In these processes the pupils can use their expressivity and creativity. This helps them **experience** Ibsen's understanding of friluftsliv. Hereby the 'through' dimension was touched upon, though it was not discussed explicitly.

Evelyn provided a broad account of the three learning dimensions and gave many examples of what can be achieved. The poem was conceived to show an aesthetic view of nature. This enjoyment of nature can inspire children to take better care of nature, it was thought. Nevertheless, the proposal was first to teach theoretically about picking berries and mushrooms, to hunt and to fish. Then one can practice carrying a heavy pack, preparing food outdoors, putting up a tent, and picking berries. Nothing was said about age-related issues.

Evelyn believed practical training to be more important for younger children, – adding that:

The concentration is not as good as with grown-ups. – (sic!) Therefore one must teach in a way that is interesting for children; by games and fun. Heavier theory can come when they have grown older, and more appropriately, after trips.

This is good advice, but appears to be contradictory to her plan of teaching theory first.

Evelyn was clear about ethics: *Most important is to convey respect for nature, so that the pupils learn to take care of nature.* This issue was not relevant 150 years ago, but as Ibsen urged people to find their calling in life, it is highly relevant to include this dimension in our times.

b) Preference for the 'in'-dimension:

Nickie found it important to include this subject in teaching at elementary school, since Ibsen has meant much for life and literature in Norway. As pupils easily forget what is said in the classroom, it was argued that it is better to go out in nature. Here the pupils will gain nature appreciation and have practical experiences that they can relate to theoretical knowledge. Especially in 5th – 7th grades (10 – 12 years of age) the 'in'- dimension is most suitable, and a pedagogical process was thoroughly described:

Part 1, outside: Let the pupils experience nature; play and try out different skills. The teacher will find what the pupils know beforehand and what they wish to learn.

Part 2, outside: Distance the class from noise, so that nature can be in focus. Let the pupils find a camping site, make a fire, etc. As nature experiences¹¹ are important, there should not be organized programmes all the time; the pupils should explore the scope for their own abilities. When the pupils have experienced nature, they will probably feel joy, and this will eventually develop into an attitude of taking care of nature, **Nickie** suggested.

Part 3: For example, around the fire: Introduce Ibsen's poem; read a few verses, and then challenge the pupils to dramatize the themes. In this way the pupils will identify with the character in the poem. The teacher should speak of the importance of taking care of nature.

Just as **Evelyn**, **Nickie** attended to what is seen as the major challenge of our times. Ibsen's main issue was not stressed; -choosing a life path. This omission may be wise for the age group in question.

Oiky argued that Ibsen's understanding of friluftsliv should be taught in elementary school because this is in accord with the government's White Paper Nr. 39: A non-materialistic simple life, with focus on experience, fellowship, challenges, and health. A specific, appropriate, age-group within elementary school was not selected.

The 'about'-dimension was chosen for teaching the topic of romanticism and Ibsen. It was noted that the 'in-dimension' should also be used, as it is essential for the pupils to come out into nature in order to eventually be able to have experiences like Ibsen. The school time-schedule must not be too tight; the aim must be on simplicity and freedom.

There ought to be no competitive activities within the friluftsliv teaching at school, **Oiky** emphasized, and pupils should feel no fashion or equipment pressures. The pupils should experience the cosiness of being in nature. This is both a recreational view and a deep ecosophy perspective, as it was argued, first, that the trips in nature will make the pupils better prepared for daily strife, and secondly, that nature can eventually become a part of the pupils, thus leading to respect for nature.

During the trips the teacher can tell about Ibsen and his joy for nature through a study of the poem. **Oiky** gave the verse below as an example:

¹¹ According to the first meaning; 'erlebnis'. cf. note 8.

*Organ sounds within the choir;
On the altar, candles glowing.
'Mountain storm-songs rate far higher,
Snow-glare makes a better showing!'*¹²

This verse is from part 5; a unit that very clearly shows the dilemma in the main character's life; whether to return to the valley or to lead a free life as a hunter. However, there were no reflections presented by **Oiky** on this dilemma concerning decisions for life.

The importance of friluftsliv experiences according to **Oiky**, is for the single, individual pupil. *The most important is that as many as possible find their way out into nature and lead a life with high quality.* A social perspective was not taken in the discussion, nor was there a deep ecosophy view.

