Friluftsliv and Wild Pedagogies: Building Pedagogies for Early Childhood Education in A Time of Environmental Uncertainty

Kari Anne Jørgensen-Vittersø, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway; Sean Blenkinsop, Simon Fraser University, Canada; Marianne Presthus Heggen, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences; & Henrik Neegaard, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Abstract

This article seeks to put two pedagogical orientations, one influenced by friluftsliv *and the other wild pedagogies, into dialogue. The theoretical section focuses on three key components: childhood, knowledge, and nature. Next, we frame* friluftsliv *and wild pedagogies and connect them to contemporary early childhood education contexts. Here, we offer a short summary of wild pedagogies' six touchstones: Nature as Co-Teacher; Complexity, the Unknown, and Spontaneity; Locating the Wild; Time and Practice; Socio-Cultural Change; and Building Alliances and the Human Community. In this section, we focus on the connections with, and challenges to,* friluftsliv *practices in a pedagogical setting. Then, we examine the possibilities for developing new pedagogies for both wild pedagogies and friluftsliv. The paper offers no definitive conclusion, rather returning to a reflection on the three key components.*

Résumé

Le présent article a pour but d'établir un dialogue entre deux orientations pédagogiques, l'une influencée par le concept de friluftsliv *et l'autre par les pédagogies de la nature. La section théorique s'articule autour de trois axes : l'enfance, la connaissance et la nature. Les concepts de* friluftsliv *et de pédagogies de la nature sont ensuite expliqués et mis en lien avec les contextes contemporains d'éducation de la petite enfance. Les six pierres d'assises des pédagogies de la nature (la nature comme co-enseignant; la complexité, l'inconnu et la spontanéité; la rencontre avec la nature; le temps et la pratique; le changement socioculturel; la création d'alliances et la communauté humaine) y sont brièvement résumées. Dans cette section, nous nous concentrons sur les liens avec les pratiques de* friluftsliv *en contexte pédagogique et les difficultés qui empêchent de les appliquer. Par la suite, nous examinons les possibilités d'élaborer de nouvelles approches à la fois pour les pédagogies de la nature et le concept de* friluftsliv. *L'article ne livre aucune conclusion définitive, mais ramène plutôt la réflexion sur les trois grands axes.*

Keywords: friluftsliv, wild pedagogies, childhood, knowledge, nature

Mots-clés : friluftsliv, pédagogies de la nature, enfance, connaissance, nature

Introduction

This article seeks to put two pedagogical orientations into dialogue with each other—one influenced by the Norwegian concept of *friluftsliv* and the other a much more recent innovation called wild pedagogies. The impetus for this arises from a wild pedagogies gathering held in Norway in the summer of 2019, where it became clear that there were important overlaps and noticeable differences between these two concepts and that bringing them together might enhance both. The aim was, and is, to create a richer set of pedagogical practices and educational frameworks to address education and educators' struggles with the environmental and social challenges of the Anthropocene.

Friluftsliv is the older, more sophisticated, and more expansive participant in this encounter. It is more than just a pedagogy and has long played a central role in Norwegian culture. There is no direct English translation for *friluftsliv* and all that such a concept entails; for our purposes, *friluftsliv* includes both free-air-life and free-life-under-the-open-air. Said differently, it includes two concepts of freedom: one is a free and open nature and the other is a free and open life in nature for humans. Because there isn't a definitive word in English for this concept and the word *friluftsliv* is such an important part of Norwegian cultural traditions (Faarlund, 2007; Gurholt, 2008; Henderson & Vikander, 2007; Reed & Rothenberg, 1993), we shall simply use the Norwegian word throughout the paper.

The official definition of *friluftsliv,* offered by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment (2016), is that it emphasizes non-competitive outdoor activities on uncultivated land (nature), such as mountaineering, hiking, and skiing; it also aims attention at harvest activities, such as fishing, hunting, and berry picking. The *Act of Outdoor Recreation* ensures the right to roam unrestricted by private property ideas that be more recognizable in Canada (Outdoor Recreation Act, 1957; Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2016). Although *friluftsliv* was not originally directed at educational settings, today it is well-established in the national curricula, running from early childhood education through to the end of secondary school (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, 2020).

