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Walking with change: a first-person inquiry into the development of a post-human “frilufts”-life

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Walking with change: A first-person inquiry into the development of a post-human “frilufts”-life

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Walking a decade-long trail of inquiry into my developing practice of walking has been inspiring and challenging. It has been a walk of distinct experiences filled with joy and grief, epiphanies and shock, discoveries and frustrations, being lost and found. While following this unpredictable path into my changing life, I would never have been able to complete this work without the support of so many lovely living beings that joined me on this walk. I would especially like to thank:

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Abstract

This thesis explores how walking in nature can support change in people and organisations. Being a pragmatic, action-oriented person, I experience that my walking practice was valuable in the change processes that I facilitate. Wondering why these walks in the 'friluft' were so valuable, I engaged in a first-person inquiry to explore my main question: "*How does my practice of walking facilitate understanding change in me and others"*?

I walked hundreds of kilometres, alone and with others, through astonishing, wild, rugged Norwegian landscapes. While using an extended epistemology of embodied knowing (Barbour, 2004; Seeley & Thornhill, 2014), I engaged in several series of first-person action research cycles (Reason & Bradbury, 2013), collecting data through journaling, visual methods, and story writing. I used them in reflective processes to make sense of my developing practice. Based on these reflected experiences, I propose to widen the purpose of action research to the flourishing of all living beings on our planet.

Theories of Deep Ecology (Næss, 1995, 2008), Eco-psychology (Abram, 1997; Fisher, 2013; Roszak, 1995), Friluftsliv pedagogy (Tordsson, 2014), and movement (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011) are finely woven together and position this work it in the field of ecological post-humanism (Morton, 2018). Based on an 'ethico-onto-epistem-ological' integration, that assumes an intertwining of ethics, knowing and being (Barad, 2007), this research explores how a practice of walking while 'ethical mattering', and intra-acting in embodied entangled relationships, helps the people and organisations that participate in these walks, change in their differential becoming.

While walking with grief, pondering upon death, I became aware of the countless distinct living beings that participated in this research. I experienced inextricable entanglements with the more than human world in affectionate, earth motherly relationships. This brought me insights about my ontology of joy, that values all life on earth.

In the last part of this thesis, I share how I started applying this developed practice with my clients in interventions of organisational change. I present an argument and hope for leaders and teams to spend more time walking in friluftsliv, finding inspirational pathways for change. My developed walking practice celebrates the entanglement of all living beings on a moving and ever-changing earth into an ecological post-human future.

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Prologue: View from Ustetind [1]

Figure 1. View from Ustetind, summer 2021

Standing at the summit of the Ustetind mountain, not far away from my new home, I take a deep breath. I sense the wind blowing through my hair and I look around at the marvellous view. Standing here, alive, at this place on our beautiful planet, I understand that all my years of exploring, researching, learning, walking, and discovering are coming together in this present moment. I am standing thinking about the countless experiences, insights, and wisdom I gained during the last years. My body is filled with new knowing. I can see this knowing everywhere around me at this place of wide horizons:

Looking into the North I see the massive mountain of Hallingskarvet[2]. This represents the *theory of my knowing*. At the foot of this mountain, the hut of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss is still there. In this hut he wrote about Deep Ecology, his philosophy about respecting life and taking joy in the beauty and diversity that our wonderful planet offers.

[1] Ustetind is a mountain in the municipality of Hol in Norway. It is situated south of Ustaoset in the north-eastern corner of the Hardangervidda plateau.
[2] Hallingskarvet is a mountain range in southern Norway, stretching from Geilo to Finse.

During my research, I crossed that mountain several times on foot and on skis. North represents to me the theory and literature I have studied that supports the foundation of my research.

Looking into the West I see the Hardangervidda[3]. This represents the *practice of my knowing*. This huge plateau of wilderness represents my practice of walking and how I developed it through my research. The hundreds of kilometres I have walked, alone and with others. I imagine all the huts I have stayed at, the paths that I followed, the experiences I encountered, and the wisdom I gained from these experiences. I climbed Hårteigen, stood at Trolltunga, struggled against the wind on lake Mår, crossed many of the plateau's rivers and connected with her inhabitants. I also walked in many of the other national parks. West represents to me my experiences collected in my body. These experiences feel solid, vast, and endless. Gazing at this view a feeling of humbleness wells up in me. I feel small, still knowing so little about our mother earth, about this huge plateau of wilderness, even after so many years.

Turning and looking into the South I see my life history. South is where I come from. It represents my *history of knowing*. There, in the south lies the Netherlands, where I was born and raised, where I met my husband and where my children were born. South is where my family and relatives live, as well as my old study- and rowing friends. South is where I have travelled from and where my roots lie, my old language, culture, and habits. South-east I see Nærsnes and Oslo, where I lived and worked and studied for so many years. All my life I have walked from South to North.

Looking closer now, zooming in as I look towards the East, I see the valley of Skurdalen. It represents my *future knowing*. This is where my new house is located, not too far from where I am standing now at the summit of the Ustetind. This place is my new home on earth where I will live my next chapter of life. I will be walking in this landscape as I will start to live my 'frilufts'-life[4].

In this thesis, I will share the results of the long doctoral inquiry journey that has brought me to this place. It was an inquiry into the development of my practice of walking and how

[3] Hardangervidda is a mountain plateau in central southern Norway, covering parts of Vestland, Vestfold, Telemark, and Viken counties. It is the largest plateau of its kind in Europe.
[4] The term 'frilufts'-life will be explained later in this thesis, as well as the Norwegian term 'friluftsliv'.

my walking has helped me in my development as a change practitioner. It has been a long walk filled with experiences of joy and grief, awe, frustration, sweat and exhaustion, beauty, and care. I have walked through landscapes of theory and practice, with actions and reflections.

This document summarizes the non-conventional academic research I carried out in the Norwegian landscape during the last nine years. You will notice that my writing style changes and develops throughout this thesis. It reflects my development as a practitioner, as an academic scholar and as a change consultant.

Please come and walk with me through this thesis.

Figure 2. I am inviting you to walk with me, picture taken in September 2017

Chapter 1. Introduction to the research

In this chapter, I introduce my core research questions and the methods I have used to find answers to these questions, and I provide an overview of the quality criteria I have used to test my work against the doctoral criteria. A foundational principle is that this thesis is not a regular scientific dissertation but rather, an action research dissertation (Reason & Bradbury, 2013; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). I conducted this research project over a long period of time, between 2013 and 2022. By the end, I understood that my inquiring would continue, even after finishing writing this thesis, because I had learned to "live my life as an inquiry" (Gearty & Marshall, 2020, p. 2), meaning that there is no strict boundary separating my research from the way I live my life; the research is an integral part of who I am. This is a personal account of a developmental journey that has brought me insights, new knowing, and wisdom about my practice of walking and about the way I have been able to apply these findings in my work as a researcher, as a change practitioner, as a mother, as a friend and in my life in general.

1.1 Becoming an action researcher

I am a practical, energetic person who loves action and change. Before I started my studies, I had been a change practitioner in organisations for more than twenty years. I helped organisations with changes to their people strategies, finding solutions for learning and development, and designing and executing interventions that helped these organisations grow, change, and adapt to new situations. The shift to becoming an action researcher has not been easy for me. Instead of helping others with finding solutions, I now had to learn to ask questions about my own work, become more critical, wonder why things appeared the way they did, and learn to reflect, and delay my judgements and solutions. Becoming a researcher, I had to learn to ask questions like: *What lies behind this? Where does this come from? How could I look at this from a different perspective?* and *What have others said about this?* I was used to taking action to help, inspire, and fix; now I had to learn to question, wonder, and reflect. Walking around in nature with my research questions helped me become a researcher but it has taken some time to make this shift.

In 2013, I embarked on my doctoral studies of organisational change at Ashridge, where I was introduced to action research. Action research is characterised by a process of repetitive cycles of action and reflection. It is about personal learning and involvement (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010), about knowledge development through participation and engagement with others (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014), and it is social research in active participation with others, to obtain flourishing of human communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2013). This approach to doing research fitted me well, especially the action part. I could play an active role myself in the research I was going to conduct. I realised the 'action' part of action research made room to study 'real-life in action', meaning that I was not going to conduct my research in a laboratory experiment, or through impersonal questionnaires, but I was going to inquire through active participation in my chosen research territory.

Action researchers say that social research can never be 'objective' because, as soon as the researcher starts inquiring in the research territory, it changes due to the presence and involvement of the researcher and the actions they cause. In action research, researchers are part of their own research. It is therefore important that action researchers investigate themselves (first-person research) to understand how they act and interact with their research environment and participants (second-person research), in order to then be able to say something more general (third-person research) about their findings (Reason & Bradbury, 2013; Colman, 2018).

My research has been a first-person oriented action inquiry. This thesis represents, therefore, a subjective, personal account about my own development journey as a researcher, as a practitioner and as a person. It narrates the journey of how I developed new knowledge through walking, reflecting, and writing. There are many others that have participated in my inquiry. These were other human being that walked with me, but along the way, I also discovered that there were many non-human living beings that participated and had an impact on my studies. They were not active researchers themselves but have been helpful supporters to my first-person research journey, I therefore call my research first-person inquiry with others.

During my years of inquiry, I learned how to conduct action research and experimented with different tools and methods that belong in this research paradigm. I explored different fields of literature including Deep Ecology, eco-psychology, 'friluftsliv' pedagogy, and post-

humanism. My research journey has changed my life and who I am. I have learned to live my life wondering, pondering, and becoming a more reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). I see myself now as an action inquirer that is never finished with the drive to learn, discover, and develop myself, as well as the others that I meet on my walk of life.

Figure 3. Reflection during a 10-day long hike crossing the Hardangervidda in 2014

> *I took this picture while hiking across the Hardangervidda in 2014. It represents the development of my reflexive skills. One of the most important things I learned during my research was to wonder and reflect, and I learned that opportunities for reflection very often offered themselves naturally during my walks: What's underneath the lake? Fish? Plants? Soil? Or maybe something very different? Do mountains also exist upside-down? Is what I see, feel and experience, a reflection of what is happening in my mind?*

At Ashridge, I gradually shifted myself from being a pragmatic and solutions-oriented change consultant, to become a reflective and wondering change researcher. You may notice that my style of writing in this thesis becomes more reflective towards the end. This shows my process of development and reflects my journey into academic maturity. At the end of each chapter in the main sections, I use a picture to reflect about questions that are still unanswered. My intention is to indicate the development of my reflexivity.

I noticed that through my research, my way of being in the world slowly began to change. I learned that being an action researcher was not about discovering facts or 'truths' about our world but involved being "part of the unfolding process we are seeking to understand" (Coleman, 2015, p. 396). I learned to walk through a complex epistemological territory while discovering extended ways of knowing (Heron & Reason, 2013) and I discovered that I, as a researcher, in participation with the-more-than human world (a term coined by Abram, 1997) could deepen my understanding of what my practice of walking was all about.

1.2 Action inquiry questions

Action research seeks validity in creating knowledge through action with others (Bradbury, 2010). In action research, the core inquiry question is always connected to the practice and work of the researcher: "Action research with practitioners always includes practitioners as partners in the work of knowledge creation" (Bradbury, 2010, p. 95). My research has been inspired both by the work I do as an organisational change consultant and by my leisure practice, which is walking in the mountains.

Another feature of action research is that it is processual and subject to change and therefore can be quite messy in appearance: "Inquiry cycles are 'messy' and are not necessarily discrete or linear. They can move much more fluidly, double back on themselves, and take unpredictable routes." (Ladkin, 2003, p. 541.) This has also been my experience in my research. My inquiry questions have changed several times over the course of the research process. I started with an initial inquiry question about intergenerational learning in the workplace (I come back to this in chapter 2). I wanted to find out how employees from different generations were mutually learning through interaction in the workplace. I initiated a cooperative inquiry group (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 1997) with cross-generational participants and executed a series of dialogue sessions with this group (Friebel, 2014). While working with my research questions and going through several cycles of action and reflection, I discovered that the concept of 'generation' had lost its meaning for me in my practice, and I discovered something else (Friebel, 2015a).

While working with my intergenerational group in 2014 and 2015 and reflecting about all the experiences the participants were sharing with me, I noticed that my walking practice helped me in how I learned and reflected about my practice of change facilitation (Friebel, 2015b). Slowly I realised that it was not my practice of working with different generations at work that formed the basis for my knowing, but my walking practice that played the more significant role in my work as a change agent (Friebel, 2016).

I started noticing that each time I was coping with a change at work or in my life, I went outside for a walk to ponder and think about answers to my change question. I noticed that my embodied movement outdoors and my interactions with the living world around me helped me in finding answers.

My walking influenced my thinking; it stimulated reflective processes; and I found it interesting to observe how this reflecting while walking helped me to process my issues. I noticed new questions coming into my mind: *What was happening during these walks? Why did they help me in my reflection process? How did I find answers and inspiration to my questions?* I became deeply interested in exploring what was happening during my walks.

How was my walking influencing me and my work as a change agent? I started deepening this question and differentiate it into more specific questions.

In the first phase, I wanted to find out what this walking practice was all about:

i. What were the content and form of my walking practice?
ii. How had I developed my walking practice?
iii. How did my walking outside in nature create reflected insights?
iv. How was my walking practice helping me with change facilitation?
v. What was it that I discovered while I walked?
vi. What changed in my body and in my mind when I was walking?

I started reading authors who had written about their walking experiences (Shepherd, 2011; Cappelen, 2019; MacFarlane, 2013, 2017; Ekelund, 2014, 2019) and discovered that a number of philosophers (Gros, 2015) and academic writers have written about how walking outdoors helped them finding inspiration to develop their thoughts and ideas (Gooley, 2015, 2018; Andrews, 2020).

This reading improved my understanding of the way I experienced my own walking. However, I generally missed the Norwegian context, absent in most readings, which I experienced as so essential in my own walking practice. I started to study friluftsliv[5] literature (Tordsson, 2014; Bischoff, 2015; Horgen, et. all 2016; Hallandvik & Høyem, 2019) to be able to understand how I could situate my walking practice into my local Norwegian context.

In a second phase of inquiry, after I had experienced a significant change in my life, and in response to this change, my inquiry question changed and deepened again. I became more philosophical and was more focussed on finding meaning and purpose through my walking. I walked with deep questions about my existence and learned how my practice of walking helped me discover the core of my joy for living in this world. Research questions in this second phase were about:

i. How did the living world influence the conversation that I had with myself, and with others that I walked with?
ii. How did living beings that participated in my walks share their wisdom of change with me?
iii. How did I receive their messages and how did I understand them?
iv. What did I do with these messages and how did I use them to find joy in my walk of life?
v. How did my practice of walking cause a shifting ontology in me?

In this second phase of inquiry I studied philosophical literature (Thoreau, 2012; Rousseau, 2004; Heidegger, 2010; Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Sheets-Johnstone, 2011), I integrated eco-psychology (Roszak, 1999; Fisher, 2013; Abram, 1997) and Deep Ecology (Næss, 1993, 1995; Sessions, 1995; Reed & Rothenberg, 1993) into my work and I learned from ecological/nature writing how my work could be positioned within post-humanism (Ferrando, 2013, 2016; Morton, 2018).

[5] The term 'friluftsliv' will be explained later in this thesis (and also appears in the glossary of Norwegian expressions, Appendix 1).

Then, in a third phase of inquiry, I returned to a more practical and applied way of looking at my findings. I looked deeper into how to apply these learnings into my practice as an organisational change consultant.

The main questions in this phase of my research were:

i. (How) could I apply the findings of my research in my work as an organisational change consultant?
ii. How did my customers experience walking in nature as inspiring ways of facilitating their change processes?
iii. How did I show up as a walking change consultant with my customers?
iv. How would a future practice of walking fit within a practice of working with organisational change?

After walking a long and windy path, I was able to state my central research question:

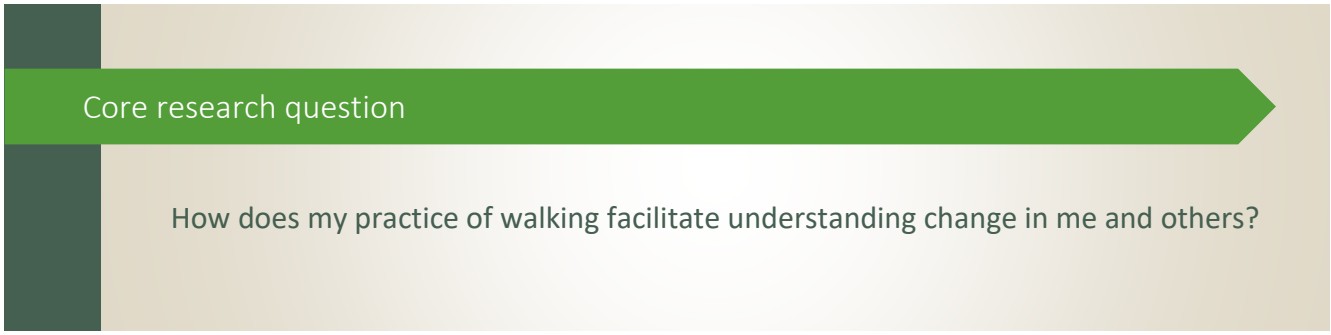


Figure 4. My core research question

I have now defined my research questions and articulated my inquiry objectives, meeting the first quality criterium as described in the table of doctoral criteria in section 1.3 (below). In this section, I elaborate more on these criteria.

1.3 Research method and quality criteria

Entering on my action-inquiry journey, I experimented with a broad range of research methods. I believe that new knowing develops from experience. To learn more about my practice of walking I had to walk and experience more consciously what my walking was all about. Walking has both been my practice and a method for collecting data.

You can find a list of all the walks I completed during this research period in appendix 4. I have walked all my life, but my research coincided with most of the walks I undertook between 2013 and 2020. My walking represents sustained and lengthy action; I walked hundreds of kilometres through many of Norway's national parks. The 'action' part of action research is important to me because I learned that through my actions, I collect experiences that I can reflect on, for how they bring meaning in my life. It also fits with me as a person. I am an outgoing, outdoor loving and actionable person. I explain this further in chapter 2.

Research methods

I have used different research methods to document my experiences, explore my practice, and make sense of it. I judge the rigour and amount of work that I have put in this research process as extensive, long, and deeply reflected. My aims have always been:

i. paying close attention to detail;
ii. attempting to record meticulously;
iii. sustained, repeated engagement in my practice;
iv. multiple, repeated observation; and
v. reviewing my materials with a critical, reflective eye.

I will now first share in more detail what methods I have used and how I iterated cycles of action and reflection while adopting these methods.

Walking

Walking was not only my practice, as a change agent, it was also my main method of researching. Walking was my method for collecting experiences, whilst also providing a safe container within which I reflected about these experiences and made propositions about them. Walking is active, physical and action oriented and at the same time reflective, mental, and integrated. While walking, I was often pondering about my experiences and forming ideas in my mind. I will come back to my specific way of walking as a method in chapter 5 when I discuss embodied ways of knowing and share examples of how my method of walking has given me insights about change in me and others.

Figure 5. Walking through Breheimen in the summer 2016

Journaling and writing

Another main method I used to collect data was journaling. Initially I would make short notes during my walks, but after my main inquiry question shifted, I always wrote extensively during and after my walks. My husband Thomas (who often walked together with me and loved gadgets) gave me a handy foldable keyboard that I could link with Bluetooth to my smartphone, so I didn't have to carry a laptop in my backpack.

Other outdoor researchers write about similar experiences. For example, Nicol describes in the context of how he framed his method, that he used a waterproof, battery-powered, word-processing keyboard that "proved to be a relatively inexpensive and robust alternative

to a laptop and provided all the functions necessary for word-processing and text storage" (Nicol, 2012, p. 4). I experienced a similar comfort with my little keyboard.

Figure 6. Sitting outside the Slettningsbu hut, documenting my experiences and reflections after a day of hiking through Jotunheimen

However, after a period of trying this out, I returned to using an old-fashioned pen and paper notebook. I found that using my body, while having a pen in my hands and moving it up and down across the pages, the fact that I also could draw, cross out, skip pages, write large and small (which you also can do electronic, but it feels different) felt more natural and in line with the landscape I walked through and the content of what I was writing about. Especially when reading back my entries, I could see by the style of my handwriting what mood I had been in: writing pretty, ugly, with big letters or small fiddling, I found that my emotions and feelings were better represented in handwriting than in electronic writing.

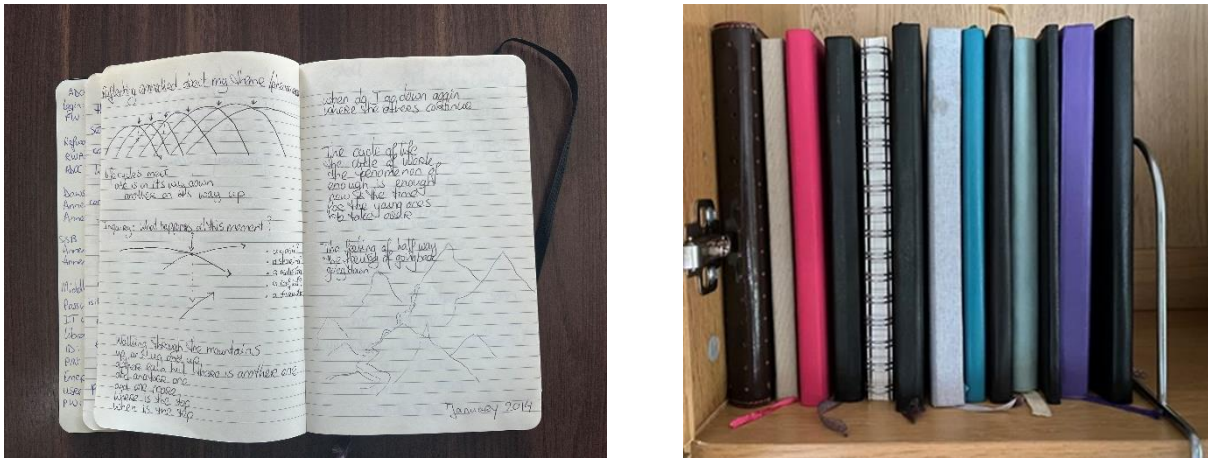


Figure 7. A page from one of my early notebooks, and my collected notebooks on a bookshelf

During my years of inquiry, I wrote more than ten notebooks full of experiences, observations, encounters, reflections, and ideas. I carried them in my backpack, wrapped in a plastic bag against rain, snow and rivers. It was not just journaling that I used. I experimented with different types of writing. I have written stories about some of my walks, partly based on notes from my journals and partly based on memory. Some of them I share later in this thesis. I have written papers and I wrote two articles (Friebel, 2015c; Friebel, 2020b). Finally, I consider the writing of this dissertation and the laborious amount of work I have put into this also as a method of developing knowing about my walking practice.

Visual methods

During my walks I also always carried my smartphone with me in my pocket. I have taken countless pictures and video snaps of moments, places and encounters that were special to me. From some of the snaps, I made longer videos. I used pictures as screensavers on my laptop and smartphone, so I saw them every time I looked at my screen.

In Appendix 5, you will find a list with links to some of the videos I made. Additionally, I have included many of the pictures I took within the text of this thesis, and I keep a database of all my pictures in my Dropbox. Looking at the pictures and videos, helped in the emergence of understanding my way of walking.

Another visual method I used was making what I have termed as ‘glimpses’. This is where I have combined a picture from my walks with a quote from my notebook.

While making the glimpse, I reflected deeply about my practice: *Why did I take this picture in this moment? What was the picture showing? What did I write in my notebook at this moment of experience? What was really happening in this moment?*

A picture adds something more and different than words on paper; it has colour and perspective and contains detail that may not be captured in my notes.

As an example of this research activity, I have included a first ‘glimpse’ with you here. The picture I took of this cairn in Rondane very well represents the moment in life I found myself in at that moment. I had a solid base with many years of experience. A bereavement experience had made my life-as-it-was come a halt (the big flat stone in the middle of the cairn) and I felt my life was split in a ‘before’ and ‘after’. I was walking to reflect about this experience and to think about what I wanted to do with the ‘after’ part of my life. This cairn with all its layers of small stones represents very well what was going on in my mind during this long hike. The text from my notebook represents my unclear mind at that moment and all the different layers of thoughts that came up into my mind during this walk. What I wrote down on one day, I contradicted on the next.

"While walking today I was reflecting a bit more about my future. What shall I do with my years ahead? What do I want and what do I like? And I thought about what I wrote in my notebook yesterday about me singing Queens' Bohemian Rhapsody while walking from Gråhøgdbu to Eldåbu. Today I reflect differently about what I wrote yesterday:

"Nothing really matters, anyone can see, anyway the wind blows"

That is not true. There are quite a lot of things that matter to me……

I feel I am not ready to decide about my life yet. I must allow myself to some more months of walking to think about it: What shall I do? Who do I like to be? I will make a long journey to the other side of the world, maybe that will help clearing my mind about who I am now and thinking about how I want to live my new life in the future."

From my notebook, @Bjørnhollia, 09.09.2018

Glimpse 1: Rondane Sagatur 2018

Reflection, and Reflexivity

One of Bradbury's quality criteria for good action research is reflexivity (Bradbury, 2010) which she describes as "the extent to which the authors explicitly locate themselves as change agents" (p. 103). Others describe reflexivity as "questioning the assumptions that underlie their practices" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, p. 22). I favour Bradbury's description because the aim of my research was a practical one: developing an understanding of what change my practice was causing. My first-person research helped me in reflecting about my experiences and I developed a habit of writing, (re) reading my notes, asking for feedback from co-walkers, then walking with their feedback in my mind. Thus, I developed a reflective practice that helped me in discovering how my walking created change. After a walk, I sat down and reflected on my notes, pictures, and videos. Thus, I learned moving between "inner and outer arcs of attention" (Marshall, 2016). I also discovered that a natural environment stimulated this dynamic, complex, iterative process of acting and reflecting. However, there were also days that I just walked, without deeper reflection.

Gearty and Marshall remark that they see this oscillation as "not so distinctively transitioning between states" but as "embodied and dynamic: a fused way of attending to experience both inside and outside ourselves" (Gearty & Marshall, 2020, p. 18). This is also how I experienced the way I used reflection and reflexivity during my research. I can look back at many years of walking, noting down, reflecting, walking again, discovering more, writing down again, looking at pictures and videos on a regular basis, talking with others about my experiences, asking for feedback, writing that down as well, (re)reading my notes, then yet walking again, while thinking, pondering and so on and on… From this, I can now conclude that this *highly dynamic, integrated and embodied process of acting, reflecting and repeating while building on former experiences* created a learning journey during which I developed and changed my perspective. I see reflection as the process of questioning that happens in my mind as a reaction on an experience (*What was happening? Why? Or what or how?*) while reflexivity is the overarching quality of giving meaning to those reflections, putting them in a wider context, and coming up with thoughtful ideas that can be tested out in new actions (what Bradbury calls the work of a change agent).

Reflection and reflexivity have played major roles in my development as a person and how I developed my walking practice.

Quality criteria

This thesis is not a conventional doctoral representation since it narrates an account of action. To achieve the doctoral criteria of rigour and quality, I looked at the action research quality criteria formulated by Bradbury (2010) and translated them to my inquiry project. I wanted to formulate the criteria in a way that fitted with my inquiry approach. I call them my *quality criteria of walkability* because I found it important to show that my action inquiry project meets the requirements of sound doctoral work.

Bradbury, who just like me can be called a pragmatic action researcher, states that it is important to articulate clear objectives for the research and that the research describes the choices that are made to meet those objectives (Bradbury, 2010, p. 102). For my work to be walkable, I find that my research must have a *clear sense of direction*. I must ask myself: *Why am I walking? What is the purpose of my walking? What choices did I make to find out what my walking was all about?* In chapter 2, I will introduce you further to my underlying motivation and ambitions to enter on this research journey. I will also explain why I wanted to inquire into my walking practice and what choices I made along the way.

A second criterion Bradbury states is about partnership and participation, which she describes as "the extent to and means by which the project reflects or enacts participative values and concern for the relational component of research" (Bradbury, 2010, p. 102). In terms of walkability, this means to me that my work must show how my walking *invites to interaction and engagement while walking with others*. In this thesis I take you on certain walks through the Norwegian landscape, seeking to show you how I engaged with others who walked with me. I point out how essential the relationships and interactions with these participants have been to my research.

Another criterion Bradbury states is that the work must contribute to the development of action research theory/practice. In chapter 4, I discuss how I discovered that walkability for me means that my research not only aims at contributing to human flourishing but that it also contributes to *more-than-human* flourishing. I critique the 'human flourishing' focus of action research as somewhat narrow, and I propose that in a 'post-human' world, the purpose of action research could be widened to include other-than-human participants.

The method and process I have used are clearly explained all through this thesis and Bradbury's criterion of actionability (action in response to need) comes back in all three parts of this thesis. Actionability is expressed in part 1 through the example of a practice account about an annually returning 'jentetur'[6] (to be explained later in this thesis). In part 2, I discuss walking as an actionable way to overcome grief and in part 3, I discuss how I have started using walking as part of my practice in my work with organisations.

I have translated Bradbury's criterion of reflexivity into the *rhythm of my walking*. During my walks I often take breaks and sit to write notes, reflect on my experiences and be present in the landscape. I also used reflexivity between my walks. Sitting down at my desk, looking back at the data I gathered, reflecting about them, writing stories, papers, and articles and then again, going on a new walk to ponder about all of this, has been a regular practice during my years of research. This rhythm of walking, action and pausing for reflection has been going on continuously.

The criterion of significance is what I describe as *rigorously walkable.* Here I mean that this research is not about a simple walk in the park. I have made many extended hikes through the Norwegian wilderness over the course of many years. I have been hiking through some challenging terrains and I will share with you how I have been sweating and struggling with my research topic.

In addition to Bradbury's criteria for good action research, I have added some further criteria of my own. What I also mean with walkability is that this thesis will take us *outside into friluftsliv*, meaning that I want its contents to be 'from outside': fresh, new, innovative, and inspiring. Hopefully you will be inspired to take a break from reading this thesis every now and then and go out for a walk yourself. As an energetic and pragmatic person, a 'walkable thesis' means for me that it takes us out on *adventures of new knowing*. Even on familiar trails, we might discover new things through the quality of our outdoor experiences.

I hope this thesis will make you think about my account of my discoveries for a long time afterward and I hope it will make you walk and come into action yourself. If that happens, my thesis will have achieved for you one of the key qualities I value and like to achieve.

[6] In Appendix 1 you will find a glossary of Norwegian expressions used in this thesis.

I have made a table that summarises Bradbury's criteria for good action research (2015, pp. 102-103), showing how I have translated them, through my inquiry experiences, into my own criteria of walkability:

	Bradbury's quality criteria	Description of how this translates to my research	Walkability criteria
1	Articulation of objectives	*A clear sense of why I am walking, what is the purpose and what choices I made to find out:* I aim to document and show how I tailor my practice of walking to its purpose and how that facilitates an understanding of change in me and others.	Clear purpose of why I walk and how it facilitates change
2	Partnership and participation[7]	*The extent to and means by which I reflect on participative values and concern:* I walk together with other human and non-human participants and reflect deeply on how our walking together influences change in myself and others.	Attention to the companions that participate in my walks
3	Contribution to action research theory/practice	*The extent to which this research contributes to the wider body of practice, knowledge, and theory of action research:* I found that the purpose of action research can be widened from an anthropocentric human flourishing to the flourishing of all life on our planet earth.	My embodied presence in the living landscape with its flourishing inhabitants
4	Methods and process	*The extent to which the AR methods and processes are articulated and clarified:* I clearly state my practice of walking processes, indicating what and how I document (journaling, stories, pictures, videos, articles, papers, thesis writing) and share the choices that I made during my research.	Walking experiences, their documentation and extended epistemology
5	Actionability	*The extent to which my research provides new ideas that guide action in response to need:* I share my 'earth mother' ontology and show how I care for the human and non-human participants in my research and adjust my way of walking to their needs. This resulted in my walking code on page 206.	Type of walk and choice of paths and landscape, tailored to participants needs
6	Reflexivity	*The extent to which I locate myself as a change agent:* I share how I notice, wonder about, and reflect on my walking experiences and research journey and how I help others who walk with me, in also doing so.	Rhythm of walking, pausing, reflecting, writing, function of huts
7	Significance	*The extent to which the insights in this thesis are significant in content and process:* I share the extensive walking that I have undertaken and the significance of my findings and how they have influenced and are still changing my practice of working with organisational change.	Rigorously walkable, post-human change, living a 'frilufts'-life

Figure 8. Table of my walkability quality criteria based on Bradbury's (2015) criteria for good action research

[7] I have considered my understanding of 'participant 2nd person research' and have conclude that I call this '1st person inquiry with others' since my participants were not researchers themselves but have been helpful supporters to my first-person research journey.

Chapter 2. Introduction to the walking researcher

In this chapter, I introduce myself, Annemiek the walking researcher, in more detail.

I love to walk. Moving my body in the open air through a natural landscape gives me a full sense of being alive. When walking, I enjoy meeting others who walk, or creep, crawl, slide, swim, sway… all creatures moving around on our planet. Walking is my way of exploring our world. I enjoy it because it gives me opportunities to participate in the unexpected, it energizes me, and walking always brings me home in a good mood.

I have always been a walker. Already from when I was a child, I had an intrinsic, natural drive for getting out and walking around. My mum once told me a story from when I was a toddler. I must have been 2 or 3 years old, and a man came to our door to bring me back home. He told my mum that he had met me walking with my doll's pram several blocks away from where we lived. I seemed to have been having a good time walking when he met me. I was walking, singing and talking to my dolls, not conscious of any fear of meeting strangers or of any possibly dangerous situations like violent traffic or losing my way. My joy for walking sits somewhere deep in my genes.

Because of its slowness, the chance of meeting other living beings while walking is much greater than when we ride a bike or sit in a car. Walking creates opportunities for meeting and interacting with others. It is easy to stop and have a chat with a stranger. I am a social, extroverted person and I have a deep curiosity about others. I am curious about the richness and diversity of how others live their lives on our planet. Walking gives me opportunities for meeting otherness. When walking I meet others unexpectedly, unplanned and as a surprise. I enjoy surprises and am flexible about encountering them, although I am aware that they can sometimes have a dark side, as I have also experienced in my life.

Other people have given me feedback that I have an entrepreneurial spirit, can sometimes be over-optimistic, take too much risk, and can look at life in a rather positivist way. How did this fit with my development of becoming an action researcher and learning to inquire deeply into complex questions without jumping into actions and conclusions?

I have been struggling for quite a while to find my own research style. My peer students from my supervision group gave me feedback to look 'deeper and reflect more thoroughly'. Participating in this group, our 'actions', the travels and walks we undertook together as a group (we called them 'jollies') formed a valuable part in our shared journey as developing researchers. We walked in Wales, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Australia, and Norway while reflecting on our research development journeys together. While sharing, we developed a strong bond as a group which helped me in my development in becoming a more reflexive practitioner. Through this process I learned to conduct iterative reflection cycles: sit down after a walk, continue searching deeper, finding out what was really lying in my deep experiences, then look once again with new questions and investigating deeper and deeper. It has been a long and tough process in which I several times almost gave up.

I also walked with my peer students Dr. Martin, Dr. Erdmann, and Dr. van Meer and later in this process I also received support from Dr. Åmli. These wonderful scholars (I call them my 'saviours') have walked along with me, giving me feedback, and encouraging me to continue developing myself as an action researcher. They stimulated me to keep going and assured me I would be able to make it to the end. The learning process with my supervisor, Professor Gearty, who gave me extended valuable feedback on each draft of this thesis, which was invaluable in helping me to write this final document. I learned to resist my first assumptions and try to understand why things appeared the way they did before coming with possible explanations for what could lay behind my experiences and findings.

2.1 Engaging in action research

I enrolled in the Ashridge Doctorate in Organisational Change in 2013. In my acceptance paper to the programme, I wrote:

> If I can find out how leaders in the emerging human age can focus more on the development of their people instead of what these people produce or how they produce it, so their purpose will be to let others come to bloom, then my inquiry will have been successful. (Friebel, 2013, p. 7.)

It is interesting to read this again now and reflect how I have changed during the years that followed. I now see how my initial question was formulated with a deeply anthropocentric focus, and that I was convinced I could find answers in a positivist way. During the years that followed, my inquiry question shifted dramatically. The context of my practice shifted, my work changed, the participants in my inquiry changed, and almost everything in my life changed. It has been a long and intensive learning journey.

However, the underlying question (*How and why does change take place, and how do I develop my understanding of change so that I can apply it in my work as a change practitioner?)* remains present and relevant.

During the first year of inquiry, the focus of my inquiry was on intergenerational learning at work. I was entering a new stage of life; my children had become teenagers and students. I learned new things from them more often than they were learning from me. Our roles started to reverse. *(How) did this reversal process also surface at work?* I became interested in studying more closely how mutual learning processes across generations in organisations took place. I wrote a transfer paper titled 'Giving voice to generations at work' (Friebel, 2014), based on a cooperative inquiry process (Heron, 1996) that I conducted as an insider research project with junior and senior consultants in the consulting firm I was working for at that time (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

After my first year of inquiry, I drew a map of how I envisioned the inquiry journey ahead. Looking back at it in later years, I find it interesting to see how apparent nature was, with different landscapes – rivers, forests, and a huge mountain to climb in the middle – already forming the territory of my research. Little did I know about what my journey would bring. The map shows a colourful, distinctive world with sun and rain, highs and lows, and multiple opportunities for engagement and interactions. I think now that this image represents my early research style full of positivist energy, activities, and ambition to walk long distances, climb high, and engage in action inquiry. However, I was struggling developing my reflective skills and my academic capabilities to study depth and complexity. There was so much action going on in my life that I hardly took the time to sit down, ask the deeper questions that I was supposed to ask in my doctoral work and write more extensively about them.

Figure 9. Map of my inquiry journey as of June 2014

Looking again at this map, I recognise places I visited also after 2014. It is almost as if I see a projection of my future, filled with the ups-and-downs I would meet in my research project ahead. I see a village of ceremonies and places for reflection at the campfire, I see a playground and many trails with huts in the mountains where people go on feet and on skis. I see that already in 2014, my walking experiences in nature played an important, if under-acknowledged, role in my research. Drawing this map has certainly contributed to the changes I made in my research project. It hung on the wall in my study for many years.

In these early stages of my journey, my inquiry method shifted several times. After completing my cooperative inquiry project (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 1997), using intergenerational dialogues (Bohm, 1996), I shifted to videography (Rose, 2014; Pink 2013), a method I learned to use from the younger generation I worked with in my initial research project. I made many videos, and I wrote an academic paper with the title 'Knowing through showing' which I presented at the BAM conference in Portsmouth in 2015 (Friebel, 2015c).

One of the issues I was struggling with was the concept of generation. I wanted to understand how intergenerational learning took place and I started making videos to collect data. But while engaging more deeply in my inquiry, I came to believe that the concept of 'generation' was an artificially created way of placing people in groups that did not always have so much in common. I found that some adults behaved as teenagers and some young people could be wiser and more mature than some seniors. Generalising people in cohorts based on the periods in time they were born did not really give me a better understanding of how and why learning occurred in my practice of change. Reflecting on this while writing this dissertation, it almost feels contrary to the post-human approach which attends to otherness, diversity, and more-than-human participation, an insight I developed in my later research. I felt I was walking a wrong path of inquiry, and I felt lost in the wilderness of research in organisational change. In 2015, I realised that my real curiosity about learning and change lay somewhere else. It was a difficult decision to close my path of inquiry into intergenerational learning, change direction and start all over again. However, looking back, I see that this initial research project gave me much practical experience about different ways of doing research. I learned important things about the processes involved in collecting data, learned also to inquire into myself to find real meaning and motivation to engage in inquiry, and took steps towards discovering who I really am as a researcher.

The purpose of my research shifted from seeking 'propositional truths' towards exploring the relationship between my work as a change consultant and my practice as a walker. After so many years of working in the field of organisational change, I wanted to contribute with a new and fresh type of practice in my field of work. I had noticed that my walking helped me in my work as a consultant, but I did not fully understand when, how, and why it was exactly helpful to me.

I wanted to inquire deeper into this walking practice of me. *How had I developed my walking practice over the years? What skills and competences had I developed as a walker? How had my context and environment played a role? What happened with me and my walking companions when I walked? Who were the main characters or participants in my walking practice and what was their influence on me?* And finally: *How did my practice of walking influence and support my work as a change consultant?*

In their overview, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba position action research as a research paradigm with a participatory core (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011, pp. 101–115). The authors state that the intention of such research gives primacy to practical knowing with critical subjectivity in discovering living knowledge. This approach fitted well with my research questions and my wish to develop a practical understanding about my walking practice. I was curious to learn how my practice of walking helped me in developing new knowing about this practice. McNiff and Whitehead state that the main feature of action research is its learning intention for improving practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, pp. 33-56). My intention to start this research project was to learn more about my specific practice of walking and to find out how I could learn to develop my work further as a change agent.

Action research is different from positivist scientific research because its core belief is that social research can never be executed in an objective way that excludes the researcher. Action researchers are convinced it is not possible to conduct objective research *on* something in a social space because as soon as you enter your research arena as a researcher, you influence the participants in your research, which again makes the situation different from what it was before you entered that arena. "Action research is an orientation to knowledge creation that arises in a context of practice an requires researchers to work *with* practitioners." (Bradbury, 2010, p. 93.) Thus, action research is participative in its core.

The consequence of this however is that action research starts with researching yourself (called first-person research) to understand better what influence I, as a researcher, have while working together with my research participants (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

I chose this action research approach for my research because it fitted well with my intention and purpose of finding out how my practice of walking influenced my practice of facilitating change. I knew that wherever I walked and whoever I met on my walks, they would be influenced by my way of showing up and walking with them.

However, looking at the location of my research and its main participants (wild nature in the Norwegian mountains) I found the definition of action research somewhat narrow.

> *Action research is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human processes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory, and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit*

> *of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4).*

In their definition of action research, Reason and Bradbury see 'participants' and 'others' as 'people' or 'individual persons'. In my inquiry, however, my research participants could be any living beings that I encountered on the paths that I walked. My community of practice could best be described as a rugged, dramatic, continuously changing landscape that was inhabited by thousands of wild living creatures. It consisted of mountains, rivers, valleys and hills, air and wind, rocks, plants, lakes, and animals. It included human beings as well, but they were not the only participants in my inquiry. I much more prefer Coleman's position, describing action research as "a practice that makes claims about knowing, a form of research that seeks to make a contribution to the academy as well as the participants who are engaged with it" (Coleman, 2015, p. 392). Coleman can be read as not requiring these participants to be human, as leaving space for other-than-human beings as well.

My second critique of Reason & Bradbury's definition of action research is its emphasis on *flourishing*. Having walked in wild environments for so many years, I experienced flourishing as a temporary phase in the larger cycles of change on the earth. Through my walking I learned that flourishing is never was a permanent end-state and that it therefore never can be a purpose. Flourishing might be the most beautiful or dominant state of a being to reach while living on the earth, but it was never the end. Why could decaying, or birth or death not be a purpose of action research as well? After flourishing (which in my vision also contains growth, fertilisation and the development of fruits, results, and new life) always comes decay and death which again facilitates the flourishing of the next generation. A flower will never flourish forever, the sun will not shine every day and a thriving community will always change again, meet misfortune, decay, and decline after some time. Therefore, I knew from my walking experience, that my action research project could not have the intention to help my research community to flourish (ad infinitum).

The purpose of my research project was rather one of learning and developing new knowing to understand how I could practically apply this knowing to guide my participants through repetitive cycles of growing, flourishing, decay, and renewal. Again, here Coleman's

description of the purpose of action research being 'contributing to' instead of 'flourishing' (Coleman, 2015) fits better with the way I wanted to carry out my research project.

For my research project, I have sought to extend the purpose of action research on both the 'human' and 'flourishing' sides of the Reason & Bradbury definition (meeting the quality criterion of contributing to this research paradigm as defined in the table in section 1.3). The 'human' I extended to 'all living beings' and the 'flourishing' I regarded being one phase (and in fact a very beautiful one that I highly admire) within the larger cycle of change.

I describe my revised purpose for my action research project as follows:

> *My action research project is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile living on our earth. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory, and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of learning how to care for my participants and guide them through their cycles of change. This change containing learning, growing, and flourishing* ***and*** *decaying, dying, and the renewal of life.*

Action research includes possibilities of inquiry through cycles of action and reflection (Reason & Bradbury, 2013; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). It claims that to understand participation with others, it is important to understand yourself. That fitted well with my exploration into my walking practice: to understand how I walked with others, I also had to understand how I walked with myself. This meant that I had to study myself and what happened with me during my walks as well as the way I conducted my walks while walking together with others.

Action research contains cycles of inquiry that take the researcher each time into deeper '*inner and outer arcs*' of discovery (Marshall, 2016; Gearty & Marshall, 2020). This was also applicable to my inquiry: during my research process I repeated countless cycles of inquiry: I walked long trails through the Norwegian national parks on foot and on skis, sometimes alone, sometimes with others. My walks contained individual practice (solitary walks), group practice (walking with other people in small groups), consulting practice (walking with clients) and mini practice (daily, short reflective walks). I walked through the wide and open living space of Norwegian nature with an intention to find a deeper understanding of how my walking helped me in my development as a change worker and how I could apply this

new knowing, helping others with their change challenges. My main critique of Marshall's model with inner and outer arcs (2016) is that I did not experience them as separate things. Rather, they formed an integrated whole while I was walking and moving and being in action. Reflection happened, yes, while being at rest or sitting and writing in the huts after a day of hiking, but also while walking, while being in the midst of action. I noticed that my reflections often got stimulated while my body was in action, in a rhythm, my legs going left, right, left, my muscles working, my heart beating, my blood streaming. The body's movement activated my reflective brain, and I often experienced good ideas popping into my mind. For me, the action of my action research took place with my body in action, walking in the 'friluft', which again stimulated reflection, wondering and discovery.

2.2 An earthly mother with roots in The Netherlands

In this paragraph, I introduce you further to who I am as a person and as a researcher. Doing first-person inquiry (inquiring into who I am as a person, as a practitioner and as a researcher) is an important part of action research. "First person AR involves the individual study of one's own actions and reflections, practices, and intentions. It makes the researcher/s themselves the focus of research attention." (Coleman, 2018, p. 159.) The purpose of first-person research is to develop what Marshall calls "continually weaving between inner and outer arcs of attention." (Marshall, 2016, p. xvii) Understanding who I am and what influence I have on others is important to be able to understand how I influence my research context. In this paragraph I will share some of my first-person inquiry findings.

During one workshop at Ashridge, we focused on going deeper into first-person inquiry. We received an assignment to identify an archetype that we felt would describe our essence in the best possible way. For this assignment, I co-inquired with my classmate Michelle Martin, and we found that the 'earth mother' archetype was one that fitted me well:

> Earth mother: a woman who seems full of emotional and spiritual understanding and seems suited to having and loving children.[8]

[8] As defined in the Cambridge Dictionary.

I love children – I have given birth to four of them – and developing people has been my ambition and purpose both in my work and in my private life so far. I enjoy being surrounded by others who want to learn and grow together with me. I always feel energy in my body when others ask me for help and guiding in their developmental journeys.

I studied pedagogy and educational sciences and worked all my life with the development of people and organisations. Being a mother of four children was a challenging, exciting, and satisfying task. I loved the challenge of helping my children grow from vulnerable babies into young independent adults. With my husband Thomas, we formed a great parent team and since we both had fulltime jobs, we managed our family logistics through a large social network with peer parents in our local neighbourhood, facing similar challenges. Our children enjoyed sports, cultural and social activities in their free time while we, as parents, still managed to find time for our own rowing and hiking leisure activities.

At work, I supported leaders, teams, and employees in their learning and development journeys. I initially worked inside several different organisations as an internal consultant: an employer's federation, a bank, and an engineering company, before moving to external consultancy. I help my clients through change processes and co-create innovative interventions together with them.

The 'earth mother' character also links to my values in life, with the 'earth mother' representing mother earth, nature, and the source of life of our planet to me:

> Earth mother: a goddess who represents the earth as the source of life; a goddess of fertility.[9]

In my life, I pay deep respect to nature and its diversity on earth. I find tremendous joy in being in nature and spending my time exploring in the wild. From the first day I visited Norway during a holiday trip, I fell in love with her wild landscapes that are so different from the park landscapes in the Netherlands. I experienced that Norwegian nature had a very special effect on me. The spacious rugged mountains, the fresh air that often smells so crisp, and the clean water that I could just drink from the stream, gave me feelings of coming home. Silence that made me hear my heart beating in my body, the enormous spaces with their emptiness and their endless views in the mountain areas, the experiences of walking

[9] As defined in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary.

for hours without meeting any other human being, it all felt so different from the overpopulated Netherlands where every square meter was planned for and organised by humans. We visited Norway during several holidays and each time we returned home we felt like something was missing, or not quite 'in place' with our lives in the Netherlands.

Figure 10. With my 4 children at the summit of Andersnatten, during summer holiday in 2005

During our visits, we also became more familiar with the Norwegian culture which is highly influenced by this landscape. Survival, equality, love, and respect for nature are values that are deeply ingrained in the roots of its people and society. The landscape invites adventures and imagination. Myths about trolls, living mountains that are home to giants, and enchanted forests that are inhabited by elves, goblins and other creatures are told to the children. The foresight required to survive in harsh winters, and through difficult times of change, is part of the culture, while enjoying leisure time in the mountains or along the coast are important elements of Norwegian family life. Gender equality, career opportunities for women and the prioritising of children in society are all attributes of a country that attracted me to return, time and again. In the end, my husband and I decided to move to Norway. We found jobs, sold our house, packed our stuff, and in the summer of 2007, we moved to Norway with our four children, on a new adventure.

This big emigration project had a huge impact on our lives. We learned to speak the language, built a new house, and integrated smoothly into the local community of Nærsnes. We learned to adapt to a new culture and experienced how it was to be an immigrant. We were the strangers, they were the normal locals, not the other way around. We learned to

participate in new rituals and celebrations, like National Day (17th May), dugnad activity[10] and confirmation, and we learned how the school system differed, compared to the one we were used to. We made new friends and got new colleagues, and again I enjoyed all the learning, changing, and developing that fitted so well with 'earth mother' values. I felt that our lives had become enriched by this move and all these new experiences. We learned things we would never be able to learn in a school, from a course, or a book. This rich international learning from experience also fits well with the founding ideas of action research. Learning from experience by taking active, reflected choices based on a vision of change (Kolb, 1984) helped me later in my development as an action researcher.