Oiky wanted the pupils to become conscious about the values of the simple and free friluftsliv. This was mentioned to have a lasting impact: The pupils can reflect on the contrasts to ordinary life and thus develop a commitment for nature. They can eventually also adopt a more environmentally conscious attitude. That is what is most important in today's friluftsliv.

Bobbie explained the pedagogical ideal with reference to a practice-teaching week carried out for the 8th grade in one of the local schools in Alta. This included 1) a one-day trip, 2) an overnight trip, and 3) a day-trip to the highest mountain peak close to Alta (Haldde, 900 m.). It should be noted that Alta is located at sea-level. Most of the theoretical teaching was done during the trips; in the actual situations.

Bobbie found it important that the teacher arranged for situations where the pupils have an opportunity to think about 'friluftsliv for their own thoughts'. **Bobbie** discussed very well the lasting impacts (the 'through' dimension): The first short day-trip was to show the pupils that free nature close to the school could be used. The teacher also took the opportunity to point to the dangers of polluting the river by the city.

The pupils experienced being together, boys and girls, without being split in two groups as is common in informal settings in the school. **Bobbie** also stopped some pupils from cutting down trees without the purpose of using the firewood, and took this moment to speak of the utilization of nature.

A large portion of the class managed to reach the Haldde peak; a surprise to many. They thus experienced more of their own abilities. The team spirit was great, and no-one complained about those who walked more slowly than others. **Bobbie**, however, did not discuss the feelings of those who did **not** manage to reach the summit.

Lastly, **Bobbie** presented a review of the Næss 'Ecosophy T' and the Leirhaug 'Ecosophy B', focusing on wisdom. It was difficult, however, to see how this influenced the pedagogical plan.

Like **Bobbie**, **Putte** exemplified the teaching of Ibsen's friluftsliv with an actual teaching-practice experience: 14 teenagers had run a farm for two weeks in the way it was done a hundred years ago. The aims were to give positive experiences of nature, especially with animals. All mobile phones and watches were collected prior, to help the pupils be mentally present. They had their phones available only one hour every evening. The participants were challenged practically, mentally, and socially through tasks given every day. They needed to cooperate. The only competition was a quiz at the end of each week with questions related to the tasks, and the winners were awarded knives.

¹² Translation by John Northam. Source: cf. note 3.

Putte judged that the aims of the project were achieved. The participants had an exciting time and mastered the tasks. Each learned to do their very best and contributed to the group. No urban commotion and stress being present meant that the youth had a relaxed lifestyle and managed to ‘live right now’. They experienced the social values of friluftsliv; they identified with nature and achieved a greater environmental awareness, and they learned about the traditional local culture.

This successful arrangement convinced **Putte** that ‘learning by doing’ was the best way of learning friluftsliv skills and practices. Reflection and environmental awareness came as bonuses.

c) Preference for the ‘through’-dimension:

Just as Ibsen stressed that one must get out into nature on one’s own; similarly **Hoover** would use nature as much as possible throughout the year. A plan was laid out for conducting the 10th grade through a one-week project.

The first part would be indoors, but only for a maximum of 1 – 2 hours. The Norwegian rules for being in nature (Norwegian Act of Friluftsliv) would be explained, pointing to possibilities for upcoming trips and inspiring curiosity. Practical issues would be discussed (fire-making, shelter, food, tools), and the philosophy and practice of ‘leave-no-trace’.

The second part, outdoors: The class would be divided into groups of 3, and the principle of ‘learning by doing’ would be implemented. The pupils should be given challenges, just as Ibsen stressed. The time schedule should not be too tight. The aim should be that the pupils feel joy in the process of mastering their tasks.

When sitting around the campfire, **Hoover** would read some verses from Ibsen’s *On the Heights*. In the examination paper **Hoover** had chosen verses with nature portrayals from Part I and III plus two verses from part VI (rendered below), because *these show elements the pupils supposedly can identify with*:

*Here in this deserted dwelling
I have housed my wealth of treasure;
There's a bench, a stove, sweet smelling
Air, and time to think at leisure. [friluftsliv for my thoughts]*

*Winter in these wildernesses
Steals weak thoughts I need to master, —
Bird-song's sickly-sweet excesses
Do not make the blood pulse faster.*¹³

Hoover hereby showed strong ambitions towards braiding nature experiences with the personal development of the pupils. However, at the age of 15, the priorities for the pupils were to ‘experience joy in nature, master the tasks, explore on their own, and have scope for personal abilities’.