Despite the official definition clearly delineating what *friluftsliv* encompasses, its traditions, the formal framing, and the philosophical aspects make it a concept open to different interpretations. The authors of this paper, for example, see the value of developing an understanding of the practical implications of humans' co-existence with other living beings and a joy of being in nature (Næss, 1995) as central to early childhood pedagogy and as a vital part of our definition of the concept.

Wild pedagogies is a more recent and more specifically pedagogical framework than *friluftsliv*, which means it comes with fewer examples and less controversy. Currently, wild pedagogies is comprehensively described in a book bearing the same name—*Wild Pedagogies* (Jickling et al., 2018a). This pedagogical orientation arose in response to worries about the overuse of centralized control in modern western culture's relationship to the natural world and, by extension,

to public schooling in the global north. However, wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* pedagogies, both developed from traditions of nature connectedness and ecosophy, share concerns about the ongoing marginalization of the other-than-human, as well as the expanding crises related to the environment. Moreover, they both share concerns for connections with nature and freedom. Thus, in this paper, *free* from *friluftsliv* and *wild* from wild pedagogies will be seen as being intertwined. Additionally, while *friluftsliv* has a pedagogical tradition that is aimed at developing skills, it also strives to improve human connections with nature (Næss, 1993; Hallås & Heggen, 2018); similarly, wild pedagogies also "aims to renegotiate what it means to be human in relationship with the world by engaging in deep and transformational change" (Wild Pedagogies, 2021).

All four contributors to this paper are engaged in working with children, teachers, outdoor pedagogy, and *friluftsliv*. Part of our interest in the work of this paper is that we believe that the development of new pedagogies in the Anthropocene is necessary and will require creativity, sharing ideas, crossing unusual boundaries, and an active criticality. It is in that spirit that the paper is offered. It not as a prescription of practices but rather as a contribution to the ongoing development of new and more ecologically aware and socially just pedagogies for these challenging times.

The paper begins with a framing of *friluftsliv's* pedagogical approach to understanding early childhood knowledge and views of nature. In this section, we also introduce ideas about nature and pedagogy that are derived from the Norwegian eco-philosopher, Arne Næss. We emphasize Næss because of his contribution to the translation of *friluftsliv* practices into pedagogy; his thinking also influenced wild pedagogies. We then bring wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* into dialogue. This will be done by presenting a short summary of each of wild pedagogies' six pedagogical touchstones in a way that illustrates components of these touchstones that both connect with, and present challenges to, *friluftsliv* practices. We provide practical examples of these touchstones as we bring wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* into dialogue and consider the fruits of this conversation. The paper will not end with a conclusion, for in many ways this work is a beginning; instead, it will gather together and reflect on key threads. The aim of this article is not to frame all possible connections between wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* but rather to see how they might "play together"—how they might enhance, clarify, challenge, disagree, and support one another. To narrow the scope, we place a particular emphasis on early childhood education, knowledge, and nature.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical framing below focuses particularly on how we as teachers in *friluftsliv* interpret and understand childhood, knowledge, and nature. Yet, reference will be made to wild pedagogies as well in order to begin the process of bringing these concepts into conversation with each other.

Early Childhood

Historically in Norway, children being in nature has been seen as a positive (Dyblie-Nilsen, 2009). Up to 100 years ago, it was common for children in rural areas to partake in everyday work outdoors, such as harvesting, looking after animals and—as in the Indigenous Sámi culture—living a nomadic life following reindeer. Even in the city, children up to a century ago spent long hours in nature-based free play (i.e., with little specialized equipment). As a result, these cultural traditions prioritized one's relationship to, and immersion in, the natural world.

Even earlier, pedagogical theorists such as Rousseau and Fröbel, advocated outdoor educational time, and influenced the creation of early childhood institutions that were committed to being outdoors (Borge et al., 2003). The result is that, even today, it is not unusual for children to spend multiple hours outside each day (Moser & Martinsen, 2010) In many kindergartens and primary schools in Norway, there are designated campsites and outdoor classrooms within walking distance of the institutional buildings. The practice of *friluftsliv* varies for different age groups, but at the early childhood level, activities can include: harvest-based *friluftsliv* (e.g., picking berries and mushrooms) intertwined with play-based outdoor activities; more contemplative *friluftsliv* practices, where the focus is on being present, having time, being mindful, and experiencing nature; and a more active *friluftsliv*, with a focus on what might be seen as more adventurous activities (Lundhaug & Neegaard, 2013).