Reflecting now, at a later stage, I also see that this adventure had its shadow sides. Our friends and family in the Netherlands were missing us and we also missed them, our physical being together reduced to once or twice a year. Our oldest son had difficulty integrating as a teenager, because not all teenagers welcome strange peers into their networks. We were very much aware that we had to be proactive in developing new relations in our neighbourhood, otherwise our lives could end up being lonely and isolated. Having small children helped us in integrating more quickly than others might experience.

Through this move, the earth mother in me felt like I was coming home, by being able to live much closer in touch with the earth. I was able to spend more time walking in Norwegian nature and this offered me more opportunities for richer experiences and reflections about life and change outdoors. As a family, we went on many hikes into the mountains, and we learned all about huts and paths and trails in Norway.

When our children became older, Thomas and I went on longer hikes with just the two of us. During these walks we often had deep conversations about our joy for walking in the mountains, about why this was important for us, and how we wanted to spend the rest of our lives walking together in these beautiful Norwegian landscapes.

This earth mother had landed in a place on the earth that invited me into a higher frequency of inquiry cycles. Through my walking in the mountains, I was developing my 'earth-mother-lyness', and from the moment of entering my action research journey in 2013, the character of the earth mother started playing an important role.

[10] 'Dugnad' is a typical Norwegian phenomenon, a type of obligatory voluntary work, all hands-on-deck.

2.3 Ut på tur aldri sur[11]

The Norwegian title of this paragraph is difficult to translate into English and that symbolises the typical struggles I have had writing this thesis in the English language. The title (which could literally be translated as “out for a walk, never sour”) is a very commonly used Norwegian expression. It can also be used to describe me as a person. It says something about my attitude towards being outdoors (being ‘ut’), my love for walking (being ‘på tur’) and my personality (‘aldri sur’ means never sour or grumpy). It summarises me as a ‘can do’ researcher with a lot of energy, a positive mindset and outgoing character. I am aware that initially this made it more difficult for me to work with rigour or take the critical doctoral position that was expected of a written thesis.

You can imagine that such a character is handy if you have four children, work full time in a challenging job, and are trying to complete a doctorate at the same time. Some argued that my ambition was unrealistic, criticized my work for not having enough depth or suggested that my level of reflexivity was too shallow to be called doctoral. Such feedback has been a real struggle for me, and in discussing my work with my peers and my supervisor, trying to demonstrate that my research had been done rigorously, with high quality and deep reflection I have made the case that the ‘action’ part of action research has been of core importance. I learn and I research through action.

I struggled with the questions: *How could I present my findings in an ‘actionable way’ that still could be called ‘doctoral’? How did I construe meaning from my experiences? And how could I communicate them with my research colleagues?*

I developed my style as a researcher over the years. Sometimes I felt oppressed and discriminated against. Why could a mother with four children who uses clear and simple pedagogical language ‘not do it’? I sometimes felt that faculty members found my work ‘too light’, and I struggled with their feedback. Annemiek was ‘aldri sur’ so how could her work be deeply academic? She was ‘just walking around in the mountains’, how could her walking be a doctoral research project? I was bodying forth (Seeley & Reason, 2008, pp. 25-46), an expression I will explain in chapter 5 while discussing my research practice. However, my

[11] A typical Norwegian expression, which I explain in this section. See also the glossary in Appendix 1.

saviour peer students never lost trust in me or my research project. Taking courage, I defined my own walkability criteria (see section 1.3) to include a clear purpose for why I was walking and inquiring into my walking, I defined clear methods & research process and my inquiry contained actionability, reflexivity and significance.

To understand better where my love for walking outdoors came from, I executed a cycle of inquiry into the history of my own life. Growing up in the city of Nijmegen (the city of the Four Days Marches, the world's largest walking event[12]), I remember as a child waking up in the middle of the night, hearing the walkers singing, while they were marching along the Hatertseweg. They sounded powerful, as if on a mission. I dreamed that one day I would go for long, explorative, and exciting walks myself.

My favourite early teenage books were about walking adventures like 'De brief voor de koning' (Dragt, 1962) and 'Kruistocht in spijkerbroek' (Beckman, 1973) in which a teenage hero went on a long adventurous walk, crossing several countries, through impenetrable mountains, to fulfil an important mission. They inspired me to go on hiking missions myself.

To understand my love for walking, I started questioning: *Why did I love being active outdoors? Why did I want to go out on adventures? Why did my movement in nature, in the forest, in the mountains or on the water give me feelings of pleasure, happiness, freedom, satisfaction, joy and purpose in life?* Sitting on a sofa, a chair, or a desk inside an office, working in front of a screen, I did not feel I was living my life in a meaningful way.

While being outdoors, experiencing nature around me, I developed myself into an active, curious, explorative, energetic, participative human being. It awakened my interest in human learning and development. I remember in high school, I encouraged my friends to spend our lunchbreak outdoors and while walking around the school building, I was asking why we had to sit still inside of that building to learn. Would it not be more exciting to travel to France to learn to speak French? Why did we not have our biology lessons outdoors?

As an adult, I became a learning and development professional and worked with organisational change. I noticed myself often going out for a walk if I wanted to contemplate situations, find solutions or inspiration for work challenges or just to relax from my busy life.

[12] For more information about this event see: https://www.4daagse.nl/en/

I noticed that walking in nature often helped me making up my mind, (literally) taking distance from an intense issue to look at it from different perspectives. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone states that “in moving, we bring a certain play of forces to life and spatialize and temporalize them in the process” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 127). I have indeed experienced that my moving outdoors released energies in me, forces that brought me room for exploration, reflection, questioning and contemplation. I have also noticed that it was important for me to have space around me in which I could breathe and move around. Moving was my force of life and the source of the enormous amount of energy that I had in me.

I have always been a pragmatist, but I am also a curious person, motivated to learn, to read, to study, to experiment, to try out new things. I love change and get bored if things stay the same for too long. I love to inquire and investigate, and that is also why my consulting practice fits me so well: new clients, new projects and new challenges energise me just as much as new landscapes, wild rivers, and new huts to visit. This is also how my research question unfolded: *Why did I enjoy change so much? How did the change I met on my walks outdoors reflect itself in the change I met working with my clients? How come that our lives as human beings in the western world have turned into indoor lives?*

In the beginning, I found it difficult sitting still for longer periods, as I always want to get up and move my body. However, for my research project to be successful, I also had to spend a lot of time sitting still to reflect, think and write. Developing my reflexivity, writing down my findings in propositions, and finding ways to communicate (on paper, in academic writing) about my research has been challenging. I love to write, but it took me a while to learn to write in academic terms, in accordance with the rules of arguing, questioning, quoting, referring, and proposing. The huts I visited during my hikes have facilitated the development of my writing. I spent many long evenings in huts, sitting at a simple table, looking out of the window into the wide living world around me, writing down my walking experiences and my reflections of the day in my notebook. I refer to my extended amounts of walking, writing, and studying as contributing to the doctoral rigour of this research and demonstrating the quality of my method and process.

Chapter 3. Introduction to the research context and literature

In this chapter, I describe the landscape and context of my research territory. I will also introduce the literature that inspired and influenced me during my journey.

But as I usually do on my walks, let's first take a break! We will spread our 'sitteunderlag'[13], boil some water from the stream in our jetboil,[14] and make a cup of tea or coffee or, if you prefer, some solbærtoddy[15]. If we were real Norwegians, we would make a small campfire and grill some pølser (sausages) with lomper (potato wraps) or I would offer you some of my home-baked 'turkake'[16] that I often bring with me on my hikes. And while we stretch our legs and enjoy the beautiful view, I tell you my story of what it is like to walk in Norwegian nature, to give you a better understanding about the context of my inquiry.

Figure 11. Taking a break, making coffee in the 'friluft' during one of my walks

[13] 'Sitteunderlag' means sitting pad.
[14] A 'jetboil' is a lightweight quick water heater over gas.
[15] 'Solbærtoddy' is a hot blackcurrant lemonade drink.
[16] A special type of home-made energy bar I always bake to take with me on my long hikes.

3.1 Introduction to friluftsliv – walking in Norway

With a population of only 5.3 million people and a density of just 14 humans per square kilometre, arriving in Norway from the overcrowded Netherlands,[17] I felt overwhelmingly freed by its non-humanness. The low population density and the abundance of natural landscapes available made walking quite a different experience from walking in other places I had visited in the world.

The Norwegian language contains a specific term for the activity of participating outdoors in nature, 'friluftsliv'. A countless number of cultural, historical, and value-based experiences and expressions lie embedded in this word which is deeply rooted in its culture. It is difficult to translate this word into English. Literally, it translates as 'free air life' but that does not express the valued meaning and traditions that are connected to it. Friluftsliv includes being outdoors in wild nature, in a forest, on the sea, or in the rugged Norwegian mountain landscape. It means experiencing the weather, climate, seasons, plants, animals, trees and landscapes and the essence of living and being outdoors. Historically, it has shaped a survival-spirit over centuries. Enduring the harsh climate with an 'all hands-on-deck' mentality lies deep in the expression of friluftsliv and in the roots of the Norwegian culture.

The first time we find a written record of the word 'friluftsliv' was in the epic poem *'På viddene'* (on the highlands) by the famous poet and playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906):

I den øde Sæterstue	(In the desolated mountain hut
Al min rige Fangst jeg sanker;	All my rich catch I collected;
Der er Krak og der er Grue,	A stool by the fireplace,
Friluftsliv for mine Tanker	Free air life in my mind)[18]

I can imagine Ibsen wrote the poem after he finished a long hike through the Norwegian mountains and finally arrived at the safe space of a mountain hut where he could sit, rest

[17] In the Netherlands, 418 humans live on each square kilometre in the UK, 270.
[18] This excerpt was translated by me.

and re-energise, just as I have done during so many of my research hikes. Mountain huts invite reflection and writing. Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe at that time and at the core of friluftsliv lies admiration and joy of what nature offers.

A few decades later the two Norwegian adventurers, Roald Amundsen and Fritjof Nansen, organised different expeditions and they were the first human beings to succeed in several wilderness trips: crossing Greenland (Nansen, 1888), reaching the North Pole (Nansen, 1896), and reaching the South Pole (Amundsen, 1903). The success of their missions was embedded in their developed knowledge and experience from friluftsliv. They prepared for their journeys by learning from extensive walking through the Norwegian mountains. The experience from their walks helped them to learn how to survive in rugged landscapes with harsh climates. By listening to and learning from the local peoples that lived in these environments and had learned through centuries how to survive in such landscapes, they accessed valuable insights, and the success of their expeditions brought us new knowing.

Other than occasional appearances in earlier Norwegian writings, it was the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1912-2009) who first actively started using the term 'friluftsliv' in his philosophical work. He first used the term friluftsliv in his book 'Ecology, community, and lifestyle' (first published in 1976). In this book Næss described friluftsliv as:

> respect for all life, outdoor education in the signs of identification, minimal strain upon the natural combined with maximal self-reliance, natural lifestyle, time for adjustment. (Næss, 1993, p. 179.)

This description touches deeply on the ontological foundation of being Norwegian. It also touches on my own ontology of being an earth mother who cares for her children, teaching them to grow-up to become self-reliant adults who can enjoy exploring the world. Friluftsliv includes a way of exploring the world that offers a wide range of pedagogical opportunities for learning and development, or as Tordsson describes it:

> Friluftsliv includes that we develop and understand nature as a world filled with expressions, colours, and moods, with aesthetic and other qualities, that influence

> our senses and our feelings at least as much as our bodies and our thoughts. (Tordsson, 2014, p. 26.)[19]

Norwegian friluftsliv contains many traditions, habits, rituals, and customs that have been shaped by a developing culture over hundreds of years. And although Norwegians have been practicing friluftsliv for many centuries, research about friluftsliv was not initiated until the end of the last century. During the last twenty years, friluftsliv has developed itself in Norway as a specialised field of research of its own that for example has published research about the meaning of paths (Bischoff, 2015) or learning through friluftsliv pedagogy (Tordsson, 2014). During the last few years, some additional new research fields have emerged, related to competencies of guiding, health, safety, and tools and methods for learning in the outdoors (Halland & Høyem, 2019), also studies about friluftsliv in the light of philosophical, educational, historical, and sociological perspectives (Horgen, Fasting, Lundhaug, Magnussen & Østrem, 2016).

For many Norwegians, experiencing friluftsliv starts at birth, in fact, many Norwegians are effectively introduced to it before they are even born because their mothers 'gå tur' (go for a walk) with them in nature when they are pregnant. A few days after their birth, Norwegian babies are taken on their first walk into nature in their prams and after the parents get tired from walking, the pram is parked outside the house where the baby continues breathing 'friluft' outdoors (well wrapped up and placed in a safe location while the intention is to improve lungs by exposure to the open air).

Being outdoors is essential for most Norwegians. Traditions require that children must play outdoors for at least three hours per day. When the children have learned to walk, they start attending the 'barnehage' (kindergarten) and a few times a week they walk together in small groups to their secret place in the woods in the neighbourhood. Here they learn to play in nature, make a fire, cut wood with a knife, climb trees, and experience many exciting adventures outdoors (I share an example of this in my story of Vardåsen in chapter 8). Elementary schools also practice a friluftsliv pedagogy and usually take the pupils for learning outdoors into nature one day a week. I was positively surprised by this after moving from the Netherlands, where children only get a fifteen-minute outdoor break on a fenced-

[19] Translated by myself

in, concrete-paved playground. In middle school and high school, friluftsliv pedagogy is practiced a few days a year (pupils go on a fieldtrip, camping, for outdoor adventure). The underlying pedagogy states that "experiences in and with nature, are collected in the body and build a foundation for further engagement. This creates again a foundation for continued, value-based learning in and through a diversity of friluftsliv pedagogical practice."[20] (Leirhaug, Haukeland & Faarlund, 2019, p. 28)

When the children become adults, friluftsliv education ends, unless they attend specialised friluftsliv colleges to study further to become friluftsliv teachers or guides (Halland & Høyem, 2019; Horgen, fasting, Lundhaug, Magnussen & Østrem, 2016). Friluftsliv pedagogy promotes experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). It includes outdoor activities that lead to outdoor experiences that can be reflected upon, theorised, and put into action again. It promotes development of sustainable competencies based on experience. One example is a research study that has been carried out to study the relation between learning in friluftsliv and the development of vocational skills (especially the learning of handy crafts) that shows how learning in friluftsliv can result in the development of respect for nature and self (Haukeland & Sæterhaug, 2020; Eikje, Haukeland, Sæterhaug & Færden, 2018) and how this learning can create a better understanding of what sustainable living behaviours comprise.

Friluftsliv pedagogy contains a value-based pedagogy based on human and nature values and has its roots in romanticism (Leirhaug, Haukeland & Faarlund, 2019), but the focus of my inquiry was not to study friluftsliv history or the development of crafts skills or pedagogical (guiding) skills. I wanted to inquire into the development of my change practice, related to my work as a consultant of organisational change.

I believe there is huge potential for friluftsliv pedagogy to contribute to making our human interactions with the world more sustainable. We can learn so much from trees, rivers, and landscapes in relation to how we develop ourselves, our organisations, communities, and our world. I experienced myself how useful, helpful, and educational my walking was for my own personal development. If we want to develop more sustainable organisations, we must give the leaders of these organisations, sustainable experiences with the natural earth to reflect upon. Friluftsliv pedagogy has a potential to develop its focus from child and youth

[20] Translated by myself

pedagogy into an adult and executive pedagogy that supports the development of sustainable competences for our (future) leaders, executives, and organisations. I come back to this in part 3 of this thesis.

Through my research, I wanted to explore how my way of walking could help me developing a practice that could contribute to develop sustainable organisations. To understand this, I first had to inquire deeper into how I experienced learning and development in friluftsliv myself.

Figure 12. Blefjell, at one of my walks, in the autumn of 2017

3.2 The dilemma of friluftsliv

Now that I have described the context of the practice field of my research, and explained the concept of friluftsliv, I want to finish this chapter touching upon a dilemma.

While considering the ethics of my research method, I developed an awareness for conducting 'good' research (see also chapter 4.3 where I discuss my ethical considerations for doing my research). According to Reason & Bradbury (2013), a key purpose of action research is to contribute to 'flourishing'. The concept of 'flourishing' is etymologically rooted in the Aristotelian term 'eudaimonia' ('eu' meaning 'good or well' and 'daimon' meaning 'spirit'). Aristotle philosophized that the highest purpose in life was living a eudaimonian life, which he described as the ability of human beings to live and do well in the world (Aristotle, 2009, original work published ca. 325 BC). In the past 2000 years, there have been many philosophical discussions about how we can interpret this eudaimonia or 'living and doing well'. For me, and for my research project, it meant contributing to new knowing about learning to change through participation in friluftsliv. This also aligns with the purpose of action research which is "the flourishing of individual persons and their communities" (Reason & Bradbury, 2013, p. 4).

During the last two decades (and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic), friluftsliv has seen a growing popularity, not only in Norway. In Norway, friluftsliv is actively promoted by the ministries of education, tourism, and health, and the ministry for the environment has even its own friluftsliv department. It is also promoted by DNT[21] and other charitable bodies and by local municipalities that want to attract people to buy huts in their locality to stimulate economic activity and develop job opportunities. All this friluftsliv promotion, including my walking practice, has a de-wilding effect on the landscape and its inhabitants. This creates a dilemma arising from the 'side-effects' of increased participation. If we humans participate more in the wild, this wilderness will become less wild, and this may result in loss of wild landscapes, species, and other inhabitants.

[21] The Norwegian trekking organisation.

An example of such a de-wilding dilemma under discussion in Norway is how we can protect our vulnerable arctic vegetation. Because friluftsliv has become so popular, some paths at the most popular hiking trails get worn-out and experience erosion.

Sherpas from Nepal have been asked to come to Norway to help with building mountain stairs (they are world-crafts experts at this) to avoid even more erosion and protect vegetation. Because these stairs are now in place, the summits are more easily accessible, which again attracts more humans to walk in these places. This creates yet more risk of vegetation being destroyed.

The dilemma circles round and round. I wonder:

What will happen if we keep on inviting Nepali Sherpas to build more stairs in these places? Do we want to give more people opportunities to enjoy friluftsliv, to take Instagram pictures, to satisfy their consumerism? Or is it because we think it is 'good', promoting others to living eudaimonian lives?

Do I want to promote more people to walk, exercise, being outside, enjoy the wild, to make them relax, de-stress and healthy? Is it to educate them and give them more experience from being outdoors? What happens if the '*Nepalistairseffect*' chases the animals, the silence, and the wilderness away? How can we find a good balance in inviting people into the wild and still show respect to the inhabitants of these places?

Kleiven discusses this dilemma in his article of 2020 but does not find a compelling answer. There are many arguments pro and contra in this debate. Are there too many humans, even in this country with such a low population density? What could we do about this?

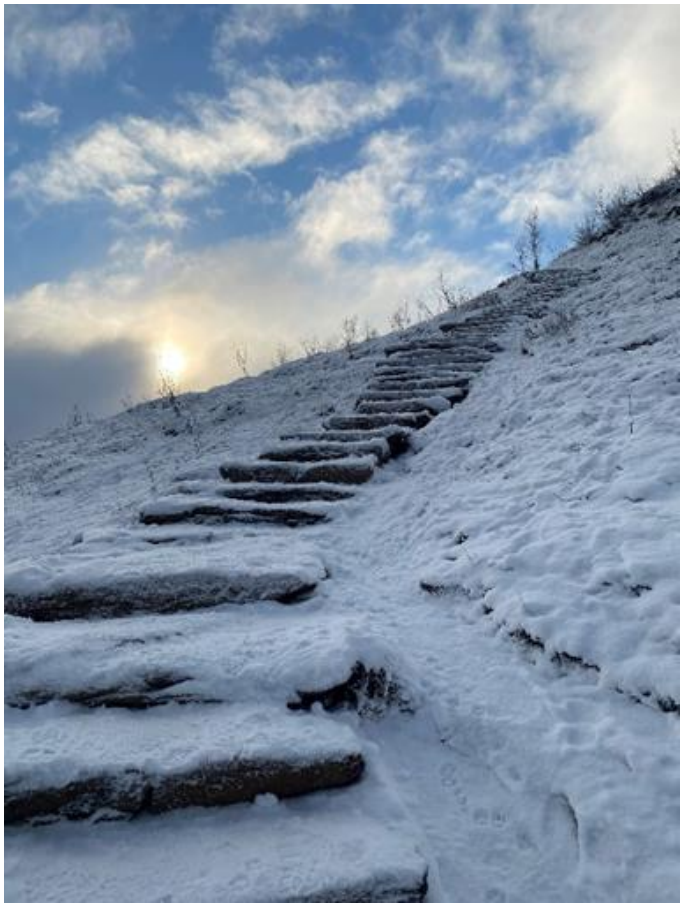


Figure 13. The sherpa stairs in Tromsdalen (Tromsø) on one of my walks in 2021

How can we protect, enjoy and be in friluftsliv without putting too much strain upon the landscape and its inhabitants? When does participation become too much participation? How could we, all living beings, share our living space in a way that sustains the Earth and her beautiful diversity?

I am very conscious that I too have contributed to this problem of human overpopulation and climate change. I produced four of these human polluters myself. While walking through the mountains and pondering upon these questions, I could not find a direct solution. Maybe the solution was not to walk? Maybe we should seduce all humans to sit indoors, glue them to their computer and mobile phone screens so they could live their lives in artificial virtual worlds and so they would not destroy the 'real' world outdoors?

Maybe we should, as Kingsnorth (2020) suggests in his article, keep people inside their houses and give them more data space on the internet so the world outdoors can 'rewild' while the humans live their lives in their urban and 'virtual' indoor spaces?

The more I walked, and the more I pondered this dilemma, the more difficult I found it to think of solutions. These questions are entangled in very complex ways. We have learned from Darwin's evolution theory (Darwin, 1859) that nature adapts to its changing circumstances and when there are too many individuals in a population, changes will come automatically and make a rebalancing happen. My walking practice and my participation in natural landscapes created an awareness in me that growth is not a state that can last forever. I saw that everywhere around me in nature, decline, death and decay, follow after growth. After summer comes fall and winter. After walking uphill comes descending.

What was the role of my practice of walking in all of this? How could I, through my practice of walking, contribute to facilitating change? Could I, through my practice of walking contribute to an understanding of how we could rebalance the flourishing of the diversity of life on Earth? My walking was based on curiosity, wondering, being present and learning from the beings that I met on my path. But what would happen if I met no other types of living beings but homo sapiens on my path?

I started reading what others had written about this and in the next paragraph I give a first introduction to the literature that has influenced me in my search for answers.

3.3 A first introduction to literature

While conducting my research, I engaged with several fields of literature that included eco-psychology, deep-ecology, philosophy (phenomenology, movement, and post-humanism) and friluftsliv pedagogy. I tried to read as much as I could to find out what others had written about their experiences from walking through nature[22] and found that the body of literature available was quite extensive.

Some of the most famous philosophers shared how walking inspired them to develop their ideas (for example Rousseau, Thoreau, Nietzsche, Rimbaud, or Gandhi, summarised in Gros, 2015) and much fiction is based on stories about walking in nature (Maclaine, 2000; Kagge, 2017; Skog, 2014; Strayed, 2013; Espedal, 2006; Ekelund, 2019).

[22] For a list of literature see the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

Through studying nature- and walking literature, I learned to look at landscapes, engage with its inhabitants, and become more sensitive to the living world around me. I found it fascinating to read about what others had learned while walking outdoors in nature. Some authors wrote about experiences from long walks they had made themselves (Shepherd, 2011; Strayed, 2012; Skog, 2014; Solnit, 2014; MacFarlane, 2008, 20013, 2017; Ekelund, 2014, 2019) or that others made (Andrews, 2020; Løken, 2004). Authors that deeply inspired me were Abram (1997), who wrote about the role of our senses while being out in nature; Simard (2021) and Wohlleben (2017) who wrote about their discoveries regarding the life of trees; and Gooley (2015, 2018) taught me to look at signs in nature that we can learn from if we observe them carefully. I read about landscapes and their animal inhabitants (Baker, 2017; Lopez, 2014) and by reading all these books, I became inspired to search for my own discoveries during my walks in the wild.

A second field of literature I studied was in the field of eco-psychology. Eco-psychology places human psychology in an ecological context (Roszak, 1995). It has the ambition of mending the dualistic split between the human body and mind that was initiated in the Western culture by the Greek philosophers. Dualism had eventually become more apparent in the age of enlightenment after Rene Descartes declared “I think, therefore I am.” (Descartes, 1968, originally published in 1637.) Since that time, dualism has dominated the (academic) western world, as can be seen in the dominant positivist academic ways of researching and of educating people. Eco-psychology tries to change this dualistic, anthropocentric way of developing knowledge by bringing the human mind, body, and the living Earth, together as one again. Eco-psychology studies the processes that help humans experiencing the living earth and themselves as one and it sees human individuals as part of, not as separated from, the planet they live on (Hillman, 1995; Fisher, 2013; Roszak, 1995). Andy Fisher talks about eco-psychology that conducts ‘recollective practice’ that are:

> activities that aim more directly at recalling how human psyches are embedded in and nurtured by the larger psyche of nature and at relearning the essentially human art of revering, giving back to, and maintaining reciprocal relations with an animate natural world. (Fisher, 2013, p. 13.)

While walking, I found indeed that I was developing, what Fisher calls ‘recollective relationships’ with the earth. Fisher writes about eco-psychology as a field of knowledge in

the academy that aims to "overcome human-earth dualism and reintegrate them by bringing our world back to life" (2013, p. 248). Through engaging in participative embodied walking experiences, I invited my research participants to experience the landscapes we walked through in a way that gave us opportunities to experience this being one with the Earth. I experienced this recollective practice many times myself:

> *The longer I walked, the wetter I got. I had to walk through bushes that reached up to my knees, which made my pants soaking wet and the water dripped from my trousers and my socks into my boots. After an hour or so I noticed my boots were not waterproof anymore. It was foggy, grey, wet, wet, wet. I just walked through the lousy rainy landscape and felt I became one with the water of the earth. (From my notebook, August 9th, 2017.)*

Being "one with the water of the earth" was a recollective experience for me: I was not the only one being soaking wet, so were the trees, the bushes that I walked through, and the birds hiding under leaves of the branch of a tree. I felt all of us were sharing this wetness.

I also studied literature on friluftsliv, Deep Ecology and philosophy. More specifically, I studied philosophical literature in the fields of eco-philosophy (Næss, 1995; Sessions, 1995), and about phenomenology (Heidegger, 2010; Merleau-Ponty, 2014) and movement (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009, 2011). In chapter 5, I will come back to how this literature has influenced my practice.

Finally, I also position my work in the field of post-humanism, once I discovered that post-humanism focuses not only on digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and a world beyond the dominance of homo sapiens, without humans but also contains a branch called ecological post-humanism (Ferrando, 2013, 2016, 2020; Morton, 2018). I looked at post-humanism in a new way and found that my approach of walking, fits well in an ecological post-human way of developing my practice further. I come back to this in chapter 7.

I will also discuss the theories that have influenced my work more critically in the intermezzo theory account between chapters 8 and 9.

To sum up this introductory part of my thesis and to position my research in an overall research frame, I have drawn a conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scaffolding that I share on the next page.

Conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scaffolding

As an overview of the concepts, theories, and methods that I have used in my research, I have sketched the following 'scaffolding' frame, based on the original drawings of my new house that I am building in Skurdalen in the Norwegian mountains:

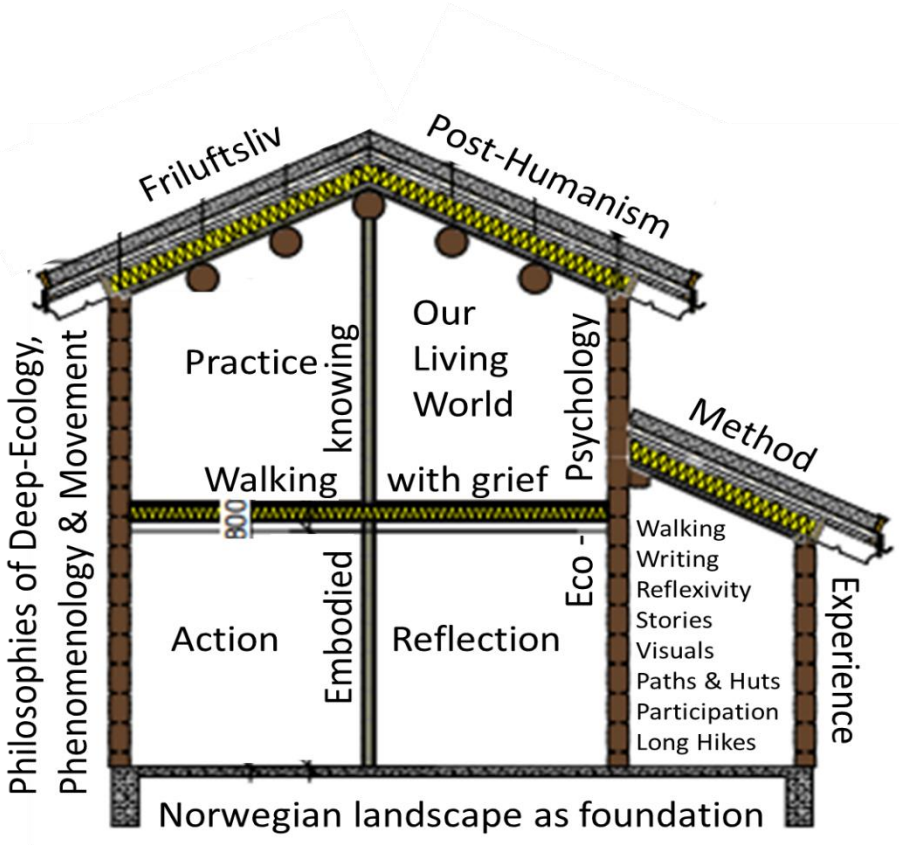


Figure 14. The conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scaffolding of my research

This drawing represents the frame of my research but also my three real Norwegian houses:

- The house we built in Nærsnes after we moved to Norway and became Norwegian;
- The huts I stayed in during the long walks that were part of my action research project and facilitated the development of my reflective inquiry practice; and
- The new house I am building in Skurdalen where I am about to start my new post-human 'frilufts' life.

Part 1: Walking with change: Understanding my walking practice

This first part of the main body of this thesis contains 2 chapters and an account of my practice, presented as an 'intermezzo'[23].

In chapter 4, I share my ethical inquiry standards, I describe how I developed a model of extended epistemology, and I touch upon some pedagogical and eco-psychological theory and discuss opportunities that I discovered in my early years of inquiry.

Then follows the 'intermezzo', in which I will share an example from one of my walking inquiry cycles. I will show how I developed a practice of annual jenteturs (to be explained later) that helped me engaging in repetitive cycles of walking action and reflection.

In chapter 5 of this part, I first discuss how important elements of the landscapes that I walked through have influenced my walking practice. After that I share how a philosophy of movement contributed to understanding my practice better, and I finish this chapter with yet another cycle of action and reflection about embodied knowing while walking.

Chapter 4. Walking my research trail

4.1 Introduction

Finding the right form to explore my research questions has been a non-linear process of incremental insights. I started my project with a rather positivist epistemological worldview, thinking I could plan, do, collect, analyse, conclude, and act upon my findings. But gradually during my journey, I discovered that this approach did not fit with my research reality.

My inquiry path took me in many different directions. Therefore, I ask you to bear with me if my research approach looks a bit messy or illogical. Some days I made great progress and gained new insights while experiencing wonderful phenomena while walking in the wild.

[23] An 'intermezzo' is a short instrumental movement in an opera or other musical work, which fits in between the main sections and connects them together thematically.

Other days I felt lost, close to despair; at one point, I had to turn around, walk back, and start writing my thesis all over again. If you find it confusing that my writing in this thesis is not chronological, I apologise, but I have done this deliberately, because my understandings and insights did not come in a chronological way. The path of my knowledge development was just as messy as I experienced the paths that I walked in my research reality. However, you can find a list of the main walks completed in my research period in appendix 4.

As Donna Ladkin says: “Perfect ‘action research’ cannot exist. At its root is the unpredictability and confounding nature of human beings and our systems.” (Ladkin, 2003, p. 547.) Ladkin argues that action research is unpredictable because of our ‘human nature’. However, in her article she does not explain what that nature contains or what it is made of. I can guess she means that humans are not like robots or machines that do what they are told or programmed to do. She possibly means that humans are being influenced by other things like moods, feelings, disappointments, insecurity, or surprises. Ladkin's comment about the impossibility of 'perfect' research spoke to me because it is congruent with the process, I experienced myself. My neat plans for a linear piece of research were disrupted by the instabilities of my actual, messy human lived experience. However, at the same time, I'm slightly frustrated by Ladkin's emphasis on 'human' nature which for me seems to miss the essential influence of 'wild, earthly nature' which continues to encompass our 'human systems', whether we acknowledge that or not. Since my research took place in wild nature, in participation with other-than-human living beings, I would rather replace what she calls ‘unpredictable systems’ with reference to living landscapes, weather conditions, and encounters with living inhabitants. These ‘roots’ have been dominantly present in my inquiry process and made me shift from a positivist to a participative, unpredictable, post-human way of conducting my research. Coleman describes action research as characteristically emergent and developmental: “how it is actually done is an emergent process rather than fully planned in advance.” (Coleman, 2018, p. 156.) My inquiry contained unpredictable experiences that I learned from and likewise I had to adjust my frames and methods several times. In this process, my inquiry question changed and deepened over the course of time and my forms of exploration shifted accordingly.

In this chapter I will first share the ethical issues that I have considered to execute my research. I show how I approached my research in line with my personal values and explain

how I have tried to act humbly and pay respect to the relationships that I developed with the human and non-human participants in my research project. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss how I have used theory about extended epistemology to develop an applied model of extended epistemology for my own practice of walking. In section 3, I touch upon some pedagogical and eco-psychological theory and discuss opportunities that I discovered in my early research phase. Later, in part 3 of this thesis, I will come back to this these findings and show you how I have been able to integrate some of these opportunities into my consulting practice of working with organisational change. More about that later, let us first walk the trail of chapter 4!

I love maps and find them useful to orient myself and find my way. For each of the chapters in the next 3 main parts of this thesis, I have made a chapter-map to help us to orient ourselves. I used Norwegian hiking maps from some of my preferred hiking areas. They also represent the messiness of my journey, there are no linear, straight lines to be found. Sometimes I walk from left to right, other times from right to left, around, or back again. My paths were curved and with many obstacles. With these maps I visualise how long, tough and exhausting my research journey has been, showing the rigour and extendedness of my inquiry work which is one of the criteria for doctoral work.

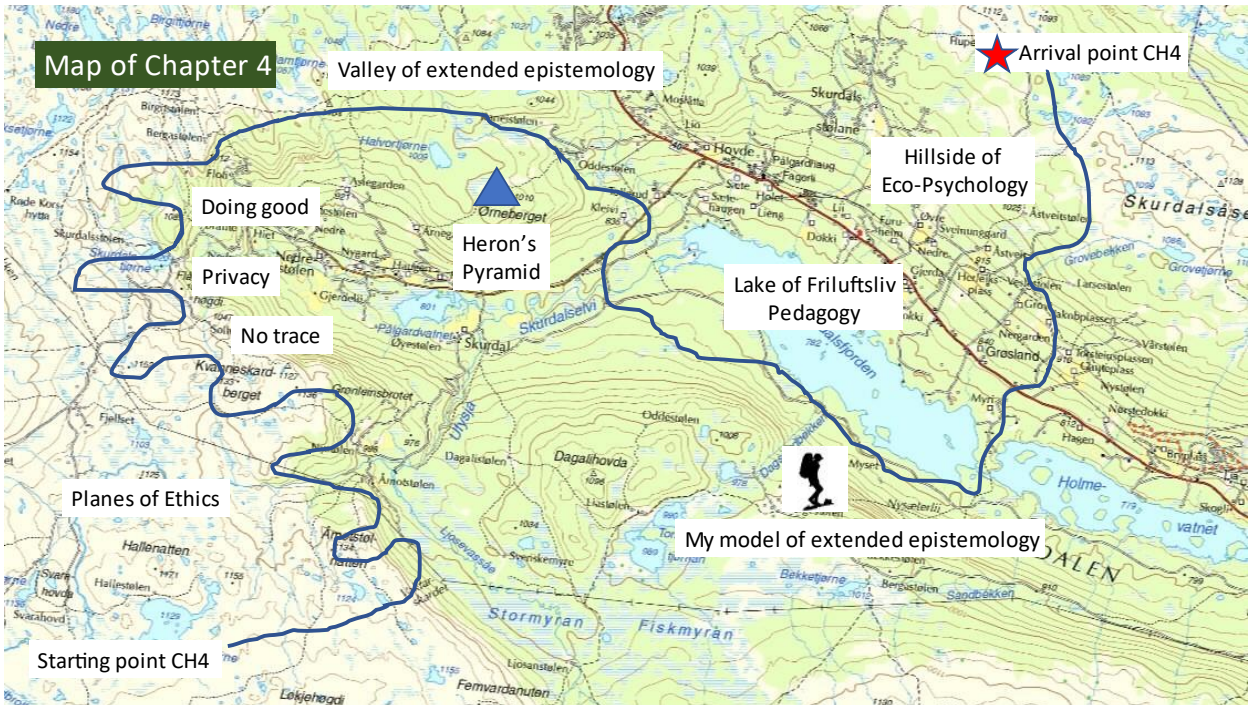


Figure 15. Metaphorical 'map of the territory' for chapter 4

4.2 Ethical considerations

Doing action research with a focus on practice development, I found it important to reflect on my role as a researcher and the way I was interacting with the participants in my research. As I mentioned before, action research aims and intends to research 'with' and not 'on' the subjects of its research question/s (Reason & Bradbury, 2013; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). Action research is participative in the sense that the researcher is seen as a co-inquirer, implicated within the research topic. Action research claims that as soon as the researcher starts inquiring, she has an influence on the participants in the research. This relationship influences the outcome of the research.

I noticed often, when I walked into a new place, the birds often began sending out warnings: "Beware, here comes the researcher, tweet, tweet". The birds noticed and acknowledged me and warned others; they made the other living inhabitants of the landscape aware of me, the human researcher, entering their territory. I learned to become aware of this while walking, "practicing the art of seeing and noticing" (Gooley, 2015, p. 11). Gooley says that is helpful to "look for something you have seen a thousand times, but perhaps never taken note of" (p. 11) and he teaches how we as urban humans can learn to notice and see things differently when we shift how we pay attention while walking outdoors in nature. His literature helped me becoming aware of who my research participants in the outdoors were and how I could notice them, seeing them in a new way. By paying attention to their presence, I learned how I, as a researcher, influenced them.

Acknowledging the quality of my interactions with the other living beings during my walks (including plants, trees, rivers, mountains, air, human beings, and many others) has been an important insight for me. My intention was to always act in accordance with my personal values, which include respect, confidentiality, care, and integrity. I was conscious that while I was executing my research, and especially considering the form I had chosen, I would be getting intimate with my participants, including myself. This intimacy had to be safe enough to make my walking a valuable activity. It should add to the credibility of the outcome of my inquiry. I refer here to the quality criterion of partnership and participation as discussed in section 1.3. However, I was also aware that it sometimes could be difficult to guarantee an entirely safe space. Walking through life always contains elements of risk and nature can be

unpredictable. I have tried to care for my participants as well as I could by applying my guiding skills and bringing my experiences to bear, to the best of my ability.

Gradually, I found that my ethical considerations were about respecting, understanding, promoting, loving, and protecting. Caring for and loving the living beings that participated in my research fitted well with my ontology of the earth mother, being the one who cares for the children of the earth. My research was about respectful, caring, and loving participation within the research, and not so much about it having specified beneficial outcomes.

Leaving no trace

In the wild, I enter the territories of other living beings that live permanently in these places where I was only a temporary visitor. I was a guest walking through their habitats, aware of their hospitality. In Norway, there is a law called 'Allemannrett til fri ferdsel'[24], which gives anybody the free right to walk and roam anywhere in the country, regardless of who owns the land. However, this law also includes some obligatory behaviours such as leaving no trace; taking your rubbish with you; ensuring no hinderance or disturbance of animals; inflicting no damage to trees, plants or other elements in the landscape; and staying at least at 150 meters from any private property.

I always cleaned up after myself and I was conscious to leave no trace except for my footprints in the soil. I always took my rubbish with me and even picked up items from others when I saw them. I found it important to respect the Norwegian mountain code[25].

Protection of privacy

I found it important to protect the privacy of my participants and respect their dignity. I was conscious that I could not share all my experiences in public because some of them were too personal and private. I was conscious to protect the intimacy of the relations I built with my participants, and I was mindful about the way I wrote about some of my encounters in

[24] For more information about 'fri ferdsel' in Norway see: https://www.miljodirektoratet.no/ansvarsomrader/friluftsliv/allemannsretten/
[25] For the 9 rules of the Norwegian mountain code, see: https://english.dnt.no/the-norwegian-mountain-code/

my research. I always asked my human participants for their consent to write about my experiences with them. In some cases, I disguised their names to protect their privacy.

With plants, animals, and landscape element, I found that more challenging. *How could I ask a tree if I could use its picture or video in my work? How could I ask the mountain for its consent to be published?* I found no answer to this question, so I have tried to act with care, only using pictures, descriptions, and videos where the subjects looked 'good' and using images with respect. Regarding the protection of the privacy of my human fellow walkers, I seem to have been successful since most of them asked to walk with me again. They actively helped me to collect data and gave me feedback when I asked for it.

Doing 'good'

The intention of my inquiry has always been to 'do good' before, during and after my walking. During my walks I checked if my participants were 'doing ok'. I am aware that it was more difficult to ask for feedback and check with non-human participants since their language was different from mine. I tried to relate with them in a 'good' way, and I could often sense their embodied reaction to my appearance.

Most animals seemed to fear me, running away, or hiding as soon as they noticed me. It made me wonder what we humans have done through our millions of years of existence on this planet to make our co-inhabitants on our planet so scared of us. (*How) could I build mutual trust with them? Was there a way I could contribute to this trust relationship with my co-inquirers? Action research promotes democratic ways of involvements of its participants but how could I let the trees and animals, rivers and landscapes speak up about their opinions and rights to live? Companies and organisations have rights – why did other non-human living beings not have them?*

Some countries, like New Zealand have in recent years started giving rights to non-human beings[26]. I find that an interesting development and if it helps rivers, mountains or any type of living being survive from being destroyed by humans, I support this.

[26] See for example: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/30/saving-the-whanganui-can-personhood-rescue-a-river

On the other hand, I feel it also to be wrong to force these living beings into our human languages, thinking and legal systems. *Can humans speak on behalf of a river in a legal conflict situation with a human voice and a human interpretation about what or who a river is and wants?* Maybe the river does not want to belong to a human legal system. Maybe it does not need to defend itself in a human way. Nature often uses different types of languages, actions, or power to speak up for itself. My intention was to learn and develop from and with the living landscapes that I walked through. My purpose was to do good, care and inquire.

These described ethical considerations also meet the quality criteria of doctoral reflected participative values and concern as described on the table in section 1.3.

4.3 Extended Epistemology

Traditional research uses positivist epistemologies in which data gathered is used for analysis and knowledge creation through strict methods of objective and rational reasoning. Action research, on the other hand, offers opportunities for using extended epistemologies (Heron, 1996; Reason & Bradbury, 2001, 2013) and this has been helpful for me in my project. Heron says that *experiential knowing* forms the base of all knowing. Through his 'pyramid of fourfold knowing' (Heron, 1996, p. 53), Heron distinguishes four levels of knowing that build on each other, which he visualises in the form of a pyramid. He describes these four ways of knowing as a systemic whole...

> …in which the last, skilled action, leads over into enriched encounter, with a resultant deeper and wider imaginal expression of the patterning of events, thence more complex and comprehensive conceptual models of our reality, and so on into more far-reaching and advanced skills; and so on. (Heron, 1996, p. 52.)

My experiences of walking in the mountains formed the base of my research journey. My work as a researcher was to walk and collect walking experiences, and while walking, I was trying to make sense of these experiences. Through executing my walking expeditions, I developed important hiking skills and competencies. I see them as my practical knowing.

I learned how to prepare for my walks, how to wax my skis, how to pack my backpack, what to take with me and what not. I learned how to navigate using maps and a compass and more. Through walking while sweating and panting and moving around in the Norwegian wilderness, I learned how to cross wild rivers, how to orient myself in a fog, I learned to develop my senses and how to perceive what was happening around me, and I developed self-confidence to walk alone. All these experiences added to my practical knowing about my walking practice. This knowing relates very well to the person I am: a pragmatic, hands-on, action-oriented person. It also goes well with the 'action' part of action research. As Bradbury states it, "only through action is legitimate understanding possible." (Bradbury, 2010, p. 93.) My years of hiking experience gave me a solid base for my research (quality criteria 3: actionability, as mentioned in the table in section 1.3) and facilitated countless opportunities to inquire deeper into my questions about how my walking practice influenced my practice of change facilitation.

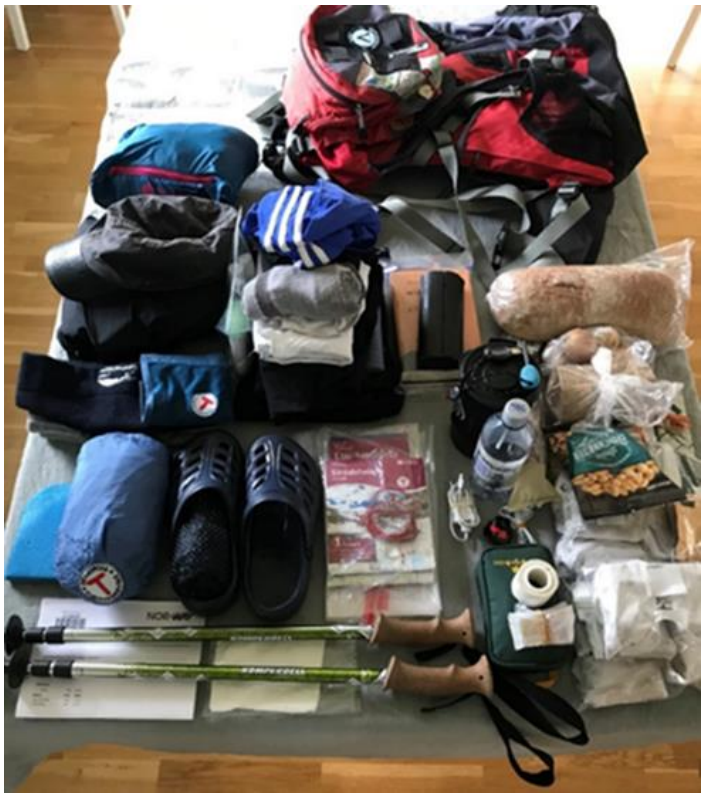


Figure 16. The minimised contents of my backpack for a two-week hike reflect my experiential knowing

The next level of knowing in Heron's pyramid is called *presentational knowing*, by which Heron acknowledges that experience can be expressed in representational ways. As I explained in section 1.3 where I described my methods (quality criterion 4), I wrote extensively in my notebooks while taking breaks during my walks or while pausing in huts after my walks. At later moments, I read over my notes again, and based on my reflections, I wrote stories, some of them I share in this thesis. I took many photographs and video clips, and all these materials gave me a better understanding of my walking practice. Thus, because of my developed walking skills, I was also able to develop skills of (story)writing, photography, and videography about my walking practice. I used these presentations in new rounds of reflection to develop more understanding about my practice.

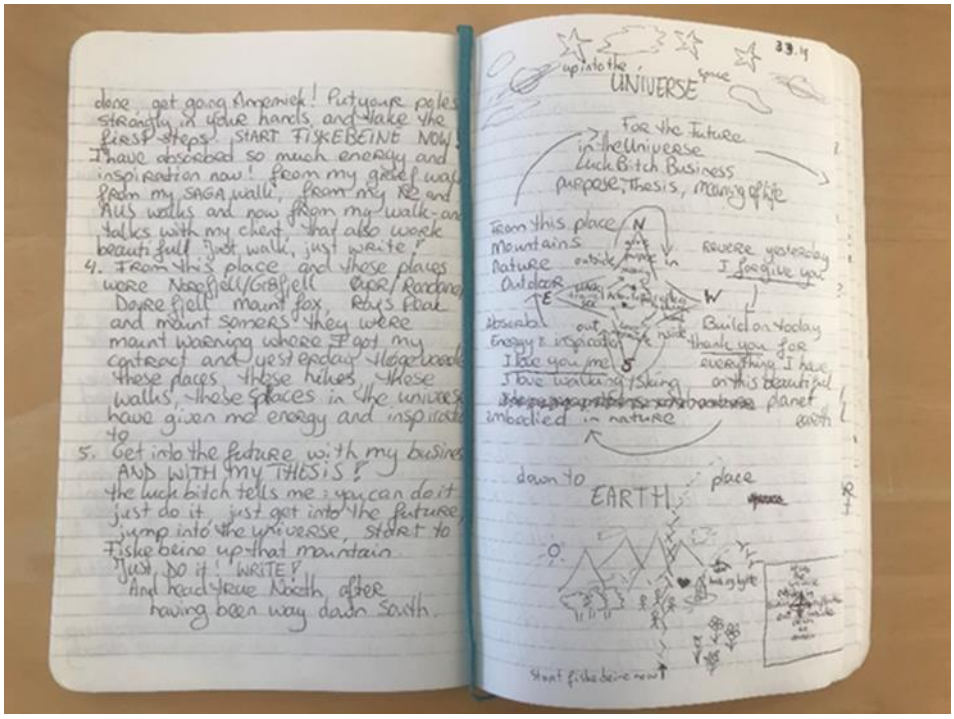


Figure 17. A page from my notebook that forms the basis for my presentational knowing

According to Heron, presentational knowing leads to *propositional knowing*. Based on my walking experiences and the presentations I made in the form of glimpses, videos, and stories, I started formulating propositions about my practice. After many repetitive cycles of action and reflection, engaging in walking expeditions and reflecting on the representations that arose, I wrote propositions in the form of papers, then articles, and finally this thesis.

These propositional writings helped me developing my practice further which again resulted in *practical knowing* about my practice of walking. I was able to express this practical knowing in my work as a change agent with my clients, which I will talk about in part 3 of this thesis.