Nature should give joy for all people, helping us to live a healthier life, according to **Hoover**. Therefore the ‘leave no trace’-philosophy should be stressed by instructing the pupils to bring their refuse home. This was hoped to raise environmental consciousness. The concluding moral was: *Nature takes care of us; therefore we must take care of nature*.

¹³ Translation by John Northam. Source: cf. note 3.

Hoover also listed central values of friluftsliv before and now: Utilization of nature, recreation, identity building, challenges, excitement, harvesting, silence, reflection, enhanced self insight, social values (not defined), and ‘the good life’. All-embracing! This looks like playing both ends against the middle, to make sure nothing is lost. . .

Sammy wrote an interesting comment on the course-plan for the Friluftsliv-programme at Alta: A teacher can impart Ibsen’s understanding of friluftsliv as theoretical knowledge, just as had been done in the daily student routines; -through lectures and article reading. However, **understanding** a concept / phenomenon presupposes practical experiences. Therefore, the ‘in’-dimension must be used. Examples could be to ‘live’ the friluftsliv from the 1850s, or to carry out a solo-trip. By working with the expressive aims the pupils can be involved in the learning process and adapt / process the knowledge gained.

Sammy conceived that the focus in the poem was not to experience nature, but on what could be achieved: *He sets out for the mountains to think more clearly about life*. Parallel to this, weight was placed on the ‘through’-dimension: The focus was on the motives and what can be achieved through friluftsliv, rather on the activities themselves. The idea that friluftsliv can help in personal development is still strong in Norway. Important aims for pupils today, which we can borrow from Ibsen, are to achieve better insight into our personality and growth of character.

Finally, the word ‘understanding’ was reflected upon. It is perceived as meaning a transcending of knowledge, implying that reasons and relations are absorbed. According to Næss (Rothenberg, 1992), we have to ‘comprehend’ nature.¹⁴

Freddie began this section with a philosophical discourse, – as was done with the understanding of the poem: Friluftsliv consists of actions, and actions have consequences. This engenders a possibility for a deeper comprehension of life; a wholeness comprehension, leading **Freddie** to Arne Næss and his Spinoza-inspired ‘Ecosophy T’ (Næss 1978, p 264), which should stimulate the individual to a deeper understanding of the connections among all that exists.

The basic norm in Ecosophy T is self-realization, a suitable objective for adults. When working with children, Leirhaug’s Ecosophy B is more relevant; the basic aim being self-development (‘B’ stands for ‘barn’; Norwegian for ‘child’). The basis for teaching children friluftsliv must be to encourage joy through nature experiences (Leirhaug, in Bagøien, 1999).

In **Freddie’s** opinion friluftsliv should lead to the emancipation of the spirit. Therefore, all three learning dimensions need to be used. An interesting perspective was offered of these dimensions:

1. ‘About’: Challenge the pupils to think.
2. ‘In’: Let the pupils experience; the teacher supporting them.
3. ‘Through’: Create a meta-consciousness.

Freddie noted a contradiction between personal life view and joy in nature, concluding that:

In spite of my belief in Zapffe’s theory of the downfall of the world, I mean the greatest source for self development lies in the joy of nature. We therefore need to convey joy of nature and the wish to take care of nature for the generations to come.

¹⁴ The Norwegian word is ‘begripe’: The main component is ‘gripe’; literally translated as to ‘grasp’, ‘grip’. The prefix ‘be’- adds a mental dimension to the practical verb; perhaps best translated as ‘comprehend’ or ‘apprehend’.

Discussion:

Most students divide friluftsliv activities into two groups, traditional and modern (advanced, extreme), and give several examples of each. A list is, of course, no adequate way of defining a concept. Most students acknowledged this, and accounted either for values or purposes. These, naturally, are intertwined, as the purposes for a trip spring out of what a person values highly. Most wrote about values connected to nature experiences. A few went ‘deeper’, concentrating on personality development; i.e., as disconnected from the actual nature experiences.

The public definition underlines that people are engaged in friluftsliv during their leisure time. However, one student, **Sammy**, chose to include paid work in nature, as long as it complied with the values of the definition; simple means. Values were viewed as more important than whether the activities were paid or not. Examples were guiding tourists and working with ill people. However, two of the students, **Carlie** and **Putte**, considered that the customers/ clients in these contexts were practicing friluftsliv.