At the early childhood level, the formal framing of being outdoors and what we understand as children's *friluftsliv* comes from the Framework Plan for Content and Tasks of Kindergarten. In this framework, *friluftsliv* includes being outdoors on a daily basis throughout the year and giving children opportunities for play in challenging yet safe environments (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 7). *Friluftsliv* in this setting is more than just having the natural world as a backdrop for activities; it is not simply a part of Norwegian cultural traditions that value being outdoors (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2016), but also about playing in and with nature, building a connection with an intrinsically valuable world and its myriad beings.

At this point, wild pedagogies is too young to be positioned within any early childhood pedagogical framework, especially since wild pedagogues actively resist the desire to control the learners and the outcomes that appears to underlie many frameworks (Jickling et al., 2018b). However, we are drawn to wild pedagogies' interests in allowing learners the freedom to explore, to discover as they wish, to have the rights of full citizenship, and to not be entirely controlled by institutional or cultural norms, learning outcomes, or proscribed goals. Wild pedagogies is a convergence of ideas and a reclamation of language about wilderness, education, and the complexity of freedom in the context of an emerging geological epoch—the Anthropocene.

Knowledge

At some point, all pedagogical orientations need to deal with the question of knowledge. What is it? How does it grow? How is it shared, transferred, and made available to others? The challenge for this paper is that, across *friluftsliv* pedagogies, there is a range of epistemological underpinnings; by contrast, for wild pedagogies, the epistemological commitments are understated. With this in mind, the best we can offer here is an incomplete frame for both *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies, while noting that there would likely be a benefit to thinking more deeply about these questions of knowledge and to listening to each other while doing so.

For many, *friluftsliv* seeks to move beyond what is understood as the standard, mainstream focus on rational, reductionistic, and scientific forms of knowledge. In order to do this, some *friluftsliv* educators and theorists have turned their attention to Aristotle's three forms of knowledge: *episteme, techne*, and *phronesis* (Høyem, 2016; Sæle et.al., 2016; Tordsson, 2014). We see these as important and even necessary for the education of the whole child; we also consider them to be complementary to the basic principles of *friluftsliv*. The first, *episteme*, aligns with the aforementioned scientific and theoretical knowledge. We see this form as ultimately necessary to wild pedagogies and/or *friluftsliv*, but insufficient on its own for achieving these concepts' many aims.

The second, *techne,* is the knowledge related to craft, skills, and artistry. In *friluftsliv*, and ecosophy for that matter (we pick this concept up below), *techne* appears in the importance *friluftsliv* places on knowing how to use local plants, make food, carve, or dye wool, for example. Recognizing plant species may be part of this knowledge, but so is knowing how they smell and taste, where they grow, and what they require to flourish. This is a view of knowledge that is not only open to skills and crafts but extends to embodied perceptions of nature as well.

The third form of knowledge, *phronesis,* is often described as practical wisdom. In some ways, *phronesis* is the biggest move away from most institutionalized schooling. For *friluftsliv, phronesis* includes knowledge related to the ethical aspects of being part of the natural world, and the accompanying respect for and joy of that positioning. Yet, there is also a concern within this form of knowledge with what is the right (as in, morally correct) within the larger culture. For *friluftsliv* and ecosophy, the independent thinking that is encouraged through an education for self-cultivation— *bildung*—has the potential to support the renegotiation of what it means to be human in relationship with the natural world. *Bildung* is a German concept referring to both the process and the product in and of education. *Bildung* sees the practice of education as complex and occurring in relations with the world (Klafki, 2007). In *friluftsliv,* both humans and more-than-humans play important, even equitable roles in buildung.