Translating my developed knowing through this inquiry back across to Heron's pyramid model of fourfold knowing (Heron, 1996) I drew the following picture about how I developed my ways of knowing about my practice of walking:

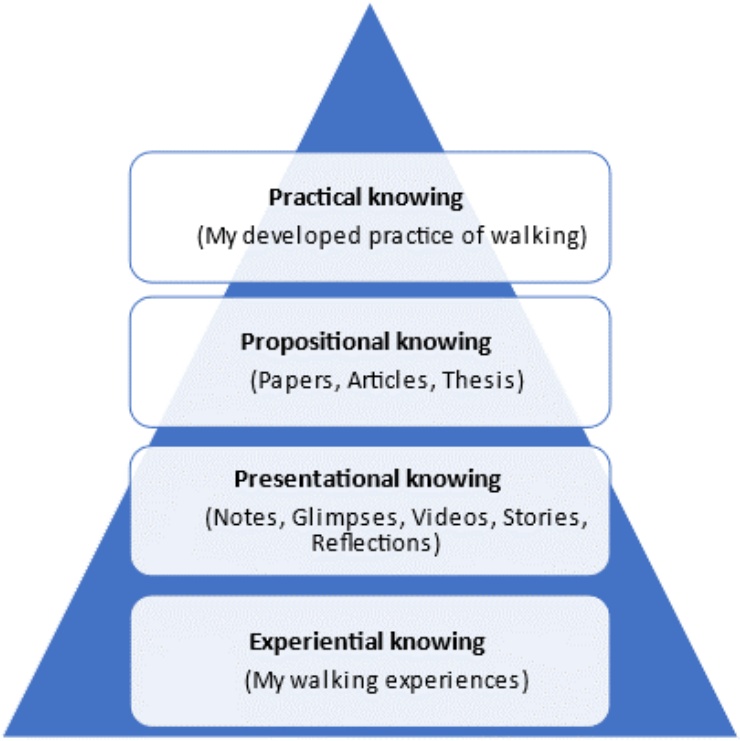


Figure 18. Heron's pyramid of fourfold knowing translated to my ways of knowing about my practice of walking

Still, I felt that something in this model was missing. It was not a full representation of the way I had developed my practice. Heron's pyramid gave me cognitive, theoretical insights about the way I had developed my practical knowing but this model did not tell me anything about the role that my body, my senses or how movement through the landscape had played an important part. This amended pyramid did not reflect the important role my embodied way of knowing had played in the development of my walking practice.

I had noticed that my physical movement, outside in the open air, offered me opportunities to attend to other living, changing, physically moving beings that I met along my way. The

interactions and encounters that I had with them during my walks made me think that there was something in these moments of engagement that taught me something important about change. These moments gave me insights about how change was happening outdoors everywhere around me, all the time. It had to do something with me being there, embodied, alive, at that place in that specific moment, resulting in my coming to feel a welcome participant in life on earth. Inquiring deeper into this brought me to other fields of knowing. I started to attend to my body: *What was happening to my body while I was walking through the mountains? What was happening to my senses, my muscles, my blood? How was my body interacting with the environment I was walking through? And what was the relation between me, my moving body, including my mind, and everything I was thinking while walking, relating to, and engaging with my environment and its living, moving inhabitants?* I come back to this in the next chapter when I explore a philosophy of movement and the extended epistemology of embodied knowing. For now, I want to explore how my embodied knowing can fit in Heron's model of fourfold knowing.

I wrote down many of my encounters and interactions during my walks and reflected on them afterwards, without pre-emptively interpreting my experiences beforehand. Seeley and Reason refer to this approach as "bodying-forth: inviting imaginative impulses to express themselves through the media of our bodies without our intellects throwing a spanner in the works and crushing those responses with misplaced rationality or premature editing and critique" (Seeley & Reason, 2008, p. 31).

While walking I discovered that my body was playing an important part in my learning, in enabling me to improve my understanding of what was happening while I was walking. I was bodying-forth through the mountains, trying to listen to what my body was telling me.

Heron's model is rather theoretical and based on cognitive reasoning. Being an action researcher for me meant attending to my embodied experiencing and making sense of them. Because the body with all its senses, feelings and emotions is effectively absent from Heron's model, I adapted my own model of extended epistemology for my practice of walking. It centres an experienced, sensing, moving body which carries a backpack filled with knowledge from experiences within the landscape and with all its living participants:

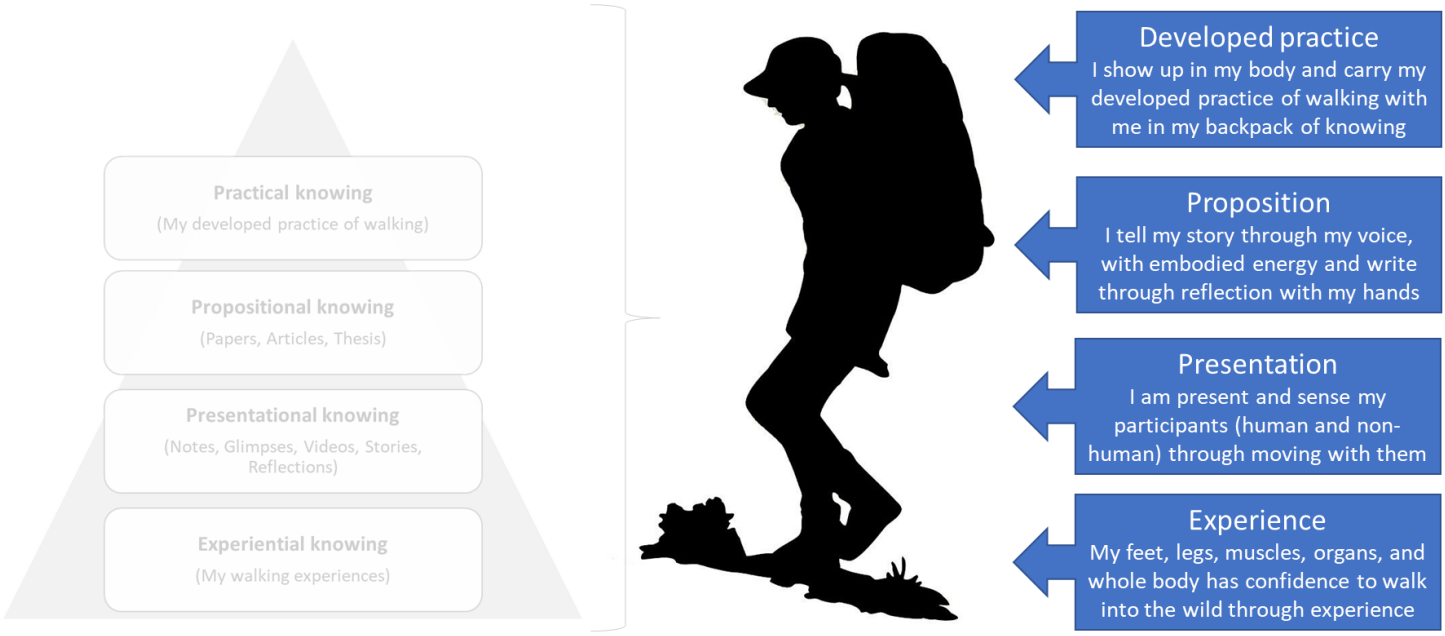


Figure 19. Model of extended epistemology for my developed practice of walking

Within this model, 'developed practice' stands for my deep experience as a walker and as an organisational change consultant. For me, this experience has been developed through walking in nature, working in organisations, and walking through life. My practice is represented through my embodied participation and engagement with others in our world (human and non-human). I propose it through my voice, my stories, this thesis, my embodied actions outdoors and through my change actions in the organisations that I work with. It is contained in my body of knowledge, represented by my backpack, carried by my body, me, through my physical and spiritual, living presence in the world.

For me, the development of this insight has not been a linear process with phases building on each other chronologically. I experienced it as an integrated process that unfolded while I was active in the 'friluft'. While walking, I experience, sense, notice, reflect, act, and react to my environment and the living inhabitants that I encounter. All of this happens in an integrated timely way in the present while I am moving, breathing, sensing, thinking, sometimes talking, or singing, listening, feeling, and experiencing in the moment. These experiences are being stored in my body as a knowing that I can access afterwards.

While sitting in the huts, reflecting, writing, and developing my propositions, I remember, recall feelings (which might be emotions of fear, epiphany, humbleness, or excitement) and while I write my memories down, transfer them in stories, glimpses, or videos, they change. The presented accounts are never the same as the real-time experiences have been.

Reflecting about all the walks I completed, the data I collected and the materials I produced, I saw that these repeating cycles of walking, moving, exploring, and then resting, reflecting, and trying to understand what happened during my walks in these last ten years, never come to an end. My body has played an essential part in the development of my practice because it was me, in my body, that was walking, learning, discovering, and developing new knowing. I feel I will keep on walking for the rest of my life and while walking, I can keep on developing new knowing about my practice every day.

Writing in my notebook has become a habit and I am sure I will write more stories about my walks in the future. My curiosity for how we learn and develop through walking has made me *live my life as a walking inquirer*. Referring back to action research, this is also the aim of an action research practice: living life as inquiry "means holding open the boundary between research and life generally" (Gearty & Marshall, 2020, p. 2), or as Coghlan and Brannick describe it, being a scholar-practitioner means that they are "not merely practitioners who do research; rather, they integrate scholarship into their practice and generate actionable knowledge" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 8).

Each walk I completed has contributed to the development of my practice. Each trail I followed has brought me new opportunities to explore, reflect and discover new knowing. Each time I put on my boots and strap my backpack on to my shoulders, I know that I will meet new friends that will participate in my walks out there.

Referring to the quality criteria described in section 1.3, I feel confident that drawing on all this sustained effort over time, my doctoral inquiry meets the criteria stated there, through its rigour of many cycles of action and reflection, in which I have applied my methods of writing, visualising, reflecting, and storying. My inquiry has taught me to wonder, attend, notice, question, and discover. This has matured my way of embodied knowing and participation. It changed my practice, my life, and my way of being in the world.

4.4 Linking walking practice to theory

During my years of inquiry, I searched widely for literature that said something about walking practices in the wild. The first literature I studied was in the field of eco-psychology. Eco-psychology is still a young, fresh shoot on the trunk of the social sciences, and academics are still discussing whether it deserves to be a 'separate field of study' or should be considered a sub-topic within psychology. Eco-psychology also has a strong connection to ecology, biology, philosophy and ethics, and therefore can be positioned at a crossroad between all these disciplines. Eco-psychology has roots in the modern environmental movement (Carson, 2000, 2018, originally published in 1951, 1964) and ecological psychology (Hillman, 1995). Fisher describes the development of the eco-psychological paradigm as a 'project' that aims to develop knowing about the human-nature relationship. Its ambition is to place the psyche (soul, anima, mind) back into the (natural) world and develop practices that create an ecological society (Fisher, 2013, pp. 7-16). It aims to be non-dualistic and therefore struggles to find its place in the academy.

If the aim of eco-psychology is to bring humans and the living earth closer together, then what type of actionable practices could we develop to make this happen? Fisher's extended description of the eco-psychological concept was helpful in providing an understanding of the theories on which it builds. However, these theories did not give me practical, actionable guidance for how I could position my own practice and research in relation to eco-psychology theory.

Roszak, Gomes and Kanner collected a variety of essays in their book Eco-psychology (1995) that focussed on more practical eco-psychological practices. In part two of their book, they dedicate several chapters to eco-psychological practices, providing interesting narratives about what Americans call 'wilderness practices' (Harper, 1995; Greenway, 1995). Steven Harper writes about hikes he made with groups into 'the wild' (Harper, 1995). He distinguishes therapy from practice. Therapy implies illness and has a beginning and an end to a treatment. "Practice implies process; there is no beginning or end, but a lifetime of engagement and discovery" (p. 185). This resonated with the way I was experiencing my own practice of walking.

Harper writes about how he went on wilderness experiences with groups of 10-16 students from his university (Harper, 1995). Even though his practices are different from my own, I recognize many elements in his writings from my own experiences while walking alone or with my groups. Harper writes about conducting rituals when entering the wild and leaving the civil world consciously behind.

One of the most interesting phenomena he writes about is the experience of what he calls the 'expanding reality shock'. He describes it as "a shock that reverberates through the whole body-mind system when we suddenly realize that reality may be larger than our familiar scope – and very different" (p. 192). He talks about experiencing a different sense of time and space and how there also can be serious moments of emotional stress that emerge almost automatically. This resonated with my own experiences:

> *I remember that during our jenteturs we experienced this phenomenon of a blending of space, being and time. We talked about how many hours we were planning to walk, so we knew how to divide our energy for the day. We did not recount how many kilometres we were planning to walk; metric distances had no meaning in these wild terrains. It was much more important to assess what the terrain would feel like and if we would reach the hut before darkness. Would there be steep parts with a lot of ascending or descending (and thus sweating, panting, slowing us down, requiring more breaks or going carefully, not to slip or slide down the ascend)? Were there difficult obstacles on our path? Rivers to cross? What direction would the wind come from and how strong was it going to be? What would the weather be like? Sun? Rain? Fog? When we walk in urban environments, we do not question wind direction, steepness of the sidewalk nor difficulty crossing a river. We count blocks or kilometres and assess where the bridges are. When walking in the wild we measure in hours or parts of the day, numbers of breaks, before or after dark, streams to cross and valleys to pass. Our reality changes into more earthly measures, it gets expanded to across the horizon and is measured in bodily endurance. (From my notebook, 13. March 2019.)*

Robert Greenway writes about what he calls the 'wilderness effect' experience when being out in nature, "a shift from culturally reinforced dualism-producing reality processing to a more non-dualistic mode" (Greenway, 1995, p. 131). What I think he means is that when we

are out in the wild for a longer period, we automatically open our minds to the natural processes we experience all around us, as if nature is reinforcing itself upon us. My journals show that this was also happening with me on my walks. I was developing an unconscious familiarity and experiencing feelings of belonging. This became most apparent in the moments when I entered or left these environments.

> *It felt as if nature welcomed me and told me:*
>
> *Annemiek why has taken you so long this time? There you are finally! Welcome back! And: Take a deep breath, invite us into your lungs, smell, feel, take us with you on this hike. (From my notebook, 7. July 2019.)*

I also often experienced what Greenway calls the reverse-shock when finishing my hikes.

> In the painful "re-entry" experience, we *feel* our newly open and connected beings congeal into hardened, separate, well-defended selves. Although unpleasant, this process is perhaps a unique opportunity to experience mindfully the cultural forces that normally operate outside our awareness. (Greenway, 1995, p. 133.)

I wrote in my own journal:

> *I always procrastinate with switching my mobile phone on because I know that the messages will flow in and the beeping abruptly 'forces me back' into the civilized world. I notice that I get irritated on the last day. When my companions switch on their phones before we have finished our walk, I get annoyed and feel I can shout at them "Please, can you stop looking at your screen until we have arrived?" I also noticed that I hate to set my first step on asphalt. (From my notebook 6. July 2018.)*

In my experiences, re-entering the civilised world often felt like a leaving behind of a place that I loved so much. It felt like a saying farewell to my home, leaving a world behind with many mixed feelings. I was often looking forward to a hot shower but regretting having to leave the fresh air, silence, and the beauty of the wild. Reading about eco-psychological practices helped me to understand my own practice and experiences. I understood that I was not the only one experiencing phenomena like 'expanding reality shock'. The following glimpse illustrates how I slowly started to notice how I experienced my being in the wild, and how it attracted me to continue following this long trail of inquiry into the unknown.

After a beautiful walk through a summer farm type of landscape I arrived at Hornsjø today. The hike was easy, the path was very well marked, and my tread was light. What overwhelmed me was the silence and the solitude. An overwhelming aloneness came over me. Here was just me. Walking. Thousands of thoughts came to my mind while I walked. My head in the sun, fresh air breathing in through my nose into my lungs, 12 kilos on my back and just walking. On my way I met some sheep. They were laying, chewing and rechewing, they looked at me and that was it. They were the owners of that little piece of land, they were the owners of my universe. No human being was to be seen, just sheep and bushes, trees and lakes and the path and me, and my walking.

From my notebook @ Hornsjø, 3. September 2018

Glimpse 2: Ringebufjellet

I created this 'glimpse' after a long solitary hike in 2018 during which I learned that I was never alone during my walks in the wild. There were so many non-human beings participating in my walking practice and so much I could learn from them about change that I slowly started to appreciate what this expanded reality of the natural world was giving me.

In Norwegian (and in Dutch and German) we have two different words for 'experience'. An 'opplevelse' (belevenis, erlebnis) is an experience which contains a blending of experiencing in the moment, living through something with an excitement and that takes place in a specific moment of time and place, while an 'erfaring' (ervaring, erfahrung) is an experience that takes place over a longer period and has a larger impact and is reflected upon, per my

glimpse above which represents reflected experience (see also Hverven, 2018. pp. 128-130). My walking practice can for one person be a 'opplevelse' whereas for another, it might be a development of 'erfaring', depending on that person's background, culture, habits, and life experiences, and how they process the specific experience of walking with me.

As I also looked across the various forms of literature, I found that during the last decade different types of researchers have started to explore what effects walking or being in nature has on our health and well-being. The research spans across mindfulness-, spiritual-, and even religious types of practices in nature. They are quite different from my own research project, but most of them conclude that the effects of walking and being outdoors was positive for their participants (De Bloom et. al, 2017; Church, 2019; Fleming, 2019; Fogarty, 2019; Jabr, 2014; Johanson, 2016).

Recent studies of friluftsliv pedagogy focus mainly on learning and development practices for children and young adults (Hallandvik & Høyem, 2019; Haukeland & Sæterhaug, 2020). Very little research has been done on how friluftsliv pedagogy can support organisational development and help adult leaders learn and change outdoors. I think there are many opportunities for further research in this field. (*How) could I, through my walking practice contribute to develop this field of research and how could the outcome of my inquiry help leaders in organisations contribute to a greener and more sustainable way of developing their organisations?* Neither the friluftsliv pedagogy literature nor the eco-psychology theory that I studied could give me convincing answers to these questions.

If we stay inside in our buildings while living our lives, doing our work, and making our money, how do we know what our living world is all about? If we think that friluftsliv and outdoor learning are so important that we prioritise it in developing and teaching our children and young adults, then why is it almost non-existent in leadership development and business education?[27] *How can the executives in our organisations learn to make sense of the world they are responsible for, if they do not experience it by going out and into it? Would it not be a logical prerequisite that leaders first must sense, experience, and live in our wide natural, outdoor, world, to understand what sustainability really means?* Some indigenous cultures have rituals for young men, who first must travel out into the wild by

[27] I am here not talking about the artificial 'survival-type' of training interventions sometimes fashionable as teambuilding exercises in leadership education.

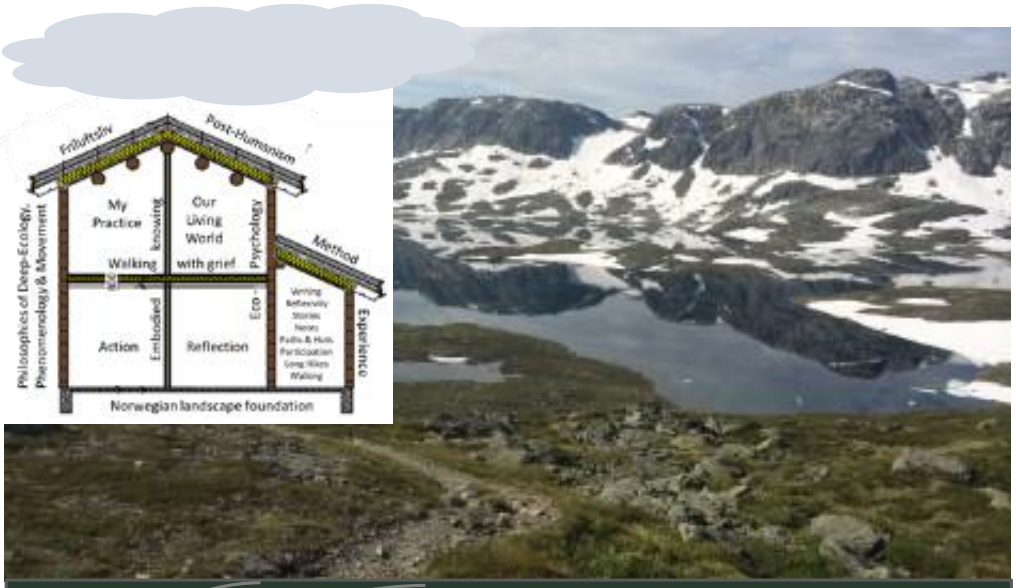
themselves, before they can be accepted as leaders for their tribes. *Would it not make sense to promote sustainability and aligned leadership behaviour by taking our leaders first out into our living world and let them meet with that world physically, in an embodied way, to learn what the diversity of life and living is all about? Why do we stay indoors, executing leadership and organisational learning programs in hotels and venues, cut loose from our living world?*

As you might notice I feel a strong passion about this topic, and I am conscious that my energy and motivation indicates a willingness to do something about this. In part 3 of this thesis, I will share my activism ambitions, my hopes to develop a practice of leadership- and organisational development in friluftsliv. There, I share how I have tested some of my research findings in walking interventions with some of my clients in my work as an organisational change consultant.

I am advocating integrating the knowledge gained in the fields of eco-psychology and friluftsliv pedagogy into an academic discipline of learning and development in friluftsliv for organisational development and change. I believe there is huge potential within these academic fields to contribute making our world a more sustainable place with organisations that are more conscious and caring for the living world in which they operate. I will come back and discuss these theories more critically in an intermezzo theory account between chapter 8 and 9.

In the next section, I close this chapter with some reflections. I call this my 'dark page' where I reflect and wonder what questions still lie hidden in the ground of my inquiry and underneath the foundation of its scaffolding. You will find a 'dark page' at the end of each of the following chapters, showing how I wonder, reflect, and try to check if my questions are being answered and what questions I still have. In each case, I do this by reference to the quality criterion of reflexivity, as stated in the table in section 1.3.

4.5 Reflection: What's still in the ground?



In this chapter I discussed my approach to action research and how I have reflected over ethical issues and embodied ways of knowing regarding my methods of collecting data, sharing them with others and the opportunities that friluftsliv is offering for action and reflection. However, there are still many questions and considerations that I have not touched upon. For example: Being the practical 'action' person that I am, how did I learn to slow down, stop, notice, reflect and wonder about my experiences? When and where did I do this? What effect did I, as a researcher have on the people and living beings that I met on my walks? And what effect did they have on me?

It was difficult for me in the beginning. I was used to walk and just keep going, heading for the summit, the hut or the end of the path. Stopping to write in my notebook helped learning to notice and wonder. I suddenly started noticing other phenomena in my surroundings. It took discipline and consciousness to develop these researcher skills.

I shared the purpose of what I wanted to find out about my walking practice (objective criteria) and how action research, its extended epistemologies and embodied ways of knowing could help me succeeding on this journey (method criteria). I also looked at how literature about eco-psychology and friluftsliv could help me study my own practice of walking in the outdoors. However, I have not touched upon how my walking participants reacted on me and how our interactions during our walks helped me developing my practice . Why did I enjoy walking in the wild with others so much? Where did this drive come from? Why did I want to enjoy friluftsliv so much, that I even wanted to move my whole family to this place so I could experience this joy more easily? I will inquire deeper into these questions in the next chapter.

Intermezzo: Jentetur – a research practice account

During my research I carried out many different longer and shorter inquiries over the years. As mentioned before, these included long hikes and short walks, solitary walks and walks with others, walks in mountains, in forests and along the fjords. And during all this walking I made notes, pictures and videos. It is impossible to showcase all these activities in this thesis so I have selected some example practice accounts in which you can see how I developed my practice from a leading and organising practice towards a more participative practice of guiding and facilitating of discovery. (For an overview of all my research inquiries, see Appendices 4 and 5). I chose the 'jentetur' because it has been an annual practice that I sustained every year during the research period, because it is representative of walks that I carried out with some other groups of people, and because the women in the group I walk with during these jenteturs, have given me valuable feedback over the years about how they experienced my walking practice and how they have seen it developing. It has been a representative practice of first-person inquiry with others.

In the year I started my doctoral studies at Ashridge (2013), I invited a small group of female Dutch rowing friends to come to Norway and join me on a jentetur[28]. A jentetur is a Norwegian phenomenon, often arranged as a friluftsliv activity. While wandering through the Norwegian mountains, you can often meet groups of female friends hiking together. The purpose of a jentetur is to sustain the bond of friendship, while being away from mothering, work, and an otherwise busy life. During our jenteturs, we often had deep conversations in which we shared experiences, dilemmas, and central questions about life. We gave each other advice and helped finding solutions to challenges. But a jentetur is also a fun activity where women get together to have a good time together.

When we first went walking together, I did not realise these walks would become an important data source for my research. Our first jentetur was a four-day hike through the Norefjell mountains and after that, the participants wanted to come back again, and we

[28] Jentetur is the Norwegian word for 'girls' trip'. Partners and children are not allowed to join this gathering.

started to repeat our walking on an annual basis. During the last few years, some of the women returned twice a year because they also wanted to experience friluftsliv in winter.

In 2015, I wrote a first paper about this walking experience with the title: "Jentetur 2015, a co-inquiry into work-life decisions". I concluded that paper by stating that "*walking, talking, reflection and decision-making about work-life changes go very well together in the Norwegian natural space"* (Friebel, 2015b, p. 33). After three years of jentetur, I understood that there was something special happening during these walks and I started inquiring deeper into them. *Why did these women want to return each year? Why were these walks so valuable to my participants?* I had also started inquiring into my role while walking with others. *Did their wanting to return have something to do with the quality of my presence? Or with the landscape? Or with the way we were walking together? What was the effect of my presence as the organiser of these walks?*

In 2015, I had started exploring videography as a method of collecting data and I made a first simple video from our jentetur[29]. I asked the women for their reactions to my video. They told me that they loved to watch it because it brought back memories and 'good feelings' about the wide and open spaces they had experienced during our hike and how the walk had given them joy and opportunities for good conversations. However, they also commented that the video was 'just' a representation and that some important elements from our walk were not represented in this video. The slowness of our walking, for example, the silence of the landscape, our engagement with nature, the depth of our conversations, our cooking and eating meals together, our interactions with other walkers, our sleeping in the bunkbeds, and our interactions with the landscape and their inhabitants: flowers, trees, lakes, mountains, animals – none of these things were covered.

Reading Judi Marshall's book 'First person action research, living life as an inquiry' (Marshall, 2016), I recognise how my practice of taking jentetur walks has given me opportunities to practice iterative cycles of action and reflection. After each hike, I sat down and wrote my experiences in my notebook, I made many pictures and videos and collected them in folders and after a few weeks I looked at them again and reflected on them. Marshall calls this

[29] See Appendix 5 for a link to this video.

"scanning inner and outer arcs of attention" (Marshall, 2016, p. 54). As she describes it, "I seek to notice myself perceiving, framing issues, interpreting, making choices about action and so on" (p. 54) and this is what I did with my experiences from these jentetur.

I reflected about how I perceived these walks and what they really meant for me. The data accounts helped me in looking back and re-imagining these walks. Through these reflections over the years, I have noticed my practice slowly changing. In the beginning, I was the one organising, deciding, and showing the way. In more recent years, I noticed my role shifting to being a participative guide, asking questions, listening, wondering, and pointing out what we could learn from the landscape and its inhabitants around us.

This way of executing reflexive qualitative research (Marshall, 2016) – i.e., containing iterative cycles of practicing, learning, reflecting, adapting, and then walking again in the following year – has formed a broad base for the development of my walking practice in general. My reflexivity comprised the way I reflected on my role as guide and how I reflected on my development in this role over the years. Writing this thesis also offered a layer of reflexivity as I have re-remembered and re-reflected more deeply. I believe that this has improved the quality of my work even further. Also, the partnership and participation criterion (see the table in section 1.3) played an important role in this part of the research.

I consider that this ongoing inquiry approach, adjusting our walk each year, learning from it, and developing our practice further, can be called a systemic inquiry approach to action inquiry (Marshall 2016). I have looked at patterns underlying how I was guiding these walks and have carefully considered how they linked to my individual development as a change agent through the walking that unfolded over time in this jentetur engagement. I noticed that these walks were connected to my individual development and the discoveries I made during my solitary walks. I saw that my learnings from interacting in the landscape and engaging with the more than human world, influenced the role I had in this group. From being the directive organiser at the start, I had become a participative facilitator during later walks, where the participants were organising and deciding much more themselves. From being the leader of these events, I had become a participative guide.

Strengthening my voice and role as a participative guide

I also notice that my voice as a walking inquirer has developed over the years. During the first two years, the group did not know that walking was part of my wider inquiry (as I was still inquiring into intergeneration learning in the workplace) but from 2015 it became apparent that walking was my topic of inquiry. I started talking with my participants about my research while we were walking. Together we discovered that our annual walk had become a co-inquiry and we developed it as a shared practice learnt over time. Talking about my research project with these participants helped me strengthening my voice to speak about it at other places as well. I noticed that they reacted positively, and they wanted to repeat our walking each year, this gave me strength to initiate walks with others, I started another jentetur group, started walking with coachees and started designing walking interventions in my change projects as a consultant.

During our jentetur in 2017, Irene, one of the participants, decided to take some videos during our walk. She sent me the files afterwards and I was now able to see my practice of participative guiding through the eyes of one of my participants. I edited her clips into a video montage afterwards, which is available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYSrQ5g5QHw&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=4&t=1s

(In Dutch, but the spoken words are not the most important feature of this video footage.)

Figure 20. A still from the video, 'Jentetur 2017, Blefjell'

What I learned from making, watching, and reflecting on this video was that it represented my developed practice in an interesting way. It is a clear account of presentational knowing (Heron, 1996). It shows that the natural world was dominantly present in our embodied interactions. This video showed me more than a picture could do. While watching the video, I could see and hear the water streaming, the wind blowing and the landscape breathing. I could listen to our voices talking, wondering, singing, and interacting with the living earth as we went on our way. I could see the richness of interactions with mother earth and with each other. This presentation was an important moment for my own reflexivity, encouraging me not only to dwell on the memories of this walk but also to pay attention to our 'real-life-moving-accounts- in-action'. I watched this video repeatedly, looking at the landscape, our social interactions, the way we walked together and all the systemic earthly elements that came together in our way of being in the friluft.

Figure 21. Jentetur Blefjell 2017: the participants decide themselves which path to choose

Since Irene took the video shots, I could suddenly see myself participating in my own walking practice through the eyes and experiences of one of my participants. Through her eyes, I could witness myself walking. I could see what role I played in the group, and instead of being behind the camera, I now appeared on the screen. I saw myself acting as a trusted wilderness guide. I noticed that the safety of my embodied presence helped the others in enjoying being outside, accessing friluftsliv, daring to go out into wilderness, appreciating our interactions with the more-than-human world, not being scared or afraid.

Inquiring more deeply into the development of my role from being directive towards being more facilitative, I saw that I let the other women make the decision about which path to follow, while I, in the background, knew very well how to get to the hut. I saw that my pedagogical frilufts approach was to let them experience, wonder, and interact with the more-than-human world, while I was there in the background as their trusted guide and facilitator (in the video, refer to 2:10–2:20).

I also noticed how I wanted my participants to experience the same joy that I so often experienced myself on my walks. I see in the video that I gave Caroline the key to open the door to the hut. I knew from my own experiences that this was an incredibly special, joyful ritual. My kids always loved to open the hut when we were on a family hike. They were fighting for turns of opening the door because it felt as discovering a new home. It always motivated them to keep going when the walking was becoming tiresome.

How far was it to the hut? What would be inside this place of shelter in the wild? What surprises would we find? How many bedrooms? What type of bunkbeds? How was the living room? the kitchen? Where there any other visitors? The Norwegian huts are so lovely and well taken care of. Irene also shows her curiosity in the video, especially while exploring the dry toilets (5:30-05:51). I noticed how joy was spreading among us when we could go inside to explore (4:53–5:00 in the video). You can see the same ritual in the video I made from a hike with my daughter and her friends, called 'Teenage hike'.[30]

Figure 22. Caroline opening the door of the hut

I remember my disappointment when I first came to a mountain hut in New Zealand. Apparently, they do not have a culture of 'dugnad'[31] in that country.

The huts were bare and did not contain the comfortable beds with covers and pillows and kitchen equipment that I was so used to in the Norwegian huts.

[30] For a link, see Appendix 5.

[31] Dugnad is a Norwegian term that is used for a type of 'obligatory voluntary work', a contradiction in terms but understood by all Norwegians because it sits deeply embedded in their 'all hands-on-deck' mentality.

Reflecting more after watching the video, I see how I, as a participative guide, used my strengthened voice, as the 'earth mother' in the group, helping my participants to make sense of the living world around us. I answer their questions, join them in their wondering, and facilitate their experiences of immersing in the beauty of this place on earth (9:37-9:40 and 10:16-10:26 in the video). The video shows the amazing landscape (and captures Irene's voice as she is deeply touched by it) with its low hanging clouds, lichen covered rocks, gusty winds on top of the 'Store Ble' summit, and our misty descent into a valley of magic.

Figure 23. Me as a guide pointing out something interesting

I studied the videos I made[32] carefully and looked at the quality of my embodied presence in the groups, landscapes and in the way I walked with my participants.

> *The amazing views we experienced gave us feelings of floating together above the clouds; the quality of our togetherness and experiencing our walking together brought us closer to each other and to mother earth. It developed a bond between us as a group and with the landscape. The landscape and the participants were allowing each other in their space to live, breathe, thrive, learn, and reflect. (From my notebook, Jentetur 2017.)*

[32] See Appendix 5 for a full list and all the links to the videos that I made from my walks.

The impressive landscape invited us to speak about visionary, meaningful and life-changing issues. Because we engaged with the beauty of the earth, we became inspired by her to talk about how we could make the best of our lives on our planet. Topics I reflected on during my solitary walks also came up during my walks with others. *How could we change our way of walking through life to make our lives more valuable?*

Change through walking

Some participants in my jenteturs made major decisions based on the dialogues and reflections we had during our walks. I refer to my ethical considerations of confidentiality and care (as discussed in section 4.2) and cannot clarify in detail what these decisions were, but I can give some more general examples. One of them decided to emigrate to Norway; another one decided to get divorced; one of the women decided to quit her job; another took a sabbatical; one started studying Chinese medicine; and other participants started new hobbies, like joining a choir or taking up deep-sea diving. Most of these decisions were based on considerations that had been 'on the way' already for a while, but our walking together, sharing our path in the 'friluft' and reflecting about experiences and insights on the jentetur accelerated the decision process and built conviction to take the plunge.

While walking and meeting change in nature, we talked about topics that were close to our hearts: caring for our elderly parents who were struggling with their health, dealing with teenage children who found it difficult choosing direction in their lives, stress, and conflicts we met at work, finding a good work-life balance. We had dialogues about how we, as working women and mothers, faced high expectations from the world we lived in – expectations from our bosses and colleagues, from our partners, children, and families – and how we were choosing to play the roles we had accepted in our lives.

While walking around in the mountains we were released from all our obligations as mothers, as professionals and as partners. Mother Earth did not have any expectations of us. We could just be in the world together and walk around in our living world that shared her beauty freely with us. The natural world inspired us to have conversations about change and she did not expect anything in return.

I experienced that 'walk and talk' was a very pleasant, comfortable, and suitable context for facilitating change conversations. While I walked beside or behind others, the landscape, the free air, the movement of our bodies and our walking together took away our constraints. We experienced that it was easier to speak about assumptions and contexts while being in an 'empty space' both physically and in our mental states, being at a distance from the issues. It seemed easier to talk about issues from different angles; we could literally walk around with a question, lift it up into the air, let it be blown away by the wind and let it land again on the petals of a gracious flower where it looked quite different.

By reflecting on the presentations from my walks, I saw that the quality of my embodied presence as a participative guide had developed during these cycles of jentetur. Referring to the quality criterion of actionability stated in the table in section 1.3, this cycle of jenteturs is an example of action response to needs from its participants.

I had similar experiences walking with other groups. Each time I walked with a group, they wanted to come back and walk again (action in response to need). During my research period, I collected more than five of these types of groups of people (some of them women-only but also mixed gender, age, and fitness) who wanted to spend at least one long weekend walking or skiing with me every year[33].

Figure 24. At one of my jenteturs with Bente and Ida in Hemsedal

[33] For a full overview of walks in the research period, see Appendix 4.

Chapter 5. Movement and embodied inquiry in changing landscapes

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first discuss how important elements of the landscapes that I walked through influenced the development of my walking practice. The paths, huts and pace of my walking have played an important role in this inquiry. After that, we will explore a marshland of philosophies in which Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's philosophy, especially, her primacy of movement, will form an important milestone marking the progress of my practice. We will continue our journey to understand embodied knowing with yet another cycle of action and reflection in which Karen Barbour helped me to get a better grip of what embodied knowing contained for me and my practice. This closes the first main part of this thesis.

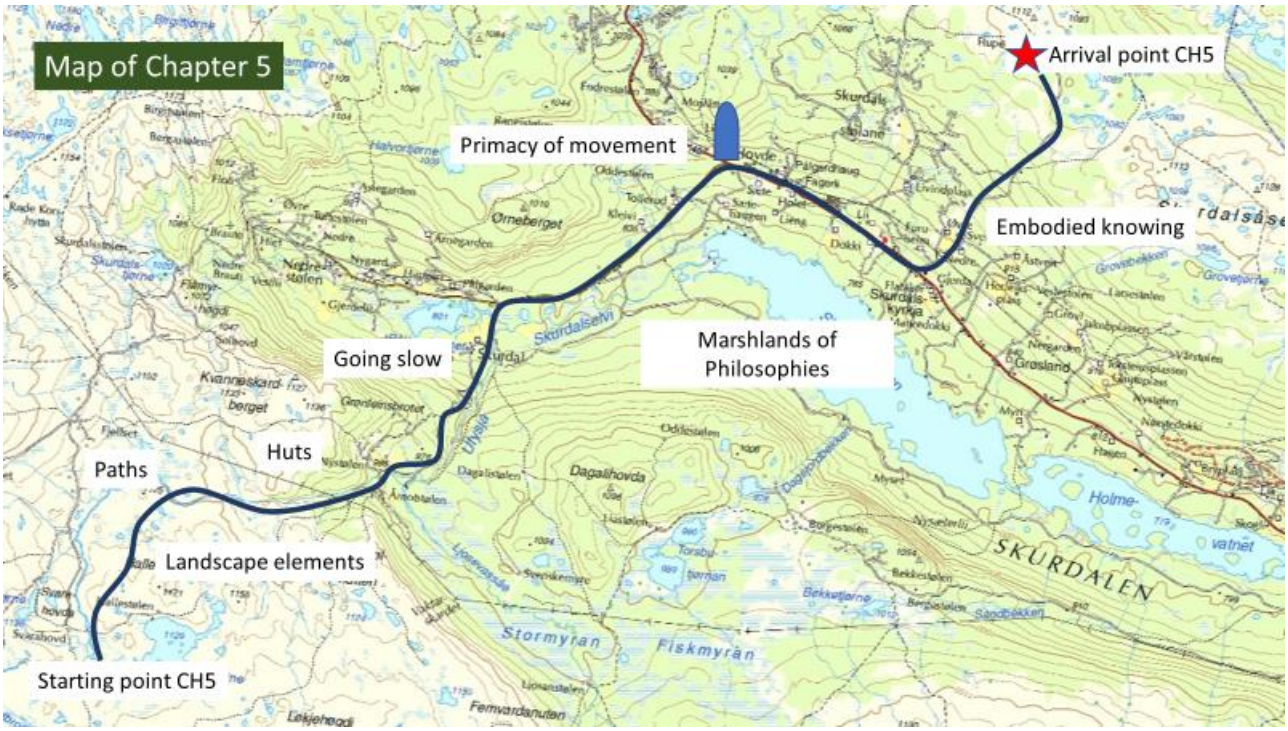


Figure 25. Metaphorical 'map of the territory' for chapter 5

5.2 Important landscape elements

During my research project, I walked in 12 of the 47 national parks (26%) in Norway[34], which I believe shows the rigour of this research. These parks offered me some unique and sometimes extreme opportunities to experience wild nature. I noticed that three landscape elements have played an important role in my research. They are:

i) the paths I've walked;

ii) the huts I've stayed in while hiking; and

iii) my walking pace.

Paths

The paths in the Norwegian national parks have been very important for my walks, as has the quality of the way they are marked. Bischoff (2015) studied and wrote about how paths influence experiencing our being in nature. She concludes that paths give us access to nature, allowing us to experience the quality of landscapes. They facilitate fundamental natural experiences that can give meaning to our understanding of being in nature (Bischoff, 2015). For me, the paths that I walked offered me opportunities to explore the Norwegian wilderness and to walk far, deep into the mountains. They helped me establish my orientation, prevented me from getting lost, and helped me grow my confidence in finding my way in the wild, so I could concentrate on other things, like my engagement with the landscape, learning from my surroundings, and reflecting about change. The well-marked trails and their easy access facilitated my walking research in a supportive way.

The paths are marked with red Ts. The T stands for 'Tur', which means 'walk' or 'trip' in Norwegian, and it is also DNT's brand logo. According to Bischoff, paths can facilitate four types of walking experiences. They can give us i) physical access, ii) aesthetic access, iii) competence-developing access, and iv) emotional / poetic / inquisitive / meditative / spiritual access (Bischoff, 2015, p. 195). During my research into my walking practice, I have experienced all four types of access, but most important for me was that the paths gave me a feeling of safety and stopped me from getting lost. Without these paths, I would never

[34] For a full list of parks see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_parks_of_Norway and for a full list of my walks during my research period, see Appendix 4.

have dared to walk so long and so deep into the Norwegian wilderness. I started with hiking shorter trails, first in the neighbourhood where I lived, then later also in the national parks; at first, together with others and later, after I developed more experience, also alone. Step by step, my navigation skills became better. I became good at reading maps and using the compass, and I also learned to hike in winter on skies. Eventually I also dared to go skiing in winter in the high mountains alone, skiing the marked trails by following branches.

I have discovered a fifth function that the paths gave me access to that Bischoff did not mention in her work: the paths created opportunities to engage with the more-than-human world. It was on my long, solitary hikes, while following the endless paths into the wild, that my encounters with the more-than-human world were most apparent. I see this fifth function being different from the four functions Bischoff found in her study. Bischoff's four functions are focused on internal and inter-personal qualities whereas my fifth function has a focus on an inter-actional and participative quality with nature. Paths offered me opportunities to interact with other-than-human participants. I come back to this quality in part 2 of this thesis.

Paths have given me many opportunities to engage with the more-than-human world that otherwise never would have been possible. They helped me walk 'deeper' into the landscape. Countless times, I have been very thankful for this army of nature-loving volunteers that made the landscapes accessible to me. Thanks to them, I was able to develop my practice, meet with my inquiry participants, and execute my research.

Paths have helped me to learn to navigate, cross large mountain ranges successfully, and grow my hiking skills and competencies. They provided for aesthetic meetings with the sublime. I experienced several epiphanic and emotional moments of learning and understanding. I am humble and grateful for the paths that showed me the way and contributed to my research. My own contribution was maintaining them by walking them. The only way a path can survive in the wild is by being walked. By walking the paths, I helped fellow walkers in arriving safely at their destinations. Even though I wandered off the paths every now and then, thanks to the paths I always found my way home again.

Figure 26. Path marked with' T' while hiking across Hardangervidda towards Hårteigen

Huts

The second important element in my practice of walking have been the huts I stayed in during my walks. They gave me a space to rest, sleep, eat, recover, write, and reflect. They also offered a space for social interaction with other walkers, forming a space in which to share stories and exchange experiences. The huts were important because they made my backpack considerably lighter in weight, which made the walking more enjoyable and comfortable. They also provided me with opportunities for multi-day (and multi-week) hikes, which made the quality of my being in the wild richer. They provided me with slow time for reflection and a space to write notes in my journals.

DNT maintains 550 huts across the country. The huts are the only human-made permanent dwellings allowed in the national parks. There are three different categories of hut, and the self-service huts are my favourites. These provide canned and dried food, so I carry less weight in my backpack. Visitors share the kitchen to cook their own meals, bunk in shared rooms and split chores like fetching water from the stream, burning wood in the stove, or cleaning and tidying. The huts are a social meeting place in the wild to recover from a day of walking and in which to shelter from bad weather. It is always interesting to share an

evening with like-minded people you have never met before. They offer a place for a good conversations, learning, and experience-sharing.

The huts are icons in the Norwegian culture of friluftsliv and have formed an important space for my inquiry. They suit the developing of rituals (as expressed in some of my videos in Appendix 3) and they contain a certain social and cultural atmosphere that deeply reflects Norwegian friluftsliv. Inhabitants of a hut often express love for the extreme beauty of the environment sitting on a bench by a cabin wall while watching the sunset over a mirrored lake on a still evening. The huts encapsulate local culture and history, and they feel as if they are 'grown' in the specific landscape. They come with a diversity of local differences, and they contain stories much as the nature of their surroundings does. It is enjoyable to find out what is special and specific about each hut. All DNT huts have a bookshelf as reading is also part of Norwegian 'hytteliv' (life at the hut), especially during the long winter nights, and the 'hyttebok' (cabin journal) narrates stories and drawings from previous visitors who have stayed there. The little library often contains books about local flora, fauna, the local history, heroes, and culture, and there are always children's books with fairy tales about trolls and elves, as well as books with quizzes and games to play during the long evenings. In my research the huts have been places where I spent many hours, sometimes a full day, to recover and reflect about what I experienced, learned, and discovered during my days of walking. Just like the philosopher Næss, who wrote his main work by the candlelight at Tvergastein (Næss, 2016), the DNT huts have been my place of study, reflection, and data collection. After I moved to Norway, I have spent at least ten nights a year in a DNT hut, and in the last years of intense inquiry, this has increased to at least 20 nights a year. The huts have been an important 'anchor place' in my walking research; they have been an important facilitator in the development of my practice.

Figure 27. I stayed at the hut Tomashelleren in Valdres in 2016

Going slowly

The third important element of my walking inquiry has to do with the pace of my walking. An important part of my walking was to engage with the environment that I walked through and its inhabitants. The best way to build relationships with the living creatures in my walking environment was by going slowly. Going slowly has created opportunity for interaction with my environment. If you walk quickly or run or jog or ride a bicycle or drive a motorised vehicle, there is little chance to encounter or build relationship with non-human others, such as animals, plants, or trees.

Walking slowly for me means finding a rhythm that is well-adjusted to my body, my legs, my fitness, and the specific landscape I am walking through to sense the world around me. If I walk too slowly (which I experienced when walking with small children), walking can become tiresome, when having to stop often and wait all the time. If I walk too fast, I notice my sensitivity goes down and I miss opportunities to see, hear, smell, or engage in the landscape. Finding the right level of 'slowness' is personal and situational; it is not always easy to find good walking partners if others are not willing to adjust their rhythm of walking. Slowness of walking is relative. What is slow for me may be fast for my mother, who is 86. These days my children walk faster than me; this used to be the other way around.

When I walk slowly, I walk with a rhythm that stimulates deep thinking, as Ekelund says, "you think better when you go than when you sit down" (Ekelund, 2019, p. 72). I experienced that my slow walking in wild environments allowed me to hear, smell, see and feel better. I also noticed that I developed my capacity to experience signs and clues in nature (Gooley, 2015, 2018).

My fellow walkers expressed similar experiences when they walked with me and that was one of the reasons that they wanted to come back and walk some more with me. Going slowly stimulated a different way of thinking compared to thinking in the urban world. It invited new and different solutions and it also stimulated real deep dialogues (Bohm, 1996) that flowed in natural ways just like the stream that we crossed and the air that we breathed into our lungs. Walking through the wild gave a specific dimension to my research that helped me to inquire into deeper cycles of wondering and experiencing change while engaging in friluftsliv.

5.3 Walking, movement, and embodied presence

In following my path of inquiry further, I started to observe my body more closely during my walks. I noticed that sensing played an important role during my walking. Walking is an embodied activity and walking in mountains with a backpack requests a physically healthy body that can endure several hours of carrying weight on hips and shoulders. The focus of my research, however, was not about fitness, strength, or (mental) health development (even though I noticed they also played a role); rather, my research focus was on learning about walking as it pertains to change. *How did I experience change during my walks and how could I use this experience in my work of facilitating change in organisations?* I became interested in taking a deeper look at the relationships between my walking, my sensing, and my experiential learning in interaction with the living, changing world that I was walking through. I wanted to explore how my practice of walking helped me in developing my embodied ways of noticing, acting, reacting, and learning as I encountered change.

I had noticed in my work as a change agent that many people in the organisations that I worked with reacted to my embodied presence when I showed up to work with them. I

noticed that they approached me as a 'trusted adviser', as if I 'knew the way' and they asked me to guide them on their journey of change. The more time I had spent walking, the more I noticed my clients showing me this type of respect. *Could there be a relation between my walking experiences and the way I worked together with them and their change and development challenges?* My practice of walking had developed some qualities in my embodied presence that had changed and influenced the way I worked. Somehow, the role I played in my client relationships reflected my wilderness experience, as if communicating that I would be able to guide them safely through rough waters, help them steer through unexpected bends in their way, and show them how to navigate on their changing paths of business and how to prepare for sudden changes in the 'weather' of their situations. What is more, the way I had learned to notice change in the wild, by going slowly, participating in the landscape, being consciously present, and using my senses, had also changed me.

I was interested in inquiring deeper into this phenomenon of my noticing, embodied presence. *Why did my clients and walking partners show trust and confidence in me as their guide?* This had showed up in the jenteturs as described in the former chapter and this showed also in my work as a change consultant. *What was it that built that quality in the relationship with them?* This question brought me to study the philosophy of movement. *How did my body sense change while moving around (in landscapes or in organisations)? How had I, through my walking, learned to show up as a 'trustworthy change guide'?*

Walking is an act of experiencing movement. It is through only by taking one step after another that we as human beings can have an actual experience of walking. I can tell you how to walk, I can show you how to do it, I can write descriptions, show you pictures or videos about walking but that still does not mean that you know how it feels, keeping your balance, coming into the rhythm, and experiencing the marvellous phenomenon that your feet and legs can bring you to places you have never been before.

I am also very much aware that there are people in this world who cannot walk, whose bodies never can learn to walk or experience walking. I became more consciously aware of this when I walked together with my friend Sibylle, who has a disabled son in a wheelchair. When we walk together, she often points out to me when she sees a ramp exclaiming happily, "My son will be able to come to this place!". She has also shared with me how sad she becomes, thinking about how her son will never be able to walk the beautiful paths that

I have walked with her. I am fully aware that walking experience is unfortunately not accessible for all human beings[35]. Neither is walking available for the living beings that fly, swim, glide, slide, jump or stand like trees or plants – but all of them know how to move.