One student, **Freddie**, chose not to give any examples, discussing solely values and purposes. His was an extremely mature presentation on the issue.

Those who elaborated on the border-line with sports, stressed friluftsliv as non competitive, with the focus on experiences, and requiring less equipment than sports.

Most of the students who discussed the borderline with motorized travel, concluded this was **not** friluftsliv. They gave different reasons: It doesn’t comply with the public definition; it disturbs people and animals; it pollutes and is not in harmony with nature. All these arguments are legitimate.

Legitimate is also a totally different line of argument, building on Ibsen’s expression in his 1859 poem. **Freddie** argued: As there is a ‘friluftsliv for **my** thoughts’, we must be open for “friluftsliv for **others’** thoughts”. Freedom for the first to think out **his** friluftsliv demands a tolerance for others to find **their** friluftsliv. Based on this argumentation, **Freddie** concluded that motorized travel must be included under the friluftsliv umbrella concept. This conclusion is in line with **Freddie’s** statement that humanity – society – inevitably destroys nature, and no one can stop the destruction . . . and therefore we should just make the best of it: Experience free nature as long as there is anything left of it. So why not do it by snowmobile?

By posing ‘freedom of spirit’ as the only criterion for defining friluftsliv, Freddie lands on a definition that embraces all one can do in the open air. By including motorized driving he contradicts with central values that have been expressed in friluftsliv through the 20th Century; Fridtjof Nansen (1916, 1922), Løvland 1943, and anew since the 1960s, both in Norway (Zapffe 1969, Faarlund, Næss 1976, Kvaløy 1978) and in Sweden (Bergstrøm ed 1979, Wermelin ed 1982, Tordsson ed 1984, Isberg 1991).

According to these and many other writers, friluftsliv carries a critical view of modern society. The main objective of friluftsliv is to give humans experiences and values that “modern” society, either in the 1920s, 1940s or later, did not give; and thereby inspire to a life more in accordance with nature. That means for example not to bring too much equipment; but rather to “lead a rich life with simple means” (Næss 2007, p 173).¹⁵

¹⁵ Næss lists ten criteria: 1) Search for good feelings. 2) Ask: Do your decisions pull in the same direction as the feelings? 3) Do your future plans enhance the good feelings? 4) Question what you plan to buy. 5) Find out what really has mattered in your life. 6) Try to achieve a greater intensity of your experiences. 7) Change focus from objects and persons to relations. 8) Check if you are really present where you are. 9) Consider your own life without comparing with other humans. 10) Seek silence.

However, also another ideology has been present during the 20th century; called an ‘accepting the development-view’ by Østberg (1980). People enjoy staying out-of-doors without bothering about the effects their leisure time activity has on nature or society. Both in this ideology and the contrary; the society critical view is that there has been a consensus that “the trip starts where the roads ends” (Slogan of Bergen Turlag; The Bergen branch of the Norwegian Tourist Association). This view has been challenged by the introduction of the snowmobile and the ATV, as these vehicles are certainly not dependant on roads; they are made to drive outside roads. Proponents of snowmobile driving like to call their motorized leisure time activity ‘modern friluftsliv’, certainly a way to obtain societal accept for their activity.

I would like further to give attention to the uneven competition between motorized driving and non-motorized movement in nature. Skiers usually get into nature to experience free nature, solitude and silence. Their nature experience is destroyed when seeing and hearing motorized vehicles. The snowmobilers don’t get their experiences disturbed by skiers. Morality is certainly a part of the issue. Friluftsliv should not include activities that disturb other peoples’ nature experiences.

Last, motorized driving implies burning fossil fuels, and thus “belongs” to the industrial society, while friluftsliv traditionally has been a counter wave.

Other students agreed with the observation that industrial society has developed on a collision course with nature, and came to the opposite conclusion of **Freddie**: Friluftsliv could – and should – be a way to make people more conscious about this disparity, inspiring them to work for a society more in harmony with nature... *A way home*, as Faarlund (1993) has phrased it.

Closure

These 9 students who had gained A’s and B’s, the highest grades, showed a remarkably mature level of reasoning about the meaning and practice of friluftsliv today. They have deeply reflected views on the values of friluftsliv, and appear well prepared to help pupils get deep and broad experiences of practical friluftsliv, as well as of the philosophical ideas upon which it is founded.

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