The pedagogy of fumbling and tumbling provides one example of how *friluftsliv* pedagogy tries to gather all three of Aristotle's knowledge principles

(Jensen, 2007). According to *friluftsliv,* children are allowed to explore and solve problems (*episteme*) on their own (through play), ask questions, and have first-hand experiences. Such actions can include developing the skills (*techne*) to climb a tree, track an animal, or find their own path through the forest (Jensen, 2007, p. 102). Implicit however in all this seemingly undirected fumbling and tumbling is, for Norwegians, the possibility to gain wisdom (*phronesis*)—the wisdom of knowing what one's body can and can't do, how much weight a tree branch can take, or where one might find a lemming's home.

Reading between the lines, we might characterize the epistemology of wild pedagogies as being diffuse, incomplete, interconnected, and surprising. Because of its commitments to nature as teacher and to more-than-human agency, knowing becomes the purview of more than just human actors, which in turn diffuses it beyond our own species. This implies that any knowing is necessarily incomplete, for what does it mean to know the sun when any single human has access to such a limited range of sun-knowing? How does the hungry western red cedar know the sun? What meanings are being made by the krill that mass near the surface of the sun-drenched ocean? What is the cat contemplating as it rolls over and paws a sun beam? Wild pedagogical commitments to activism, social justice, and shared projects suggest that knowledge has fluidity to it in such a way that it is interconnectable and interrelatable, though clearly not all one. Finally, with ideas surrounding spontaneity and the agency of the natural world, one gets a sense that knowledge is filled with surprises; it is much less concrete than many teachers might expect.

Nature

One significant inspiration for how nature is understood in a *friluftsliv* setting has been the work of philosopher Arne Næss. In his book, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (1989, Næss posits that nature and all-natural beings have intrinsic value (Næss & Rothenberg, 1989). And, he continues, it is through childhood experiences with and amongst these valued others that humans can come to care for the more-than-human.

Næss created five guidelines for an ethically responsible *friluftsliv*: 1) respecting all life and respecting landscapes; 2) providing the opportunity for people to have deep, varied, and rich experiences in and with nature; 3) placing minimal strain upon the natural world while also seeking to maximize self-realization; 4) having the opportunity to live a natural lifestyle; and 5) making time for adjustment when moving from an urban setting to more natural ones (Næss & Rothenberg, 1989).

We find these guidelines interesting as pedagogical ideas and practices for *friluftsliv* inspired Norwegian educational institutions. While Næss wrote these guidelines more than 40 years ago, they are as important as ever today. He rejected the idea of using technical solutions to overcome environmental

challenges, and he prioritized the development of a profound relationship with nature, which he called deep ecology (Næss, 1993; Næss & Rothenberg, 1989). Næss warned readers not to see these guidelines as static, and indeed when he revisited *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* two decades after the book was first published, he welcomed new interpretations and discussed what he saw as new contributions to the field. He added in this open invitation to the growth of his philosophy that, even if he does not agree with everything others contribute, he celebrates the importance of diversity and acknowledges that differences in culture and lifestyles may call for different solutions (Næss, 1995). These ideas have both risen from and inspired the development of *friluftsliv* within a pedagogical context in Norway. It is these ideas of building relations, of shared flourishing, of enacted freedom, and of a vibrant and agential natural world that resonate with wild pedagogies.

The Six Touchstones of Wild Pedagogies and Friluftsliv: *Descriptions and Interpretations*

In the following paragraphs, we provide a concise summary of each of the six wild pedagogies touchstones that are described comprehensively in Jickling et al's (2018a) seminal book. Each summary, which has the aim of helping the reader better understand wild pedagogies, is followed by an example drawn from the authors of this article's own experiences working in Norwegian *friluftsliv* educational settings. The aim is to inspire further considerations of how *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies tumble, fumble, challenge, and support each other. The methodology for this paper is predominantly a theoretical and exegetical analysis. Yet, in order to sustain the dialogue and do justice to education as a practice, we have chosen to include direct examples, micro-case studies, and narratives from our own experience. The hope is that such an approach both reflects theoretical and practical aspects of the project and better allows us to consider new, shared, and changing pedagogies.