Experiential knowing is easier to distinguish from theoretical knowing in the Dutch or Norwegian languages. They have two different words for it: 'kennen' and 'weten' (Dutch) or 'å kjenne' and 'å vite' (Norwegian). These kinds of knowing are two different things. The first one expresses knowing through experiencing, through having completed and reflected upon an action or activity. The second one (weten, å vite) expresses a more cognitive or rational way of knowing while using logic and theoretical reasoning. Walking can only be known through (practical) experiencing. Reading theory about walking does not bring you into knowing how to walk. Walking requires specific movements by the body.

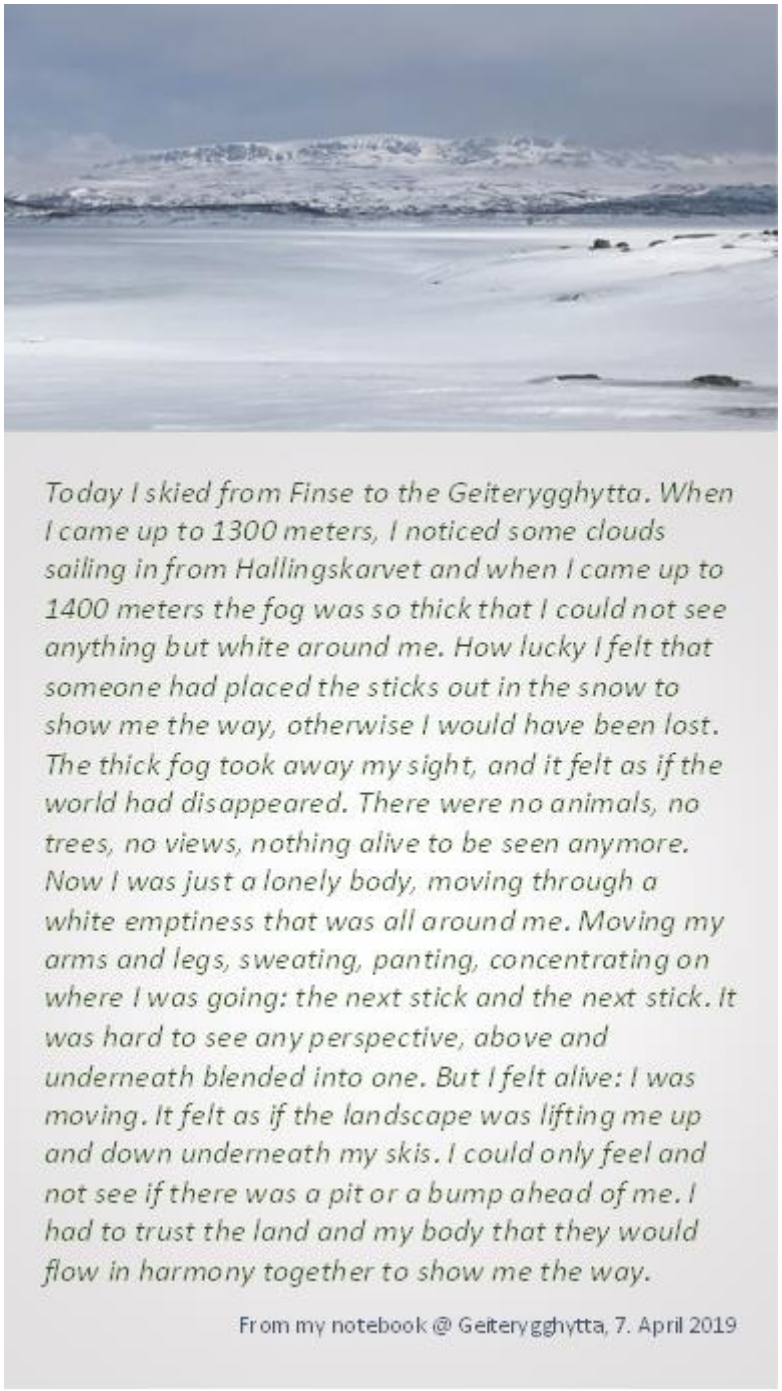
In her philosophy about the primacy of movement, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone claims that "movement is the generative source of our primal sense of aliveness and of our primal capacity for sense-making" (2011, p. 114). She claims that movement is essential to perception, that it is a pre-condition to perceiving. We can perceive because we move, because our body in movement is able to sense. Thus, she claims that her philosophy of movement is a precursor to the philosophy of phenomenology on which Martin Heidegger built his philosophical work Being and time (2010, first published in 1926) and on which in turn Maurice Merleau-Ponty built his philosophy about the phenomenology of perception (2014, first published in 1945).

While reading about the writings of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty I have tried to untangle how they relate to my practice. It is through my living, moving body that I can perceive the phenomena that I meet on my path during my walk. I walk around through the mountains by moving my body and through my body I perceive the world. Or, as Merleau-Ponty (building on Heidegger) puts it, "by re-establishing contact with the body and with the world this way we will also rediscover ourselves…the body is a natural myself and, as it were, the body is the subject of perception" (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, p. 213). The originating ground for knowledge is animation, being alive, moving around in a specific time and space.

[35] DNT offers in Norway special trails for people in wheelchairs see: https://www.dnt.no/nyhetsarkiv/1016-dnt-har-turer-for-alle/

I tried various times to read the books of these philosophers but often got no further than half-way. This was heavy literature that I found difficult to understand.

When phenomenologists and existentialists write about perception, they often write about things or events and how they experience or perceive these things or events in the world. They write about things and phenomena as if they were 'objective' things without a specific personality and existing outside themselves. However, during my walks, I experienced the phenomena I engaged with as 'living beings' with personalities of their own and each having a relationship with me. Meeting a river or a tree or an animal felt like meeting a co-living inhabitant of the earth capable of relating to me. I would not like to call any of these beings a 'thing' or 'object' but rather understand each one as a living being, with a distinct character, a uniqueness of its own in that specific moment and at that specific place in which I was engaging with it. The river I was crossing had a personality, a persona. It was a living, moving being, greeting me with its specific, unique characteristics in that moment. Some rivers I crossed were soft, easy, slowly rippling, offering me the perfect boulders to step on, so I could jump to the other shore in a minute. I perceived them as friendly and helpful, offering me their tasty water to drink. Other rivers I perceived as wild, aggressive, and strong. They forced me to strip off my hiking trousers to wade through, their waters up to my knees. I felt I had to combat, fight, and beat them. With those characters, I celebrated my victory when I finally arrived on the other shore.



Glimpse 3: Hallingskarvet

My meeting with a sudden character, like the thick fog up on the Hallingskarvet, made me reflect about the source of our respective aliveness. The phenomena I encountered during my walks made me realise how coincidental, situational, and time-bound my being alive on this fascinating spot of our beautiful planet was. If I wanted to understand my practice of walking better, I had to look more deeply into its primary phenomenon, at the quality of my movements through the landscapes that I engaged with. Sheets-Johnstone argues that

> quality is built into our moving bodies; it is a built-in of the animate world. It is the basic stuff of life that in various ways literally informs the life of all animate organisms, both as the style of appearance of an organism's own moving body as it experiences itself in the process of moving, and as a 'style of appearance' of something in the world. (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 139.)

This 'quality of movement' was something I experienced during my walks, both in myself and in other living beings that I related with during my walks. I had seen how the mother ptarmigan ran on the narrow path I followed, using her style of movement in screaming and panicking, in order to protect her chicks and give them time to run away from me. I had felt how the wind played with my hair and moved it into all directions, welcoming me at the top of the Blefjell. Sheets-Johnstone taught me that, embedded in a phenomenology of movement and grounded in experiencing the phenomena that I perceived during my walks, it was the quality of my movement (with slow, attentive, presence) that gave my interactions with the living world value.

While participating in the wild world around me, I collected my experiences, walk after walk, and by reflecting on them, my embodied understanding of the quality of my practice slowly began to grow. Walking through the beautiful rugged and wild landscapes of the Norwegian national parks, I understood that my ability to move my body through these astonishing landscapes was a primal prerequisite for the execution of my inquiry. Sheets-Johnstone states that "in discovering ourselves in movement and in turn expanding our kinetic repertoire of 'I cans', we embark on a lifelong journey of sense-making" (2011, p. 118). However, the critique I have of the authors of the philosophies of phenomenology and movement (including Sheets-Johnstone!) is that they do not describe or interrogate their own personal, individual, emotional experiences with phenomena they describe.

Writing my Hallingskarvet experiences in my notebook at the end of the day while resting at the Geiterygghytta and reflecting about the glimpse I made during a later moment helped me to develop a better understanding of how to make sense of these experiences.

I had embarked on a journey through the wild and through all my walking and skiing endeavours, I developed skills allowing me to encounter changes in the living world around me. Through inquiring deeper into my walking representations, my notes, my pictures, the glimpses, and videos that I made, I learned to understand that I was myself a moving,

embodied, living phenomenon. I experienced an ontological shift through *experiencing that my body in all its physical, emotional, cognitive, sensitive, cultural, historical, context was not 'just my body' but that it was part of a larger living whole*.

I understood that I was a living, self-moving being, following my specific paths through these marvellous mountains of Norway at this specific moment in time; I was (just) a little living element that was moving around on this planet in interaction with all the other living things that were moving around on this living planet. My practice was a dynamic, living, experiencing sequence of embodied events that were taking place in a living, continuous changing and moving space. Sheets-Johnstone's theory of movement enabled me to perceive the phenomena I met on my walks as alive, moving and changing all the time in their characteristics. Her work made me see how these phenomena influenced me through our interactive reciprocity, to understand that an exchange was happening through movement and through which I could learn to understand the landscape and all its living beings. I found that, to be able to make sense of the world that I was walking through, and to understand how my experiences and my encounters with specific living beings in the wild influenced me, I had to practice this noticing of change while walking more.

I had learned that my moving, embodied presence in the landscape, the way I sensed and noticed change through participation with its living inhabitants, and my iterative reflections about these changes, had caused an ontological shift within me, from seeing myself as a separate, individual, observing human being, to being part of the living landscape myself.

The following glimpse expresses how my walking often brings together this complex web of life (Capra, 1997). Thoughts in my head are reflected in the landscape while I am walking. I notice that I am embodying myself within the complexity of my inner and outer landscapes.

The walking and the landscape around me melt together with the movement inside of me.

There are always recurring themes that I think about when I walk through the mountains: Human relations, the purpose of life, the learnings from my interaction with nature. I often recall memories from when I was young, and I have reflections about who I am and who I want to be. I also often start singing when I walk, and I always think about Thomas.

I think about these themes because they are difficult, complex, interrelated and I see and feel them around me in the landscape. I also know that I will not develop these thoughts any further when I sit still in a chair in a building. When I walk with them, I feel that I make progress with them, step by step my knowing develops on the rhythm of my walking. The rhythm of the slow going and the interaction with nature gives me clues to direction, ideas of how to tackle issues and suggestions for actions to take when I will be back in the urban world.

From my notebook @ Hovatn, 14. July 2019

Glimpse 4: Ryfylke

5.4 Learning to understand embodied knowing

During my years of inquiring, I encountered countless moments of embodied experiencing. These embodied experiences even started before I was actually walking. Often, in my body, a feeling of longing to be in the mountains would arise while I was still in an urban environment. Other writers describe this embodied feeling as '*the calling of the mountains*' (Næss, 1995; Tordsson, 2014b; Espedal 2006).

> *On my way to the starting point of my hike, I noticed often that a first glimpse of the mountains made me exclaim emotional expressions like: "Look! Ohhh! Ahhh! Beautiful! There still lies snow on the top!" Just seeing the sublimity of the dramatic landscape from the window of a car, bus, or train, gave me physical and emotional embodied reactions.* (From my notebook, 18. September 2016.)

I often feel a strong sense of joy being released through my whole body on seeing a first glimpse of the mountains. They have a magical effect on my whole body. This joy brings a sense of relief from urban stress. It is often accompanied by a breathing-out and a feeling of release at leaving the hectic city behind. I feel as if the pressure from the urban world is slowly ebbing out of my body. The closer I come to the mountains, the more strongly I can feel their presence tickling my body with pleasure and excitement. I feel the attraction of these giants in every part of my being.

Arriving at my point of departure, I often noticed an intense embodied awareness coming over me. I notice myself feeling that I am coming alive again, stepping out of the vehicle, stretching my body after sitting still for a few hours, breathing the fresh mountain air deeply into my lungs. And then, once the engine is switched off, I notice an overwhelming silence.

Suddenly I hear the singing of a bird in a tree or the splashing sound of water in a nearby stream. The fresh burst of oxygen in my body gives me a happy feeling of being welcomed into a world of magic. Often, I think, "finally, I am back in the mountains, this is where I belong!". After I became aware of this, I inquired more deeply into the phenomenon: *Why did I experience my arrival at the starting place of my walks as a homecoming? Why were the mountains not my home? Why was I not living here permanently?*

Once I start walking, embodied impressions follow each other continuously through the day. A foaming waterfall, a special curved tree, the appearance of a wild animal, a rocky wild river, a beautiful flower on the side of the path, an astonishing view from a hilltop – all these phenomena appear around me one after the other, entering my body, my senses, and my mind. I collected thousands of those moments of experience while walking in the wild all day and the more I have walked, the more embodied experiences I have collected. I wrote many of these interactions down in my notebooks. I started to notice how these experiences influenced my thoughts, my observations and my way of walking. I became more confident, more attentive, more aware, more sensitive and more engaged with all the living and changing life that was happening around me.

What I learned from my walking experiences and relating them to Sheets-Johnstone's philosophy of the primacy of movement was that through my movement, through being alive in nature, I could learn to develop the alertness of my senses. I developed an embodied way of knowing that helped me notice meeting phenomena of change. Or, as Abram put it, "the simple act of perception is experienced as an interchange between oneself and that which one perceives – as a meeting, a participation, a communion between beings". (Abram, 2011, p. 268). While walking, I was interacting with an ever-changing and moving landscape that taught me to be prepared to meet change at any time. Change was my companion; change was always there, it showed up in every curve of my path.

This communion between me and the living beings around me brought me opportunities to learn and develop. A mirrored lake taught me the joy of washing away the sweat of my overheated body. A long path with a strong headwind taught me perseverance. A flourishing meadow taught me love and admiration for the beauty of the earth. My walking developed an awareness about how my mind and my body formed an integrated whole with the experiences I had in the open air. I was ready to act, react and interact with the changes that I met on my path. A steep abyss, a frozen lake, a fox who suddenly appeared. While walking and meeting with these phenomena of change, my body absorbed all these experiences into the whole of my being.

Another researcher who builds on Sheets-Johnstone's philosophy of movement is Karen Barbour, researcher at the university of Waikato, New Zealand. Through her research, on movement through dancing, Barbour concluded that developing knowing through

movement is distinct and different from knowledge development through thinking and cognitive analysis (Barbour, 2004). Like me, Barbour struggled to reconcile her practically developed understanding from experiences through movement with academic theoretical and philosophical knowledge (p. 227).

Barbour helped me accept that my way of researching did not fit cleanly within the positivist dualistic model of western knowledge development, and she also taught me that I was not the only one struggling with this issue. My walking experiences had given me an experiential basis to critique the conceptual separation of body and mind. Barbour interprets embodiment as "simultaneously and holistically cultural / biological / spiritual / artistic / intellectual / social / emotional, with recognition of difference in terms of race / gender / sexuality / ability / history / experience / environment" (Barbour, 2004, p. 230). In her studies of embodied ways of knowing, Barbour emphasises that her epistemology is embedded in a simultaneity (of time and place) and a holistic experiencing. The mind and the body form a whole in the experiencing of movement. Coleman (2015, p. 397) refers to Bateson (1972) taking a similar position, insisting that the major epistemological mistake made by modern civilization is in thinking in parts instead of wholes.

Barbour also acknowledges that learning through moving in a kinaesthetic sensing way (through movement in a specific space, in a specific time, and relating to specific objects and experiences) is important to develop better understanding of self in relation to the world. Through my body in action, walking (like hers in action, dancing), by participating in my context (of friluftsliv), in engaging with the living world around me, when encountering surprising phenomena of change in nature everywhere around me – in these ways, I came to understand that movement lies at the foundation of understanding change. Change was so overwhelmingly visible in my walks, so noticeable in the wild nature around me, that I came to experience change as a deep earthly phenomenon. It touched my earthly being, my caring and sharing in this world, it touched my 'earth-motherliness'.

In the conclusion of her research findings Barbour promotes the development of movement in education because "movement and focussed reflection on movement experience can contribute significantly to our knowledge of ourselves, of each other and of the world around us" (Barbour, 2004, p. 235). She promotes movement as an innovative proposal for developing new ways of education.

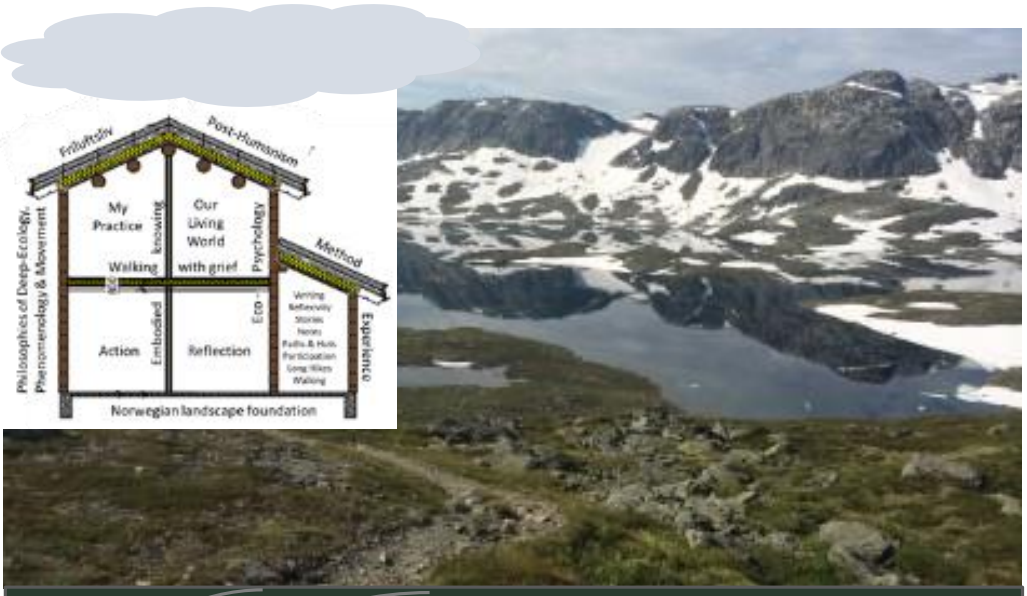
One of the weaknesses of Barbour's work in my view is that she fails to consider that experiencing movement inside of a building, say, a (dancing) institute, a (ballet) school or any other human construction, is quite different from how we experience movement outside in the free air. There, the movement of other-than-human phenomena – the air (wind, storm, breeze), the movement of the weather (rain, snow, mist, sunbeams) or the movement of other earthly beings (rivers, seas, paths, plants, animals, trees) – influence the experiencing of movement in a dominant and deeply sensitive way.

My position is that movement in friluftsliv, outdoors, has certain specific unique qualities that are different from moving within a human constructed environment, for example in a choregraphed dance, in most types of sports or in moving in human-designed spaces, like climbing stairs, walking on smooth surfaces like pavements or hallways or moving in buildings and houses. I could also critique her for not having looked at the pedagogy of friluftsliv that has already developed and implemented a large curriculum promoting movement in education (Tordsson, 2014, 2018; Hallandvik & Høyem, 2019).

In a later article, Barbour proposes using ways of embodied knowledge as a form of arts-based research (Barbour, 2006). I learned from my own experience that there's also an artfulness in my walking practice. It often inspires me to produce artefacts. I pick up things I find on my path like a colourful leaf, or a beautiful stone, and I make expressions like glimpses, photos, videos, and stories. I propose that my practice of walking can be seen as an integrated way of practicing art, craft, sport, education, adventure, reflection, relaxation, relating and developing at the same time. It can be seen as a discipline of its own, as a way of being, a way of living. Barbour’s way of studying movement and embodied knowing has certainly contributed to my understanding of embodiment, and the development of my embodied knowing. However, her omission of relating movement to the influence of the embodied presence of the outer (natural) world and other than human bodies around us, made me choose to walk into a somewhat different direction again.

Figure 28. An old mountain trail in the landscape of Rondane that I walked in the fall during one of my research walks

5.5 Reflection: What's still in the ground?



After sharing the practice account of the jentetur in which I showed what my role was as a guide and how I paid attention to my walking companions (quality criterium 2 in my table in section 1.3), I showed in this chapter how my way of looking at the landscape, the role of some important elements in it (like the paths that I followed and the huts that I stayed in), my pace and my embodied presence, all played an important role in my learning to understand what my practice of walking was all about. However, some questions remain in the ground underneath: if the features of the landscape are so important in my practice of walking, how have they contributed to the development of my practice? What do the paths really mean for me? How have the huts given me new insights? And how did my way of going slowly, help me in understanding the changes I was going through and the development of practice that I was experiencing?

While inquiring into my walking, I noticed that movement played an important role in my epistemology of embodied knowing. What happened when my moving body started interacting with its moving, living environment? How did I react to unexpected participants? What role did animals, plants, trees or rivers play in my walking research? And what was my reaction to the moving, living non -human participants on my walks?

To find answers to my question about partnership and participation and not only look at my participation with human beings (and meet the quality criterium of reflecting about my participative values and concerns) I decided to search deeper into this participative element of my walking practice: who was I walking with, apart from human beings? And what influence did these participants have on the development of my way of walking? I will search for answers to these questions in the next part of this thesis.

Part 2: Developing practice further: Engaging with the living world

After inquiring into my walking practice for a few years, I felt I still did not fully understand how this practice was of importance in my work as a change agent. At this point, I had considered the landscape, the nature and culture of the context I was walking in. I had looked at huts, paths, and my pace. I had also been inquiring into my own history, my research style, values and ethics, and the development of my embodied knowing. I had been reading literature about walking, eco-psychology, friluftsliv pedagogy, and philosophy, but I still felt there was something missing in my knowing about my walking practice. *I understood that change was part of my practice but how was it linked to my walking? How did the change I met on my path influence me in the development of my practice?*

One thing I had noticed was that the world around me and the living creatures that I met on my path seemed to play an important role teaching me about change. In the next phase of my inquiry, I decided to take a closer look at this relationship: *What role did the living world play on my walks? What could I learn about change from them?*

Like part 1, above, part 2 of this thesis contains two chapters and a practice account. In chapter 6, I share how a disruptive change in my life offered me a rich research territory for researching change. In this chapter I inquire deeply into how walking with grief developed my knowing about interacting with the living world.

After this emotionally laden chapter – which also shows my development as a practitioner through a shift in writing style – I share a practice account from my Saga-hike[36], a two-week solitary walk that I completed in 2018. This is again presented as an 'intermezzo' between chapters.

Then, in chapter 7, I conduct another cycle of inquiry into my walking practice, in which I explore philosophy and ontology and I share how my being in the world slowly shifted from a positivism of developing others, towards a new way of how I learned to enjoy again (after my grieving), my being in the world.

[36] The 'Saga-trail' is a two-week trail going through 3 national parks in Norway. For more information, see: https://saga.dnt.no/

Chapter 6. Walking with grief

6.1 Introduction

In 2017, I entered a new phase of my research. I had walked many trails, most of them with others, and many of them with my husband Thomas. Our children were growing up, with the older ones leaving home to start studying abroad, and they didn't much want to walk with their parents anymore. So, my husband and I completed many walks with just the two of us. We completed a long trail across the Hardangervidda, hiked around in Jotunheimen, Breheimen, Trollheimen; we had also started to hike on skis in winter.

I thought I would soon be ready to finalise my research and write up my thesis, not knowing that I was barely half-way. I knew that change, just like walking, also has a dark side. I had experienced it during my walks; after ascending a mountain and celebrating the view from the top, comes the descent. I often forget that the descent is much more difficult than the way up to the summit. It is often during the descent that accidents happen – a misstep, sliding, falling. You see that also with mountaineers: deadly accidents on the Mount Everest generally happen on the way back down. I had experienced it myself: Arriving at the summit, tired but satisfied, you think that your journey is completed, but the most difficult part of the journey still lies ahead of you. And so, it has been with my journey of inquiry. The most difficult part was still to come.

After passing my progression viva in the summer of 2016, I thought my research was nearing the finish line. One more year of writing-up and my thesis would be completed. This is also what I envisioned in my inquiry map from 2013 (see section 2.1), drawn with my positivist mindset at that time. Nothing was further from the truth. I had forgotten to draw a major part on this map: the descent. I first had to experience a deep descending before I could really say that I had inquired into all facets of my walking practice.

What was it like to walk with a difficult, unexpected change? How was it to walk with pain, sorrow and grief? How did my practice of walking equip me for changes that were unexpected, disruptive, or hard to endure? The opportunity to inquire into such experiences was unfortunately offered to me in 2017.

In this chapter I take you on a walk of descending into death, an experience of walking with a broken heart and grief, and I will share with you what happened when I walked a trail of presence with absence. I share with you how I met with reindeer at Toveseter, and with a pianist at Haglebu, and I will tell you the story of the valley of Dalabu. I will share how I found that my practice of walking in friluftsliv helped me with maturing my grief. I show you how I discovered the consolidating power of the more-than-human world, and I will share how solitary walking has helped me to envision living a life of free air: a 'frilufts'-life.

Now, let's leave this summit, where we have enjoyed the amazing view enough, and start walking from Høgevarde[37], descending into the valley of death.

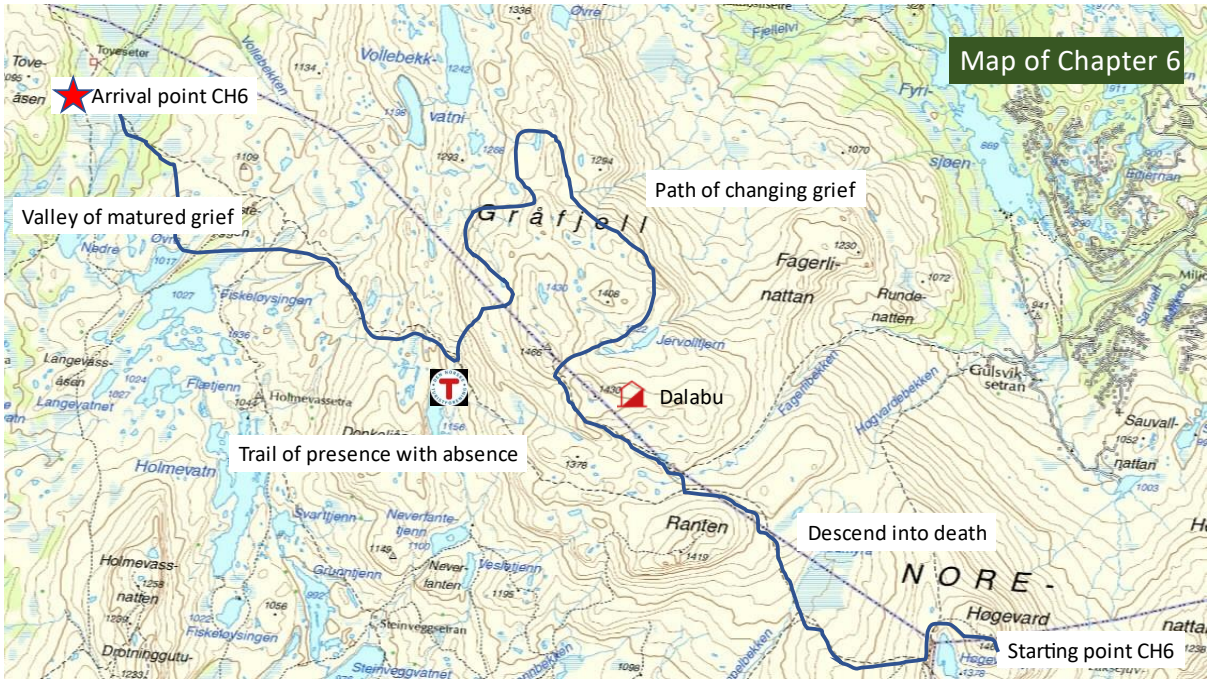


Figure 29. Metaphorical 'map of the territory' for chapter 6

Note to reader:

The topics in the next section deal with grief and bereavement. You may be personally affected by some of these issues. Please bear in mind to look after yourself if you need this.

[37] Høgevarde is a summit and a hut at the highest spot in Norefjell where I started my grief-walk in 2017.

6.2 Meeting the dark side of change

On April 28th, 2017, my husband Thomas was suddenly diagnosed with a malicious brain tumour that was located so deeply on his brainstem that it was too dangerous to allow for any form of treatment or operation. I remember this day clearly in my mind. It was the most shocking, worst day of my life, the most difficult news I had ever received. At only 52 years old, the doctors gave Thomas just a few more weeks to live.

We called our children home from all corners of the world: Sjaak (22) was just finishing his bachelor's in architecture in Boston; Emma (20) was studying event management in Sydney; Ida (17) was on a high school exchange in Nevada; and Hanneke (15), was still in middle school and at home with us.

After twelve seemingly endless weeks filled with love, care, worry, deep conversations, sleepless nights, compassion, and communion with family, friends and the local community, Thomas slowly had to give up living. He died peacefully on July 21st, 2017.

During those three extremely intensive months of helping my loved one die, walking and writing were extremely important and helpful in my survival. Even though I put my research project officially on hold and took time off from my academic obligations, writing helped me stay sane and, unconsciously, I collected a valuable amount of data during this period.

I wrote intensively in my diary about everything that was happening in and around me. As soon as we received the diagnosis, I also started to write a blog because that felt like the best way to communicate with 'the outer world'[38]. There were so many people around us that wanted to be updated on our situation. We had friends and family all around the world and our local community wanted to stay informed and help. For me, writing was a method for making sense of my experiences, to process my feelings, and to document what was happening, just as it was with my walking research. Life was so intense during these three months that I hardly could keep track of the things happening every day.

It felt like I had made a misstep at the top of the mountain after enjoying the beautiful view. We had just celebrated Sjaak's graduation in Boston, all the kids were doing fine, we lived in a beautiful house in a wonderful village, we had both nice jobs and were enjoying our lives,

[38] See https://thomasvelthovenblog.wordpress.com/ for the blog I wrote during these three intensive months.

then suddenly there was this disruption. I tumbled down the mountain. Nothing could stop my fall. I was sliding, falling, down, down, down into a deep black hole and I did not know where I was going to land in the valley. I learned from this that life is unpredictable, just as nature is. Change can happen anytime, unexpectedly. We humans cannot control our lives.

After we received the bad news, Thomas wanted to walk with me every day while he still could. He told me that if he were able to walk, he would still feel alive. We shared the vision that walking is living. Some unusual events happened in our local community during this time. Because I mentioned it in my blog, neighbours provided a bench at Lake Baarsrud in the forest behind our house, so Thomas could sit and rest before walking home again. A key to open the barrier into the forest was provided by the landowner so we could drive our car up to the lake and still participate in nature, taking walks of only a few steps, during the last weeks of his life. Meals were provided at our door by a shocked local community that read my blog every day and surrounded us with love and compassion. The experience of living through this unexpected disruptive change turned my life upside down. It forced me to stop living the life I had been living so far. My optimism was completely disrupted.

The funeral ceremony was exceptional. It was designed the way Thomas wanted it to be. On a field of grass down by the Oslo fjord we all gathered around the open coffin. The local scouts (our family had been active members for many years) provided a tent and benches for everyone to sit. The more-than-human world was also invited and prominently present. A light wind played with the candles and slowly blew them out one by one. A sailboat that came sailing into the Nærsnes bukta[39] solemnly lowered its sail in a final salute. The sun donated warmth and seagull cries decorated the emotional speeches. The local community provided home-baked cakes, coffee, and juice and after the funeral, once the scouts had cleared everything away leaving no trace, a violent, wild thunderstorm erupted, with lightning, thunder, and heavy rain. I felt this was Thomas bidding us a last thunderous farewell, just as his life, his laughter, his voice, and his presence had been in our lives.

After these three exhausting months, I felt devastated, heartbroken, and I needed to get away from the house we had built together, and in which our family had been living so

[39] Bukta is the Norwegian word for bay or shore.

intensely over those last three months. The mountains were calling me. The only thing I could think of was to leave and go for a long walk into the wild.

I hiked a long solitary trail through Norefjell, Gråfjell and Hallingfjellet and this walk became one of the most impressive, strange, unique, embodied walking experiences I have had in my life. Some deeply impressive exceptional phenomena happened to me during that week.

Writing this chapter has been very exhausting. At the same time, it was a healing experience just as my walking often can be, exhausting but also comforting, and joyful. I sat in front of my screen for many hours, writing this chapter with tears in my eyes, because the memories of all my experiences came back to me in such an emotional way, each time I tried to write about them. In the beginning I was not able to look at my data, the things I had written in my journal or the pictures I had taken on the walks. But slowly I managed to reflect on them. Through periods of reflexive writing while paying attention to inner and outer arcs of reflection, I was able to distinguish the different phases of grief I had walked with. In the end it brought me a new ontology to which I come back in the next chapter.

6.3 Walking with grief after experiencing death

Reflecting on this walk again in the years afterwards, while engaging in deeper cycles of inquiry on my embodied experiences in friluftsliv, I noticed how important my experience of walking with grief had been for my research. The solitary week-long walk that I completed immediately after I had been through this disruptive change experience in my life, developed a new type of awareness in me about my being alive in this world.

My state of being during this grieving walk was one of vulnerability. I had chosen a mountain range that was not too challenging to hike through, not too far away from where I lived, with paths that I had hiked many times before. I had accounted generously for time, including extra recovery days every other day. I had heard about research that explained the risk of living with a broken heart[40]. As Jauhar explains, emotions do have a direct physical effect on the human heart. Grief can cause myocardial injury and there is proof that broken

[40] https://www.ted.com/talks/sandeep_jauhar_how_your_emotions_change_the_shape_of_your_heart

hearts can be deadly (Jauhar, 2018). I did not want to fall or die myself. Helping my husband die was enough; this earth mother had four children who had lost their father, to care for.

I was still in shock and could hardly believe that Thomas, the love of my life, was not alive anymore. My brain felt numb, as if I was enveloped within a grey, misty cloud. Emotionally exhausted, I could not think clearly or analytically. This state of being brought a new dimension to my meeting with the animate earth. My walking was very different from what it had been before. My engagement with life and the living creatures that inhabited the mountains during this hike was exceptionally, emotional, and sensitive. When I reflect on it now, reading my journal and recalling my experiences, tears come back into my eyes.

> *I am blowing my nose and drying my tears with toilet paper. I am collecting a pile that is getting bigger and bigger. Later this afternoon, when it gets colder, I can use them to light a fire in the stove. I can light a fire with these tears, set my tears on fire. But first, now, here, sitting, writing, I can cry and cry, and finally let all the tears come out on this lonely mountain top.* (From my notebook @Høgevarde, 6. August 2017.)

During this hike in my state of grief, I noticed that the animate earth reacted to me in a way I had never experienced before. I remember I walked around through the mountains in what almost felt like a sedated state. My brain was not functioning like before; a fog of grief had laid itself over the landscape of my being. While walking, I suddenly felt as if all the living creatures around me in the landscape 'knew' what I had just been through. They could smell it, or hear me thinking, or they could feel it in the air. As if the trees and animals, the plants, and rivers that I met on my path understood that I had just lost my beloved. I can give you a practical example based on the notes from my journal:

> *It was a warm and sunny evening. I made a cup of tea in the little kitchen of the hut and took it with me outside to sit on the bench with my back against the wall and breathed the evening air into my lungs watching the sunset after this long day of walking. Suddenly I saw a reindeer appearing on the horizon at the top of the hill. Its antlers sticking fiercely up into the evening sky, I saw it nicking a few times. Then more reindeer appeared, and a flock of about 30 individuals started slowly descending from the mountain into the valley of Toveseter. I saw them purposefully heading towards me. First, they disappeared behind a lower hill but then they reappeared again, much closer to me now. I watched them keeping my breath; this*

was wonderful theatre to watch. Slowly they came closer, moving all the time, walking, grazing, following each other and the leader of the flock. And then, suddenly they came to me, so close, so near, while I was sitting on my bench, holding my breath. And while walking passed me, they bowed their majestic heads with their antlers towards me, one by one, showing me their respect. It reminded me of the funeral, when all the people came to greet me after the ceremony, showing me their respect, one by one. These reindeer seemed to do the same, passing me by and showing me their respect. I felt deeply honoured. They had come all the way down from the mountain to me, bowing to me and greeting me, telling me that they cared for me in their own reindeer language, showing me: yes, Annemiek, we know that you have lost your husband and we feel very sorry for you. They awakened an understanding of deep connection that I had with them in me. In that specific moment, sitting with my back to the wall of Toveseter in the evening sun, I felt connected with all the living species on earth. It was a feeling that I had never felt in this way before. (From my notebook @Tovester, 9. August 2017.)

On that same walk there had also been other strange moments of connection and interaction with nature. It felt as if all living beings around me were paying their respects. Walking around with all my grief, often crying, not paying too much attention to the path that I followed, I felt lost and sad. One day I had to cross a river, trying to follow her steppingstones across the wild raging stream of water. A slippery bolder decided it was time to baptise me. I lost my grip and fell flat into the stream. Standing up again, soaking wet with all my tears washed away by its waters, the river whispered to me: “You are a widow now”. So, I replied, “Thank you, river, for baptising me! Can I now go and change to dry clothes before I freeze?” I would not have experienced a fall in a river in a similar way before. This was the first time I heard a river whispering to me.

The river had told me I was a widow now. I was struggling to accept this identity shift. I felt way too young to be a widow. *What did it mean to be a widow? How could I continue living my life as a widow?* As a person with widow experience, it took me a long time to understand and accept why and how the culture of people around me had given me a new status identity. From one day to the next, my culture now called me ‘widow’ and ‘single mum’ which had a quite different, sad, and negative connotation compared to ‘wife’,

'parent' or 'mother'. When I married Thomas in 1993, I consciously chose to become a wife. On that festive day I did not realise that I had potentially also chosen to become a widow and what that would mean for me and my identity.

Because Thomas died suddenly, people felt sorry for me. They wanted to help me, they saw me as a sad and vulnerable woman. I had never experienced that before in my life. I had always been an ambitious, happy, intelligent, strong, independent female. I was struggling with this new identity that was given to me. It felt so 'not like me'. My worldview began to change. I had now learned that we cannot plan and design our lives as I had thought before. Life was like a mountain river, bending through the landscape, never straight ahead, changing from violent rapids to mirrored lakes, water flowing out into the oceans and returning as rain showers or snowstorms on the mountain.

But I was glad I was not living in earlier centuries. It must have been so much more difficult for women to lose their husbands in the old times. I did not have to wear black clothes or hide my face behind a veil. I did not have to marry my husband's brother or the village priest. Some cultures even kill widows. *How could I ever identify myself as being a sad, miserable, unhappy woman?* That identity did not align with my identification as an 'earth mother'. I was always helping others to grow, develop and flourish. *Was I the one in need of help now?* I could not deny it. It was the truth: I was a widow. *How long would it take before people would see me as 'normal' human being again?* Possibly never.

In his book about Signe Danielsen, 'the mother of the plateau', an earth mother among the Samen (Laps) in the north of Norway, Melien noted one of her wise statements:

> It took me long time to get over his death. Time heals all wounds it is said, and that is true. Little by little, the grief becomes more in the background. I was like a mountain birch in early spring. It looks dead and sad but beneath the bark, the sap rises and gives new life to leaves and branches. But forgetting - no, I never can. (Melien, 1975, p. 79)[41]

This metaphor of the mountain birch made sense to me. I knew deep inside that I still had half a lifetime laying ahead of me, but at this moment I felt as if my life had come to a halt. Like a mountain birch in winter, I was in the downturn of a change cycle, descending from

[41] Translated from Norwegian to English by myself.

the mountain, hibernating like a bear, going through a dramatic disruptive change in my life. It made me stop and reflect about life. And while walking, I engaged with the living world around me: *Is that what the trees do when their leaves fall off? Is that what bears do when they are sleeping in their lair? Are they taking time to stop, think and reflect about the essence of life on earth? Are they hibernating to collect new energy for the next cycle of change?* My walking inspired me to reflect about this big identity shift I was going through. I was imagining myself as 100 years old and looking back at my life. At that age, Thomas would only have participated in a small part of it. 24 years of marriage suddenly felt short. I felt time as a relative and strange phenomenon. It didn't mean the same to me anymore.

When I arrived at Haglebu, I took a short evening walk to the mountain church that brought back memories from the first time we were visiting there as a family with small children, before we moved to Norway. The local headmaster of the school had proudly shown us the results of his community engagements. *Had our visit here been the final motivation for us to move to Norway?* I was standing in front of the church when suddenly someone opened the door. I thought it was closed for the summer. It was a pianist, who invited me inside, asking me if I wanted to hear the music that he had just composed. I accepted his invitation and sat down on a chair in the corner of the large hall. He played his beautiful newly composed fugue for me as a private concert. The beautiful music and the special moment in this beautiful mountain church, of which I had such special memories, brought tears to my eyes again. And while I sat there, looking through the large glass windows at the wealth of green fir trees that surrounded the church, I felt I was finally attending my own private funeral, now without all these other people attending. I knew Thomas's spirit was there with me in that moment, and it felt very good.

My grief walk was coming to an end. Only one more mountain range. Hallingfjellet would take me through the valley of Dalabu and up to Langedrag where Sjaak and Hanneke would come to pick me up. Writing helped me keeping track of my walking experiences. My journaling during these days was intensive and reading the notes from my journals at a later moment, I understood how my walking experiences in the wild had helped me find peace at heart and avoiding myocardial injury. The living world around me had brought me rest, peace, and consolation.

A few months later I wrote a story based on my journal entries as a reflexive way of processing the data from my notebook and develop what Coleman calls “subjective knowing-in process” (Coleman, 2015, p. 394). I am sharing this story now with you as a data account, to show you how my walking with grief through the wild had brought me into a closer relationship with the animate earth. Through my walking with grief, while engaging with the living world around me, I had learned to better understand how this disruptive event in my life had made me change. Through writing this story I learned how my subjective experiences gave me new insights and competencies in how I could engage with the living world around me during my walks. As Coleman writes: “subjective experience is central to first person action research and action inquiry” (Coleman, 2015, p. 394).

The story of Dalabu

I am sitting alone on the steps in front of the Dalabu hut. I see the beauty of a green, peaceful valley in front of me. A bit further away in the background, I see the empty mountains of Reinsjøfjellet. The sun is shining warm on my face, a soft refreshing wind blows through my hair. I hear the stream ripple, its water in continuous flow. I feel at peace. Here, I can let go of everything. Here, I can let go of the pain of my broken heart. Here my heart can stop bleeding and slowly I feel a new, very thin layer of tissue starting to grow over the deep wound in my soul. When I was bathing in the river, just after I arrived at this place, I felt the fresh mountain water wash away another layer of hurt and pain and after a good night of 10 hours of sleep without any interruption (no snoring, changing diapers or running tears), I felt my broken heart slowly starting to ease a bit. This place is so peaceful that it takes away any risk for my open wounded heart to become infected with depression. This wonderful place full of living and moving beings is healing me.

I hear a bird singing in the small mountain birch that is standing next to the hut. I hear the bells of sheep in the distance; they are coming closer. This perfect valley, which I have all to myself on this perfect sunny day, offers me a space of peace.

Finally, I feel relaxed again after all these weeks of intensively caring, loving, nursing, and mothering my loved ones. Weeks with sleepless nights, helping my husband to let go of his life. They have been the toughest three months of my life. And now, here, in the Dalabu valley, I can finally start to let go as well. Let go of my love, let go of my dearest Thomas, let go of a part of me that will never be anymore.

A cloud is passing in front of the sun; is it Thomas telling me something? Suddenly the wind feels chilly. The sheep bells have disappeared but the stream in the river keeps flowing, endless amounts of water, washing away my pain. The trees are standing still next to me, grounded, with their roots deep into the earth. They wave their branches, telling me: "We see you, Annemiek, we are here for you, our green leaves are here to dry your tears, we produce new oxygen for you to breathe. We are here, as shelter from the wind, to produce fuel to heat up the hut. We listen to you Annemiek, we, the trees of Dalabu. Although we are small, we are strong, we survived the frost, snowstorms and the ice, and so will you. We are here; we wave at you to ease your broken heart."

The sun reappears from behind the cloud. It warms my body. I feel better again. My pink woollen shirt lights up in the sunlight. Here I sit, all alone, in front of the Dalabu hut, the most peaceful place on earth, reflecting, writing, crying out tears for my lost dearest Thomas. I blow my sun-burned nose once more, feeling better now. This landscape is helping me, supporting me, more than any human being, psychologist or therapist could ever do. This landscape is not coming with follow-up questions, explanations, interpretations, forecasts, advice, prescriptions or whatever. This landscape just sends another cloud, a sunbeam, or a birdsong; it gives me a place to be. Being in the wild. Me. Here. Now. On our beautiful planet earth. The trees just stand and wave: "We are here for you!" And that is all I need. I need no conversations, no long talks or human language, no words. All I need is the language of the earth. I thank you earth for being here, right now, for me.

I too will die, sometime in the future; my time will come but not now. Now, I live, and I can just be. We are all alive, together, here in this valley, the trees, the stream, the wind, the sheep, the birds, the mountain, and me. We use and help each other, giving and taking. We give water to wash and drink, oxygen to breathe, wood to heat, protection to sleep. Water, air, fire, earth, wind, and sun. All are present in this valley to care for me, just as I have cared for him, to give me new energy to survive this death, loss, and grief. Now I can cope, I can stand, I can tolerate. This valley brings me back to the essentials of life in a very gentle, soothing, caring way. I know there are many people out there that want to help me, care for me, support me and that is good to know but they cannot do what this valley does to me, the way earth facilitates my recovering from grief.

(Based on notes from my journal, @Dalabu, Friday, August 11th, 2017, written in the winter of 2018.)

Writing this story a few months after this intensive walk and based on the notes from my journal, I learned to look deeper at my walking practice. I see this writing exercise as an epistemological exploration in with which I tried to understand what I had experienced and learned during this walk. *How had my practice of walking helped me understanding the life-change I was going through? And how did the writing of this story help me reflect on my practice and the way I interacted with the living world that I engaged with on my path?*

My walking in friluftsliv helped me recover from this difficult change in my life. I noticed that my way of engaging with the more-than-human world had changed. *The animate earth had shown me a form of compassion that I had not experienced before*. It felt as if, through my vulnerable state of being, I suddenly was more open to receiving the compassion of the animate earth, as if I suddenly understood the language she was speaking. Through this experience, my world view was changing. As Seeley & Reason explain: “If we are more engaged and alive, we are more likely to feel the emotions that enable us to engage with discernment with the context we are in…which means we will get to know the more-than-human and other-human world” (2008, p. 45).

My walking had offered me the space and slow, uncommitted time for mourning, for just being, and for engagement with the more-than-human world. During the walk, I had been deeply touched emotionally by the earth's compassion and consolation. My reflecting and writing had facilitated a development of an embodied understanding of how my vulnerable participation with the living world created a new way of being in the world. "If we can keep open and allow responses to be called forth, we stand a chance of the personal and the universal uniting" (Seeley & Reason, 2008, p. 42). The response of the trees, rivers and reindeer to my grief gave me an understanding of this universal uniting. My stories expressed what I had learned from the more-than-human world as presentational knowing.

I had walked around with so many questions:

If life could end so abruptly, without any warning, then what was the meaning of living? If the living were so vulnerable and we all could die so suddenly, then why were we born in the first place? Why did Mother Earth want our ashes? Why should I develop my practice, write a thesis about it, and help the world in her flourishing, if we all end up as humus and nobody will remember anything about us after two or three generations anyway? Who would remember Thomas a hundred years from today? Why do we want to be remembered anyway? Do I want to be remembered by others? Why? Was that the reason why I was writing this thesis and making all those bunads?[42] *To be remembered?*

Walking around with these questions in my head and writing my reflections down – first in a journal and later as short stories – helped me in processing an embodied epistemological understanding of how my walking practice facilitated the creation of new knowing.

Making sense of this cycle of inquiry within my larger inquiry into my practice of walking, I came to understand that through my walking I had learned to "acknowledge our existence as one of the earth's animals, and so remember and rejuvenate the organic basis of our thoughts and our intelligence" (Abram, 1997, p. 47).

[42] The bunad is a Norwegian national costume, passed on from generation to generation. I made three, for my daughters at their confirmation ceremonies, and am making some more at the moment. For examples of bunad costumes, see https://www.lifeinnorway.net/bunad/

Through experiencing Thomas's death, and walking with my grief through the mountains, I had learned to open my senses to life and the living that I met on my path. I had learned that my walking through the wild brought me closer to non-human life on earth and my walking alone with my grief had offered me a new way of communicating with and perceiving life and death.

I had learned to affirm the animateness of my perception (Abram, 1997) and through this newly gained way of perceiving the world around me, had learned that my walking helped me participate in the living world in a different way. My questioning the purpose of the cycles of life and death also brought me to inquire more deeply into my process of grieving.

I became interested in learning more about my grieving process while walking because I had noticed that as time passed, my grieving changed as well. *Was it because of my walking that I was recovering from grief? Was it because of my walking while reflecting, that I began to understand differently, what life on earth was all about?*

In the next section I inquire deeper into my walking with grief.

6.4 Changing grief

While walking through nature in the years since Thomas passed away, I have experienced how my grief changed and developed over time. In the next two paragraphs I summarise an inquiry into the changes to my grieving between 2017 and 2020 and how I link these changes to the development of my practice of walking over these years.

Spontaneous grief

Reflecting on my grief experience, I realised that there were different levels of grieving. I experienced immediate grief after my husband passed away. This type of grief felt like an immediate, spontaneous sadness. I call it *spontaneous grief*. It comes immediately after experiencing loss or a disaster, often in response to a shock, and is based on spontaneous emotions and embodied reactions. It comes with tears, rage, anger, or denial, and it says: "No, no, no, this cannot be true!" News about a lay-off, a bankruptcy, a virus infection, a drowning, a car accident, or a malicious brain tumour can cause these types of reaction. While walking, I also met them in the natural world: an avalanche, a bushfire, a flooding, a killing, a raging tornado, or hurricane. "No, no, no, this cannot be true!". We feel helpless – as a victim or prey – and our reactions are not rational, reflected or planned but emotional, spontaneous, embodied and stressed.

Absence grief

The second level of grieving I experienced was the grieving that came when I realised that Thomas was not present. His absence dominated everything. This grief comes in waves, like the ocean, with feelings of missing that come and go. It feels like a craving, a longing for, and it awakens a sadness upon realising that someone or something is not present. This happens often when certain specific or important events are happening. I call this *absence grief*. It is often triggered by a sign, a memory, or a ritual, where the absence of the person, object or subject is obvious. When our daughter graduated from high school and Thomas was not there to attend the ceremony, it made me sad even though it was a joyful moment. When our son bought his first apartment, we could not celebrate together, even though it

was a festive moment in his life. Even when the covid pandemic broke out and I found myself thinking, “Thomas never wore a facemask in his life,” I felt a strange absence. I am sure there will be many more events like this in the future where his absence will be so evident that mixed feelings will arise. A marriage in our family in the future, a grandchild yet to be born – joyful moments that may have a sad aura because of his felt absence.

Maturing grief

The third level of grieving I experienced has to do with maturation of my grief. It is the type of grief that I again discovered through walking and made me understand how I could learn to live with joy while at the same time being aware of a presence of absence. I call it *maturing grief*. It is an acceptance of the fact that grief is there, and that there will always be an absence in my life and yet that I can still live my life joyfully, finding fulfilment. I found there is a process of discovering oneself in living with the presence of absence. It contains a process of maturating from spontaneous grief (intense sadness in the moment), through absence grief (missing presence that comes in waves) towards a discovery about what living a life with the absence of a loved one is all about (maturing or matured grief). This third form of grieving helped me to mature my practice of walking with change, accepting that change can happen any moment, any time, again and again. I discuss this third level of grief in more depth shortly. First, I will delve a little deeper into what I have come to understand as absence grief.

Others have written extensively about the process and stages of grief, with Kübler-Ross famously developing a five-stage model with stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Personally, however, I did not experience my grieving as described through these stages. I never experienced anger, bargaining or depression but quickly entered on a journey of finding meaning. I should say again that my overall inquiry was not about uncovering or defining the stages of grief. In my own research, I found it more interesting to look at *how my practice of walking while grieving, through my embodied participation with the changing, living world, facilitated my grieving process*.

Winter was arriving and the lakes froze to ice. *How many more winters would I be alive without Thomas?* In this part of the world, water changes from fluid to solid ice every year.

It usually takes a few weeks of frost before I can pull my skates out of the closet and glide across its surface. Skating is different from walking, being a widow is different from being a wife. From fluid to frozen, from swimming to skating, from partner to single. Again, nature helped me to make sense of change. Then, once the lakes are frozen, things change again. Snow comes and covers up everything. A virgin layer of pure white, fluffy substance changes the dark, cold, frozen landscape into a world of clean, magic, and untouched lightness. The identity of the forest shifts dramatically, just as my own identity shifted, and so it continues to change again and again. Later in 2017, I experienced another loss. My father died four months after Thomas and the wound in my heart, which had only started to heal a little bit, was torn open again. I felt I needed more time to walk, to slow down, to stop, to heal, be with nature and find out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life.

In that first long winter as a widow, I often felt resonance with the frozen landscape. I went for long trips on skis in the forest behind my house. It seemed that Thomas and my father 'donated' tons of snow to help me recover. I felt hard and cold, like a frozen lake, then soft again as if covered with snow. I skied alone, with friends and with my children; they also went through an identity shift. They had become children without a father or grandfather. They needed me to be there for them, their earthly mother who was still alive and could provide stability in their otherwise turbulent teenage and student lives. The cycles of nature kept on turning continuously, just like the earth. They taught me that decay, suffering, and death were just as important elements in the turning of our planet as birth, growth, and flourishing. I now realised that death is inextricably interconnected with the continuation of life. This was rich learning. Experiencing death was an important stage of experiencing in my development as an 'earth mother'. Losing a father and helping children who have lost their father made me once again realise how important mothers are in our lives.

While walking around in nature, interacting with the more-than-human world, and reflecting about the changes in my life, I discovered that my grieving process had enabled me to learn to live with the absence of Thomas, and I noticed that it had developed me further as a person. The grieving process brought me deep thoughts and reflections about what it means to live with the reality of 'not-being', what it means to be alive on planet earth among the living millions of other beings, the millions that will be born in the future and the millions that have already died in the past.

Walking around, noticing life going on around me while Thomas, my loved one, my best buddy, my hiking mate, was not there to walk with me, I realised that I had to stand up for myself and be comfortable with walking alone. I started to develop my own voice. I was not part of a couple anymore. I focused on developing my practice of walking alone. I learned to live my life with his 'not-being' present, but I knew that he was still there inside of my mind, inside of my body. He was in my thoughts, in my history, in my past life, in my children, in my heart, and in my belly. But he would not physically be part of my future life. He was in the air – I was breathing him in and out all the time – but physically, as a living, moving, human body, he was no longer there. I now had to cross the mountain-ridges alone.

Walking through the wild while engaging with the more-than-human world had helped me to think, to reflect, to cry, to smile, to see, to learn, to struggle, to fall, to persevere, to engage, to participate, to write about it, and to learn to be with it.

While walking through the Norwegian mountains, taking breaks at the huts, sitting at the table, looking out of the window, staring into the grey fogs outside and participating in the wild world around me, processing, thinking, writing, I learned how to live alongside the not-being. I matured through my grieving, and I felt enriched by the experience. Sitting in huts after a long day of walking, writing, and philosophising about my experiences with the dark side of change, I felt like an Arne Næss at his hut, Tvergastein (Næss, 2016, pp. 45–64).

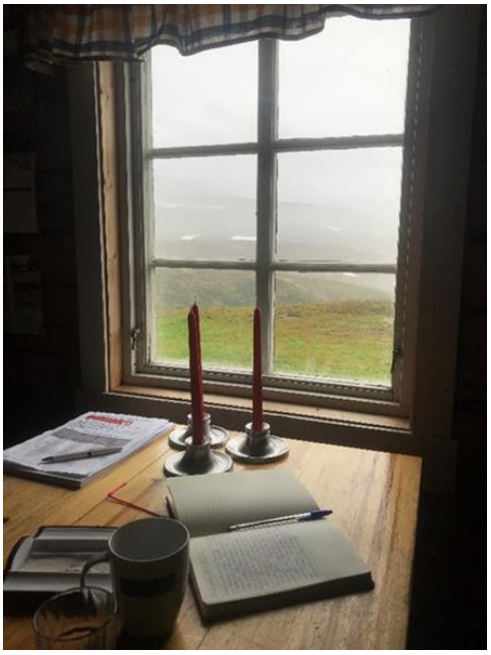


Figure 30. Writing @ Midtistua, summer 2020

My walking through the raw and dramatic natural landscapes had given me insights into how change in life appears. It was during this reflective and grieving period in my life that I felt my ontology shifting. It was the more-than-human world that helped me open my eyes and made me see how decay and death contribute to life and flourishing. I was not only living a life that contributed to learning and development; life was more than that.

I learned through this process of *maturing grief* that I could continue living on this beautiful planet that Thomas and I had shared in the past, in his absence. I felt I had matured into a person with an important change experience. I had not only given painful births to new life four times; I now also had the painful experience of helping the initiator of these lives die.

I realised that Thomas's death had given me an experience that touched my soul and my body deeply. This embodied learning through my walking made me realise that life could be short and that it was vulnerable. I learned that we, who are alive together on this planet in this moment of time, must respect and value each other. We are here to help each other to be born, grow, develop, decay, and die. I felt this as an 'earth-motherly' experience because it was the natural world that helped me learn to understand this. I learned this through my walking and through writing about this in different layers of reflection: in journaling, in writing stories, and now, in writing this thesis:

> *I experience maturing grief as a process:*
>
> *From learning how to live with grief,*
>
> *through learning how to live with absence,*
>
> *to learning how to live with not-being.*
>
> *(From my notebook, 28, July 2020.)*

I learned that for me, the *how* question was being answered through living a frilufts-life. Maturing grief contains a reflected experience. Through my walking I learned that *maturity arrives after an experience is reflected upon, understood, and given a place in one's life*. This reflection can contain rational analysis, or it can contain an emotionally felt embodied meaning, or both. I experienced an embodied understanding of how I had developed and changed myself through my process of grief. I see this process of maturing grief as a personal combination of experiencing thoughts, feelings, intuitions, reasoning and

emotions. I processed my experiences by thinking and feeling back, rethinking, and feeling again, and giving grief a place in my body, in my brain, in my heart, in my legs, and in my fingertips. This maturation of my grief developed as a "fingerspitzengefühl" (almost an instinct) of embodied knowing, and I processed it through my walking.

I see this maturation process of my grieving as a process of learning to be with the 'not-being'. That is, I have gone through a process of reflecting, thinking, and re-playing the experiences in my mind so that I can give them a place in my body and in my life.

I remember in the first weeks after Thomas's funeral, I dreamt about the ceremony every night. It felt as if I was the camera hanging in the ceiling of the tent, looking down at all the people gathered. I saw the flowers, the open coffin with Thomas's body lying peacefully in it, the candles that were blown out by the wind, the tent canvas flapping, and afterwards chatting with family and friends, and then the grand finale with a violent thunderstorm. I thought about this experience many times until I could finally give it a place in my body with acceptance. It had been an exceptionally beautiful ceremony, and I could not think of any more impressive funeral that I had attended. I could now continue to live with this memory.

While walking through the mountains, these types of thoughts often came to my mind, especially when I felt the wind, or I noticed dark clouds gathering. Then I thought "Hi Thomas, it's you again", and I remembered the beautiful funeral ceremony.

This example of the funeral is just one example of this maturation process. I could give many more examples of how I have reflected about my grieving process. Another example is what happened with the meaning of the cairns. While walking through the mountains, with questions about being with not-being, presence and absence in my head, the cairns with their red Ts were showing me the way as usual. The red Ts mark the hiking trails everywhere in Norway. Suddenly, the Ts that were present everywhere became something different to me. Something new. They changed identity from 'just a path marker' to showing me meaning and direction in my life. The Ts had become the T for Thomas.

Figure 31. T for Thomas

The Ts that had previously been simply a welcome signpost assuring me that I was heading in the right direction now symbolised Thomas 'showing me my way'. I felt that he was still there, out in nature, showing me how to follow the endless paths in the Norwegian mountains. The Ts symbolised my change and my maturation of *living with his not-being-present*. Each time I saw one, I felt joy – joy that Thomas was in this way still with me, assuring me that I was doing ok, bringing me safety and showing me my path forward.

My walking helped me to become wiser. I realised I did not have to work hard, please others, or strive to develop people and organisations; I could just walk, just be, and follow the Ts into my new future. I followed the path of friluftsliv, enjoying being outside and being alive on our planet. My mission was no longer focused on trying to make the world a better place, but, more simply, to *share learning in participation*.

Linking my learning from walking with grief to literature

I had come to one of the most powerful insights of my inquiry. I had learned that my practice of walking *facilitated learning in participation*. Not only in participation with my human co-walkers but also and especially in participation with the living world that I was walking through. The outcome of my walking was not so important as the walking itself, the experiencing, the moving, the perceiving through bodying-forth; this is what made my developed practice a valuable shared learning experiencing. As MacFarlane expresses it:

> The [mountains] pose profound questions about our durability and the importance of our schemes. They induce, I suppose, a modesty in us. Mountains also reshape our understanding of ourselves, of our own interior landscapes. The remoteness of the mountain world – its harshness and its beauties – can provide us with a valuable perspective down on to the most familiar and best charted regions of our lives. It can subtly reorient us and readjust the points from which we take our bearings. In their vastness and in their intricacy, mountains stretch out to the individual mind and compress it simultaneously: they make it aware of its own immeasurable acreage and reach and, at the same time, of its own smallness. (2008, p. 275.)

MacFarlane wrote beautifully about his walking experiences and what he learned from his participation with the landscapes that he walked through. Walking old ways on foot, finding wild places and mountains within the mind, helped him discover what he could learn from these landscapes. And so did reading Nan Shepherd, who described her walks into the Cairngorm mountains in Scotland as:

> a journey into Being; for as I penetrate deeply into the mountain's life, I penetrate also into my own…. I am not out of myself, but in myself. I am. To know Being, this is the final grace accorded from the mountain. (2011, p. 108.)

Like MacFarlane and Shepherd, I experienced that the mountains support my state of (well-) being. I started to understand what my walking through the wild was all about. I started to realise that walking in the mountains helped me to find the core of my practice and how the paths helped me to walk into my new future.

This future would be a future of joy.

In the following years, I undertook several solitary weeks-long hikes from hut-to-hut through the mountains. While walking my Saga hike in 2018, I came to better understand the first statement of the Deep Ecology platform:

> The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes. (Næss, 1993, p. 29.)

My husband Thomas had lived a rich and flourishing life and although it ended early, it had been beautiful with a high intrinsic value. Life has value from the first moment of being born on earth and starting to move (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). It was not necessary to 'complete' a lifetime into old age for a life to 'matter'. I shifted to embrace the position that every life is intrinsically valuable from the outset. My walking and my experiencing phenomena in nature, my studying the philosophy of Deep Ecology and my reflections on the theories of eco-psychology had helped me in noticing and understanding my shifting ontology.

I was shifting from understanding value as being in the world to help others grow and develop, constantly designing, planning, and organising the learning and development activities, to a being in the world where to be alive is to share a joy of learning in participation, together with others and not only human beings but also other-than-human living and learning creatures. This shift was from being outcome-oriented, where achievement of learning results through experiences had primacy towards an ontology of joy, where the spontaneous learning experiences themselves are in the centre.

Through a developed living consciousness and participating in encounters that took place along my path, I had discovered that the experiencing of change brought me joy that was more powerful than any learning outcome.

Thus, in the years after Thomas's death, I walked more into the mountains of my own mind and found grace in the Norwegian mountains. I understood that even though Thomas had died, and I still missed him every day, life could still be joyful. My embodied soul found joy and peace through my practice of walking. The dramatic and painful changes that had happened were eased by the beauty of the landscapes that I walked through and the fellow walkers who accompanied me. I saw a complete shift in my previously turbulent life, which had been so packed with family activities, with obligations of being a wife and a mother,

with full-time working and career aspirations, with sports and community activities, with emigration, with house building, with cultural adaption, with learning and development, and business consulting and customer pleasing. It all had changed. As Gros writes in his philosophy of walking:

> The wearisome grand passions and distasteful excitements of active lives, stressed to breaking point, are supplanted in the end by the implacable lassitude of walking: just walking. Serenity is the immense sweetness of no longer expecting anything, just walking, just moving on. (2015, p. 146.)

I had experienced a big change in my life that had taught me it was important to spend my life doing what I enjoyed best doing: walking, just walking! I had to get used to walking without Thomas because we always walked together, but my walking alone had brought me maturity and wisdom. It made me feel like Gandalf the Grey becoming Gandalf the White in The Lord of the Rings (Tolkien, 1965). I disappeared and then I showed up again with a gained quality of embodied presence. I disappeared into the mountains with no connection to my phone, for days, to collect new wisdom in the wild. I walked and thought and reflected and wrote in the huts that I visited. Time slowed down. My walking was slow. Wisdom is slow. It never comes fast. I learned that developing wisdom takes time, it takes slow time, it takes patience, and it takes courage to develop. Daring to cross that steep snowy path, slowly, step by step, all by myself, took courage. If I walked too fast, I could slip and slide down into the ice-cold lake, and that would kill me. Every step brought me closer to maturity, closer to wisdom, closer to being with not-being.

Not-being is an acceptance of all the things I will not experience, achieve or be with in my life, like running a marathon or travelling to the moon. Maturity is accepting this not-being. It is all right that I will not be. I will not be the president of a country (luckily), nor will I be a paraglider or a stand-up comedian, nor reach the summit of the Mount Everest and all that is ok. Being with not-being means that I will attend the wedding of my children with Thomas not-being there or seeing his grandchildren being born with him not-being-present and that is also something I have accepted now.

Living with not-being means receiving insights that there are things in life that will never be. And while I think it will not be there, it is there, nevertheless. Just as in the mountains. It looks like there is nothing. It looks like all is empty, it looks like the landscape is deserted,

but if you look closely one more time, if you learn to understand the language of the earth, you see that everything is there. There is air and water, there are rocks and soil, there is grass, and there are flowers and mud and fire and wind and rain and fog, and sometimes there is sunshine. It looks as if there is nothing whereas in reality, everything is there, even Thomas. You just must learn to see it, to smell it, to hear it, to value it, to appreciate it and then you discover its beauty and its joy.

Through my grieving process, I have learned to be with the not-being and it has opened my eyes and my senses. It developed my perception for experiencing the present and valuing my living with the not-being. Inspired by Heidegger who wrote about being and time (Heidegger, 2010) and discussed "*dasein*" as a way of being present in the world, others built further on his philosophy and both the theories of phenomenology and eco-psychology developed this idea of being present in the world further (Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Abram, 1997; Fisher, 2013).

I learned through my inquiry into my walking practice that being able to live in the present, while engaging with the living world around me, without focussing on the outcome, gave me joy and helped me to live with the not-being. Walking in this specific landscape (place), here and now, sitting in this hut, looking out of the window across the frozen lake, seeing grey, empty mountains with white patches of snow and strings of fog hanging over it, the drizzle coming down, I had disappeared from the civilised world but was fully engaged with the living world around me. I felt I became wise through my being with the not-being and engaging spontaneously with life that I met on my path. The reading about philosophy of movement (Sheets-Johnstone) and embodied knowing (Barbour) that build further on phenomenology had given me a better understanding about why my walking through the wild brought me this joy of participating in life.

While reflecting on all those experiences and writing my conclusions about this down in this document, the following thought came to my mind:

In living a frilufts-life I am, and I am not

I am not with others

I am not with Thomas

I am not in "their" world but,

I am in "the" world, "our" world

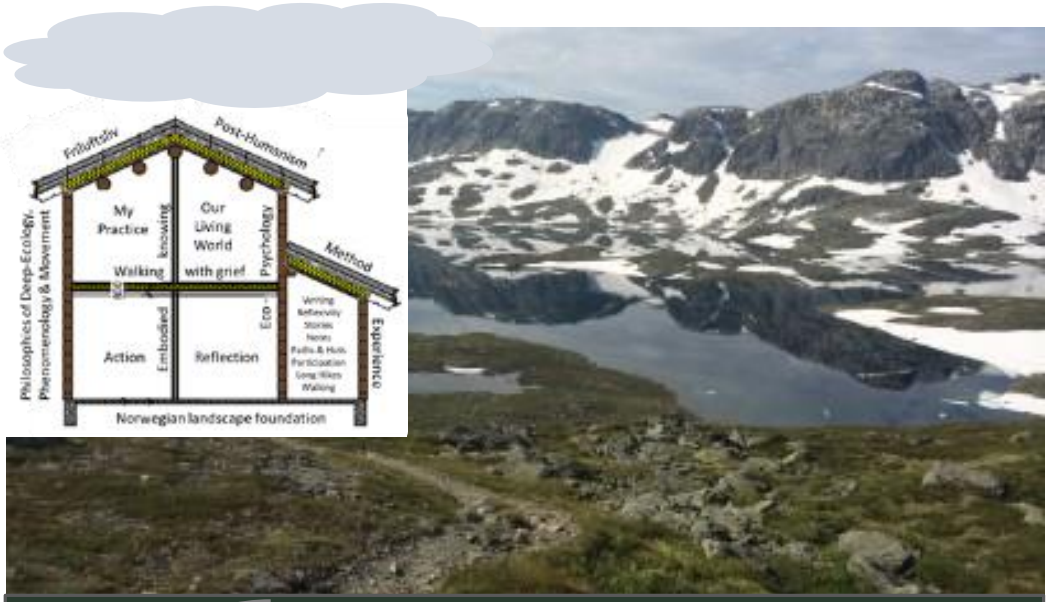
With all the living others

living my life in the free air

Where Shakespeare posted the question "To be *or* not to be" in the play, Hamlet (1603, Act 3, Scene 1, italics by me), I have adjusted the question in my maturation process to my personal question: "To be *and* not to be" – that was my question, and even more specifically, my questions were: *How do I do that, being with not being? How could I learn to be with the not-being? Was it possible to learn to live a life with not-being?*

Through walking with my grief, I learned how it was to be alive, with Thomas not-being-alive. And I learned that being with the not-being also had a rich value. Being with not-being forced me to live, to do things, to walk, by myself, alone in solitude in companionship with the free air while experiencing that I was never alone. There was always air with me to breathe with, there would always be sun to warm me or rain that I could splash to wash myself in. I learned to take solitary responsibility for my life, for my being alive on the earth and for enjoying my actions on the earth. I would live a rich frilufts life, engaging with the thousands of other living beings that existed and were adding value to this planet.

6.5 Reflection: What's still in the ground?



In this chapter I shared how my inquiry into walking with grief has given me a better understanding about how my practice of walking not only brings me joy for living, diversity, growth and flourishing but also how my walking in friluftsliv helped me to process, experience and learn to live with the dark side of change: decay, death, and loss .

My walking with grief helped me understand how change processes in our (natural) world can unfold in unforeseen ways. Some change can come abrupt and create emotional reactions, other change comes more gradually and takes longer time to grasp. How can I translate this developed knowing to organisational change where the focus is mainly on growth, adding value and achieving objectives? Why do we in organisations not often focus on how to deal with decay, loss, or divestments? There lies a taboo on decay and loss. I will search deeper for answers to these questions in part 3 of this thesis.

In the last part of this chapter, I described how walking in the mountains helped me in the maturation process of living my life with absence and how I learned that *maturity arrives after an experience is reflected upon, understood, and given a place in one's life*. My joy for walking did not disappear during this grieving process; on the contrary it became deepened and enhanced. It strengthened my embodied way of engaging with the more-than-human world. However, a question still unanswered is how I could give this new knowing a place in my life. It was not easy getting used to living and walking with this emotional pain of loss and bereavement inside of me. Was the living world sending me a message about how I could learn to live with death? I explore these questions in the next chapter in a philosophical way, diving deeper into ontology.

Intermezzo: Sagatur – a research practice account

In the time after Thomas passed away, I found it difficult to pick up my daily work-life rhythm again. I felt my consulting work made no sense anymore. Sitting in the office producing PowerPoints and discussing models with my customers felt like a waste of my precious time on earth. If one could be dead in three months, what should those three months preferably be spent on? After yet another unsuccessful effort of proposal writing, leading to a clash with my boss, I decided I needed time off to think about my life. I quit my job and decided I would go for a long walk. Putting my friluftsliv into action and picking up my research work again, I went on a long solitary hike to find answers to some of the core questions weighing on my mind. Between 3rd and 16th September 2018, I hiked a trail called the Sagatur[43]. It is a 230 km trail from Nordseter, through Øyerfjellet, Ringebufjellet and Rondane, finishing at the summit of Snøhetta in Dovrefjell. Before I left, I wrote some questions in my new notebook that I wanted to spend time on reflecting:

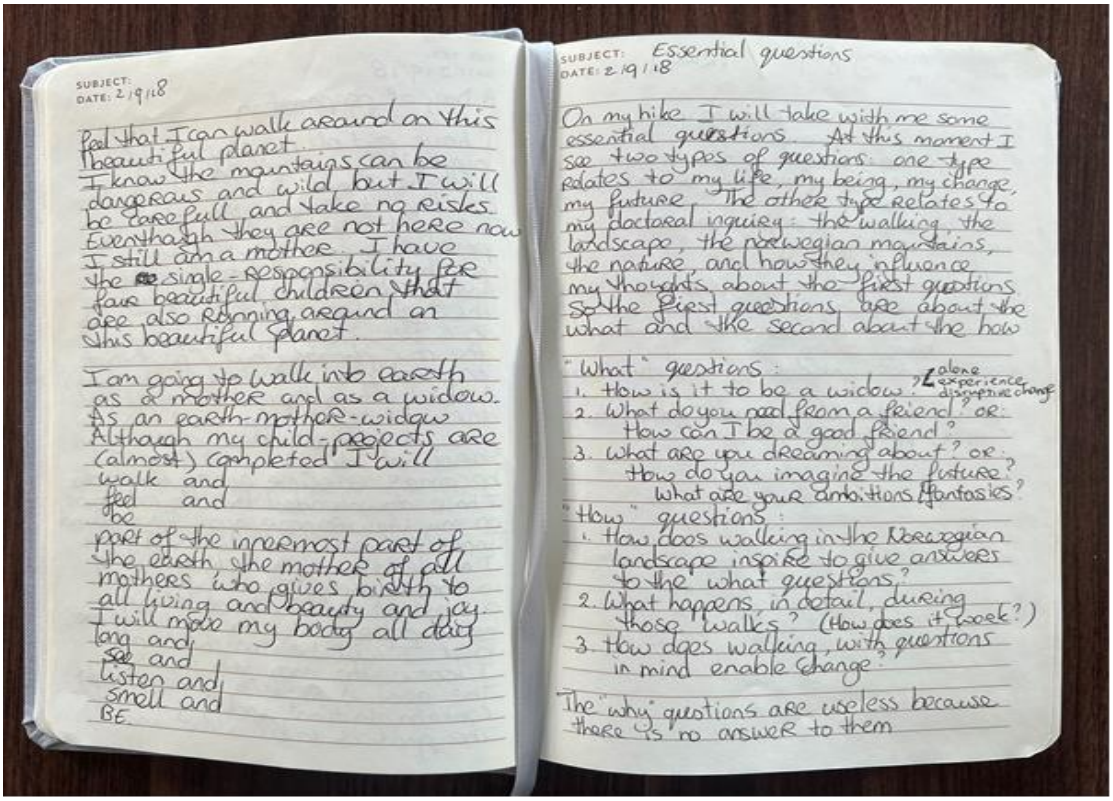


Figure 32. Questions in my notebook at the start of my Saga Hike

[43] For more information about this trail, see: https://ut.no/turforslag/1115975/signatur-saga-langruta-mellom-lillehammer-og-snhetta

What is the meaning of living if we all will die in the end anyway? How can I find purpose in my life without Thomas being present and with my children now starting their own lives? What does it mean to be an 'earth-mother widow'?

I read Victor Frankl's 'Man's search for meaning' (written in 1959) one more time and still did not really understand what he meant with his third way of discovering meaning, which is, "by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering" (Frankl, 2004, pp. 115-117). *Was I experiencing unavoidable suffering, and what attitude should I take towards it?*

Reading Rilke helped me assuring that it was fine to go out on long solitary walks: "The more patient, quiet and open we are in our sorrowing, the more deeply and the more unhesitatingly will the new thing enter us, the better shall we deserve it, the more it will be our own destiny." (p. 36, 2012, originally published in 1908.)

Until now, I had lived my entire life in company with other human beings. I had always been together with my family of origin, or my husband, my children, and my friends, and most of my walks had been walks with other people. I was slowly getting used to walking alone and I learned that solitude brought a new dimension to my life and to my practice of walking. I had first experienced this deeply in my grief-walk after the funeral. This time however my solitary walks had another purpose. I wanted to research deeper into my walking practice and find answers to other questions.

Rilke taught me that I should not expect to find them immediately:

> "Have patience with everything that remains unresolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answer. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day." (Rilke, 2012, p. 21.)

So, while hiking this long trail, I started living my questions by carefully observing my encounters with other living beings that I met on my path. I tried not to look for answers, but to look for experiences and encounters. My approach to inquiry was shifting again, from noticing, sensing, and walking through a landscape as a visitor to seeing myself as a member

of the community that I was walking in. I had learned to notice specific phenomena in the landscape and how they often repeated themselves in different situations. I had developed my skills of sensing and noticing (inspired Gooley, 2015, 2018; Abram, 1997). I had for example become more sensitive to sounds and smells in the landscape around me.

Through this inquiry I learned to notice wild animals and how they communicated with me when I met them, not seeing them as an outer threat but as a co-inhabitant in the area. I learned how a wild river that formed a disturbance in the rhythm of my movement invited me to a fresh foot massage. So instead of being annoyed that I had to take of my boots, I now experienced it as a welcome gift. I learned to notice how a whispering tree called my attention to a squirrel high up its branches, how a sudden appearance of an animal made me aware of its participation, and generally noticing change around. I wrote these discoveries in my notebooks and my photographs became better as well. They helped me noticing and paying attention to the beauty of diversity and distinctiveness.

Inspired by reading MacFarlane (2008, 2013, 2017) who wrote about walking through landscapes in the UK and Ekelund (2014, 2017, 2019) who wrote about his walks in Norwegian landscapes, I started pondering how I could be more attentive and engage with the animate and natural world during my own walks. These authors helped me experience change differently. The changes I was experiencing during my walks were caused by a moving of the earth, by cycles of day and night, by seasons, by the movements of living creatures, by appearances of new life, and by decay and death. This was not change that could be planned for, it was change that was happening through embodied perceiving, and in participation with the living world.

On my long Saga hike, I slowly came to understand that change is an earthly phenomenon that is essential both for my own moving body and for our moving planet earth.

While walking for many days in solitude, hardly meeting any human being but meeting a wealth of other living beings on my path, I developed a highly embodied sensitivity for participating within the wilderness. I had been walking alone for two weeks and felt I had become one with the landscapes that I walked through. I had become ‘wild’ as Harper describes it: “Only perception existed, a perception that was more complete, more whole than any I have known in a usual state of consciousness.” (Harper, 1995, p. 196.) For me, it felt like I had become a fully accepted member of our animate world. I had met and

interacted with so many non-human beings during these two weeks and they had offered me so many wonderful experiences that I now felt humble and appreciative towards all these living beings that had joined me on my long hike. Sitting in the peisestua[44] of the Grimsdalshytta, tired and satisfied after yet another wonderful day of walking, I wrote down my experiences and reflections from another day of hiking.

After I came home, reading over the notes in my journal, I could imagine myself walking there again. Reflecting about this experience a year later, and trying to write about how this experience really had changed my way of being in the world, I wrote the following story:

The story of the Dørålsglupen

When I first opened my eyes this morning and peeped through the curtains of my bedroom at Øvre Dørålseter, I saw that the sky was coloured with pink and orange. I jumped out of bed, put on my down jacket over my night shirt and went outside. I was just in time to see the most magnificent sunrise I had ever seen in my life. The early morning light coloured the mountains orange, pink and yellow. I stood there totally overwhelmed, gazing at the mountains around me as if continuing to dream. But I was not sleeping anymore because soon my whole body started shivering. I was quickly getting cold, standing there with my bare legs (it must have been 2 or 3 degrees Celsius), coming from my warm bed, but the landscape looked, smelt, and felt so astonishing I could almost have cried. What a joyful morning this was, what a fantastic experience to start a new day this way, what a beautiful world I lived in.

After breakfast I packed my backpack and left swiftly, ready to climb up the Dørålsglupen where I would experience a second magical experience on this same day. The Dørålsglupen is a gorge in Rondane filled with a mass of rocks and stones.

[44] A peisestua is a living room with a fireplace.

You walk through the bottom of the gorge but since it is filled up with all these rocks and boulders, you must first walk up, ascending a few hundred metres before you can descend through it on the other side of the mountain.

While hiking up through this vast mass of grey rock, I felt like I was walking through a bare, lifeless moonlike landscape. There were rocks under, beside and above me. Grey stone walls rose on both sides of me, and the sound of my steps echoed ominously around me. I reflected about how humans could never even imagine creating a space like this. It was such an incredible huge landscape, it made me feel humble, and small. It must have been an enormous avalanche, the crushing of the ice moving through the area or maybe an earthquake thousands of years ago that caused the top of the mountain to tumble down and change its shape into this bare, lifeless, silent gorge. It took me about an hour and a half to hike up to the highest point in the gorge. The huge rocky walls were towering impressively above me while I was stepping from one stone to another. They made me feel like a tiny little being, unnoticeable as I went through the dead silent landscape. Yet, it felt as if a giant could appear any moment from behind a huge boulder, awakened by my footsteps. I imagined that this would be the perfect place for them to live, among these giant rocks. As a little lonely human soul, I could hide behind the huge boulders if needed.

When I was a little over halfway, in the middle of the gorge, I suddenly stopped. I heard something. It was the soft sound of water slowly dripping. I did not see it, but I heard it. I sensed I had entered a sacred place. Around me there were only rocks, nothing else, just grey stones piled upon each other. It was very silent, and I saw nothing moving or living around me but there was the soft sound of dripping somewhere nearby. I knew I had come to a source, to a place where life begins. It was a place of birth, a place where water starts surfacing the earth. I was at the source of the world, experiencing the birth of a river. The landscape around me looked like another planet; I felt like I was on Venus or Mars. This is what Earth must have looked like before life began, just rocks and stones in thousands of shades of brown and grey. And then, suddenly, there it is: the sound of water. I did not see it, but I knew it was there because I heard it. Deep beneath me, underneath the surface, in the womb of the earth, life was starting. I felt emotional and somehow, I

felt I had to do something special: acknowledge this moment, execute a ceremony, say a prayer, sing a song or shout something. I felt my emotions needed to express this amazing moment, this experiencing. I spread my arms open wide, lifted my hands up in the air and shouted: “THANK YOU! Who or what ever created life on this planet, thank you! Thank you for letting the water rise from inside the earth, giving life to us all!” The sound of my voice echoed between the high stone walls. What a joy. Then I started walking again.

A few minutes later, while hiking down the gorge the sound of the dripping started to become louder, then it changed into the sound of streaming, flowing. It was incredibly special to hear the water stream underneath the stones I was walking on. Still, I could not yet see any water. The sound of water streaming became louder and louder with every step I took. And then, suddenly it was gone again. I fantasized that there might be a large cave in this mountain with an underground lake, and that the water had streamed into this silent underground lake. I continued to walk and suddenly, a little further down I saw it: a tiny steam of water appearing on the surface of the earth, the river was born. I felt humble and honoured to be allowed to witness this birth of life on earth.

Continuing my walk further through the gorge, the little stream slowly became larger and larger, the volume of water was swelling into a violent mass and while following my path downwards, I saw the stream transform into a waterfall so loud and powerful that it would be impossible to cross. Earth was slowly turning green, little flowers and insects were appearing, a vast diversity of living beings was exploding everywhere around me. I had walked from the death moon into the living Earth. What a joyful experience it had been.

(Based on an entry from my notebook from September 12th, 2018, *written in September 2019.)*

Experiencing this joyful moment during my solitary walk in the wild, writing about it in my notebook at the Grimsdalshytta (12. September 2018) and then writing it again in the story of the Dørålsgluppen a year later, touched me deeply. After I wrote the story down and reflected again on it in later cycles of inquiry, I felt I could still hear the echo of my footsteps in the gorge, the dripping of the water deep down inside the Earth beneath me was happening again in my mind. The rush of the swelling river came to live in me again. My embodied experiencing of this participation in the wild, and my writing about it, made the birth of this river an embodied part of me. I can still feel it in my chest, legs, lungs, and ears. I felt that Barbour's and Sheets-Johnstone's ideas about movement and embodiment (Barbour, 2004; Sheets-Johnstone, 2011) became integrated into my deeply embodied experience of participation on this Saga journey and that they are still a part of me. I take them with me wherever I show up. I feel I am a representation of this intense embodied experiencing of movement in participation with the living world.

Story writing has been part of my method to make me understand better what my practice of participative walking with change all is about. Writing the story of the Dørålsgluppen made me understand how my walking through deep participative experiences with the more-than-human world developed a joy in me that kept me going, walking, moving in the world. The writing of stories developed my practice into a reflexive practice in which my reflective entries from my notebook became reworked and translated into meaningful stories that interpreted those reflections. It contributed to a change in me and to the development of an ontology of joy that I will talk about in the next chapter.

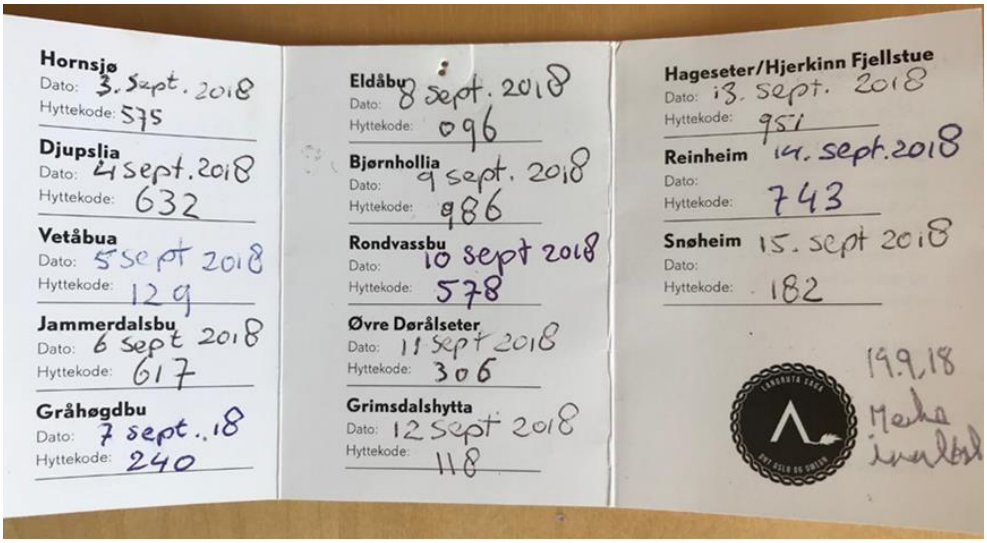


Figure 33. Account of the huts where I stayed during my Saga hike in 2018, representing rigour in my practice

By walking this long trail in the mountains, I learned that my participation with the wild animate world often offered me these sudden, unexpected, embodied moments of deeply joyful experiencing. Many of the phenomena I encountered made big impressions on me. I noticed that they settled themselves deeply in my body, not just in my mind, brain, or memory, but all over my body. They felt like little pearls of experience that had become part of me. I still feel, for example, my encounters with the reindeer at Toveseter in my belly, I still carry the long view from the top of Hårteigen in my chest, and I can share many more examples of impressive, embodied experiences that gave me moments of joy that I still cherish as embodied jewels of beauty deep inside of me.

This is also what I mean with my knowing of developed practice, the woman with the backpack who carries experience, presentations, and proposals through her embodied knowing as described in section 4.3. Because I met these animals, wrote about them in my notebook, reflected about the meaning of my encounter with them later, and wrote stories about them, I developed a better understanding of my practice what I call my developed practice of participative walking.

I learned that the more I walked and the more I reflected on my collected experiences, the deeper I felt that my core way of being alive on earth was touched and changed by these walking experiences. Sitting down after all this walking, I followed deeper cycles of inquiry and I noticed that something in my inner being was shifting. I felt I had developed a maturity of participation in the natural, more-than-human world, and this caused a deep humble respect for the Earth and all its living creatures, which again formed a basis for my participatory worldview.

> *While hiking through the last mountain range of my long hike, Dovrefjell, one day I suddenly met with a flock of muskoxen. The moment I noticed them, I had a palette of choices of how to react: I could be scared, surprised, or enchanted. I could react with screaming, showing powerplay by shouting at them to go away. I could react with anxiety, awe, respect, love, or insecurity. The diversity of psychological, physical, and embodied reactions to choose from was significant but the point I want to make is that in such sudden encounters with wildlife, you do not choose a reaction like that. I did not stop, make a rational analysis, and identify the best possible behaviour.*

Embodied engagement with the more-than-human world comes with spontaneity and is deeply embedded in experience and personal ontology.

Reflecting afterwards about my encounter with this flock, I noticed that my primary reaction had been one of joy. My spontaneous reaction was: "Wow, I am seeing a flock of muskoxen, and I even see a little baby calf among them!" (I thought 'how cute', not 'how dangerous'). When I noticed that they saw me too, I started speaking in a soft and friendly tone to them: "Hello oxen, my name is Annemiek, nice to meet you, I won't do you any harm, thank you for inviting me into your territory, I find you beautiful and amazing. I know you are super strong, can be dangerous to me, and that you can run much faster through these bushes than me, so I won't disturb you any longer and I will walk in a wide circle around you to continue my path further into the mountains". It felt as if they nodded with approval to me and then they continued grazing. (Based on entries from my Saga-hike notebook, 2018.)

Inquiring deeper into my embodied engagements with the living earth, I realised that my ontology of joy and my embodied experiences formed the basis of my knowing. My first reaction was one of surprise and joy; I felt neither scared nor threatened. I noticed that the muskoxen, in reaction to my joyful way of being, did not feel scared or threatened either.

However, my experience warned me to be careful and my social antenna were out and alert and that is why I talked softly to the animals and moved in a wide circle around them, so as not to disturb them. I had read books about encounters in wildlife and about muskoxen (Lopez, 2014) and knew they could be dangerous, especially when they had calves.

Reflecting about my encounter with the muskoxen made me realise that they also communicated to me in their own embodied way. Looking at me, nodding and then looking away to continue their grazing meant that they felt I was no threat to them, as if they signalled: you are ok, you can pass to walk along. I had learned to understand and interpret their embodied language. Through my experience I had learned how to engage with their bodies through my own body. We spoke with our bodies; language was not needed.

On September 16th, 2018, after a tough ascent through a snowstorm, I reached the summit of Snøhetta. I was enriched with a wealth of experiences and learnings but still with many of my research questions unanswered: *What did my learning about participation in the living world tell me about how I could change to live my life? How had my developed practice of walking shifted my ontology of being in the world? How could I transfer the learnings from my walks to my work as an organisational change consultant?*

Figure 34. On top of Snøhetta, 15th. September 2018

Chapter 7. Joyful walking through engaging with the living world

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I share how I have taken my developed walking practice into yet another cycle of inquiry. *How did my learnings from walking with grief influence my practice and my being in the world?* To answer this question, I looked at the theories of Deep Ecology and Ecological post-humanism one more time. I explored how some of their ideas resonate with my developed practice and my world view of caring for life on our planet, but I also found areas where my views and experiences differed. This cycle of inquiry brought me to a discovery about my changed ontological position. I explored this ontological shift and studied different types of joy in my search to understanding what joy means for me and my being in the world. In this chapter I elaborate on this long journey and explain what I mean with my newly discovered ontology of joy.

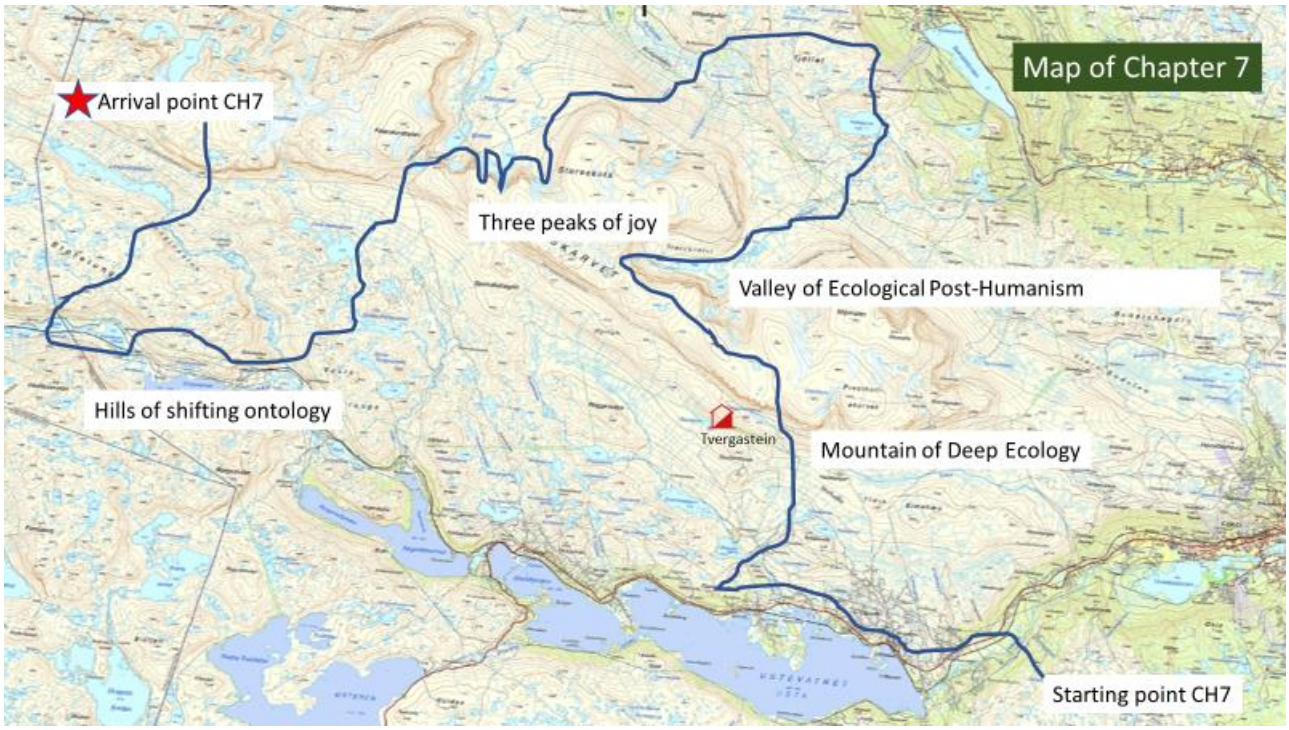


Figure 35. Metaphorical 'map of the territory' for chapter 7

7.2 Integrating Deep Ecology into my practice

My research journey brought me literally to the founding mountain of Deep Ecology, as I hiked and skied on several occasions through the Hallingskarvet mountain range. Hallingskarvet is where Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1912-2009) had his mountain hut Tvergastein and where he wrote many of his philosophical works. As well as being a fervent walker of these mountains[45], Næss was one of the founders of the Deep Ecology platform, which began in the 1960s as did the global environmental movement.

Deep Ecology's core beliefs are founded on ethical values concerning our treatment of the living earth. According to Deep Ecology, all life should be respected and seen as having certain basic rights to live and flourish (Sessions, 1995; Næss, 1993, 2016; Reed & Rothenberg, 1993). George Sessions who worked closely with Arne Næss describes Deep Ecology as a platform that "is essentially a statement of philosophical and normative ecocentrism together with a call for environmental activism" (Session, 1995, p. 190).

The eight ideas described in the platform for Deep Ecology (Næss, 1993, p. 29) helped me make sense of my own walking practice and to look at it from an eco-centric point of view. Here, I first look at how reading the ideas of Deep Ecology has influenced my practice and then discuss critically where my work aligns with and where it differs from their views.

The initiators of Deep Ecology talked of creating a 'platform of supporters' (Næss, 1995; Reed & Rothenberg, 1993) because they did not want to call Deep Ecology a 'movement'. From the generations before them, they witnessed that 'movements' were often based on strong rules and doctrines (for example the communist movement, the fascist movement, and some religions), leading in their view to unwelcome outcomes, such as indoctrination and extremist behaviour that ended up in war. This was not what they wished for their own platform. Deep Ecology beliefs are grounded in a notion that the world changes continuously and that we learn and develop every day as a consequence of which, they accept that the basis for their own Deep Ecology beliefs could also change over time.

[45] For an illustration, see: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAC766B95FD2DA21F

Proposal for a 'Deep Ecology platform' by Arne Næss and George Sessions

1	The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness they may have for narrow human purposes.
2	Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.
3	Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4	Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
5	The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.
6	Significant change of life conditions for the better requires change in policies. These affect basic economic, technical, and ideological structures.
7	The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8	Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.

Figure 36. The Deep Ecology platform (retrieved from Næss, 1993, P. 29)

Næss and Sessions insisted that their 'points' were not to be seen as rules, or laws but as a 'proposal'. Næss wrote, "Others may work out their own formulations because any set of formulations will be coloured by personal and groups idiosyncrasies. So, several are needed." (1993, p. 28.) In their writings however, the Deep Ecologists do seem rulebound.

The first point of the platform promotes the flourishing of human and non-human life on earth regardless of usefulness for human purposes. According to Deep Ecology, life is valuable because it is alive. A dilemma, however, is how to find a good balance in valuing all these living beings on our little planet while populations species are growing and shrinking or going extinct and whether we can find a sustainable, balanced way to live together.

In point 5, the Deep Ecologists say that there are too many humans living on our planet, at this moment in time. All these humans need food and houses, and increasingly want e.g., cars and highways and airplanes and holidays, with the result that we have cleared huge parts of our planet, reducing biodiversity to make space for humans, including myself, to live. Climate change and mass extinction are a result of this. Monocultures were introduced to sustain the human species, at the expense of the diversity and flourishing of other living

species; pollution is a side-effect of human ways of life. I am aware that I am guilty myself in participating all of this and I struggle with this ethical awareness. Producing four children has been my biggest polluting contribution to the world. These children now need food, they book airline tickets; they contribute to human domination on the planet. The best way to reduce pollution, climate change and mass extinction is to reduce the human population on the earth. However, killing people cannot be the ethical alternative. Did Thomas's death contribute positively by decreasing the human population? Næss (who also wrote point 8) himself had four children, so like me he contributed human domination fourfold so how could he then subscribe to point 5, which promotes the decrease of the human population on earth? Næss died in 2009, so was that his contribution?

The flourishing and balancing of life on earth is very difficult to 'manage'; in fact, I think this flourishing and balancing is not about human managing, subscribing, or promoting at all. It is about change. About continuous, everlasting change. My biggest problem with the Deep Ecology platform is that it is still written from an anthropocentric point of view. As if we humans can achieve all these things by subscribing to these points and putting actions into place to make them happen. There is no acknowledgement that it is maybe not us humans but the living world itself that ultimately establishes this balancing and flourishing. Others who critique the ideas and thoughts of the platform say that it is "difficult for most people to see from [these descriptions] what actions they should take in their own lives…they remain disembodied and impersonal" (Nicol, 2012, p. 9). I agree with Nicol that the platform points are difficult to translate to suggestions of how I could change my way of life. Environmental philosophy remains often intellectual and generalised, but it does help us to create a mindset and reflect on causes in the process of finding possible solutions.

For my research, I have taken a closer look at point 2 of the Deep Ecology platform, which says that richness and diversity of life contributes to the flourishing of life. What is interesting about this point is that (already written in 1979), it includes all life and explicitly also states non-human life. It is thus broader than the action research definition that promotes the flourishing of *human* life (Reason & Bradbury, 2014, see also my discussion in chapter 4). Deep Ecology presupposes that "life itself, as a process over evolutionary time, implies an increase of diversity and richness" (Næss, 1993, pp. 29–30). The implication is that new species can come into existence *because of* the flourishing of other species.