Touchstone #1: Nature as Co-teacher

This touchstone implies that the natural world is a vibrant, active, agential place that is worth listening to, attending to, and learning from. Accepting this touchstone and acting on it likely means that educators will spend more time outdoors—a practice that links *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies. In the outdoors, different pedagogical possibilities may appear and new affordances may be engaged. At another level, this touchstone has significant implications for what knowledge is and how learning happens. If nature becomes a co-teacher, then the human as the sole possessor, arbiter, and conveyor of knowledge is de-centred, and learning becomes a shared project that is no longer complete or human-based.

On a typical cold and rainy day, 1- to 3-year-old toddlers from a Norwegian preschool went hiking. Just outside of the fence, Phillip, 2.5 years, proclaimed, "Earthworm!" Everyone gathered around it, and after a while, Phillip picked it up from the asphalt and carried it with him in his mitten. Every now and then, he checked that it was OK. The children waded in a stream, sat in meltwater, stumbled over tree roots, enjoyed a long lunch, and hiked all the way back (over tree roots but faster through the stream). Phillip kept checking his mitten. The last thing I saw as he re-entered the preschool premises was the tail of a little earthworm.

The next day, Phillip hiked with a slug in his hand. The third day, he passed me with a larva: "No, this is not a worm," he told me.

Children's *friluftsliv* in the Norwegian educational context is about play and the exploration of nature. Every landscape offers potential for children's learning, including hills for sliding, rocks for climbing, or berry bushes for picking. If children can play freely or observe the environment, they may see the possibilities for experience and exploration. In the example above, Phillip learned where and how his treasured animals lived, as well as their morphology.

If we see nature as a co-teacher, we need to engage and understand more-than-human life. In our example, Phillip found his earthworm/slug/larva because he was actively looking for something. He knew that nature would provide opportunities for finding small treasures. It is hard to know what fascinated him, but it was clear that he took good care of the small animals he found; he also started crying if he lost any of them. By letting Phillip follow his curiosity in an environment or at a certain place, his teachers gave space to nature to be present and to teach. To include nature as it occurs during different *friluftsliv* activities has long had a name in Norwegian pedagogical *friluftsliv*: the dead mouse pedagogy. The aim is to build upon what appears in nature or what nature brings forward, be it a dead mouse or a living earthworm. For the human teacher, this means releasing control and letting nature come forward as co-teacher. But this does not mean that the human teacher is abdicating all responsibility. We have all seen children step away from the "slimy, icky" worm or crush the offending slug under their heels, either as expressions of power over others or as a means to hurt them. Yet, beneath any particular individual behaviour there are often cultural norms that support the violence and distancing over the connecting and sharing of space. Here wild pedagogies postulates the possibility of human teachers who are actively and critically engaging in cultural change.

Touchstone #2: Complexity, the Unknown, and Spontaneity

This touchstone prioritizes the unpredictable as it pushes back against the modernist desire to control and contain. Such an approach to learning allows for a diversity of voices and possibilities that are often marginalized or even lost in environments where standardized, measurable, and definable outcomes are the focus. For educators, this involves risk. It means fostering complex situations and

emerging curriculum design and that resist a focus on simply positing "desired learning outcomes" and pushing students towards those chosen particulars. By acting on this touchstone, educators are endorsing the suggestion that the world does not work in a clean, predictable, linear fashion—and that something important is lost when we assume it does.

> *A group of 3- to 5-year-olds hiked to one of their places in the forest. There, they know which plants taste good, which rocks are best for climbing, and which logs are greatest for balancing. After a while, the children became less active. At this point, a teacher exclaimed, "Who wants to find treasures?" With a group of eager children, she walked ten metres and turned a rock over. For the next hour, she and the children were buzzing around the critters under the rock, asking questions about what they saw and pondering the creatures and their actions.*

Wild nature is rich with life and possibility, and most nature meetings provide learners with the opportunity to experience this. *Friluftsliv* encourages us to get close to this rich and complex life of nature, and to do it in the simple ways provided in the example above. In *friluftsliv*, the act of going on a short hike, gently removing a stone to experience the life underneath, or quietly observing the immediate surroundings moves us closer to nature and allows us to revel in its complexity. Also, enjoying the aesthetic experiences of the bird song, or the feelings by the campfire, allows space for learners to follow their own interests and for nature to step forward as a co-teacher. These practices are seen as important factors influencing our relationship with nature.

Within an educational context, it is important to resist the urge to frame and organize activities too tightly. It is also crucial to emphasize the early childhood teacher's role in not controlling but at times meditating children's play and exploration. A teacher needs a well-developed toolbox of pedagogical practices and didactical tools to be able to: respond to possible situations and outcomes of children's play and exploration; be prepared for the spontaneous outburst from a child; support children's emotions in meeting nature; and be humble, allowing space for unexpected learning and outcomes.

In touchstone #1, we discussed how accepting nature as co-teacher meant giving up some control. Accepting a complex nature as co-teacher implies that the (human) teacher needs to accept a higher risk as well. A teacher that brings children (or students) outdoors knows that they cannot control what the children will encounter that day or how the children will respond to those encounters. Increasing the complexity of the experience intensifies the risk that the human teacher does not have all the answers. In the example above, the teacher, by turning the rock over (both literally and figuratively), opened up the possibilities for the children to experience nature's complexity and to enhance their sense of wonder and joy. She also willingly risked decentring herself as the "expert" knower for those moments in which the children asked questions that she could not answer. When we permit ourselves the experience of wondering along

with children, we all learn together; we learn from nature, and we discover that humans don't know everything. The willingness of the human teacher to take risks, move from the position of expert, and not know the answer is embedded in *friluftsliv* as well as in wild pedagogies.

Touchstone #3: Locating the Wild

This touchstone brings an active criticality into wild pedagogies by cautioning against both the cultural constraints of much of modern public education and the colonial orientations that modernity has toward the natural world. These cautions challenge educators to think about their own privileges, including those related to the natural world. They call on educators to be constantly aware of how the language and metaphors they use, the structures they work within, the tools they employ, and the ways they teach can either challenge problematic status quos or sustain them. This touchstone also suggests that the wild can be located anywhere: in rural and the urban places and also within individual beings. However, this wild presence is often obfuscated by cultural and colonial overlays. Thus, educators will be challenged to facilitate encounters with the wild that respond in critical ways to pedagogical obstacles and culturally normalized orientations.

> *On an excursion with students to a beach located on a small peninsula outside Oslo, we encountered a former student on a trip to the same area, but her group of children were playing in the beach volley sandpit. The area had rich climbing possibilities, a large diversity of costal birds, and a shoreline full of seaweed, shells, snails, crabs, and sea life. We asked her why they were playing here, 50 metres up, and not down at the water's edge. She replied that they were not allowed to play so close to the water because of the safety regulations imposed by the kindergarten owner.*

Friluftsliv is often defined as activities and nature experiences located on uncultivated land; yet, out of necessity, many of our pedagogical practices are in urban areas. One consequence of this is the importance of keeping uncultivated areas available for children's exploration. However, there is a second challenge implicit in *friluftsliv* here, which wild pedagogies makes explicit: to locate the wild in whatever place is available. Wild places can be the unforeseen, the messy and complex often with a rich biodiversity, and can be found in the borders, edgelands, brown fields, and between built landscapes and natural areas (Faerley & Roberts, 2012). Moving along a road or a path with children involves more than simply walking from A to B. When they are allowed, children move up and down, and they explore and play. Locating the wild is a mode of seeing and being in place, of having an openness to its wildness.

Because the teacher in our example didn't challenge the imposed rules, the result was that the children did not encounter the wild where ocean and land meet, where crabs live, and where their exploration might have been at its best. The potential for a wild encounter—for discovering something

unexpected, recognizing something wild in oneself, and learning from nature—is likely more present in the edge-lands and areas near the ocean than in the volleyball pit. In addition, when teachers do not challenge the status quo, children also learn the culturally expected ways of being, and their own wildness becomes hidden bit by bit. To be thoughtfully critical of the rules and let go of some control not only makes room for children to discover the wild; it also sanctions their ability to question and resist the assumptions of their culture. The critical wild pedagogies educator is always encouraged to remember those troublesome boundaries of enculturation. The desire to control or tame others and the wild—in natural places and in ourselves—is ever-present, and we would do well to be attentive.