I find it interesting that in these times we place so much focus on the extinction of species, (which I think is important and I agree we must try to prevent) and pay very little attention to the birth of new species. Are new forms of life being born at all these days at all? Which was the latest, newest species born on earth?[46] This is hardly ever discussed in the media. Do new variations of the Coronavirus count? Maybe I should develop my walking senses even more or try, as Abram (2011) suggests, 'becoming animal' by developing my embodied senses and not just my cognitive skills.

By 'richness' Deep Ecology platform supporters mean the 'abundance' or 'flourishing' of life on Earth. They envision the natural world as a subtle balance of complex inter-relationships in which the existence of living organisms depends on the existence of others within their ecosystems. Deep Ecology believes that our dominant human destruction of the natural world poses a threat not only to other species but also on our own species since all living organisms in the world interact and depend on each other. Theories developed in later decades like complexity theory and systems theory also build on this idea of reciprocity of all living beings on earth. We give and take and interact to change, to thrive and to flourish, to grow and learn, to give birth and to die, and to make our planet into a beautiful home for so many diverse and complex beings that are continuously interacting and moving around.

I experienced such complexity of interrelationship while walking through the Dørålsgluppen.

> *As soon as I experienced the river being born, surfacing on the crust of the earth, and the water started flowing down from the mountain, diversity of life, interactions and flourishing started to appear. Lichens coloured grey rocks green, little flowers appeared in cracks and holes of big boulders, insects buzzed around them, and an incredible abundance and complexity of diversity of life exploded on the path while I walked down. (From my Saga hike notebook 12. September 2018.)*

[46] The Eumillipede was first discovered in 2020: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eumillipes Is it newly known about or perhaps a new species?

Figure 37. Beautiful flourishing on a crack of a rock in the high mountains of Norway

In point 8 the Deep Ecology platform calls for action and activism – this is also what action research promotes (see criteria 5 in section 1.3). Given that the platform also promotes diversity (in point 2) this activism could be as diverse as there are species on the planet. Many supporters of Deep Ecology have expressed their activism in collective non-violent protests. In 1970, Næss himself defended the Mardalsfossen waterfall by chaining himself onto some rocks with other activists to try to prevent it being converted into a hydro dam (which today is seen as an environmentally friendly way of making 'green' electricity).

Both large organisations like Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund, national governments but also individual people and small communities, act trying to protect species, landscapes, and habitats against human domination and destruction. National parks have been established, rare species have been banned from hunting and killing, and poisonous fertilisers and forest clear cutting have been prohibited. However, after half a century of activism to protect the diversity of life on earth, the climate crisis is more acute than ever, the Amazon is still disappearing, and there is no consensus on the danger facing the Great Barrier Reef[47]. Have the eight points of the platform been a waste of time after all? Would

[47] https://www.aims.gov.au/news-and-media/great-barrier-reef-not-fine-and-nor-it-dying-truth-inbetween

there be another, more effective way to achieve the ambitions of the Deep Ecology platform to protect the diversity of species and the balancing of flourishing of life on earth?

Participation in mass manifestations or attracting media attention don't go well together with my personality and who I am as a person. I don't feel comfortable joining a great movement, walking the streets to protest, or seeking media exposure. But I do want to contribute to help finding solutions to this rebalancing dilemma of life on earth.

Could my walking practice, my action research, and the writing of this dissertation contribute to finding a solution? Could my walking practice contribute to the development of a better understanding about this balancing on our planet? My walking practice promotes finding a balance between flourishing and decaying, between life and death, between walking and resting, between action and reflection, between the path and the hut, so how does that help the flourishing of species?

As Alan Drengson wrote in an overview of Næss's life and work: "Ecological wisdom involves intuition and insight that energizes our spirits, minds, feelings, and senses with unified understanding." (Drengson in Næss, 2016, p. 40.) *Could the idea of the development of ecological wisdom through walking in fact be my form of ecological activism?* My walking practice invites us into developing intuition and insights in participation with the living world. It is an activism of joining in with living and moving creatures, through becoming one with animal (Abram, 2011), with air (Stoknes, 2019) or tree (Simard, 2021), and it invites to energise the spirit, mind, and senses in participation with the living world. *Does my walking also result in an ecological wisdom that results in a better appreciation of the quality of life and living on earth? Does my practice of walking, by moving together with other living beings help in developing a wisdom that clarifies our understanding about change on earth?*

I remember hiking with friends through Langsua national park while we had some deep conversations about our 'last twenty healthy years' on the planet (at this time, we were all in our early fifties) and we discussed what we wanted to accomplish during those last twenty healthy years. The answer I gave to my friends was 'facilitate walks with others to learn more about change in life on earth'. It was what we were doing right there in that moment. I noticed that my answer had a double layer: Our movement through the landscape, our interaction with nature, the views that we had, the animals, trees, and plants

we met, the embodied physicality of our walking and our moving in and out of deep spiritual dialogues, gave me so much joy in the moment, and created value through changing our perspective. I feel certain that activism does not have to be expressed as angry protesting, shouting, arguing, or convincing. I have noticed that my own activism is more of an invitation. It contains wondering, admiring, caring, learning, and developing. I invite my participants to walk with me, and my invitation to walk facilitates developmental processes in them, and in me and even in the creatures that we meet on our path.

On that day, I noticed that this way of walking inspired us to reflections about purpose and meaning and sustainable life on our planet. And while we walked together, I envisioned a future with humans walking on the earth in an embodied, present way while living a 'frilufts' life. I suddenly realised that the future I desired was already happening in that very moment. I was walking right there with my participants, and we were wondering, learning, and enjoying together. And while walking and talking and reflecting about this, I realised that *I had developed an ecological embodied wisdom.*

Through the slow movement of walking and the interaction with the landscapes, and all its diverse, abundant living creatures, I experienced the 'unified understanding' Drengson talks about in his introduction to Næss's 'Ecology of wisdom' (2016), as a deep ecological experience. It made me understand that my walking on this beautiful planet had created a maturation in me that made me live my life in a more conscious friluftsliv style: I felt that my research had resulted in an ecological embodied wisdom.

I will come back and discuss Næss' theory more critically in the intermezzo between chapters 8 and 9.

All my walking, reflecting, writing, skiing, dialoguing, and even the dying of Thomas had contributed to change my mind, my body, my life, and my practice. I now knew that spending time out there, in the mountains, in the woods, along the fjord, walking through the fog, in sunshine and rain was important to me. It had become a basic and essential part of my life. I needed to walk so that when I returned to the urban world, I could deliver my practice of change in a natural, energised, and joyful way. I could deliver a practice of change filled with the wisdom from the Earth. Based on the experiences from all my walks in nature, I could transfer my embodied knowing into quality guiding that was so desperately needed by the organisations that I worked with.

From my notebook, 7. April 2019

Glimpse 5. Ecological embodied wisdom

7.3 Positioning my research in ecological post-humanism

Many of us humans have lost our connection with our living planet. Most of us in the western world spend our days living with and among humans, in our human-constructed environments, executing human activities, with our human-created things. Through all our building, constructing, performing, optimising, automating, controlling, and producing activities, we have created a human mess stripped of intimate relations with the other forms of life on the planet. *How can we continue living on our planet earth without destroying it? And (how) could my walking practice contribute to the restoring of the flourishing of all living beings on our planet?*

After finding a fertile soil for my research in Deep Ecology and eco-psychology, I next tried to find a landscape in which I could position my research, to develop it into the future. *How could my practice of walking contribute to making our world a better place to live?*

After surveying more ecological literature, I discovered that I could position my work in the philosophy of post-humanism. In this section, I explain why I position my work in this philosophy of ecological post-humanism.

Humanism is based on anthropocentrism, which means putting the human in the centre. The term 'anthropocentrism' has a connection to the 'Anthropocene', a new geological epoch said to date from the time of significant human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change (Crutzen & Stroemer, 2000; Steffen, 2021). The timing of the start of this epoch is still being discussed. Some consider it started about 12.000-15.000 years ago, when humans changed from being hunter/gatherers to become farmers that started to cultivate the earth. Others argue that this epoch started in the late sixteen hundred after Cartesian dualism was introduced and once the enlightenment came to dominate the development of positivist science, which led to many human discoveries and inventions.

Yet others propose that the Anthropocene started in the late eighteen hundreds with the start of the industrial revolution and the explosive growth of the human population. Homo sapiens became dominant on our planet and this resulted in a surge of clear-cutting of forests, development of cities, building of roads, bridges, and tunnels. Eventually, the

polluting effects of trains, cars, machines, airplanes and many more interventions are resulting in mass extinction of other-than-human species and climate change has manifested as a planetary crisis (Bregman, 2019; Harari, 2015).

The idea underpinning the Anthropocene is that in a distant future this human epoch will be visible as a new geological layer in the earth, a geological follow-up layer coming after and above the era of the Holocene. When geologists (whether human or maybe of some other species) dig into the crust of the earth, thousands of years from today, they will find a physical layer identifiable as a period in history where human beings formed the dominant species on the surface of the earth. It will be a layer that constitutes of plastic, concrete, glass, asphalt, etc., all the things that roads, pavements, streets, buildings, highways, cities, and other human constructions are made of.

For my research it was not so important to establish when this epoque of the Anthropocene started, as my field of research is not in geology or climate change. It is very clear to me that humans are the dominant living species on planet earth in my lifetime (the humanly defined twenty first century). I found it more interesting to think about what we humans can do to becoming less dominant, or at least a less destructive species on our earth. To answer my questions of: *Walking, so what?* and *What now?* I found it more interesting to take a closer look at the beliefs of post-humanism; how and where they relate (or do not relate) to my inquiry findings and how some of its concepts might help me answering my questions about the future of my practice.

Ferrando (2013) states that there are at least seven different types of post-humanism (antihumanism, cultural post-humanism, philosophical post-humanism, the post-human condition, post-human transhumanism, AI-takeover and voluntary human extinction) and some of these also have overlapping areas of study. Cultural post-humanism, for example, builds further on humanism and its legacy by questioning the historical notions of 'human' and 'human nature', often challenging typical notions of human subjectivity and embodiment (Haraway, 1986). Anti-humanism is critical of traditional humanism and traditional ideas about humanity and the human condition (Baker, 2017). Meanwhile, trans-humanism is an ideology and movement that seeks to develop and make available technologies that eliminate aging, enable immortality and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities, in order to achieve a 'posthuman future'

(Hayles, 1999). A variant of trans-humanism is what is called the “AI-takeover” which suggests that humans will not be enhanced but rather eventually replaced by artificial intelligences. Some radical philosophers promote the view that humans should embrace and accept their eventual demise, which can then lead to a voluntary human extinction. Here, the ‘post-human future’ is a future without any humans at all.

Post-humanism promotes the idea that humanity can be transformed, either transcending, or being eliminated by technological advances or the evolutionary process and is often expressed as an artistic, scientific, or philosophical practice which reflects these speculations at to what comes after this period of human dominance in the world. *What will the age after the Anthropocene be? How will and can the world change when humans are no longer seeing themselves as the dominant species but open their minds and acknowledge that all life on earth is just as equally valuable as their own lives on earth?*

We call this ‘post-humanism’ because it goes beyond humanism, imagining what comes after humanism. We don’t know how to call or name this field of study, since we don’t know what will come after this epoque of human dominance on earth yet. However, post-humanism finds it worthwhile to think, imagine or theorise about possible futures and one of its ideas is also that: if we imagine a future, start talking about it, find words, images, fantasies, or descriptions about it, we may be able to make it come true (Haraway, 1985; Ferrando, 2013, 2016, 2020; Morton, 2018).

During my walking, I became consciously aware that our co-existence, this co-participation, this reciprocal interdependence between all life on the planet encapsulated something essential for life to survive on our planet. Connecting deeply with other than human life in the world around me while walking, moving in embodied action, I perceived that I was just one little living creature among thousands of other living creatures, a little participant in a big, sublime, huge, living, moving, and acting being that we call earth, or even, the universe.

Post-humanism imagines living on an earth free from human (historical, cultural, gender, race, religious) supremacy and considers how to give all living beings an equal opportunity to live, learn, develop, flourish, decay, die, and reproduce respectfully on our planet. Post-humanism contains a wide range of studies. It has roots in several different academic disciplines, including philosophy, ecology, technology, culture, anthropology, sociology, and

history. Post-humanists claim that a post-human ethics encourages us humans to think outside of the narrow interests of our own species and take seriously the interests and rights of beings and things that are different from us.

While reading about post-humanism, I found an affinity within the realm of ecological post-humanism (a sub-discipline of philosophical post-humanism) that builds on a post-anthropocentric, post-dualistic and post-positivist world view. Ecological post-humanism focusses on the role, influence, and the relations that non-human living beings have with the human species and how they together can change the future of life in our world.

In his book 'Being ecological', Timothy Morton describes how we can live in ecological ways, instead of 'doing ecological things' (like thinking that we can save the planet by eating as vegetarians, planting windmills, or driving electrical cars). Morton says that if we change our attunement to life on the planet, this might result in quite a different world (Morton, 2018). What I found interesting about his thinking is that he claims that "The whole is less than the sum of its parts, because the whole is one, and the parts are many, and things exist in the same kind of way, if they exist at all." (Morton, 2018, p. 99.) This helped me in developing my thinking about my walking practice.

Morton states that due to the way we have been raised and educated in the Western world, we always learned that the whole is bigger (and thus better) than its parts. He says we do this because of our 'good old agricultural-age theism' (p. 98). One God is better than many, one king and one nation are better than many clans, and in the West, we believe that the biggest, strongest, and most powerful wins (based on our dualistic, positivist, Cartesian, Darwinist thinking about the survival of the fittest). Morton explains that in our Western culture, winning, growing, and expanding is seen as not only important but essential. Companies with the highest profit and biggest market share are seen as the best. Our goals are to be the best in our markets, to grow 'from good to great', to beat the competition. We want to become 'one whole' with one mindset and one shared culture. You could also call this 'good old white male academic supremacy' thinking. We never hear of a company that wants to be the most caring, loving, including, sensitive, or joyful.

Morton suggests: *What if we flip this around, saying that the parts are more than the whole? What if we say that the world becomes richer and fuller of flourishing life if we think*

that many clans are more valuable than one nation? Many gods may provide us with more tolerance and love than just one. Many cultures may give us richer experiences in life instead of one. *Maybe love and care for the ones that are different, exceptional, our minorities and our endangered species will help us see the world differently?* If we start thinking that diversity gives us more creative, innovative, and different types of solutions to our problems and ideas, we can use them to clean up the mess that we have made. *Would we be able to enjoy living in our world in a different way?*

I found these ideas fascinating because this is also what I experienced during my walking. Each tree in the forest looked different and had its own unique character. Morton uses the term 'distinct'. Together trees form a forest, so yes, there are 'wholes' just as well as 'parts' but that does not mean that the distinction of the parts should disappear in the big whole. Each child has its uniqueness, and the diversity of their distinctness makes them beautiful, and it is their beautiful distinctness that brings me joy. Diversity amazes, surprises, and creates surprises and epiphanies. The 'earth mother' loves and cares for all her children one by one, even if they are, or just because they are so different. I remember telling Thomas: *'Isn't it beautiful to see four so different, distinct, unique children that have the same parents but are so diverse?'* The parts are more than the whole in our family.

Where I differ from Morton however is that he, in his being, is object-oriented where I am rather more joy oriented. Where Morton focusses on things, on objects and their distinct meanings, in my work and in my walking, I rather focus on the joy that these 'parts' – this diversity, this distinctness, this beauty – bring to me in my life. I like to focus on the richness of the parts and interact, participate, and care for them because they are so different, and their differences bring me joy. While walking, studying, and reflecting, I discovered that it was not the power of the whole but the distinct beauty of the parts that brought me joy. I experience this as an 'earth motherly' feeling. As a love for all the children. Each one needs caring and attention and help in their own development. I cannot focus too much on 'the whole', and it is not my mission to win, beat, or create one whole because then I will be missing out on the beauty and distinctness of the parts.

The result from studying my walking, from going slowly and participating in nature, made me come to see all the small, different parts that were alive in the landscapes that I walked

through. They made me realise that it was them, the distinct parts, with their beauty of diversity and all their interdependencies, that brought me joy and meaning in life.

I am ecological because I realise that I am also a distinct part among all these other distinct, living parts. This is what makes me feel at home in our wild, beautiful, diverse world. I am participating as a part among the parts and if we all respect, love, and care for each other, for all these distinct parts, just as the earth mother does for her earthly children, then we can find a beautiful, joyful balance of living and sharing our planet together. I envision that in an ecological post-human, post-anthropocentric world, all parts are being valued for what they are, and that they do not become extinct or disappear into the bigger whole.

This brings me back to Deep Ecology platform's point 2, which acknowledges the value of richness and diversity of life forms in themselves (Næss, 1993). Deep Ecology also values the parts and pleads for a balance, arguing that dominance will end up in violence, misery, death, and destruction, that the power of the whole suppresses and ignores the parts.

This again brings me back to the pedagogy of friluftsliv which has as its mission to facilitate learning in the outdoors by getting familiar with all the different parts that are living out there and how the parts can work together to create a joyful existence (Tordsson, 2014). Trees offer dry branches so I can make a fire that can warm me and dry my clothes because I don't have enough hair on my body. Tree, air, rain, fire, and my human body are many parts which interact to provide care and enjoyment.

I come back once more to eco-psychology, which tries to understand how our human souls interact with the soul of the world, how our human psyche communicates and participates with our anima mundi (Roszak et.al, 1999). *How did the reindeer know I was in deep grief and came to show me their respect? Why did the living creatures that I met on the paths that I walked ask for my caring attention and gave me joy in return?*

Referring to the quality criteria I discussed in section 1.3, I suggest these discoveries speak of significant insights that have influenced and changed my practice and my life. I will also discuss these insights more critically and explain further what I mean with post-human inquiry, in the theory account following this chapter.

7.4 Discovery of an ontology of joy

In my next, and even, deeper phase of inquiry, I returned to the question of how my research into my practice of walking – now understood as influenced by my studies in the disciplines of friluftsliv, eco-psychology, Deep Ecology and post-humanism – had caused a shift in me and my way of being in the world.

Over many years, I had believed that I was born to help others learn and develop and lived this with a passion. When I was 8 years old, I taught our neighbour's children to read and write before they were old enough to go to school themselves; I helped my friends learn to roller skate in our street; later, I taught others to row, to sail, to put up tents, and to climb trees. I enjoyed giving birth and helping my own children to grow, learn and develop into adulthood. In my working life, I have studied pedagogy and the science of learning in organisations, and have taught hundreds of leaders about leadership, project management, culture awareness and organisational change, and I had been responsible for leading and developing many consultants in their journeys of learning, experiencing and development.

During my inquiry journey, questions of purpose kept returning in my mind: (*How) had my mission in the world changed? Why was I alive? What was the reason I kept on walking?*

I had slowly noticed that my walking in the wild influenced me as a person and how I was interacting with other people at work, as well as at home. Through inquiring into my walking practice, I began to understand that my ambition of developing other human beings was slowly shifting. Through my walking in friluftsliv, I discovered that there was so much more to my life in the world than (just) helping human beings to flourish. I was slowly opening my eyes, my senses, my body, and my feelings to this larger world. My long solitary walks had given me a new way of experiencing our earth that was non-anthropocentric. Humans were not the only species that were learning and developing on our planet. There were millions of other living beings that needed space for learning and development to grow and flourish.

I read many books and articles by authors that had been written about their experiences with walking while searching for answers to their questions. Some authors wrote about walking and their shifting ontologies (Shepherd, 2011; MacFarlane, 2008, 2013, 2017; Ingold, 2004; Kagge, 2017; Lopez, 2014); others wrote about how participation in friluftsliv

changed their way of being the world (Ekelund 2014, 2017, 2019; Espedal, 2006; Zapffe, 2012; Tordsson, 2014, 2016). Some wrote about what they had learned from their interactions with trees, plants and animals (Abram, 1997, 2011; Powers, 2019; Wohlleben, 2017; Simard, 2021; Baker, 2017; Gooley, 2015, 2018), how they wrote their most important philosophies after walking outdoors (Rousseau, 2004; Thoreau, 2004, 2012; Heidegger, 2010; Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Næss, 1993), or what they had learned from hiking long trails as a female (Solnit, 2014; Strayed, 2012; Maclaine, 2000).

While inquiring more deeply into my own experiences with walking and changing, I slowly discovered that my walking practice had caused an ontological shift to my own way being in the world. I noticed that my purpose of being alive on the earth was changing:

- From planning and organising the development of others to questioning and guiding others on their walks of change with my embodied, participative presence;

- From doing my work as a pro-active pedagogue / teacher / change agent to focussing in my work on the joy of seeing a change unfolding;

- From an ambition to develop and change others to enjoying experiencing the beauty of seeing others finding the courage to change themselves.

These were profound shifts in the way I was experiencing my professional practice, and it was through my research into my practice of walking that I discovered how I was changing myself. I noticed this through the entries I wrote in my journal and through feedback I received from others who walked with me. They told me I seemed to be less focussed on time and goal-achievement and that I had become better at coaching, listening, giving feedback, and just being a walking partner.

I came to the insight that my drive for learning and development of others was founded in a deeper layer of myself. Just as the origins of the river lay deep inside the mountain, underneath the massive rocks and boulders of the Dørålsglupen, so my joy for life lay as the

source of my being, deep underneath my ambitions to care for others and help them learn and develop in the world.

Mother earth knows intrinsically how to adapt to changing circumstances and I came to feel that this knowledge therefore also sits deep within the genes and roots of every living, moving being and is passed on, generation by generation. Through inquiring more deeply into these natural processes of change, I now understood that it was the privilege of my being alive and capable of noticing all these changes happening around me that made me who I was on this earth. Inquiring more deeply into the concept of joy, I wrote extensively about this in my notebook, and I drew pictures to try to understand how the universe, earth, nature, humans, and change interacted continually with one other.

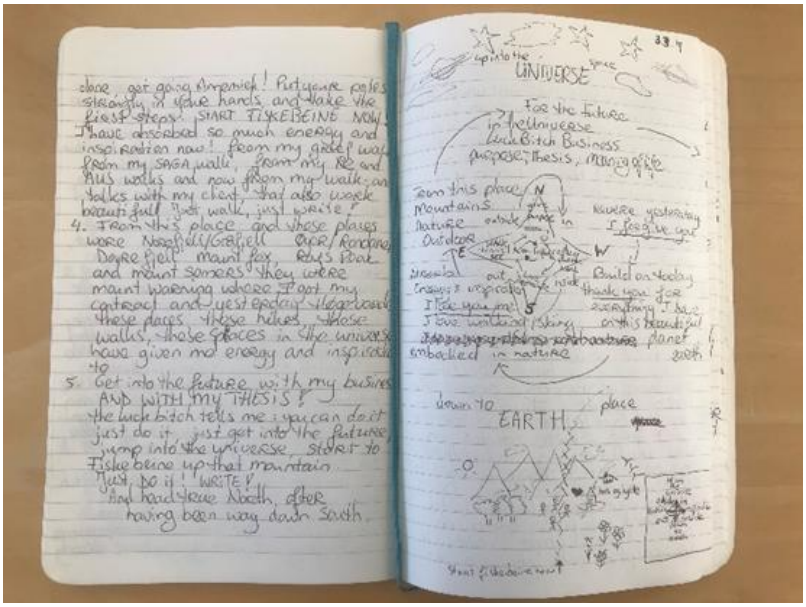


Figure 38. I wrote extensively about joy in my notebook

Once again, I returned to Arne Næss, who also wrote about the philosophy of joy. Næss based his philosophy of joy on the work of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza (1632-1677) who defined three concepts of joy: i) *hilaritas* (cheerfulness, fully embodied, cannot be too much of it), ii) *titillateo* (pleasurable excitement, affects part of the body, a more consumption-oriented joy, which can be overdone) and, iii) *laetitia* (generic joy comprising all the sub-kinds of joy), described by Næss as "man's transition from lesser to greater perfection"

(Næss, 1995b, p. 254). Næss developed these three types of joy further into his own philosophy of joy (Næss, 1995b, p. 255).

The first joy, according to Næss, is the joy of self-respect and contentedness, which is a result of the contemplation of our own power. Relating this to my walking practice, I recognise this kind of joy after I succeed in crossing a wild river, when I arrive at a hut after a long day of hiking, or when I reach the summit of a mountain. I am proud of myself, about my achievement and reaching my destination and I enjoy having accomplished a goal that I set for myself before I started off. I noticed that most of the participants that I met enjoying friluftsliv in Norway did so because they wanted to achieve this kind of joy.

I remember sharing this type of joy with Bente and Ida, standing on top of Hårteigen, celebrating the completion of our mission, thanking the mountain for allowing us to ascend her safely.[48] Most organisations set these types of goals, seeking to achieve the joy of accomplishment of growth, profit, value creation or customer satisfaction. The joy of achieving a goal can result in self-respect and contentedness and for most human beings on our planet this is enough to achieve a happy, fulfilled and rich life.

The second form of joy Næss describes is the joy resulting from "increased personal, active knowledge of things greater than we are" (Næss, 1995b, p. 255). It is a joy that transcends the joy of self-achievement. This is a kind of joy that made me choose my professional career in learning, consulting, facilitating, and developing others. I get a deeper experience of joy than just joy for myself and my own achievements from: seeing how a leadership team is developing and changing, because they learned how they can act together as a team; experiencing another person perform something they did not imagine they could master because they have acquired a new skill; training leaders in leadership development programs and seeing how their organisation starts to flourish after that; and watching my children succeed in life, working to complete their schools and studies and starting to flourish as human beings in the world. This is the kind of joy I experienced and valued dearly

[48] For a visual record of this, see the video I made: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrNjGrlpPyo&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=9&t=0s

over the last 25 years of raising my children and teaching and facilitating many others through my job as an organisational change agent.

The last kind of joy Næss describes is "the joy resulting from active interaction which, strictly speaking, defines ourselves" (Næss, 1995b, p. 255). I found a similar kind of joy through my research project into my practice of walking. Through an embodied experiencing and active engaging with other living beings in friluftsliv, I noticed that I started to develop a new and deeper kind of joy. Thomas's death contributed to this as well. His passing away had facilitated me to make longer, deeper, more reflective solitary walks on my own into the wild. I discovered that through my solitary, grieving walks that I had started to engage with the living world around me in a new way. My belief that I could plan and manage my life the way I envisioned had been abruptly torn away. I realised that humans do not control our lives but that the interplay of relationships in the living world shapes our being.

If some cells suddenly start growing aggressively and take over my body, then I will not stop that from happening simply by planning. I could love and care and act as an 'earth mother' to facilitate a respectful dying process, but I could not overrule this relationship between cells and the body. When the COVID-19 virus suddenly started to spread, killing many humans, we could wash our hands and work to develop a vaccine, but we could not overrule this relationship between a virus and the human species. My walking, while looking closely into my relationships with other moving creatures, made me realise what a joy it was to be alive, what a joy it was to be able to move and walk and explore the world, what a joy it was to wonder and engage with and be in an ever moving and changing world. I could find joy not only from the fact that I had achieved an envisioned goal or destination, not only from the satisfaction of helping others in reaching their goals or destinations. In fact, it was the embodied relationships in active engagement with other forms of moving, living beings on these journeys that I found brought me the deepest form of joy.

Through enjoying the beauty of earth's diversity, experiencing the fascinating, continuous cycles of change that all living beings in the open air on Earth were going through, I discovered a key insight:

> *I experienced the joy of my total reality: me being alive, walking and changing with and among others in active, embodied, participative relationships on this beautiful planet in the universe.*

From birth to death and rebirthing of a new generation again, day after night, summer after winter, year after year, I understood that the wisdom I gained from my experiences of walking in friluftsliv had given me an immeasurable amount of joy that came from deep inside my body and from deep inside the earth. It was my joy at being alive.

Building on Næss who says, "Joy is the affect by which, or through which, we make the transition to…integrity or wholeness" (Næss, 1995b, p. 254), and through my inquiring into my walking practice, I found that I had developed an affectionate relationship with the 'total field of my reality' of my life on earth. The landscapes that I walked through, the plants and trees that I met on my way, the animals that I engaged with, all the living, moving creatures that I encountered on my walks, (as well also as my friends, family, colleagues, and clients that I walked with), brought me the kind of joy that gave me new energy and that helped me to live my life in a purposeful way.

I spent these years inquiring and reflecting while walking, carrying my old red backpack from hut to hut, participating with the more-than-human world while trying to understand how my walking was changing me. I met with dark clouds and blue sky, I experienced cold white snow and bright warm sun, I walked through wind and rain collecting embodied experiences from mountains within my body.

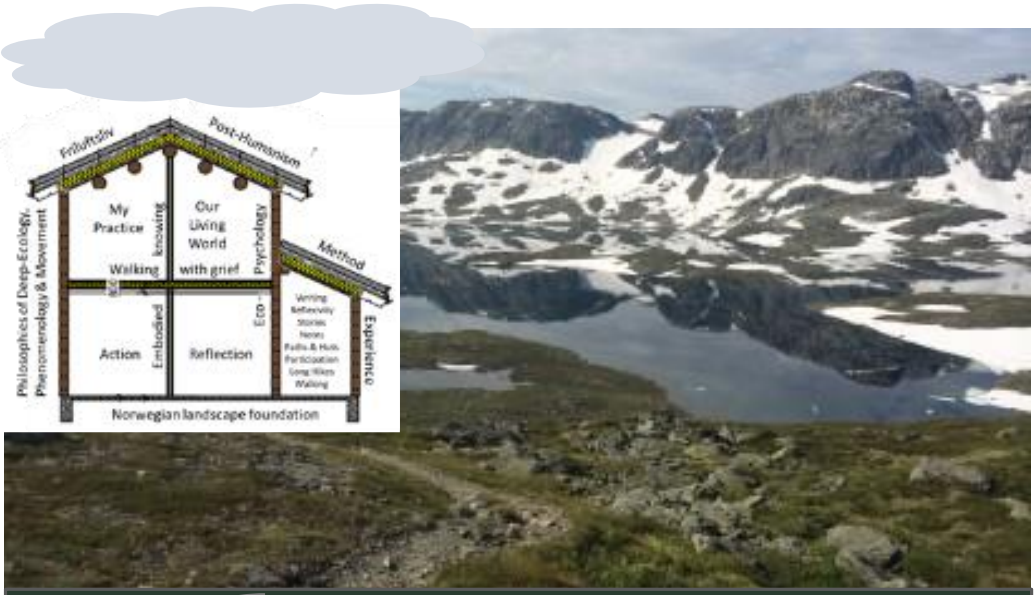
And slowly, step after step, I came to know what my practice of walking with change was all about. I began to understand that continuous change, including my own change, was interwoven with all the moving of humans and non-humans on our planet. During these years of research, I have walked hundreds of kilometres, alone and with others. I walked with family, with friends, with my husband and children, with individual clients and leadership teams. I walked with my research peers and with my supervision group.

I discovered that my walking with 'the total field of my reality' brought me immense joy.

On 28th. October 2018, I wrote in my notebook:

Being alive = Moving = Walking = Joy

7.5 Reflection: What's still in the ground?



In this chapter I discussed how my walking, my studying of deep ecology and linking it to the philosophy of post -humanism taught me how an ontological shift took place and helped me see life in a different way. I explained how my developed ontology of joy is laying deeply at the foundation of my practice of walking. Through iterated cycles of action and reflection and wondering what my life was all about, I noticed that my walking had deepened my understanding of how my partnership and participation with the living earth enriched my being in the world that brought me joy.

This first-person action inquiry cycle gave me a wonderful insight in my practice of walking, my way of being in the world and the way I engage with the living world while walking through life. However, there are still some important unanswered questions laying underneath this new knowing:

How was the discover y of this shifted ontology of joy playing a role in my work as a change agent in organisations? Was there a way I could transfer this new knowing about myself, my practice of walking and my engagement with the living world into my work with people - and organisation development? How did my embodied knowing play out in my interactions with my customers and colleagues? Could I somehow use the knowledge I had gained from this first -person inquiry into my consulting work? And was the pain of walking with absence being eased by the discovery of this ontology of joy?

I will explore these questions in the last main part of this this thesis.

Part 3: Applying developed practice: Walking with organisational change

After this long, deep first-person inquiry into my practice of walking, I noticed that the learnings from my research were flowing into my professional practice as organisational consultant in lots of different ways. I began to walk with clients; I used metaphors from my walks in my consultations; I brought stories and experiences from my walks into the organisations that I worked with; and I tried to bring the more-than-human world into my work in my change processes. In this third main part of this thesis, I bring together the findings from my research as described in part 1 and 2 and share some examples of how I have started applying my developed practice of walking in my work as an organisational change consultant. *How could I best share my powerful new knowing with others at work? What would be a good way to start talking about these reflected-upon experiences in my consulting practice? (How) could I influence the leaders in the boardroom that I worked with to listen to my stories and join me on a walk?*

Initially, I found it scary to talk about my research, my findings, and my developed practice with my clients. Walking in nature was widely understood as something you could do in your free time, but not relevant at work. I was scared that my clients would find me woolly or not 'business-like'. Talking about trees or birds or the changing seasons when discussing organisational change projects, culture development challenges or a competency development framework was very much 'not common practice'.

When everybody in the room was talking about digitalisation, efficiency, sustainability, and growth scenarios, (how) did my practice of walking through the wild fit in with this? I was searching to find my way in.

Walking is an unconventional practice in the profession of organisational development. Learning to speak about my research and my findings took courage. *How could I share with my clients that walking in the wild could be a practice to help them change and develop their organisations? If walking had been so helpful for myself to overcome a disruptive change, contemplate purpose and meaning, overcome grief, and find joy in the presence of my life, how could I translate these findings into my organisational practice?*

Chapter 8. Walking with organisational change

8.1 Introduction

During the last 30 years, I have been working with the development of people and teams in many changing organisations. My inquiry into my walking practice had answered many of the questions I started out with, but there were still some essential questions, linked to my work as an organisational change consultant, that were unanswered. How could I use my new knowing from my develop practice as a walker into my work as an organisational change agent? I still found it difficult suggesting walking as a value adding intervention in my work in the business world. It was seen as very unconventional to leave the building or organisation and go out for a walk. Change processes were to be designed and developed in meeting rooms and on computer screens, in (home)offices between four walls and under a roof. How could we let wind and rain, sunshine and snow be a part of our organisational change process? How could trees, rivers and valleys play a role in a learning and development? How could walking be introduced as a valuable, proven method of intervention to help organisations and their people change?

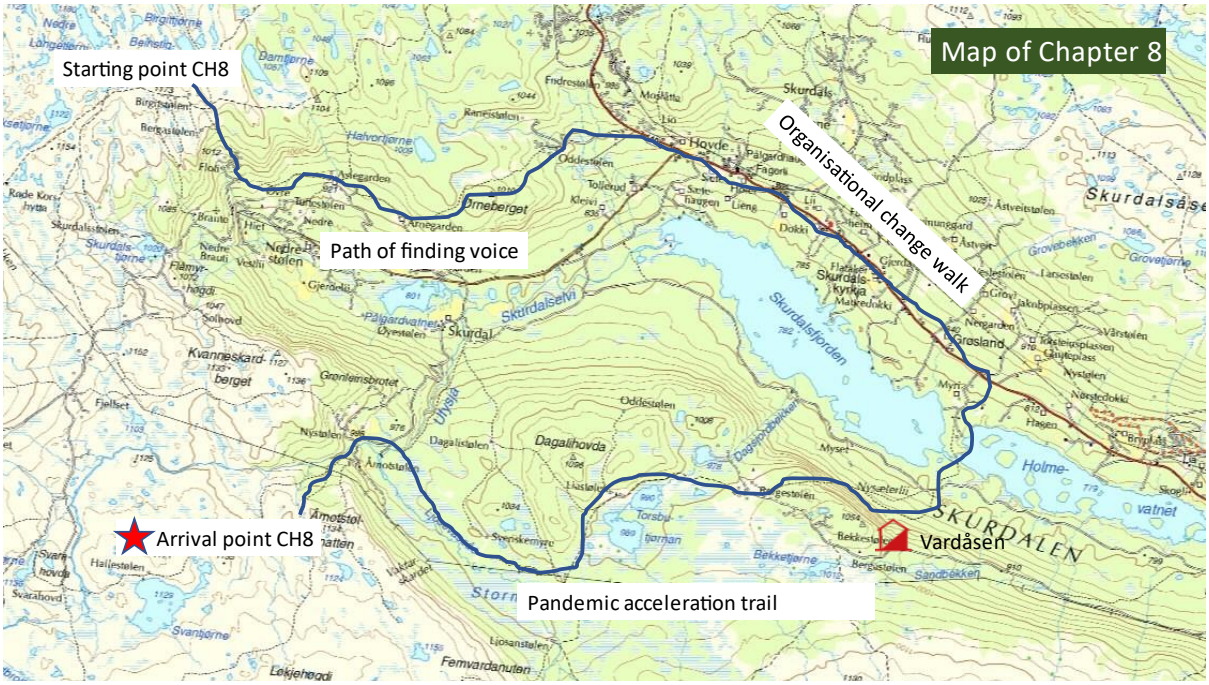


Figure 39. Metaphorical 'map of the territory' for chapter 8

8.2 Finding a voice for speaking up about walking with organisations

Returning to Norway after my long walks in Australia and New Zealand in 2019, I started my own consulting firm. I wanted to try offering walking as an intervention in organisational change projects. My vision was to become a guide for organisations who needed change interventions and wanted to walk with me. I wanted to offer walking, in participation with the living world outdoors, as a way of learning to understand change, to guide leaders and teams in their development, and as an intervention for boards and management teams to develop visions, strategies and alternatives to change.

One of the biggest challenges I experienced initially was daring to speak about walking and to introduce or suggest it as a practice with my clients. Asking my clients to get up from their chairs, on their feet and out of their offices was not common in their daily organisational practices. In today's western world, many organisations are located in buildings, in offices, in schools, in hospitals, in shopping malls, in factories, in workshops, or in homes, and most do not welcome animals, trees, plants, seasons, weather, or other outdoor phenomena into their working spaces. Our work is executed inside human-constructed buildings, inside four walls with a roof on top. Daring to break away from "being inside" and taking my clients to walk outside was seen as non-conventional, a 'not-done' practice in organisational consulting. It took me courage and subtlety to ask my clients in a friendly way if they might be interested to come out and walk with me in the unpredictable, uncontrollable outdoors. I had to be careful in how I explained to them about the wealth of unknown living creatures and phenomena out there that may have answers to their change questions. I have been (and still am) struggling to find ways to do so. And yet, if I ask people, and especially Norwegians, about their experiences with walking in nature, they answer me with positive and enthusiastic stories. I had noticed that the stories from their friluftsliv experiences at work were cut off, locked away and not used in their work. They had to wait until the next weekend before they could enjoy the friluft again. *(How) could I change this? Was there a way I could use the experience people had from their free time friluftsliv experiences in the solutions I was developing with them to support change in their organisations?*

I found that I had to learn to develop my voice, learning how to speak up about my walking practice at work. *How could I communicate that there was so much to learn about change*

from trees, from mountains and from rivers? How could I speak about the valuable embodied learning experiences I had encountered during my walks in the wild, that were so obvious of use and transferable to organisational change to me? How could I help my clients see this value and promote learning from other forms of life in their organisations (or rather persuade them to take learning into the wild)? I had to find a way to overcome my shame in speaking about nature in the world of business. I had to dare to be vulnerable and risk that my clients would turn me down or consider me unprofessional.

Brené Brown defines vulnerability as experiencing "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (Brown, 2013, p. 34). That definition fits well with how I felt in the beginning when speaking about my inquiry. I felt highly connected with my experiences and my learnings from my walks. My walking was important to me; it had become an embodied part of me. Speaking about it in an organisational context felt risky. I had been a 'businesswoman' all my life and I knew that embodiment, nature, and the flourishing of life were not regular topics on the agenda in the boardroom. I recognised the strict separation between the indoors and the outdoors that I observed with my colleagues. I had also been like that before I started my inquiry. Somehow, I had to find courage to speak up about my research findings without destroying my professional reputation as a change consultant. My strategy was to speak about it carefully, step by step. I was, as Brown calls it, *daring greatly*. In my first introduction with new clients, I did not speak much about my walking practice but after I got to know my client and their people a bit better, I gathered all my courage and slowly introduced ideas about the more-than-human world into their organisation.

I decided to start carefully with a first cycle of inquiry.

In 2017 I was helping one of my clients with the design and development of a new strategic competency development model. We were looking at market trends, customer behaviours and the development of service products to work out what competencies their employees would need to master in the future. To make a first step in applying my knowledge from my walking experiences in delivery with a client I thought of using presentational knowing (Heron, 1996) while tapping into my experiential knowing from my walks. Consequently, in preparing for the session, I took a large brown piece of paper that covered a whole wall of the meeting room, and on it, I drew a huge landscape with mountains and trees, flowers and a sun, rain clouds and a long winding path that disappeared into the distance.

My colleague consultants looked at me sceptically, laughing and asking: “What are you drawing Annemiek?”. I knew this did not look ‘professional’.

Could I not put a model with square boxes on a PowerPoint slide? I wanted my clients to have a feeling of ‘being outdoors in the world’ by drawing this outdoor world on the wall. I hoped it would give them a perspective of thinking about the world ‘out there’. *What would their organisation meet in the world, if they were to take an imaginary walk into the mountains of the future?* With my creative drawing on the wall, I wanted to invite them on an imaginary journey into the wild.

It was a first step in daring to show and tell my customers about my experiences with walking, using presentational knowing to share my ideas.

The client had quite a traditional culture and they were in the financial services sector, but I had decided to ‘dare greatly’ and work with them using this representation of a natural landscape to help them prepare for change and competency development in the future.

I felt nervous, vulnerable, insecure and at risk on the day of the session. *What if my client said, “This is rubbish, Fröbel’s kindergarten[49]” (the famous pedagogue whose name was so close to mine and whom I admired so much)? What if they said that this way of working did not fit with how they saw their ‘professional’ future in the financial markets ahead of them?*

When the participants came into the room and saw the huge drawing on the wall, they reacted with joyful positive exclamations. My clients were Norwegians, they had all experienced the mountains before, they knew what ‘friluftsliv’ meant to them.

Their first reactions and emotions of recognition and good memories from being at their huts and joyful vacations they spent in their childhood, were simmering through the room.

Throughout the session, the participants came up with creative ideas of how they could ‘walk’ their company through the mountains of change into the future and they wrote them on colourful cards that we glued on to the drawing of the wild landscape on the wall.

[49] Friedrich Fröbel was a German pedagogue who coined the term kindergarten in 1840 for a play and activity institute for pre-school children in which learning from and with nature was its central pedagogical approach.

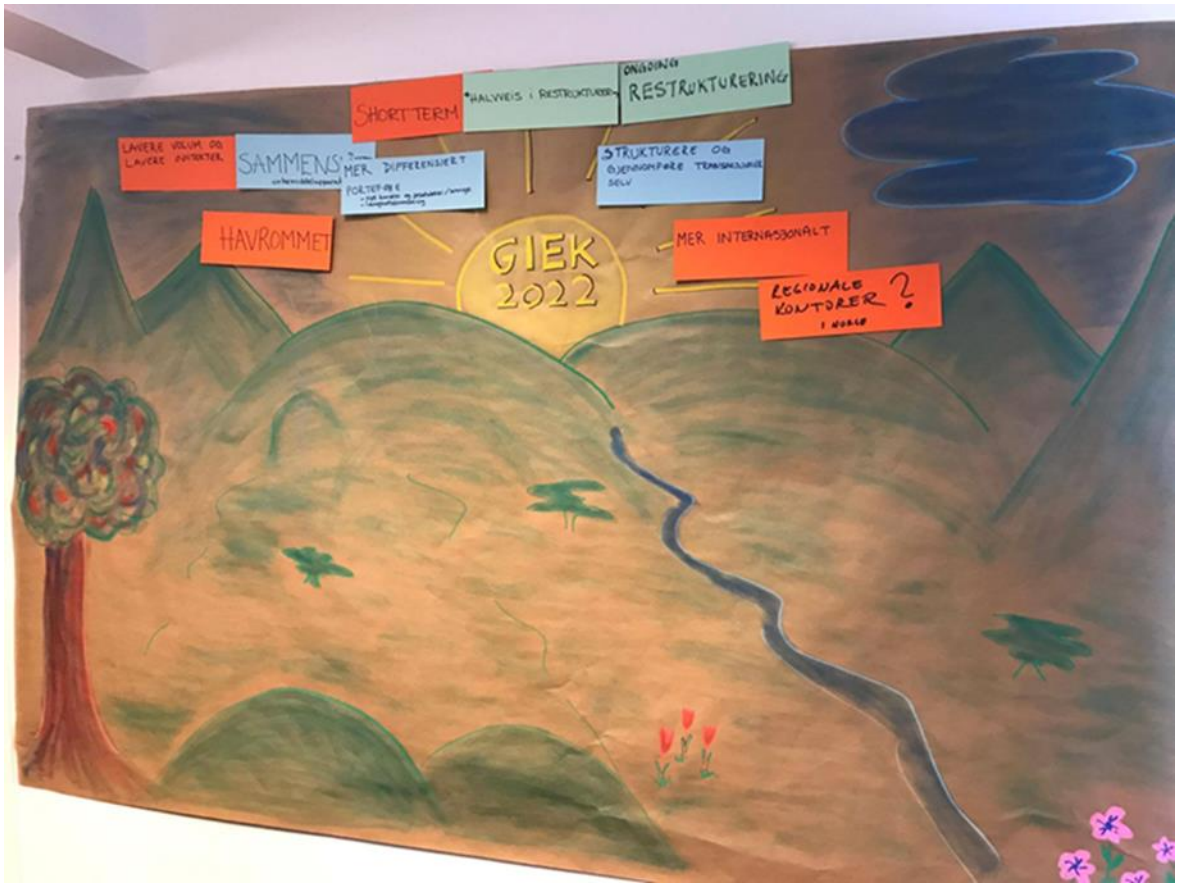


Figure 40: Picture of the landscape I drew on the wall during a workshop with my client in October 2017

The session was fun and creative, and I felt that my initiative of inviting the mountains into the room through my drawing had given the session more energy, creative ideas, and some sustainable outcomes. It had inspired the participants to think outside of their financial square PowerPoint boxes. A year later, my client's HR department received the prize for 'best competence development organisation' in Norway from the national professional body for HR and people development.[50]

It had been a first step. I did not yet dare take my clients with me out into the wild, but I dared to draw the wild in the room and take them with me on an imaginative walk into the wilderness of their future. This first experiment gave me courage to explore further with new cycles of inquiry into practice application.

In a second cycle of inquiry, I started to develop a voice of embodied advocacy. As discussed in part 1 and 2 of this thesis, I had developed an embodied epistemology through my inquiry

[50] You can find the story at https://www.hrnorge.no/pressemeldinger/hr-norges-kompetansepris-2018-til-garantiinstituttet-for-eksportkreditt

into my experiences with walking which had taught me how to 'sense, feel and listen' to the natural world outdoors in friluftsliv. Based on these experiences, I felt a growing responsibility of translating my newly acquired embodied knowing into human- and business language so I could share them with others at work. I moved from using walking in the wild as a metaphor into developing a way of telling the story of my experiences.

Through reading stories from others and writing my own stories about my experiences with walking, I developed my advocacy, speaking up about how the natural world could be of inspiration for change. My reading and writing helped and inspired me to speak up about the wisdom of trees (Powers, 2019; Wohlleben, 2017; Simard, 2021), the signs and language of animals and plants (Gooley, 2015, 2018; Carson, 2018, 2000), the history and cultures of landscapes (MacFarlane, 2013, 2017; Ekelund, 2014, 2017; Lopez, 2014), the language of mountains (MacFarlane, 2008; Shepherd, 2011), and the importance of friluftsliv (Ekelund, 2018, 2019; Kagge, 2017; Tordsson, 2016) in our organisations. Their stories helped me in talking about my own experiences. I was learning to speak up about how walking in friluftsliv could be beneficial when designing and working with change in organisations.

I re-read the stories I had written about my walking experiences many times, after which I felt confident enough to tell them as examples of learning from our living world in sessions, leadership development programs and the change projects that I worked on with. I have for example used the story of the Dørålsgluppen (which you find in the intermezzo after chapter 6) to discuss with leaders how they can develop their listening skills to find out 'what is underneath' the noise, sounds and rumours they are hearing in the organisation. I learned not to use nature as a metaphor for development but to use real stories to guide my customers in their change journeys. I always received positive reactions after telling my stories and these reactions encouraged me to inquire even deeper into ways of sharing my developed knowing with my customers at work.

Through a second cycle of studying, reflecting, and writing about my walking experiences, I noticed that within my writing there were many micro insights that I had learned about change from nature. *Through reflecting on the significance of my walking practice, I created different ways to talk about change with my customers*.

In a third cycle of inquiry, I developed my voice even further, and I went from storytelling to embodying. I now showed up with my clients in an embodied way that showed trust, knowledge and experience, and I did not always have to talk explicitly about my walking experience to bring my embodied knowing into my work.

Rather than using metaphors or sharing my specific stories, I learned that my embodied presence with them was enough. I did not have to talk about all the kilometres that I walked, the summits that I reached, the bad weather that I met, or the landscapes that I crossed. Sharing my embodied competencies of attending, wondering, and engaging that I had learned from the living creatures in the wild was enough to make my clients and colleagues interested in walking with me. *Through my extended walking, I showed up in an embodied way that radiated a quality of knowing about change in the world.*

Inquiring more deeply into the way I developed this voice of advocacy for the natural world, I noticed that at first, I struggled to translate the embodied experiences from my walks into a human organisational language. I started looking more closely at how the living creatures around me communicated with me through their sounds and movements. I slowly realised I did not need the human voice of words and speech when working with my clients, nor did I need writings or visuals to communicate my experiences with them. I did not need human words in English, Dutch or Norwegian, I did not need to tell them the stories that I wrote, nor did I need the pictures or videos that I made anymore. *I discovered that I could advocate the outdoor world and all its living beings through the quality of my embodied presence.*

Just like trees communicate through the movements of their branches, the sap streaming up and down through their trunk, roots, and leaves and through their interconnections with other living beings: fungi, insects, and birds –

Just like rivers communicate through the movements of steaming water, meandering through the landscape, through moving boulders and through their interconnections with algae, fish, and amphibians –

Just like mountains communicate through the movements of avalanches, gorges, and caves, through their interconnections with weather on the outside, stalagmites on the inside and water systems in and around them –

So could I communicate through the movement of my body and my interconnection with all the living creatures in the landscapes that I walked through.