Touchstone #4: Time and Practice

This touchstone focuses on two key discussions: process and practice. Both discussions have the ultimate objective of understanding how to build and maintain relationships with the natural world. The first discussion, process, suggests that maintaining relationships with nature is done through spending significant amounts of time in specific places. A new pedagogy would allow the children to be immersed for longer periods in the more-than human-world. But the push goes beyond this; it asks us to reconsider how we conceptualize time. It asks us to find ways to slow down, listen in different ways to our own and others' bodies, and immerse ourselves in what some have called deep time. The second discussion, practice, has a pair of meanings: The first implies the activity of one's pedagogy, that is, the *how* of one's teaching, and the assumptions and habits that motivate that work; the second asks us to take on the work of building a rich relationship with the more-than-human world around us as a kind of discipline, that is, "a practice"—a project that requires commitment, effort, and ongoing attention.

> *For a nature preschool in a rural area, time and practice are central parts of how they engage with nature. On one full-day outing in the early fall, a group of preschool children went to a spruce forest to pick mushrooms, climb, and play. The terrain for that day's excursion was chosen because of its potential for finding mushrooms, its large boulders, and its wild steepness. Although the teachers had devised plans for the day, they left the time schedule open so as to show the ways in which they valued the children's initiative. There was time for repetitive climbing on the boulders and up the trees. Additionally, the children had the opportunity to practise harvesting and cutting mushrooms under adult supervision, and there was lots of play and exploration. The goal for the day was not to reach one specific place but rather to spend time "on the move," seizing opportunities that arose on the way.*

Time is important in so far as children need it to develop connections, even though they often appear able to engage with, and immerse in, natural environments more easily than adults. In the above example, the children

frequently moved between their home environment and the outdoor setting. For both wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv*, time to play, practise, and explore is crucial. And yet, wild pedagogies appears to be pushing time and practice further by challenging the idea of linear time itself. Wild pedagogies is interested in learning to encounter geological, even deep, time (Cohen, 2015). It is also committed to recognizing and living into cyclical time—that is, it is dedicated to encouraging learners to note, for example, the changing seasonal patterns of the feathers on a "common loon," or to immerse themselves in the natural dialogue in such a way that time disappears. For *friluftsliv,* time and practice aim to connect the learners to place and to nature. Recurring encounters build children's relationships with both place and the more-than-human world (Jørgensen, 2014, 2015) and give them opportunities to make discoveries, explore, practise skills, and put work into building their practice of being-in-relationship.

Touchstone #5: Socio-Cultural Change

This touchstone begins with a radical premise: Much current educational practice, particularly that which rests on the same theoretical footing as modern western culture, is anti-environmental. Relatedly, this touchstone is rooted in the belief that maintaining the status quo or merely tinkering with the edges of current education will not be enough to change human–nature relationships or limit the destruction being wrought by some humans today. Such a touchstone demonstrates that wild pedagogies sees itself as a project of cultural change. Education is thus an explicitly political act that places the teacher in the role of activist—one who recognizes that the choices being made in the classroom have explicit and implicit consequences for how learners understand themselves, their role as humans, and the importance of the natural world. This touchstone also recognizes that the future is no longer easily predictable; children are not growing up into the same world that their grandparents did. The educator needs to prepare them differently, potentially helping them to develop such skills as: the ability to respond to uncertainty; creativity; willingness to engage in community toward shared outcomes; and so on.

> *Each child in a group of kindergarten students was engaged with beetles. They built "housing" for them out of leaves and cones, and they gave each of the beetles pet names. However, they never trapped them, instead following their movements from a distance and actively trying not to disturb their way of life.*

The children in this example seem to have understood that the lives of these creatures, even though they differed significantly from their own lives, was important. The children were allowed to explore over time, and they encountered these small animals (Hallås & Heggen, 2018) regularly, always fascinated by their appearance. When new children entered the group, they learned from the others about how to engage, and they were taught the rules

about respect and care for the beetles. A culture, or even counter-culture, of care was being created—one that honoured the place of the beetles and their rights, and shunned violence as a form of encounter.