My sense for this way of communicating, which I had developed though learning, maturing, and inquiring into my practice of walking, expressed itself through the quality of my embodied presence with my clients.

It happened for instance when I was working with a company that had contracted me to help them out with a crisis in their management team in 2019. It became suddenly obvious to me. Squirrels were 'hanging around' in trees, boulders were 'just laying' in the river and moose were 'sniffing around' in the forest. Their embodied presence, their 'hanging around', their moving, breathing and being alive had a function, a role, and a contribution to all other life forms around them. Equally so, I could be 'hanging around' in organisations.

This company had asked for my help to restore trust in the management team. I offered to 'just hang around' and be available for employees, leaders and other stakeholders that felt a need to talk, to share their experiences and frustrations with me, or channel their concerns about the outlook of the company. Walking around, breathing, sniffing, showing up, attending, wondering and being present was my way of participating and helping this client change. My role and function were one of embodied presence and contributed to the flourishing of the organisation. I was meandering like the river, jumping like the squirrel, and following my path like the moose through my client's organisation with a quality of my embodied presence.

As discussed in part 2 of this thesis, my ontology had slowly shifted from a dualistic- to a participatory way of being in the world. Before I started my research, I thought that my role with my clients was one of 'producing, delivering, performing and completing'. My inquiry had given me insight in how my presence with my clients could be more relaxed and joyful.

By showing up with my embodied presence, focussing on the wider world outside of their buildings, bringing my developed wisdom and experience from my walks with me, I noticed I brought an embodied presence that gave my clients inspiration and confidence to change themselves. This insight came to me after reflecting on the feedback I received from one of my clients (written down in the 'glimpse' on the pages following), which made me think about what I had done to help them through a crisis.

When the company contracted me to help them with a change process, I first decided to invite the members of the management team to walk with me one-to-one for half an hour to get to know each other a bit better and develop trust. I noticed that during these introductory walks many of them opened their hearts and shared honestly with me what had happened in their team and how they had experienced this. I was not sitting with them in a room taking notes, nothing was recorded or reported. I was just walking with them, listening, breathing, while a crispy fresh air streamed into our lungs. Snow was falling on our heads and birds from the neighbourhood were joining our walk with their song. The conversations were open-hearted and when we met afterwards as a group during the management team meeting, it felt as if they all knew me well. During our walks I heard the same story from seven different managers, from seven different angles and from seven different experiences which gave me a good insight in the dynamic of their team.

This walking laid a good foundation for my following interventions. I felt that through taking them outside of their building for a walk & talk, I had been 'wandering around' in all the branches of their organisational tree. Just like I had seen the squirrel do in the trees in the Baarsrudmarka, jumping around, collecting nuts, sniffing here, listening there, eating at different places with different people, being physically present and engaging with what my surroundings were offering me. I walked around in this organisation to find out what would be a good way to restore trust in their leaders and bring back joy. Every now and then I 'disappeared' into 'not-being-present', to reflect, write and find answers, alone in nature by myself. I remember I went for quite a few ski-trips that winter and while skiing through the fields and forest, I was often thinking about my clients' challenges with trust and teamwork.

On one of those ski trips, I noticed how the light from the sky showed me my path forward. It inspired me to reflect about my embodied presence (and purposeful non-presence) with them, being and not-being with them, helped me in the role I was playing in their organisation. It taught me that my way of speaking up and being present was like the way I was present while skiing through the wild. I made the following glimpse based on their feedback, my reflections about my embodied presence, my experiences while skiing and being not present with them, and some notes from my journal:

At the end of my engagement facilitating a change process with a management team, the director of operations took me aside telling me: Annemiek, before you came to help us, I was about to resign from my job. I was sleeping badly, and you can ask my wife how stressed, negative, and tired I was each day I came home from work. I wrote my letter of resignation but just before I sent it in, you suddenly walked into our organisation. The approach and the interventions you brought to us, and especially the way you engaged yourself in our organisation and with the management team has been extremely helpful. I remember our first walk-and-talk in the snow, just outside the office here, when we got to know each other for the first time, that "broke-the-ice" and gave me a reason to trust you. That was a real good conversation. I felt you listened to me. Thank you for advising me to wait with handing in that letter because now, 5 months later, I see the sun shining again. My wife sees me coming home from work whistling a song, I am riding my bike again and I sleep well. Our changed management team is now full of inspiration and motivation to make the organisation healthy and grow again. Thank you for walking with us.

From my notebook @ Aukevarden, 24. June 2019

Glimpse 6. Skijordene Baarsrudmarka

8.3 Applying walking with changing organisations

In recent years, I have slowly developed words and expressions to explain to others what my practice of walking is all about. I have designed different walking interventions and noticed that more clients became interested in my proposals to incorporate walking.

I designed 'walk and talk' sessions into my leadership development programmes, sending groups of leaders outdoors in pairs, asking them to conduct a co-inquiry into a specific topic. The participants come back with valuable stories and share new ideas that they may not have developed if they had stayed in the meeting room. I started coaching while walking and I used walking to develop trust among leaders, among me and my customers and among colleagues that I worked with in my change consulting practice.

However, even today, I often still feel nervous inviting my clients to walk outside with me, especially if it is a new client and they don't know me too well. Meeting the CEO of a new client for the first time, I hardly dare to ask: "Shall we go out for a walk to get to know each other a bit better?" even though I know it is the best way to introduce myself in an informal way and I am almost sure I will get a positive reply to my invitation. I am conscious that when I invite my clients out for a walk, they might feel uncomfortable because they are not used to walking in an organisational setting. It is as if we must learn to walk again, as if we are walking into a country where we don't speak the language and have no idea what the culture, customs, and habits are out there. I am conscious that when I invite a leader out of their office building, a part of their power will disappear. However, my invitation to walk is almost always accepted with a joyful positive answer: "Yes, that's a good idea, let's go".

The first thing I do when I am starting up a new engagement with an organisation is to look up their address on Google maps and explore what their outdoor environment looks like. *Is there a park around the corner? Maybe a pond with some ducks? Are there any walking paths around the building? Are there any trees, fields, traffic-free zones? Maybe there is a river or a stream with a path that we can follow?* I often orient myself by taking a walk in the neighbourhood before or after a meeting and while I do, I am trying to figure out if there are any walkers working at this place. As soon as there is an opportunity to take someone out for a walk, I know where to go and tell them I know a pleasant path to follow.

I remember working with a management team of a factory that was located at one of the most beautiful spots in Norwegian nature, down at the bedding of a steep fjord, surrounded by huge mountains and wild nature. The factory itself, however, was surrounded by a high fence and there was only one steep narrow asphalt road giving access to the site with no pedestrian lane. The mountains seemed unapproachable and far away. I could only look at them from the windows in the canteen. HSE rules and regulations prohibited anyone from walking around by themselves. I was thinking about my friend Sibylle and her son in the wheelchair; this must be how people who want to walk but are not able to do so feel.

In the end, I asked the CEO to walk with me to show me around the factory and although there was not one single participant from the more-than-human world joining our conversation while walking, it was interesting to watch him interact with the machines, the materials and the people working in the factory while we walked together. In the theories of quality management and continuous organisational improvement, there is a theory that is called *management by walking around*, which describes how leaders that walk around their organisation, connecting with their employees as they do, can find this helpful in reflecting on what they can do to improve their organisations (Ingold, 2004; Zundel, 2012). This walk with the CEO through the factory gave me a different impression of him compared to how I knew him from observing him in the management team meeting, but this walk was not the way I use walking in my organisational change practice. My walking practice has a core of engaged participation, it is not a type of 'inspection' or 'supervising' type of walking. My practice of walking contains engagement through embodied learning, it is not a management technique but a participative development activity.

From 2019 I started bringing walking into my professional practice, step by step. At first, I designed it 'secretly' into the more regular and traditional interventions that I delivered. And then wonderful things started to happen. I started receiving positive reactions. So, I experimented further. I suggested: a walk-and-talk session in a team development process, a coaching session while walking instead of sitting in an office, a daily morning walk in a leadership development programme, a walking dialogue as an example in a handbook for a mentoring programme or walking as part of a brainstorming session.

I also started using spaces differently in my work with clients, first inside their buildings, using spaces outside their buildings. I gently let my clients experience how their embodied

presence in nature could give them insights and inspirations to change. And I observed that my clients started to enjoy these outside activities. They began to see these experiences as valuable in their change processes and, just like the women from my jenteturs, they started to ask for more.

I will now share a story that I wrote, based on a coaching experience that I had with the managing director of a client company I was helping going through a very critical organisational change process. It is an example of how I started to apply the findings from my research in my work as a coach and a change agent. I have carefully acknowledged the privacy of my coachee by anonymising her name with a capital letter, and she has given me her consent to using this story in this way in this thesis.

The story of Vardåsen

We met at the train station from where a rocky path took us up into the woods. A drizzling rain was falling but that did not prevent us from going out. I had been coaching K for about half a year and I had guided her through one of the most challenging phases in her life.

A lack of trust in her management team resulted in her having to leave her company, and at the same time she was going through a difficult divorce that almost caused her to collapse. A radical decision to stop, freeing up time to think, and to ask for help had prevented her ending up in a burn-out situation. When she asked me to coach her through this process, she accepted my suggestion to go for a walk.

Today we had agreed to walk up the Vardåsen hill. The first part of the path was steep and slippery and at some places the path had become almost like a stream. We had to be careful not to fall and slide down the rocks. Fortunately, we were wearing good shoes and since both of us were experienced hikers, we managed to ascend

slowly but steadily. K's dog, who also joined us on this walk was totally happy she could join us and was running along with us joyfully up the hill.

At the start of our walk, we chatted a bit about what we had been doing since we saw each other a few weeks ago. A bit further up on the hill, the conversation became more serious. I asked her how she was doing now, after all that she had been through, and she shared several stories with me about how difficult all the changes had been for her. It was very strange for her being at home now without having to go to work, not being responsible for the organisation any longer and not having a husband at home anymore. Her two teenage boys had to learn to travel between their parents' houses and that was a change that was taking some time for the whole family to get used to. She shared that it felt good to have some time off, to reflect and think about everything that had happened and ponder upon what had gone wrong and what she could have done differently.

When we reached the top of the hill, we were welcomed by a beautiful view. In the distance we saw the Oslo fjord surrounded by the woods from the Hurum- and Kjekstadmarka. We stood there for a while and K told me that in the last few days she had noticed that she was slowly getting back some of her energy. I reflected it was interesting that she mentioned this right here at this moment and in this place.

Arriving at the top of the hill, we stood there, sweating, gathering our breath, after the steep climb up. It had taken us a lot of our energy to come up here. Just as the changes in her live had requested a lot of energy from K. It felt as if nature, by requesting the physical energy needed for walking up this hill, reminded her of how her energy had been consumed by this big change process and that it now, arriving at this place, was offering her a glimpse into the future showing her that recovery was possible. We saw the islands of Håøya and Gråøya rising from the water in the Oslo fjord. K, who is also a sailor, told me the islands were still literally inapproachable for her because her sailboat needed repairs and she did not have the energy back yet to fix all the work that needed to be done to make her boat ready to sail again.

From here, while gazing at the islands, she could see a glimpse of her new future in the distance. She started fantasizing out loud about what a possible future might

look like. She was talking about sailing again and participating in some regattas. When we turned around to look at the view in the other direction, we found that we could not see the Gaustatoppen as we had hoped. Clouds and rain showers were preventing us from seeing the big mountaintop in the far distance. Nature sent us apparently the message that looking into a longer future was not appropriate at this present moment. Not yet.

We decided we must come back to this spot at a later moment in time and maybe we would be allowed to look further into the distance and then into the future. The path had invited us to hike up today, but only slowly and carefully, placing one foot in front of the other, watching out for the slippery rocks, just as K was walking her change path carefully, taking time to recover. Maybe the next time we were here, we could hike up more carelessly, enjoy a brighter view and see the Gaustatoppen.

While descending, we talked about her experience of taking one step at a time. She wanted to focus on new values and a different type of leadership in her work in the future. She wanted to live a more relaxing life, taking more time to get others on board with her ideas and plans, delegating more tasks and making sure everybody in her team would appreciate her support. She shared with me that the best thing she had done so far, in her recovery process, was to go out and walk in nature. She had gone for many walks in the nearby area, together with her dog, to contemplate everything that had happened.

She had also been on a jentetur with her best friends a few weeks ago. They had hiked along the Swedish border, and this had been extremely valuable for her. With her close friends she could be herself, leave all her masks at home and just relax while spending time together in nature. She could laugh and cry with them and they had some deep and valuable dialogues about everything she had experienced while they were enjoying nature and the wildlife around them. In the evening, while sitting at the fire, she had shared with them what had happened privately and at work and they had discussed many different reasons why things happened the way they happened. They also discussed many different scenarios for her possible future.

When we were halfway down, descending the ski slope on the other side of the hill, we met some small groups of children from the kindergarten who were playing outside in the rainy woods.

A group of five toddlers came from the opposite direction marching up the ski slope towards us at a high tempo. They were clearly heading for the top. A little girl was leading in front inspiring the rest of the pack with a marching song to follow her. "One, two, one, two" she sang out loud, and the other kids were following her, joining in singing the song. K said to me: "See, already from this young age you can see who the leaders and who the followers are. Leadership is not only something you can learn to develop, but also something that already sits in your genes, in your personality, something that is part of you right from the start of your life and that you start practising from young age while playing with your friends".

A bit further down, another group of children was out picking flowers, together with their teacher. They were enjoying and appreciating the beauty of nature around them; they were the artists, the lovers, and the adventurers; they did not even think about reaching the top.

When we came down at the foot of the hill, we met a third group of toddlers who were playing with their scoops and buckets in the puddles of muddy rainwater. They were having a good time, just staying where they were. They were the builders and fixers, the potential engineers, and craftspeople, building canals, bridges, and locks, learning about earth and substance and water.

We noticed that each group of toddlers had its preferences for a playing environment. Through their playing, they were all practising and developing specific skills and experiences that they later in life could use to shape a future for themselves. These skills would become essential for them in life. Our walk had given K inspirations about how she wanted to shape her future and what role she wanted to play in it. Our embodied being in this natural environment had been a rich ground for my coaching and helping her to point out what Earth was telling us.

(Written based on a coaching experience, summer 2019.)

This story shows how I applied the learnings from my research and my walking experiences in my practice as an executive coach.

I tried purposefully to help my coachee feel the embodied presence of the living world around us. I helped her to see, look, feel, smell and sense what the natural world around us was 'telling' us. This stimulated her to continue paying attention to our surroundings and after a while she started inviting the living world around us herself. She told me after reading this story that it indeed had been a wonderful and inspiring walk. Back at home she also sat down to write her ideas and reflections down, and when we met at a later occasion, we shared our written reflections to discuss following steps and walks to take.

Through sharing my developed extended epistemology of embodied experiencing with my client, by experiencing the fog and the slippery rocks together, through the breathing of the fresh air deeply into our lungs, our bodies sweating by the time we arrived at the summit of Vardåsen, we both experienced a different presence in the world from when we were talking during our coaching session inside of the office building.

Our embodied ways of knowing through sensing, moving, and interacting with the living world around us brought new dimensions into our conversation. Was this what Sheets-Johnstone meant in stating that "movement creates the qualities that it embodies and that we experience" (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 124)? Our walk up Vardåsen had created an embodied quality that gave my coachee opportunities to reflect, learn and envision a new future. Participating in the landscape while moving our bodies, using our muscles, letting our blood flow and our lungs pant, gave us energy and ideas, reflections, and valuable, qualitative experiences. Through our words, sounds and silences during our walk, sometimes emphasizing, sometimes repeating, because the wind was blowing parts of our conversation away, we were able to access valuable meaning that was developed during our conversations in a new and different way.

Paying attention to the living world we met on our path, talking about our experiences that we would never have shared in the office, our walking offered creative and innovative ways of looking at my client's situation in work and life. It was as if the two feet we were using, in touch with the earth, with the hill, with the soil of our liveliness offered us a realistic sense of her situation. My client could not look too far into the future yet, there was still too much

fog in and around her head. Nature communicated with us to be patient. But the landscape also told us that there would come a day when the view would be clearer, when she could look and envision her future new life.

Through our walking, our embodied way of knowing became stimulated as we took the landscape seriously. We felt we became enriched by the offerings from the Earth. The view that was not there; that was a strong message. Nature had provided us with a lesson of change: the time was not always right to make decisions. Sometimes it was better to wait. Wait until the fog is gone, the snow is melted, and the frost has disappeared. Nature taught us that there is time for everything, and we should pay attention when mother earth communicates with us. We cannot always continue to grow bigger, be better, or have more. Sometimes we must take a pause, a step down, descend into the valley and just rest to gain new energy for a new spring to come. Our walk generated lots of implicit change ideas that I wrote down afterwards in my stories and in written reflections about my experiences.

It was no coincidence that on our way down, we encountered the children, showing us something about different types of leadership. They prompted us to discuss that we would take another round of reflection on what type of leader she wanted to be. The children had shown her some different styles; they were all moving in the landscape, and all seemed to be very happy. *Which style would make her happy?* Not the style she had been executing during the last year with her management team; it had made her very unhappy. But she was not sure: *did she want to hike up to the top, pick beautiful flowers along the way or stay at the bottom, playing with the water and the soil?* All three types would be needed in the organisation. *Which type would make her feel happy, valuable, and rewarded?*

Later, I evaluated with my coachee how she had experienced the walk outside and if she found it different from the coaching sessions we had executed inside of the office. She told me it had been an amazing experience for her. We both experienced this session as highly valuable. Our embodied activity in nature, our interaction with the living creatures on our way: the slippery stones, the drizzly rain, and the non-view at the top of the hill and even the groups of toddlers we met, playing on the ski-slope, had given us valuable inspiration for learning and reflection. My coachee reflected that nature had offered her a rich learning arena that had inspired her to question her leadership style and made her reflect deeply about how she envisioned a change in the way she worked with the people around her.

While walking up and down Vardåsen, nature had offered me wonderful opportunities to start questioning and address situations that were valuable in relation to my coachees change needs. And it was because of my walking experiences, the reflections I had undertaken in the years before, my developed embodied knowing competencies and my developed sensitivity to the living world around us (Abram, 1997) that helped me see, feel, and understand what the living world around us was communicating. It helped me know to point out the phenomena we encountered, helping my client in her noticing. Taking my coachee out to this rich environment gave our walking experience a value that could never be achieved inside a meeting room. The phenomena we met on our path influenced and affected us and the phenomena would never present themselves in the office.

Was it this what Abram meant with his concept of 'becoming animal' and that each phenomenon has the ability, to affect and influence the space around it (Abram, 2011, p. 269)? Or when Tordsson said that in friluftsliv we are 'allowed' to receive from nature, with our feelings, fantasy, and creativity (Tordsson, 2014, p. 161)? I had experienced our walking coaching session to Vardåsen as a rich experience filled with opportunities and suggestions nature was offering us to help us in our thinking and reflective processes.

Cartesian dualism and the industrial revolution have influenced the way we learn and the way we are taught by our teachers in our school systems. Organisational learning is also based on this same dualism, and we have developed it in such a way that we find it normal that learning and development takes place inside in the buildings of our organisations where we sit down in classrooms or meeting rooms, listen to lectures, and participate in discussions trying to develop our organisations through cognitive learning. Through the influence of this mind-body dualism, we have developed an education system that encourages us to think that learning is something we do in a designated room where we concentrate on 'filling our brains'. Learning outdoors, in friluftsliv, using our whole body for learning, and learning through interaction with other than human life is generally not a part of our leadership and organisational learning curriculum. But as Tordsson states: "Friluftsliv can be a suitable starting point to discuss wide, intellectual perspectives and give a base for meaningful dialogues, also about topics that are usually called 'theoretical'."[51] (2014, p. 34.)

[51] Translated by myself

Tordsson goes on to say that Friluftsliv offers eight qualities for learning through:

i) rich experiences that result in a richer 'inner life', ii) versatile personal development, iii) acting skills that stimulate creativity, problem solving and self-confidence, iv) reflecting skills that stimulate personal internalisation and connects sensuous and cognitive learning, v) different understanding of nature than what is dominantly taught in schools, vi) social developments, vii) continuation of a cultural heritage, and viii) value-based experiences that create value orientation.

Through my inquiry, I have accounted for a significant change in my own worldview and professional practice through developing a sustained and dedicated practice of walking over many years. My developed way of walking, first with grief and later with joy, has given me an embodied expertise that I could apply in my coaching sessions, helping my coachees understanding their change situations.

My developed practice of participative walking supported understanding change in a grounded way. I had learned why it mattered to attend to the living world around us. It was our living earth that was offering suggestions of how to change, and through my research I had learned how to attend to these suggestions through embodied ways of knowing and share them with my walking companions, helping them change.

To give you one more account of my practice, I made the following 'glimpse' after a coaching walk-and-talk with another client. While making this 'glimpse', I reflected about what had happened during our walk and while writing my reflections down, I understood better how the action of the walking helped my client in making progress in taking her decisions. I learned how I used elements of the landscape (in this case the beautiful view over the lake from literally different 'point of views') to coach my client look at her situation from different angles. I mirrored the landscape through the surface of the lake to her situation suggesting taking different perspectives on her situation. This 'glimpse' also represents the criterion of actionability as stated in the table in section 1.3: my walking practice provides new ideas that guide action in response to needs.

Today I had a coaching walk with S. We walked around the Sem lake in Asker.

The walking seemed to inspire her to move on with her career. At the start of the walk, she was still in doubt if she would accept the job-offer she had received: it was a temporary job for a lower salary compared to what she currently had.

At the end of our walk, she said: "Yes, I will do it! I will accept the offer, I must change, I must progress with my career, just like we do in this walk, it feels natural and good. Otherwise, I feel I will be stuck in my current job forever.

Then, while working in this new job, I can look for something better. Just like the view from this side of the lake is different from when we were on the other side, I see my situation now from a different perspective than before we started walking. This walk really helped me to find the right path to walk."

From my notebook, @Asker, 23. May 2019

Glimpse 7. Coaching walk-and-talk around Semsvannet in Asker

8.4 Acceleration through pandemic walking

By 2020, the learning from my research was flowing into my professional practice in lots of different ways: I used walking to analyse organisational 'as-is' situations, interviewing members of a management team on walk-and-talk sessions. I walked with them while pondering why there was a lack of trust in the team. I facilitated leader development while walking, I offered career advice while walking, and I had designed competence development interventions while walking. My walking practice was developing into a new and wonderful, unusual change consultancy practice. And then, in 2020 the pandemic came.

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly forced me and most of my fellow human beings to stop doing what we had been doing and work from home, our circumstances changing from one day to the next. COVID-19 accelerated the development of my awareness about how much I depended on having fresh air in my lungs, how I needed space and air to stay healthy, and how important it was to have enough space to avoid infections or spreading of disease.

The outbreak of the pandemic also showed me how all our lives on this planet are interconnected. We all need clean air to breathe, water to drink, space to move in, access to land and sea in order to live and thrive, soil to grow things, fire for heat and sunshine so that we can flourish. As David Abram beautifully described it: "We can understand ourselves and feel what it is to be human only through our interaction and engagement with all these others, nonhuman beings with whom our lives are so thoroughly tangled." (2020, p. 7.)

One virus had been able to change the world at a speed we had not experienced before. Schools and organisations were closed, with learning and work executed online from home. This opened the opportunity for people to take time to reflect, look with fresh eyes at our everyday rhythms of life, and experience living in a different way. *If we did not have to leave our homes every morning to go to school or to work, then why would we leave our homes at all?* It was as if a magical winter put our human activity into hibernation. Traffic jams disappeared over night and a fragile silence descended on infected cities. Team sessions, leadership development programs and learning interventions were put on hold.

After a few weeks of keeping quiet, some other things started happening. My body started asking for movement because that is what my body is made for. As Sheets-Johnson had

taught me: “movement is the generative source of our primal sense of aliveness and of our primal capacity for sense-making.” (2011, p. 114.) If we humans cannot move, cannot walk, life loses its purpose and makes no sense anymore.

I experienced an urgent need to get out of my home, which had started to feel like a prison. I was not the only one feeling this way. Many of my fellow human beings (re)discovered walking during this pandemic because that was something our governments were not prohibiting. A walk around the block, in the local neighbourhood, or in a nearby park opened the eyes of many of us and we started seeing and hearing things we had not experienced before. Later, many people discovered how a holiday in their own country could be a wonderful experience. Many of us (re)discovered the beauty of nature and we learned to open eyes to things we had never seen before: a deer in the local park, fungi in the garden, an old tree that had always been there, but we had never noticed it.

Walking became the new COVID-19 craze, a new daily activity that many humans had forgotten about previously. Managers encouraged employees to take a walk at lunchtime because they were concerned that their employees would become depressed from sitting inside their home offices, staring at computer screens and in video meetings all day long.

Suddenly we started encountering each other again: the human and the non-human world. Suddenly, because of a virus spreading around, there was an opportunity for re-connecting.

Because of the time spent not-travelling or not-commuting, there was now time that could be spent walking in the neighbourhood. I noticed it in my own local community: the paths that I mostly walked by myself started suddenly to become ‘worn out’. People I never used to meet in the forest behind my house were there on a daily basis. I got invitations from people that wanted to walk with me, who I had never walked with before. It was as if the world was telling us: “Yes! Stop driving, flying, bussing, and training, start walking!” We were not required to be present in cities, in offices or in most other buildings anymore. Rather, we were forced to stay at home and encouraged to take a break by ourselves and engage with the other living beings around us.

What a strange world we had been living in pre-pandemic, where going out for a walk was seen as ‘skipping class’. Now we were suddenly encouraged to get out and wander about in our neighbourhoods for a while every day.

Walking as an organisational activity was suddenly acceptable. People took phone calls and meetings online on their phones while walking around, with their colleagues and clients in their ears. Outside in the free air, it was much easier to stay at a distance from each other and avoid infections. Teachers invented assignments and games for their students learning outside because there it was much easier to keep the two meters distance compared to inside in the classroom. Outdoors there was space and air and almost no danger.

The timing and implications for my research could not have been better. It felt as if the natural world had been listening to my cry to take care of our stressed environment through promoting walking and being outdoors. As if it sent a virus to force us humans to take a break, slow down, stay at home, and go for a walk around the block. I don't know what the future will bring but during the COVID-19 pandemic I noticed an accelerated acceptance for being outdoors and walking while meeting, learning, and developing in many organisations. *Will this new habit continue to be accepted after the pandemic is over?* The future will tell.

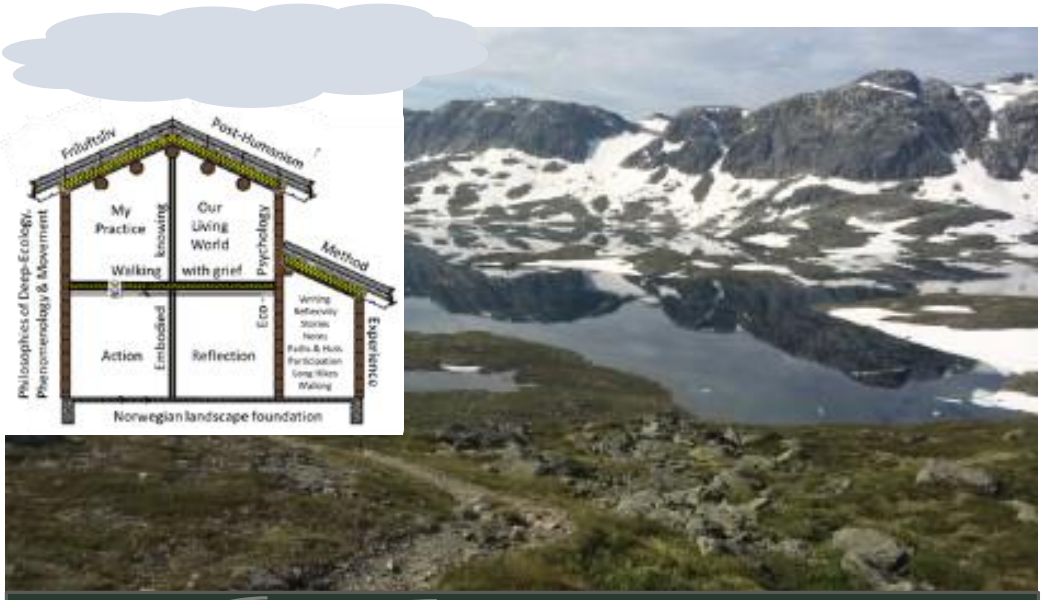
I can imagine (and hope) that organisations have learned through this pandemic that we do not always have to meet each other face-to-face in the office. I hope we will continue promoting outdoor activities as a regular way of meeting, learning, and developing. I hope that the lessons that this virus taught us will last for a long time and that it will result in an acceptance and promotion of outdoor walking interventions as regular activities in our organisational lives. I can imagine so many other applications from my research outcomes: *Why not create outdoor meeting rooms in the gardens of our organisations? Why not invite nature into and around our buildings to encourage people to meet, learn and develop in participation with nature in the free air?*

While writing up this thesis, I saw many beautiful new initiatives popping up: regenerative leadership, natural leadership, forest bathing, natural guiding, nature immersion, forest therapy, walking coaches, rewilding initiatives, and many types of organisations and associations starting to promote walking as part of their service offerings.

It seems that the pandemic has accelerated an acceptance of being outside more and of using walking and moving in friluftsliv in developing the future of our world.

Figure 41. Walking during a team development session I was leading in November 2021

8.5 Reflection: What's still in the ground?



In this chapter I discussed how I have started using the learnings from my developed practice of walking in my work as an organisational change agent. I developed a voice to speak up about walking and how it can facilitate change processes. I described how reflection outdoors in the free air, while engaging with our living earth, can lead to a better understanding of change in our organisations and our lives. I learned that I, through my embodied presence, while carrying a backpack full of reflected experience, bring an ecological wisdom with me to my clients.

However, I have just started putting this knowing into practice. There is still so much more to explore: How can walking with people in changing organisations help creating a better world in which people pay more respect to non -human living beings and give them the attention, love and care they deserve? How can I bring friluftsliv in a more structured way into organisational learning and development? And how can I, with my walking practice, facilitate to let organisational inhabitants meet with the outdoor inhabitants of our planet to create better understanding among them? More practicing and more action-inquiry is needed to find answers to these questions.

The discoveries from my first -person action inquiry have not yet answered the following questions: Can I now, based on my findings, conclude something that will count for the wider (academic) world? How can I find a path into the future to make walking in friluftsliv an accepted practice for more fellow walking practitioners and researchers? I will address these questions in the closing part of this thesis.

Intermezzo: Post-human change – a research theory account

In follow-up to my viva in June 2022 at Ashridge house, my examiners asked me for a piece of writing that engages more critically with the theories I have cited in this thesis.

Therefore, in preparation for this work, I have (re)read and reflected on these theories, while also reading some new theory that I uncovered in the course of this exercise. In this intermezzo I will provide a critical discussion of the theories I consider most important for my work, showing where I find value in theory generally, and how particular theory has relevance to my thesis.

Additionally, my examiners asked me to explain more clearly how my research helped me in developing my living theory of change and what I mean by my practice of 'participative post-human research'. I have worked with these concepts, and the result of this work is a synthesis which follows below.

This intermezzo is built up in three parts:

- Part 1 contains a critical engagement with theory that is used in this thesis;
- In part 2, I explain my living theory of change; and
- In part 3, I discuss my practice of post-human inquiry.

Part 1. Critical engagement with theory

1.1 Philosophers

One of the main theories that helped me in my studies is the theory of Deep Ecology and especially the work of one of its co-founders, the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Næss. In section 7.2 of the main thesis, I discussed the theory of Deep Ecology and how it influenced my practice of 'walking with change'. Deep Ecology focuses on the value of all living beings in the world, and how we, human beings, must try to live in balance within our ecological environments; I describe how this has opened my eyes to look around and engage with the living beings that I met on my walks. Næss says that human beings must develop their own individual Ecosophy based on their ambitions for self-realisation and the eight points from

the Deep Ecology platform (Næss, 1993, p.29, see also p. 147 in this thesis). However, Deep Ecology has also been criticised by, for example, Plumwood, who critiques its anthropomorphic orientation. Plumwood rejects the rational dualistic core of Deep Ecology that puts the human self and self-realisation at the centre (1993, pp. 165-189). Plumwood states that, as long as human beings keep on telling themselves that they are the masters of the earth (or even the universe), and putting themselves at the centre, we will not succeed in changing the way we inhabit our planet (1993, pp. 190-195).

Caring through relations

So how could we successfully change our behaviours? Plumwood proposes that we must create new and different stories. She is suspicious of mainstream Western philosophy on the basis that "deep structures of mastery are buried in foundations of Western intellectual frameworks and conceptual history" (Plumwood, 1993, p. 190). This is a departure from Næss, who puts individual development of self-realisation at the core of his thinking because "the most comprehensive and deep maturity of the human personality guarantees *beautiful action*" (Næss, 1993, p. 86) a position that he explicitly bases on Kant's principle of beautiful or moral action. As far as Plumwood is concerned, this is 'master's logic' (e.g., patriarchal). She argues that it is not self-realisation, but rather learning from oppressed, dismissed groups like women, indigenous people or people from other races (not being white, western males) that can help changing the world into more sustainable ecologies. "Much inspiration for new, less destructive guiding stories can be drawn from sources other than the 'master', from subordinated and ignored parts of western culture, such as women's stories of care." (Plumwood, 1993, p. 196).

My work is influenced by Deep Ecology to the extent that my walking involves paying attention, engaging with, and valuing the living world that I walk through. However, it is more closely aligned to Plumwood's theory in the sense that my walking is not about how humans can learn to interact with nature to develop and realise themselves in the world, but rather, about discovering how we, by caring and attending to life in general, develop relations that generate sustainable change. My loving and caring way of being in the world is not with the goal of establishing myself in order to realise my own self-esteem (as it might be, after Næss). Instead, my purpose and goal are *to sustain life through caring for our living planet*. This kind of caring in fact comprises a hard, practical work that neither Næss nor

Plumwood talk about. It involves guiding, feeding, dressing, cleaning, interacting, engaging, coaching, helping, loving, advising and more. Here, I see my contribution as neither Næss nor Plumwood, since neither of them describes how this 'valuing of life' can be enacted in practice, whereas my approach translates theory into practice through many of these activities, which I have termed as 'earth motherly'.

Another eco-philosopher, David Abram, is concerned with whether (and, if so, how) we can live in a world where both human and non-human lives are responsive to a sense of mutual dependency. He theorises that this is how humans initially experienced life on earth in our early history and wonders why we don't participate in the world in this way anymore, noticing, like Plumwood, that some indigenous cultures still do. Abram speculates that modern human lifestyles, being 'distanced' from a sense of the earth as animate, have embodied effects on our way of being that limit our ability to process sensory information from the natural world. He asks:

> "If participation is the very structure of perception, how could it ever have been brought to a halt? To freeze the ongoing animation, to block the wild exchange between the senses and the things that engage them, would be tantamount to freezing the body itself, stopping it short in its tracks" (Abram, 1997, pp. 130-131).

Where Abram tries to find clues to our lost connection in the over-focussing on the development of our (rational, written) language, Plumwood believes that this loss is caused by the 'mastery story' of western culture which is "a story which has spoken mainly of conquest and control, of capture and use, of destruction and incorporation" (1993, p. 196). From deep ecological, feminist, and embodied viewpoints, these philosophers agree that our interactions and relationship with the more-than-human world must be restored and reanimated in order for humans, and all other living beings, to survive the disastrous crisis we have called upon ourselves. The benefit I gain from these eco-philosophical theories has been in the general shaping and influencing of my mindset and approach as a change practitioner. As Nicol puts it, "Theory helps me to intellectualise this and reflect on the fragility of human existence and our relationships with, and dependence on, what Abram (1997) refers to as the 'more-than-human world'" (Nicol, 2012, p. 10).

From philosophical theory to walking with change practice

After revisiting these theories and reflecting on them, I found I was struggling with questions of "So what?" and "What now?". The work of these philosophers seemed to lack answers to the questions of how we can use these theories in our daily practices in life. How can we change our dualistic, rational minds, that have been formed by many generations of 'western, rational, objective, male, oppressive cultures' and ways of thinking? As Plumwood identified, 'mastery' ways of thinking sit deep in our cultures, in our school systems, in our forms of nation states, in democracy, in capitalism, in the way our parents raise us, in our organisations, our communities and the way we live our lives. These philosophers have written beautiful work with many ambitious ideas, but they do not tell me how I can make the realisation of these ideas happen in my practice. As Nicol formulates it, "As an ontological framework this may well make sense to academic philosophers, but I imagine it is very difficult for most people to see from this description what actions they should take in their own lives." (Nicol, 2012, p. 9). I agree with Nicol when he critiques these theories for remaining disembodied and impersonal.

Toulmin characterises modern philosophy (meaning, philosophy written in the last 400 years, from Descartes, at the beginning of the 16th century until the end of the 20th century) by reference to theory centricity, stating that ""modern" philosophy is more or less entirely *theory-centered* philosophy" (Toulmin, 1989, p. 11). He explains that from around 1630, philosophy turned away from the oral, local, transient, particular aspects of life and language and became focussed on written arguments, general ideas, and abstract principles (p. 35). Philosophy became exaggeratedly rational and theoretical in the hope of elevating questions of epistemology, natural philosophy, and metaphysics out of reach of contextual analysis (p.44). And he wonders: Has this helped us living better, more valuable lives? Has it improved our relationships with our living planet? Toulmin does not answer these questions directly but explains further that a highly rational, abstract and theoretical philosophy has

> "lost its original appeal in the 20th century, if only because more was at stake in the rational Quest for Certainty than is acknowledged in standard histories of science and philosophy, or than is at stake today in philosophy, now that we find ourselves back where the humanists left us." (Toulmin, 1989, p. 44)

Toulmin argues that it is time for a change in the way we have been practicing philosophy for the last 400 years. He also forecasts that this will happen soon now. And indeed, I see that today, 30 years after he wrote his book, the world is changing dramatically. Toulmin wrote his book before the internet had become a common digital communication tool and indeed the theoretical, non-human philosophy that was only available to an elite high educated population is now easily available to anyone (whether it's also accessible, in the sense of readers being able to follow and interpret these texts is another matter). In this thesis I have set out ways to find answers to my own 'how' questions, in my case, by going out to walk into the wild, while thinking and reflecting, while participating with the more-than-human world around me, while building relationships with trees, birds, rivers, animals, plants and mountains. I explored how my body, my sensitivity, and my being in the world changed by walking and inquiring during so many years. I learned from these personal, embodied experiences while trying to connect them to the ideas of these philosophers. However, it was through my concrete, practical interactions with the non-human world, in concrete contextual places, in specific times and through specific encounters, that the meaning of my practice became clear to me.

1.2 Nature writers

As I wrote in section 6.4 of this thesis, nature writers do write about their concrete, personal experiences and by reading these writers, especially Nan Shepherd, her Norwegian equivalent Peder W. Cappelen, Robert MacFarlane, Tristan Gooley and Torbjørn Ekelund, helped me to see how developing deeper relationships with a living landscape can develop a sustainable practice of participative engagement in the world.

The biggest distinction I noticed from the writings of the eco-philosophers is that these authors have written more personal accounts of their experiences of walking through the wild. They locate their practice in a context, at a specific time and place. Because their genre is different from the theoretical philosophical works, nature writers freely share their individual experiences and emotions. These works are written in more poetic and imaginal language which gives the writer opportunity to describe scenic views, participative encounters, surprising appearances or unexpected, magical experiences. Both Nan Shepherd (2011, written in 1944-45) and Peder Cappelen (2019, written in 1964) have written beautiful, short, poetic accounts of their embodied experiences while walking in

their specific mountain areas. They describe how their interactions developed their relations with animals, plants, weather, rivers, air and mountains. The Cairngorms and the Hardangervidda are similar landscapes, and I noticed they wrote quite similar books without knowing about each other's works. I wondered what would have happened if these two people had met each other and walked together for a while. Nowadays, when I walk across the Hardangervidda, Cappelen and Shepherd are often in my mind. I sometimes imagine that it is with me, having read their powerful and beautiful prose in their respective languages, to bring their experiences, lives and works together whilst also adding my own personal way of walking.

Robert MacFarlane has written several books in which he explores walking, respectively, in mountains, wild places, old footpaths, and even underground places (MacFarlane, 2008, 2013, 2017, 2019). For his books, MacFarlane enquires into the local stories, histories and cultures of these wild places, he builds relationships with the (human and non-human) inhabitants and through describing these relationships and his embodied ways of knowing, seeks to include and express these experiences in his own stories. In some of his writing, MacFarlane questions the way humans have shaped landscapes to their will and wonders what impacts will be felt in the future. He also meets many other walkers and interacts with them, and he has read widely about other authors who write about walking. He noticed, just as I did, that most of them were walking with questions in their minds about being, purpose, meaning, and their relationships on and with our planet:

> "But the people I was meeting on my walks were inspiring and modest improvisers. All were using walking to make meaning for themselves – some simply, some elaborately; some briefly, some life-dominatingly – and I couldn't find a better name for them than Pilgrims" (MacFarlane, 2013, p. 236)

MacFarlane's writings have inspired others to go walking and discover the 'old ways'. The nature writers that have influenced me share the objective of inquiring while walking. Through the act of walking, they are 'looking' for something, be it finding a meaning, a history, a future, a change, or a way of being in the world. They describe that the slowness of walking, their embodied movement through a specific contextual-laden landscape and their being in the open air all day, helps them creating a mindset that gives opportunity to explore, reflect, imagine and find. Gooley's (2015 and 2018) guides for walkers, combined

with the more lyric writing of Shepherd, Cappelen, Ekelund and MacFarlane, made me walk differently. It developed my way of inquiring – seeing, thinking, experiencing and reflecting about the living world around me – in a way none of the philosophers had been able to do.

However, what none of these authors wrote about was how my walking could be of use in my practice of organisational change. Their limitation, for my inquiry, is that they did not engage in questions about how a practice of walking and engagement with living landscapes on our planet could be of value to the way we work in our corporations and organisations when we are away from those landscapes. Neither do they consider whether these practices would be useful to support a change in our 'business mindset' from exploiting, damaging and consuming, using our living world as a resource-to-be-processed, to a mindset of developing more sustainable organisations in mutual intra-dependency.

1.3 Friluftsliv and eco-psychology theory

In my search for answers, I turned to a third group of authors: the writers and researchers of friluftsliv and eco-psychology. Where philosophers helped to create a theoretical 'mind-set' and the nature writers supported me in developing my sensitivity and practical embodied ways of knowing, the authors of friluftsliv and eco-psychology literature helped me to understand processes of human learning and development in the outdoors.

As I discussed in section 3.1, I also studied the work of Norwegian friluftsliv pedagogy, and I read some American eco-psychologists. These theories have given me a better understanding about what happens with the psyche while being outdoors, but I found no answers to my questions about how this theory could be of use in organisational change practice.

Andy Fishers argues that eco-psychology is always based on personal experiences and experiential knowing (Fisher, 2013) while Bjørn Tordsson writes in his perspectives on friluftsliv pedagogy that we must carefully choose what we do while being in the outdoors. Tordsson suggests using variating forms, to learn to practice our sensitive abilities, learning to remember what we experience, and learning to describe what we experience during our intra-generational encounters. He also suggests that we must be given opportunities to express what we have experienced in own personal ways. This will give us enriched

understanding that triggers more questioning and thus learning and development in participative experiencing (Tordsson, 2014, pp. 334-336).

As both Fisher and Tordsson propose, I started to use these suggested practices of friluftsliv pedagogy and eco-psychology, as I discussed in chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis. This has enriched my way of walking in that it generated questions about why we live our lives on this planet the way we do. This questioning led me to search further into how I could use this way of walking, thinking, reflecting and learning in the organisations that I work with. That said, neither friluftsliv pedagogy nor eco-psychology gave me answers to my questions around how these theories could be of practical use for organisational change practices.

Concluding this part on theory critique, I learned that my practice of walking with change is embedded in philosophical theory and influenced by practices of nature writers, friluftsliv pedagogy and eco-psychology. They have contributed to my understanding of how I, as a living human walker, am part of the living landscapes that I walk through.

Part 2. My living theory of change

When I started this inquiry journey in 2013, I was an experienced organisational change consultant and knew how to apply change models that were developed at the end of the twentieth century. With Kotter, for instance, as one of the main thought-leaders of positivist change theory (Kotter, 1996, 2008), I had learned to think about change in terms of linear processes designed in Gant charts, with steps to follow, time- and action plans to implement, and activity descriptions to execute. Kotter stated that it was possible to 'manage' a good change process, if you did it in a human (rational, linear, stage-driven) way:

> "The key lies in understanding why organizations resist needed change, what exactly is the multistage process that can overcome destructive inertia, and, most of all, how the leadership that is required to drive that process in a socially healthy way means more than good management" (Kotter, 1996, p. 16).

Later, Kotter adjusted his vision somewhat, arguing that the most important part was that 'a sense of urgency' should be present to 'manage' these processes well (Kotter, 2008) but he was still convinced that people should 'manage' (steer, direct, own, master) the change. The

consulting companies I worked for all developed their own branded change models based on similar principles. For example, at Implement Consulting, I worked with their 'Change with Impact' model (Kræmmer and Divert, 2009) and at PWC I used their 'People Centric Change' model in my projects with clients. They were all positivist, anthropocentric and linear ways of working with change.

From positivist to complex relational

In these change theories, human beings and the organisations they created were the main characters. The wider ecological environment and the living world in which these organisations existed were not considered as relevant, except for their human stakeholders. Only recently, after systems theory was developed, this slowly started to change.

My inquiry however made me experience that change did not happen in linear, mechanistic ways through cause and effect, I found that it was much more complex. In my work as a change consultant, I experienced change as a phenomenon that was based on relations, on interactions, on participation in actions between and among living beings that all connected in complex ways.

Bateson was one of the first to describe that change was something else. He describes change as 'difference': "Difference which occurs across time is what we call "change"" (Bateson, 1972, p. 458). He suggested that we must look again at our way of thinking about change and the causes of change. He says that change in the physical world (outside the human body) and change in the mental world (inside the human mind) are not the same thing, stating: "The whole energy relation is different. In the world of the mind, nothing - that which is *not*- can be a cause" (p. 458). By contrast, Bateson argues, in the physical world there is always 'something', an energy exchange, that causes a change, an effect, an impact on something else. However, in the mind 'nothing' can cause a change. For example, something you do not do (which is nothing) can cause an effect with others. If I do not clean the table after eating my meal, this can cause an irritating effect with others. Irritation is an emotion and emotions can very well be a cause for a change. Bateson claims that the separation of intellect and feelings and emotions (which, as I discussed in part one of this intermezzo, is grounded in Greek philosophy and enlightenment reasoning, and caused rational, dualistic and positivist reasoning), causes monstrous and dangerous situations that

destroy our world through consumption and oppression. Bateson seeks to bridge the relationship between rational and emotional “differences” because it is these relationships that cause what he calls ‘external pathways’ for the larger mind of the world.

I recognised much of what Bateson describes in his work during my walks through the wild. While coping emotionally with bereavement, I felt that my emotions were connected in relationships with the living world around me. I felt very clearly that the trees, birds and rivers bonded with me and my state of being. I felt that they showed me their respect, that they cared for me, helping me to overcome my grief (see for example my experience with the reindeer on p. 113) and connected with me in very special ways (see for example the story of the Dørålsgluppen on p. 138). I experienced change as a living phenomenon that made “*a difference which makes a difference*” (Bateson, 1972, p.459) because of the relationships I was developing between the living beings in the outer world and my emotions in my inner world. They were not two separate things; on the contrary, they were emotionally connected, entangled, interrelated with each other. In the world of organisation, we can learn from these interrelations and entanglements and what processes and actions happen in these relations when change unfolds.

Capra (1997) builds further on Bateson’s work. He writes that he sees the world as a network of communities of living organisms. In his theory of change, Capra argues that hierarchies are a human projection, that the living world does not experience as such. He says, “In nature, there is no ‘above’, nor ‘below’, and there are no hierarchies. There are only networks nesting within other networks.” (Capra, 1997, p. 35). He sees living systems as networks of networks and that is what he calls the web of life. The members of these networks all influence each other and must be considered regarding change.

This is also what I experience when working with change processes in organisations. I see that the people at work all have relations inside and outside their organisation, including with the landscapes where their organisations are located, their natural and cultural environments, their histories, personalities, families, and all the things that happened in the past. All these interrelated elements in this complex web of relations play a role in the change processes that are happening in their organisations.

After reading Bateson and Capra I found I was looking at change in the world in a new way. Change was not a mechanistic, multistage process but a complex, interrelated, unpredictable phenomenon. However, while walking and inquiring into my practice, I noticed that the (earth)mother, feminine perspective of experiencing change was missing in both Bateson and Capra's writing. I also noticed that they hardly quoted from or based any work on female authors or scientists.

From complex relational to living change

I believe that most life on earth is generated through birth from a mother. This is not only the case with mammals, but also counts for most other living beings on our planet, for example mother trees bring forward new trees that are nurtured by them (Simard, 2021). What characterises a mother is that she gives energy and attention freely away to her children. In this loving, nurturing and caring relationship, a mother expects and requests nothing in return. The attending to her child sits deeply in a mother's genes, instinct, beliefs and ways of being in the world. I have experienced this myself. New life that grows deeply inside of your body is a unique experience. Life that grows from within an existing life, that changes through (physically and mentally) attending, feeding, caring, loving and helping to learn and develop. I call this (motherly) attending *participating in changing life*.

Through participating in changing life, we are making a difference in our web of communion, or as Plumwood states it, we enact that it is possible "to treasure the incomparable richness of diversity in the world's cultural and biological life, and to participate with earth others in the great dialogues of the community of life" (Plumwood, 1993, p. 196). Active participating in a wide web of relations creates change, diversity, and distinctness, and in my view this effect can be wider than just mother-child relations, also potentially embracing relations that are inter-organisational. Forms of life are entangled with each other and their environments through this participation and (earth) mothers play an essential role in helping it grow and change. (Earth) mothers bring forward new life and relations and help to develop them. Thus, they make a difference that makes a difference which is the essence of change. Participating in life can be among and across species, since we are all entangled in our interconnected webs of life on this planet.

Through being this active participant in my specific part of the world, I was changing myself together with the other participants in this environment. We all influence each other through active participation in our shared lives. Karen Barad talks about entanglement:

> "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating (Barad, 2007, p. ix).

Barad takes a position that all life on our planet, human and non-human, and all matter, throughout the universe, is entangled together, influencing and changing each other through intra-active dynamics. I can't speak to the universe-level claim, but on a personal scale, this seems consistent with the experiences I have had in my walking practice. While walking in the world, I meet and intra-act with others (human and non-human) that I meet on my path. My intra-active meetings offer me many possibilities for discovering, learning, and changing. I also come to perceive that I have responsibility to intra-act ethically with my participants: "Intra-acting responsibility as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world's vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us flourish." (Barad, 2007, p. 396). This is what I mean when I write about the qualities of an *earth motherly participating in changing life*.

Reading Barad, whose work builds further on Plumwood's, has opened my mind by pointing out this entanglement. I suddenly understood where this 'feeling of being part of nature' comes from and why it matters. I also understood that I could use this insight in my work with change in organisations because organisations also consist of entangled relationships between and within its members.

It was also my entanglement with the landscape and all its living beings and phenomena that made me experience my feelings of joy. Expressing my joy has enabled me to become more active within the landscape and for the organisations I have worked with, giving me energy to intra-act, care, love and nurture. This is how I participate in change. This was what my change practice in the organisational world was all about: *by showing up, being an active participant in my entanglements with an organisation, I could influence change in my*

togetherness with others. By opening up myself to the others in these organisations, by welcoming qualities of difference into my mind, by walking, moving, inside and outside these organisations, my life became a part of the life of each organisation, and thus I was a part of the changes, which we, the inhabitants were creating and experiencing together.

In order to experience change and make change happen, I realised I had to be an active, ethically responsible, entangled, participant in that change myself. Through building relations, by caring, giving, listening, (this is, intra-acting) which again, were all related to my embodied sensing, my being an 'entangled member' of this living community around me became apparent to me. It takes energy, time, attention, empathy, embodied presence and active joining (mothering) to become part of and being accepted in *a community that is part of the web of life*. Through embodied attending and active participation with other living beings, we can become part of a change.

Ethics, knowing and being are then all merged together in this change process. Barad calls it

> "*ethico-onto-epistem-ology* – an appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing, and being – since intra-action matters, since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again, because the becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter." (Barad, 2007. p. 185).

For me this 'ethical mattering' is part of my being an earth mother and experiencing joy in the world. In my change practice of walking, the relations (human and non-human) become apparent, and they bring me new knowing through my embodied presence in these entangled relationships. My walking practice contains an ethically intra-acting that helps the participants in my walks with them flourish. Through my practice, I take responsibility for the (earthmother) role that I play in the world's differential becoming.

Synthesis in my living theory of change

During the summer of 2022, I immersed myself in (re)reading all these change theories as inputs for writing this intermezzo. After weeks of theoretical work, I needed a break and went hiking with my youngest daughter for a few days across the Hardangervidda, with my mind full of concepts. Being the action researcher that I am, I wrote down some of my

reflections in my notebook. Back at home I wrote a short story about my experiences. I found that while I was walking and thinking about my living theory of change, my practice of walking served me by creating the space I needed to better understand what my living theory of change is all about. In this story I wrote:

> *…While we moved our bodies through the landscape, it felt as if the landscape was standing still. (These are feelings Tordsson (2014b), Ekelund (2019), and Cappelen (2019) describe.)…This landscape was shaped by the last ice-age. Ever since the last glacier disappeared, no human being had touched it, except for their feet, and the forming of some cairns that stood along the path that we were following… (MacFarlane (2013), and Shepherd (2011), wrote about this….What had been the difference that made the difference? (This is what Bateson (1972) asked.) And how did this change happen? Was it the mother grass that had produced different seeds? Was it the influence from the weather? What had happened over time? How were all the grasses around me entangled with each other, with the bushes, with the lemming and the human beings that were pausing for a break on their walks at this place? (Barad (2007) often wondered about things like this.)*

This glimpse (you can find the whole story in Appendix 6), shows that my living theory of change is based on active participation, embodied presence and attending to the 'living children of the earth' around me. Together we learn, develop, grow and change with each other. By paying respect to diversity, valuing distinctness, having awareness for our entanglement and understanding that it takes time, energy, love, care and a lot of effort (which, in Norway, is supplied through our culture of doing 'dugnad' work), beautiful, ethical change happens in and around us.

Understanding this has opened a new world to me. I now understand that my physical, embodied 'showing up' in organisations with this mindset of 'active participative change' – which I also term *walking with change* – helps me in making a difference in the world. Participating in change processes as an earth mother involves seeing the organisations that I work with as living children that need care and attention and that are part of a wider network or community (as Capra (1997) calls it a web) of relations, all entangled in some way and in the end, together forming the universe. This gives me an active earthmother role

to help these organisations learn, grow, develop and thus change (or as Bateson (1972) calls it, become different).

I started from a position of seeing myself working within a positivist paradigm as a classic change consultant, where my key activities are designing, planning and facilitating linear change roll-out plans. Progressively, through this inquiry, my practice has changed me to view myself as acting as a *change walker*. Walking into an organisation, I first want to 'get to know its inhabitants', just like I do when I start a walk in the mountains. I first want to build relationships, become accepted as a member in a community of other living beings by giving, caring, valuing, and nurturing the children (employees, leaders, departments, subcultures, other types of connected groups) in its network. I do this by walking the paths of the entangled web of relationships, and then helping these groups within the organisation to see, sense, grow, learn and develop in embodied ways, as well as through applying traditional, rational change management mechanisms. The living change can then spread though others, who then also walk and act in participation within their living world around them, in the big web of this living organisation.

Part 3. My practice of participative post-human inquiry

In the last part of this theory intermezzo, I address the question of how my developed living theory of change, and the existing theory that supports it, has influenced my way of conducting post-human inquiry.

In their work about the 'Great Turning', Macy and Johnstone describe how a slow transition is taking place in the world from "a doomed economy of industrial growth to a life-sustaining society committed to the recovery of our world" (Macy and Johnstone, 2012, p. 26). They describe how three dimensions of i) a shift in consciousness, ii) holding actions and iii) life-sustaining systems and practices, are happening simultaneously and are mutually reinforcing each other to make this transition happening (p. 32).

I wondered whether and how my developed practice of walking was part of this great turning and what place my practice might have in this transition. While inquiring into my practice of walking, I learned to see how the living members of this world participate in my

practice. I experienced that my walking put my 'chattering mind' at rest and I learned that through my embodied activity, I could attend to other-than-human life that was participating in the context of my inquiry. These others helped me develop my embodied way of knowing and they enabled me to discover my ontology of joy.

Developed practice of inquiry

Essential in the development of my practice of inquiry (my own 'Great Turning') has been the discovery of an understanding about the value of distinctness and diversity of the cycles of life and death, beyond the human. I learned that my practice of walking is a 'post-human' practice because humans only play one role it; I no longer take humans as my starting point. Rather, I now perceive it is the ecology of all living beings, with all their interrelated affairs, happening in continuous cycles of change, that can make an impact in the world. The implication for me of how I effect change is that I see all living participants as important and valuable and that I, as a living being, am part of this living change as well. I do not stand apart, on the outside, but I am an active, living participant, that comes in with my own history, experiences, personality and culture to participate in change with others.

Macy and Johnstone (2012), describe how each individual human being can act and have an impact in the world by developing a vision and then consciously plan for making their vision happening. They call this process 'Active Hope', and they believe it is the combination of individual human efforts, each making conscious decisions and acting upon them, that drives the transition towards the world's recovery. I have come to see, through my post-human way of inquiring, that human beings only play a minor part in this change. I learned that the most harmonious way I can make this great turning happening is in participation with the living world around me.

Beyond the 'western' mind

Another author who criticizes dualistic thinking is Richard Tarnas who concludes that we are at a turning point of how we see our human impact in the world. In his book '*The passion of the western mind*' (1990), he describes how science, philosophy, technology, and culture in the west have been shaped from the Greek world view, through Christianity into the modern area, mainly controlled and shaped by the masculine mind at the expense of the feminine. He states that

> "the evolution of the Western mind has been founded on the repression of the feminine - on the repression of undifferentiated unitary consciousness, of the *participation mystique with nature:* a progressive denial of the *anima mundi,* of the soul of the world, of the community of being, of the all-pervading, of mystery and ambiguity, of imagination, emotion, instinct, body, nature, woman - of all that which the masculine has projectively identified as "other" (Tarnas, 1990, p. 442)

And it was exactly these aspects that helped me developing my walking practice further. I discovered how the living world around me, while I was full of emotions of bereavement, while using my body in motion and participating with the living beings that I met on my path, helped me to shape my mind, my vision, and my ideas about my being in this world. All these 'feminine' elements, that according to Tarnas have been repressed by our masculine western mind over the last 4 millennia, played an important role in my research. Tarnas concludes his book with saying that "the deepest passion of the Western mind has been to reunite with the ground of its own being" (p. 443) and he argues that the 'great feminine principle' in life (we are all born from a female body) must be allowed back into the western world and reunited with the masculine.

However, Tarnas's highly theoretical analysis does not give me many clues about how we can bring this change about in our practices in the world. He does not say what type of practices are needed to make this reuniting happening. He only affirms that he is a supporter of the "indispensable ideals expressed by the supporters of feminist, ecological, archaic, and other countercultural and multicultural perspectives" (p. 444). Being the practical person that I am, my contribution in this discussion lies into questioning: How might I – or we – do this? How can we reunite the feminine with the masculine dominance in our Western minds and cultures? What actions are needed to make this reunion happen?

Post-human inquiry

My post-human way of inquiring, giving the more-than-human world an important role in my research, has been an attempt to contribute to this reuniting, to contribute to this 'great turning' that is taking place in our earth history at this present moment in time. The ecological crisis shows us that we humans cannot continue exploiting our planet the way we have been doing in the past 12000 years. Through my inquiry I discovered my entanglement

with the living world that I walked through, and I discovered that I could use my walking practice as a way of reuniting the human with the non-human, the masculine with the feminine, and the urban mind with the wild mind.

This ecological post-human inquiring, *attending to all life in my inquiry space*, also had an impact on my practice as an organisational change consultant. By taking my customers out for a walk outside of the office, I attempt to bring the mystic of the anima mundi into our work environments. Valuing the distinctness of all the creatures that live in my inquiry space, studying how we influence each other, how we actively participate in each other's' lives on this planet – this is what I call ecological post-human inquiry. While being out walking and inquiring, we can learn and develop and change our world into a more harmonious living network that creates space and time for distinctness, diversity, beauty and care, which Macy & Johnston (2012) call the Great Turning.

I have set out in this thesis a contribution that Tarnas describes as a synthesis that "leads to something beyond itself: It brings an unexpected opening to a larger reality that cannot be grasped before it arrives, because this new reality is itself a creative act." (p. 445). This is also what Abram (1999) calls 'the spell of the sensuous world' that can teach us new and more harmonious ways of being or what Morton means by calling for "opening [of] our eyes, or our senses to the distinctness of the parts, that create more value than the whole" (2018, p. 98). These post-human philosophers advocate for a world where it is not the human at the centre but a world of all living beings (of which homo sapiens is one, but just one, of the species) and with this re-emphasis giving all species a chance to live harmoniously together in reciprocal relationships. They argue for leaving the dualistic, anthropocentric, rational epoch behind us and invite humanity to walk into a future that pays more respect to distinctness, diversity and new epistemologies. In this, they build further on the inter-connectedness described by Bateson, Næss, Capra, and Plumwood.

My practice of walking is one way to approach this future. My research has shown how developing new relationships can teach us to see our beautiful planet with new eyes and can help us change our habits and styles of living and working into more sustainable ways. My role as a researcher and walking practitioner is to help and guide others on their own paths of change. I suggest that other researchers who are interested in undertaking such

walking inquiry work to do so with an open mind for learning and connecting. My method involves:

i. first becoming an active participant in a living community,
ii. while attending to its distinct diversity with an open mind,
iii. using embodied ways (walking, moving, being outdoors) with these others while opening up the senses (see, listen, smell, touch, taste, feel);
iv. next, being part of and actively participating in this community, becoming a member by understand its culture, history and ways of being,
v. take time to reflect upon experiences in a way that fits personally (in your own way, this could be oral, written, visual, artful, poetic, physical or in another way); and
vi. then, starting to entangle and influence with its members by walking, moving, changing together,
vii. following a path of active participation in change processes while
viii. caring, nurturing, guiding and helping others to finding direction,
ix. while iterating the activities above, following the curved path in active, reflective participation together, into the changing future.

I learned how to execute this way of doing post-human inquiry, by walking this path myself while being influenced by others who wrote about this and walked together with me. Becoming entangled with the landscape around me, I was participating in changing life, gradually discovering not to put myself, or other human beings at the centre of my research but acknowledging that there were many other types of complex living beings playing an important role in it. Gradually, I came to understand my inquiry as ecological and post-human. This understanding did not arise from one day to the next and nor was it based on the planning and execution of a pre-existing vision. Rather, I came to this understanding through a slow, longitudinal, interactive, participative, and messy process.

The impact on me and on my way of being in the world has been substantial. The practice of walking, the movement, the intra-action with other entangled life around me, has created change in me, in the way I do my work, in the way I interact with others (human and non-human) and in the way that I live my short life on this planet. It has made me conscious of the great value of living my life in an *ethico-onto-epistem-ological* way, and the joy that this brings to me, as well as the impact I have on others that participate in my walk of life.

Chapter 9. Conclusion: Walking into the future

Back in Norway after my long sabbatical journey in 2018, in which I completed quite a few walks in New Zealand and Australia, I re-engaged in inquiry and writing.

I started with some deep reflections on all the walking I had done in the past years. I had walked alone, and with others. I had completed some long solitary hikes through the wild in Norway. I had walked with my children when they were missing their father. I had walked with friends and family and my good study friend Craig, with whom I conducted several co-inquiries walks in Australia. I had collected an enormous amount of data and now my last questions were "*What now?"* and *"How can I make all this into a doctorate?*"

Figure 42. Hiking around Mount Cook, New Zealand, December 6, 2018

After one of my last hikes in New Zealand I had written on my blog:[52]

> Today we hiked up to the summit of Mount Somers (1650 m.) It was fun hiking over the ridge since I haven't walked over many ridges before. We ascended about 1100 meters, and on the top, we found a wonderful hexagon with wise words that nicely summed up the last four weeks in this great country. They are very much aligned with my own life values and they're exactly the reason why I travelled all the way to the other side of the world. How wonderful to find these words on top of a mountain after three hours of lovely hiking, panting, and sweating. My New Zealand adventure has almost come to an end, what a treat it was today to find these wise words at the summit:

[52] Retrieved from: https://annemiekfriebel.wordpress.com/2018/12/08/summit/

Revere yesterday

Build on today

Absorb energy

And inspiration

From this place

For the future

Figure 43. At the summit of Mount Sommers, New Zealand, December 8, 2018

Once again had my practice of walking and engaging with the living world around me brought me a message of wisdom. I had learned from my research that the living world sends me messages all the time and even though the message at the top of Mount Sommers (which I rather should call by her Māori name: Te Kiekie) was created by the human species, it was the mountain that had called me up, to come and read this message on her summit.

The energy I received from this mountain on that December day in 2018 on the other side of our planet, inspired me to continue developing my walking consulting practice. It gave me inspiration to pick up researching and writing again after my long bereavement break. *What would my developed walking practice bring me in the future? Would it be as Te Kiekie was suggesting? Would it bring me enough energy and inspiration for the future?*

Earlier in this document, I set out my research quality criteria (section 1.3) in which I stated that this was a doctorate project with clear objectives, participative, actionable methods, and an inquiry process based on practice development and reflexivity which produced significant contributions and insights.

I have shown that my research into my way of walking has given me clear insights about the role that my body, my senses and my reflections play while walking through the wild, and how I developed my embodied knowing while participating in the landscape around me.

I have shared how my ontology shifted while walking with grief, which provided significant new insight into my purpose in life and how I have chosen to start living a “frilufts” life, more closely in harmony with the living world around me. I have also shown how I have started to apply my developed practice in some of my change interventions while working with my clients and their organisational development challenges.

Yet, after all these years of inquiry, there are still some questions left unanswered.

In this last concluding chapter, I consider the future for my practice and share the questions and suggestions I have for fellow walkers and fellow researchers. I elaborate on my last questions of *“What now?”* and *“Why does this doctorate exist?” What are the questions and inspirations that after all my inquiring and writing, I want to offer to other walkers and to the wider research community, to walk with into the future?*

Figure 44. Metaphorical ‘map of the territory’ for chapter 9

9.1 Recommendations and questions to fellow walkers and researchers

Just as Te Kiekie told me to absorb the energy produced in my body by walking up to her summit and finding inspiration from this place for the future, I found energy from this inquiry into my walking practice that inspires me to look into the future.

The paths I have walked during these years have given me significant insights about my practice, which I want to share with fellow walkers and researchers. In this section, I give my concluding reflections, recommendations, and questions that fellow walkers might find helpful when developing their own walking practice. My research has been rigorous, my quality criteria as discussed in section 1.3 are met through my sustained and dedicated practice of walking over many years, they substantiate my claims, and still, after all these years, I have some questions that remain unanswered.

In this section I sum up the findings of my research and I send an invitation out into the world to my fellow walkers and researchers, to take the baton over from me. I invite you to help me searching for answer and walk with my ideas and suggestions for further inquiry.

A 'shifted way of being in the world'

A first area of contribution to new knowing arises from my 'shifted way of being in the world'. During my inquiry, I have learned to see our living earth with new eyes. Through my participative way of engaging with the natural world, in the landscapes I walked through, meeting other diverse, distinct, living beings in their own physical space in the open air, in reaching out to them in a humble, and caring way, and by presenting myself as being one of them, I learned that my co-living beings welcomed and accepted my presence, my wonder and my curiosity, and invited me to enjoy our lives together.

I learned that by reaching-out, I was able to reach-in. The river of the Dørålsgluppen, the reindeer at Toveseter, the little bird in the Jon valley and the sheep at Nordseter, they all acknowledged me as a fellow earthling. They all shared the beauty of their diverse ways of being in the world with me. I understood, as written in the intermezzo of this thesis, that through my 'ethical mattering' that is, through my way of walking, being entangled in participative, earth motherly relations with the living world around me, my practice of

walking brought me energy and joy in helping others to change. Through this inquiry, I have learned to appreciate life in all its distinct diversity. I experienced a significant change in my worldview. I discovered that my ontology of joy changed me and that I bring it with me when I am walking with others. I invite fellow walkers, to join me in sharing this joy for living and moving and appreciating the diversity of life on our beautiful planet.

Questions and suggestions for fellow walkers:

When walking, take questions of purpose with you, engage in participation with the living world around you and enjoy the beauty of her diversity. Reflect on questions in your mind of purpose and entanglement with the world around you. Try to see how change is happening in and around you while walking.

Do you also notice the messages the living world around you, are sending out to you? How do you intra-act in your entanglements with the living beings that you meet on your path?

However, regarding understanding this 'ethical mattering' and joy for being alive in the world while walking, I have some questions left for fellow researchers to explore further:

Questions to explore for fellow researchers:

Why do we humans focus so much on ourselves and see ourselves as better or of higher value than other living beings on our planet? Is there a way we can learn to see that human value is just as important as the value of other living beings on our planet? How can we shift the focus in action research from the flourishing of human beings to the of flourishing of all living beings on our planet?

Can the introduction of an ethico-ontho-epistem-ological way of walking (learning through walking while ethical mattering with an ontology of joy), help us, living in a more earth motherly, caring and joyful way of being in the world?

Embodied participative practice

A second contribution from my research is around extended epistemology. Through my inquiry into my practice of walking, I have learned that an extended epistemology of embodied knowing helped me developing my practice into a participative, active, walking practice that brought many insights about change.

While walking outdoors, with my body in motion, I felt alive. After many cycles of action and reflection I started to notice how I was entangled in embodied intra-active relationships with the world around me. While walking I was in action, producing and consuming, participating and exploring, but also reflecting, learning and developing, knowing and being at the same time, ethically mattering with the living beings that I met on the paths that I walked. I let light and oxygen come in, breathed carbon dioxide out. I was relating with the trees, the air, the rivers and the animals, and together we changed, created new energy, joy and ideas.

Through this inquiry, I have learned how my body and mind are intertwined in entangled relationships with the living world around me. I now experience my life and my practice as an embodied participative journey that I share in relations with other living beings on our planet.

I have learned that through the primacy of my body in movement, I can co-create thoughts and ideas that help finding ways to change together. My body has helped me to sense, feel and interact with other humans and non-humans that joined me on this journey of discovery. Through this embodied way of practicing action and reflection, I have learned that my practice of walking offers many opportunities for learning about change. I changed myself and I have helped others change. Our walking generated new knowing through embodied slow movement in the ‘friluft’.

Questions and suggestions to fellow walkers:

When stuck with questions of change, go for a walk outdoors in the “friluft”. Try to attend to your body in sensuous participation with the living world around you. What are you hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting, noticing, feeling? How can you learn from your body what the landscape and its inhabitants are telling you? Could you translate some of your embodied experience into new knowing? Can you feel how you are entangled with the world around you?

While walking, I learned through this embodied way of knowing to notice the beauty and diversity of our living world. Different forms of life gave me different clues and suggestions in their own embodied languages, that I learned to understand through my dedicated studies and the substantial number of walks that I completed. The more I experienced, the more joy I felt for being alive, the greater the range of creative ideas, suggestions and solutions that came to my mind and helped me answer my change questions.

Through applying my doctoral action research quality criteria of partnership and participation, while using documented methods in iterative cycles of action and reflection, I discovered that my practice developed into a valuable embodied participative practice that I carry with me when I show up in my change work.

However, regarding this way of developing new embodied knowing, I still have some questions left for fellow researchers to explore further:

Questions to explore for fellow researchers:

How can embodied knowing become more accepted and applied in our Western world that is still dominated by dualistic, positivist ways of knowing?

Is there a way to communicate the added value of embodied knowing, the way our bodies are entangled with the world, and how it can change the way we are living our lives on our planet in a more sustainable way?

Organisational change through walking

My third contribution from this research is about organisational change. Through this inquiry into my practice of walking I have learned to start applying some of my research findings into my work as an organisational change consultant. I believe that in the years to come, I will introduce my ecological post-human approach to walking, and my embodied, joyful way of being in the world, even more in the organisations that I work with as a change agent. Some key insights that I developed through my studies and research that can be applied in organisational change practice are:

- A team development intervention does not mean creating 'one team' in which everybody acts and behaves the same. Team development means that the members of the team learn to see the beauty, distinctness, and value of the different 'parts' in the whole of the team (Morton, 2018), that they form a living network (as described on page 198) and how they are entangled with each other. Enabling a team to learn about themselves through the interplay between and among team-members, and to see and appreciate the value of their distinct diversity, can create beautiful results.
- A leader development program cannot prescribe that all leaders must learn to behave in a similar way all the time (based on Morton's' and Capra's reflections as discussed in the intermezzo). Rather, it should find ways to encourage leaders to act with an open and wondering mind, avoiding judging, trying to understand what assumptions are lying underneath our actions. Each employee is unique and distinct and needs specific attention and care. A leader must learn about the diverse paths they can walk and how they can guide their employees on their learning and development journeys. Learning about their ethical, ontological and epistemological way of being in the world, helping them to see their entangled relationships inside and outside their organisation, can help them in understanding how they are participating and intra-acting in relational, living change processes.
- An organisational change process does not mean that we must restructure all divisions, regions, or departments in a similar way. Creating unique, distinct, and beautiful organisational units and teams may result in a beautifully entangled organisation with many diverse valuable parts that act and intra-act together to form a valuable and potential whole. How to cultivate conditions to create such

organisations could be an ongoing research agenda because this is easier said than done.

Through my research I have learned that the beauty of the diversity that our living world is offering can be of inspiration while working with people in organisations. Valuing the diversity of all forms of life in organisational change processes, will create opportunities to develop beautiful, distinct, diverse entangled organisations. These can contain beautiful, distinct, diverse entangled departments or teams that are occupied by beautiful, distinct, entangled diverse people. These people can then invite non-human beautiful, distinct, diverse species to entangle with them and become part of it.

It is going to be difficult to make organisations change like this. As a change agent, I am only a little part of the bigger whole. But I am a distinct, unique little part, and I see my work as distinct and unique as well. The earth mother cares for all her distinct and unique children. What I can suggest to my fellow organisational change agents is:

Questions and suggestions to fellow walkers:

Introduce walking, in all sorts of forms, as part of organisational change interventions. Communicate the value that embodied ways of knowing can bring. Can you share ideas of how we can invite our living world to become part of our organisational changes? Start with small first steps; maybe a walk-and-talk with a colleague before going on longer and more extended walks with larger groups?

Regarding the use of walking in organisational change interventions, I still have some questions left for fellow researchers to explore further:

Questions to explore for fellow researchers:

How can we help organisations with shifting focus from development **of** people (often with a focus on training and performance improvement) to focussing on **participation** in the development processes **with** people while focusing on the **joy** this brings to our work in our organisations and our lives on our planet?

Can walking help organisations to connect their visions and strategies to a bigger view, outside their organisations, to a vision about their entanglement with wider ecologies, and their contribution of how to sustain the diversity of life on earth?

How can we start using the developed insights of this research to contribute to the flourishing of all living beings on our planet?

9.2 Finding the path of living a post-human "frilufts"-life

I have come to the end of this long journey of inquiry into my practice of walking with change. Through my research, I have learned that nothing in this world is static. The cycles of movement and change are complex and difficult to grasp. There is an endless balancing and rebalancing going on between birth and death, between decay and growth, between underpopulation and overpopulation, between flourishing and illness, between love and hate, between care and ignorance. *Could thinking in non-dualistic ways, while introducing extended ways of knowing and adopting diverse ways of thinking with countless epistemologies, help us find a path to live our lives in better ways with our fellow living beings on this planet?*

Writing this thesis has been a big challenge for me. I can't remember how many drafts I have written, and I was often confronted with whether my work was good enough. A few

times I almost gave up, but my saviours helped me keep going and my walking buddies kept returning, wanting to walk with me. They encouraged me that I was discovering something unique and special, and I ultimately also become convinced that my practice contains so much potential that I could not stop walking, writing, and developing until I was finished.

I learned that there are thousands of shades of colours, contexts of landscapes, and complexities of lives. After ten years of inquiry, I learned that after flourishing comes decay, which again gives space for fruits and harvests that carry food and seeds for new life to flourish after the current dies away.

It has been tough to cope with my grief, but walking with it, while reflecting, and writing about it, has enriched my life. I learned that the temporality of our embodied lives is a given on this planet. We try hard to prolong life and avoid death. Still, there is one thing we all know: sooner or later, our bodies will die. We humans spend a lot of time, money and energy developing medicine against aging, vaccines against viruses, digitalisation to reduce our labour wear off, developing new technologies to make our lives easier and more comfortable, envisioning cyborgs, robots, and other new AI technologies to facilitate our sustained human dominance on the planet. Nonetheless, one way or another, one day with or without the human species, our planet will enter the post-human era.

My walks in the mountains and the death of my husband taught me that life on earth is both long and short. Three months of illness can feel like ages, but 52 years of living is very short. Time is a relative phenomenon. The blooming of blåveis, my favourite flower, that decorates my bunad with its exuberant beauty is the signal of new life and flourishes in the Norwegian spring, after a long winter with snow and ice. Their blooming doesn't last for more than four weeks. But we all know they will return, year after year, I have seen them return every spring ever since I have lived in Norway, and they have done so for ages.

Figure 45. Walking with my daughter Hanneke, sharing the joy of finding blåveis in the early spring

The big mother tree that Simard wrote about (Simard, 2021), has been in the forest for hundreds of years. She loses her leaves every autumn, and they return each spring. One year, during a heavy storm, she falls to the ground so that finally, after two hundred years, her daughters that have grown around her, get enough space and light and air, to grow beyond her realm (Powers, 2019; Simard, 2021; Wohlleben, 2017) and her fallen trunk, full of captured carbon, provides food and shelter to many other living creatures.

Could we humans offer more space and light and air to the habitats of our fellow living beings on the planet? How could we reduce our own numbers, so that we need less, take less, and consume less, and so that we can enrich the quality our own habitats and those of our fellow species with more diversity? As Morton taught me during this doctoral inquiry process, less creates more and the qualities of the parts have more value than the whole (Morton, 2018, P. 99).

Could we through inquiring deeper into these questions find answers of how we can better balance the flourishing for all forms of life on earth, not just for humans? How can we learn to listen to the other forms of life and learn their needs, interact with them, give back and care for them, love them, just as an earth mother loves and cares for her children? Could we

learn to communicate with them in another way by engaging and interacting together with these other forms of life, by walking our lives together with them? Could we by inquiring in participative ways into our relations with the living world, find a more joyful way of inhabiting our planet together?

To find this path into our future I propose that we come outside more frequently, out of our houses, our offices, flats, schools, shopping malls and cities to walk into the open, free air. By breathing air into our lungs more consciously, by acknowledging the raindrops on our head, by touching the soil underneath our feet and by meeting with our co-inhabitants in this world, we can learn and try to discover together how we can find this path towards a new balancing of life on earth.

Through my research project I have come to understand that by walking outside in the "friluft", I found new ways of learning, exploring, and knowing, and I decided to change my way of being on this planet. There are still many questions I have left over, even after this long and extensive journey. Writing this thesis has not been easy for me and it has cost many years of my life, but I have learned and developed and changed and found valuable new knowing.

As a result of my inquiry, I have decided to move to a space on earth where I can live in closer communion with other than human lives and I start living what I call, an ecological post-human "frilufts"- life. I will start living my life being an even more active participant in more-than-human life on earth. I hope that I am standing on the brink of a new age, where the human species dominates less and renews relations with the other living beings on this planet. An age in which humans have finally understood that we are not the only species on our living earth, that we do not 'own' primacy. An age in which we understand that change is cyclical, and that living is not only about growing, developing, and flourishing, but just as much about decaying, shifting, reflection, death, and renewal. I hope we are entering a new age of living with ecological wisdom. This is what I have learned from doing this research. The path into my unknown future is to keep on walking and I am inviting as many walkers as possible to join me on my joyful paths of participation in life into the future. I will be living my life with an ontology of joy, walking, exploring, and participating in the lives of my earthly co-inhabitants, for with whatever time I have left on this beautiful planet.

Figure 46. Walking into my new neighbourhood, starting to live a post-human "frilufts"-life

Coda: My walking-code for living a post-human “frilufts”-life

As mentioned earlier in this work, the Norwegian trekking organisation has developed a mountain-code as a practical guideline for all people that go walking in the Norwegian mountains.[53] It contains recommendations, advice, and principles to protect the environment, prevent accidents and support safe and pleasurable hiking.

I wrote my own personal walking code as a guideline to develop my practice of walking further into the future. It is based on my research and my vision of living a “frilufts”-life.

Annemiek’s personal walking-code

1. When I am stuck (with anything), I always go out for a walk
2. While walking I move into a rhythm that my body feels at ease with
3. My walking supports embodied creativity: hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting, feeling, touching, imagining, thinking, pondering, wondering
4. I engage with the living beings that I meet on my path
5. I walk and write to reflect and after that I share and tell the stories and experiences from my walks with others
6. I slow down and stop regularly to notice and confirm the living world around me
7. I care for and give back to what I receive from our mother earth
8. I respect all live on our planet and only take the minimum I need for my own
9. I inspire others to go out and walk alone or together, and invite them to walk with me, sharing my joy for walking
10. I always adjust my walks and the choice of landscapes that we walk in, to the wishes and capabilities of my companions (and I don’t participate in extreme outdoor sports)

[53] https://english.dnt.no/the-norwegian-mountain-code/

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Appendix 1: Glossary of Norwegian expressions

Bunad

Bunad is the name for the Norwegian national costume. It is worn by males and females on the national day, 17th. May and on other festive occasions like weddings, baptisms, or other solemn celebrations.

DNT

DNT is an abbreviation for “Den Norske Turistforening” the Norwegian trekking association, one of the largest voluntary organisations in Norway.

Dugnad

Dugnad is a Norwegian term that is used for a type of obligatory voluntary work, a contradiction in terminus but understood by all Norwegians because it sits deep in the ‘all hands-on board’ mentality. Everyone helps if needed, without getting paid.

Folkehøyskole

A Folkehøyskole is a non-academic institute of further education that students often attend in the year after they finish secondary education and before they start studying at a college or university.

Friluftsliv

Friluftsliv literally translates as “Free air life”. Næs describes it as: “Respect for all life, Outdoor education in the signs of identification, Minimal strain upon the natural combined with maximal self-reliance, Natural lifestyle, Time for adjustment” (Næss, 1993, P. 179) and Tordsson describes it as: “Friluftsliv includes, that we develop and understand nature as a world filled with expressions, colours, and moods, with aesthetic and other qualities, that influence our senses and our feelings at least as much as our bodies and our thoughts” (Tordsson, 2014b, P. 26).

Gapahuk

A gapahuk is a construction of tree logs that originally was used for emergency overnight stays in the woods. One log was tied between two trees and others logs or branches were used to make a pitched roof on the forest floor. In these days you often find more permanent gapahuks in the Norwegian wild that offer place to shelter or sleep.

Jentetur

Jentetur is the Norwegian word for 'girls' trip'. In the Norwegian tradition, small groups of women often gather for a few days or a long weekend, once or twice a year, to sustain their relationship. The purpose is catching-up with their being in the world, share stories and good conversations and renew their friendship bond. Partners and children are not allowed to join this gathering.

Tur

Tur means 'walk' but it can also mean trip, vacation, expedition, or long weekend

Turkake

A homemade energy bar that is very pleasant to eat during a break on a long hike.

Sitteunderlag

A sitting pad, often made from lightweight materials or felted wool that is handy and comfortable to take with you on a walk and sit on during a break which prevents your bottom getting wet or cold.

Pølser i lomper

Sausages in potato wraps, a very popular Norwegian snack to prepare on a campfire during a break in friluftsliv (you can also buy them at all petrol stations in Norway).

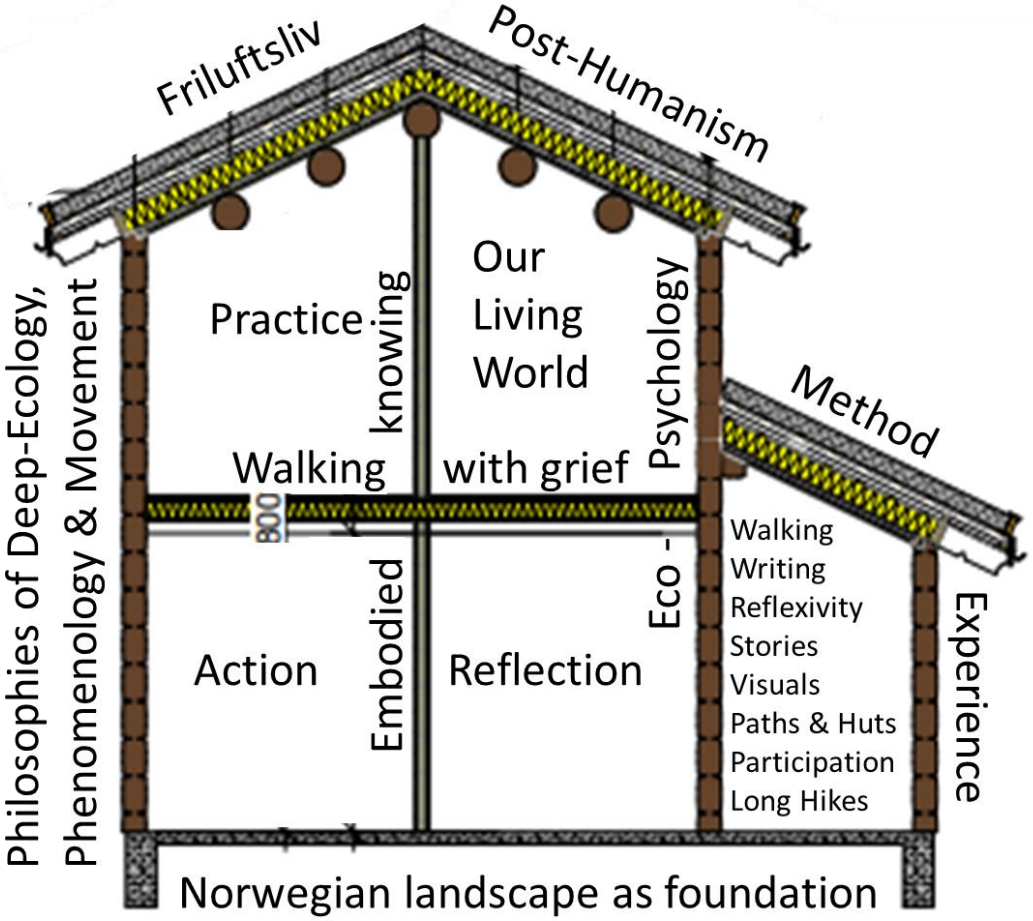
Short Norwegian Expressions:

Det er ingen skam å snu: there is no shame to turning back

Ut på tur, aldri sur: Out on a walk, never grumpy (literally: sour)

Det gis ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlig klær: there is no bad weather, just bad clothes

Appendix 2: Conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scaffolding



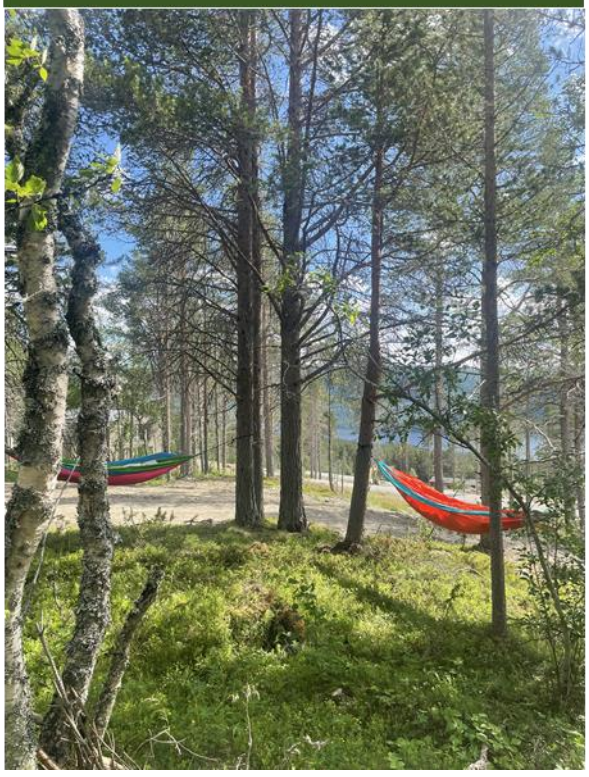
The conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scaffolding of my research

(Based on: plantegning snitt Friebu)

Note:

This thesis scaffold-house also symbolises my real three Norwegian houses:

1. *The house we built in Nærsnes as a family when we moved to Norway and first built our Norwegian life*
2. *The huts I stayed in during my long walks that were part of my action-research practice*
3. *The new house I am building in Skurdalen where I am about to start my new post-human «frilufts»-life*



Axiology in practice

I carefully selected the trees on the lot where I am going to build my new frilufts-life house. Some had to be removed. I asked them for permission. They will give me warmth afterwards. I will bring back many trees to build my house and they will make my actions CO2-negative.

The first night we slept at my new place, the trees supported my daughter Emma and me to tie our hammocks and we celebrated this new start with sleeping in the free air among them.

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Appendix 4: List of major walks executed in research period

2013

- First supervision group jolly, walks in Wales, UK
- First jentetur in Norefjell staying at the huts: Toveseter and Høgevarde
- Many walks I did not record, yet. It was only the start of my inquiry

2014

- Second supervision group jolly, walks in Sri Lanka
- Two-week hike with Thomas across Hardangervidda, staying at the huts: Haukeliseter, Hellevassbu, Litlos, Tyssevassbu visiting Trolltunga and back
- Second jentetur in Langsua, staying at the huts: Storhøliseter, Storkvelvbu, and Skriurusten

2015

- One-week DNT course cross-country skiing in the high mountains in Jotunheimen, staying in the huts: Gjendesheim, Gjendebu, and Fonsbu
- Third supervision group jolly, four-day hike in Langsua Norway, staying at the huts: Storhøliseter, Storkvelvbu, and Skriurusten
- Walks in the Ashridge gardens and near surroundings: participant-led modules with walks and writing and poem reading in nature, Berkhamsted, UK
- One-week hike with Thomas in southern Jotunheimen, staying at the huts: Thomashelleren, Yksendalsbu, Fonsbu, and Slettningsbu
- Besseggen summit hike with Thomas, Sjaak, Alex and Hanneke in Jotunheimen, staying at Memurubu
- Third jentetur in Rondane, staying at the huts Bjornhollia and Eldåbu

2016

- Four-day hike on skis in eastern Hardangervidda with Thomas, staying at the huts: Immingen fjellstua, Mårbu, and Solheimstulen
- Long weekend hike on skis in Hallingskarvet with Thomas, staying at the huts: Finse and Geiterygghytta

- Walks in the Ashridge gardens during progression Viva and two weeks of summer school, Berkhamsted, UK
- One-week hike in Breheimen with Thomas and Sjaak and partly three other friends, staying at the huts: Turtagrø, Stølsdalen, Nørdstedalseter, Arentzbu, Fast, Vigdalstøl
- Four-day solitary hike, staying in a tent in the wild around the Hallingnatten
- Fourth jentetur in Nederland walking around the Reeuwijkse plassen
- Two-day hike with Thomas, Pim and Lieneke in the Nordmarka: staying at the Katnosa hut

2017

- On-boarding hike with Implement Consulting, staying in a forest in southern Sweden
- One-week solitary ski hike in the eastern Hardangervidda staying at Rjukan, Helberghytta, Kalhovd, Mårbu, and Immingen fjellstua
- End-of-life walks with Thomas: 3 months in the Baarsrudmarka, resting at the bench at lake Baarsrudtjernet in Nærsnes until he could not walk anymore
- One-week, solitary hike to grieve in Norefjell after the funeral, staying at: Høgevarde, Toveseter, Haglebu, Dalabu, Langedrag
- Fifth jentetur, first in the Baarsrudmarka to commemorate Thomas and after that in Blefjell, staying at Sigridsbu
- Mother-Daughter hike with Hanneke: 3 days in Telemark and up to the Gaustatoppen summit, staying at Rjukan and at the Tjørnbrotbu hut

2018

- Team development hike with leaders from client company, staying outside and sleeping in the wild in the forests around Karlsborg in Sweden
- Three generation walk with mum, my sister and two of my daughters at Hardangervidda: staying at the Mogen hut
- One-week with walks around Bergsjø-Ål-Reineskarvet with friends including a hike via Iungdalshytte, staying at the Kongshelleren hut
- Mother-daughter hike with Emma in Jotunheimen staying at Gjendesheim
- Two-day hike with Hanneke's teenage friends in Blefjell, staying at the Sigridsbu hut
- Two-week solitary long-hike SAGA-trail in Ringebu-Rondane-Dovefjell-Snøhetta: 230 km, staying at twelve different huts: https://saga.dnt.no/

- Co-inquiry short walks with Michele and Sybille in the Baarsrudmarka in Nærsnes
- Two-day hike with Barbara in Norefjell, staying at the Høgevarde hut
- New Zealand: many mother-daughter hikes with Ida throughout New Zealand
- Australia: many hikes with Ida, Emma, Craig, and relatives in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland

2019

- Co-inquiry walk with Craig: Pennant Hills, Sydney Australia
- Co-inquiry walks with my customers executive leadership team
- Mother–son hike on skis with Sjaak in Norefjell, staying at Høgevarde hut
- Sixth jentetur, first time on skis, in the Baarsrudmarka, staying in Nærsnes
- Jentetur on ski in Haglebu with Bente og Ida R.
- Four-day solitary hike on skis in Hallingskarvet, staying at the huts: Krækkja, Finse, Geiterygghytta
- Coaching walk & talk with clients
- One night alone out in the woods, Baarsrudmarka: sleeping under the stars
- Two-week solitary hike in Ryfylke from Haukeliseter to Lysebotn, stayed in ten of the huts of the Signatur-trail: https://ryger.dnt.no/
- Mission Hårteigen, jentetur with Bente & Ida R. Four days in the western Hardangervidda reaching summit of Hårteigen staying at Hadlaskard and Stavali huts
- Two-day co-inquiry jentetur with Lieneke in Lifjell from Bø to Himingtjønn and back, staying at Himingsjå hut
- Inquiry walks with Pleuntje at Scheveningen beach in the Netherlands
- Seventh Jentetur along the coastal path of the Oslo fjord from Høvikvollen to Skogsborg and back and around the Drammen Spiralen in the Finnemarka
- Ski hike with Pim and Lieneke in Nordseter staying at camp Lillehammer
- Ski hike up to the summit of Hallingnatten 27 December 2019 (see appendix 6.)

From 2020 I kept on walking, but I completed so many walks, I did not keep track of them anymore, walking had become my way of living my life.

Appendix 5: List of videos with links

Playlist with all ten videos I made of selected walks in inquiry period:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE

1. Ski hike/course Jotunheimen, winter 2015:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W24wYjc4Dxs&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=7&t=0s

2. Supervision group jolly Norway Langsua, summer 2015:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLQBi1Rbzr8&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=11&t=0s

3. Family hike Besseggen summit, summer 2015:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLSbyCob71E&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=10&t=0s

4. Third Jentetur Rondane, autumn 2015:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy8mXM2Q1u8&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=6&t=0s

5. Solitary hike Hallingfjellet, summer 2016:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUIJFZT6sSU&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=3&t=1s

6. Fifth Jentetur Blefjell, autumn 2017:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYSrQ5g5QHw&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=4&t=1s

7. Mother & Daughter hike (with Hanneke) Telemark, late autumn 2017:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVxQvfJ5wvw&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=11&t=0s

8. Reflective walking in the snow Nærsnes, winter 2018:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E_j2V_cKhk&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=5&t=0s

9. Teenage hike Blefjell, summer 2018:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8OIpfx2Jac&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=2&t=4s

10. Mission Hårteigen with Bente and Ida, summer 2019:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrNjGrlpPyo&list=PLGnWmhlLYdspseqamZB9hEgAJxwfm13ZE&index=9&t=0s

Appendix 6: The story of Rauhelleren

Story of Rauhelleren

The ancient landscape that we walked through today looked timeless, unchangeable. The old rocks and boulders that were laying along the path that we followed had been laying there for ages. Each season the snow covers them in the fall and each spring they re-appeared and look exactly the same. While we moved our bodies through the landscape, it felt as if the landscape was standing still. (These are feelings Tordsson (2014b), Ekelund (2019), and Cappelen (2019) describe.)

This landscape was shaped by the last ice-age. Ever since the last glacier disappeared, no human being had touched it, except for their feet, and the forming of some cairns that stood along the path that we were following. (MacFarlane (2013), and Shepherd (2011), wrote about this.) While we sat down during a break, I took a closer look at the specific space where we halted. I saw grass, some bushes, and a lemming that quickly ran away when we approached, and I wondered: Was there change happening at this specific spot in this seemingly unchangeable plateau? (These are questions Næss (1993) often asked.)

This specific, distinct blade of grass was not the same one as the one that grew here last year. The unique individual I was looking at, was a new generation that had grown from last year's seeds. I saw that the bushes had new off-springs on the tips of their branches. It gave them a fresh and renewed look. Some older branches had died away, their greyish brown disposals laying on the ground around them. And what about the lemming? How old was this animal? How long had it been living in this

space? Were there any more of them, hiding in a hole in the ground? Was it a mother that had a nest of young ones to care for underneath this big boulder?

I could see that some other people had taken a break here before us. The big boulder protected us against the wind and, leaning our backs against it, we had a beautiful view across the endless wide landscape. I could see Hårteigen, Hallingskarvet and the Hardangerjøkulen glacier in the distance. It was the perfect spot for a break. I think the lemming knew this. Maybe it had found some crumbs from sandwiches before and maybe it thought: if I make this place my home, there is a bigger chance for me and my family to find food in an easy way. Interacting with (the leftovers from) human beings could be an advantage for animals in the wild. (Abram (1997), would have noticed this.)

So, even if it seemed to me, while walking, that this space had been the same for thousands of years, inquiring more closely with its living inhabitants I found it had not been unchanged at all. It had changed dramatically, even since the year before.

The blade of grass was dancing in the wind, waving its tips on the rhythm of its flow. It looked quite joyful, bowing its tip towards the east, away from the dominant wind direction from the west. What had last year's grass looked like? Was it the same size, colour and substance? Was it also bowing towards the east? Or had it been very different? If it was different, what was it that made it different? What had been the difference that made the difference? (This is what Bateson (/1972) asked.) And how did this change happen? Was it the mother grass that had produced different seeds? Was it the influence from the weather? What had happened over time? How were all the grasses around me entangled with each other, with the bushes, with the lemming and the human beings that were pausing for a break on their walks at this place? (Barad (2007) often wondered about things like this.)

The wide landscape looked static and strong as a rock: Hårteigen always, wherever you walked, sticking up so remarkable in this vidda-landscape. Hallingskarvet showed itself as it had done for millions of years. But still, was it the same? Was it the same "Lange livsfar" as Arne Næss had called it? Was todays' Hallingskarvet the same as the Hallingskarvet he had experienced half a century ago?

Even though a huge rock formation looks the same year after year, if you zoom in, you start noticing change. The lemming living under one of its boulders was not there last year. It possibly moved in recently. The blade of grass was new this year and the bushes had new branches since the year before. From a broad, 'whole' perspective, it looks as if nothing changes, but if you look closer at the details, you notice that there are changes like new distinct inhabitants, new branches, new off springs that all relate with each other. (This is something Morton (2018) describes.) Some living beings have left, moved out or died. Maybe it is hotter or colder, drier or wetter, maybe co-inhabitants got sick, didn't survive the harsh winter or just didn't want to return the next spring. There were no birds at this place. Where were the birds? Were they here last year? (Gooley (2018) could have been asking this question.)

It was time to end our break. Our thermos was empty and our bread and turkake were eaten. We purposely left some crumbs on the ground for the lemming and its family. They would have a happy meal this evening just like we would have at the Rauhelleren hut we were aiming for. We had a few more hours to hike so we packed our stuff in our backpacks and started walking again. And once again I felt how I was entangled with this landscape and its community of living beings. I felt that during this break I had developed joyful relationships with the blade of grass, the bushes, and the lemming underneath the big boulder that served us so well during our break. They helped me experiencing change in a seemingly unchangeable landscape. They made me feel being a humble participant, being entangled with life at this huge plateau, that still would be here during the next millions of years, also after my body has died away from this planet.

(From my notebook, August 13, 2022)