> "Do you want to meet Tina?"
>
> I was visiting a student in a kindergarten internship, and this was the question that both the particular student and the children in general asked almost immediately after my arrival. I did not know who Tina was, but I said yes anyway. The children ushered me into the woods near their classroom. We moved carefully through the trees, eventually stopping by a stone. There, they introduced me to Tina: a viper, taking a sunbath. This was their shared place, snake and children and instead of restricting access the human teacher had taught the children how to be respectful and to deal safely with Tina.

Both wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* can be understood as "counter-cultural" movements with regard to the destruction of nature. Together, they might open new paths for educational practices, working for ecological and social justice while simultaneously empowering children to seek new solutions to myriad challenges facing humanity. Bringing *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies together may help educators to think more deeply about pushing back against the environmentally troublesome cultural norms in their settings. At the same time, they will participate in developing a new geostory that focuses on the needs and realities of their local places.

Touchstone #6: Building Alliances and the Human Community

This touchstone seeks to remember the importance of building strong alliances and flourishing multi-species communities while at the same time reminding us not to forget the potential range of human allies that could be involved. The implicit goal is to push against the challenges of individualization and alienation and to resist the colonial move to separate marginalized groups, be they human or other-than, and place them at odds with each other. Here justice is seen both an ecological and a social movement and much can be gained by working together. To create flourishing equitable communities, we need to listen to and learn from each other. In practising these, we benefit from the support and care of others, the multiple perspectives that become available, the bigger platform that alliances can create, and the art of living differently together. Educators have the opportunity to work with and learn from myriad others, including environmental educators and critical race theorists, community organizers and experiential educators, popular educators and gender theorists, and beyond.

Involvement in the local community and its politics can be an important site of learning for children. In the *friluftsliv* tradition, early childhood has tended to be a time of limiting conflict, of protecting the child from the world's troubles, and of allowing them to love nature. We wonder if such practices indicate that

we are too afraid of conflict and that, no matter the attempted protections, children know and experience more of the violence, inequities, and problems of their local places than we are willing to accept. When we recognize these points, we begin to unleash the potential for careful and conscious work to be done to expand activism and human alliances in Norway. One example might be building more expansive relationships with the Indigenous Sàmi, learning from their cultures and ways of being. Learning about Sàmi culture is already part of the kindergarten curriculum, and most celebrate the national day of the Sàmi people on February 6th. Inspired from what has been learned from the Sàmi culture, the use of *lavvos* (traditional Sàmi tents) or *gamme* (traditional Sàmi dwellings made of wood and turf) is often found in Norwegian early childhood institutions today. Outside of this demonstration of respect and influence, there are few texts that teach non-Indigenous students about the Sàmi. There is also limited access to language and Elders, and there are few active interactions where children might gain significant exposure to the ways and people of the Sàmi. Building alliances could mean making Sàmi culture, language, and ways of being a much more significant part of Norwegian public education (for an example, see: Nutti, 2017). This in turn would create cross-cultural understandings, foster rich relationships, and potentially create a more socially inclusive system while expanding the creative possibilities for all learners.

By Way of an Ending: Three Key Threads and Some Further Conversations

Knowing that offering a conclusion at this point would be preposterous, we have chosen to return our focus to the three important threads that have drawn our attention: view of children, view of nature, and view of knowledge. There are, admittedly, many more possibilities, but we will leave these until next time.

View of Children

Both wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv* see children's encounters with, and intertwining in, the more-than-human as essential to learning and life. Drawing on the guidelines for ecological and ethical *friluftsliv* (Næss, 1993, Næss & Rothenberg, 1987; Næss, 1995), one of the aims of education is to give children deep, varied, and rich nature-based experiences. Access to nature within walking distance of early childhood institutions is important. Both *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies highlight doing this without causing undue pain and suffering on more-than-humans. This position has interesting implications for human teachers as they will have to decide when children's learning needs to be tempered because of the impact that learning might have on the places and other beings involved. If the teacher takes the intrinsic rights of all beings, their freedom to self-realize, and the decentring of the human seriously, then there will most certainly be times when children might not be allowed to touch,

turn over, examine, or even play in certain areas. The costs resulting from the damage to the life, lives, and locales of a community of more-than-humans are obviously more significant than the beneficial learnings gained by a few children. However, we see these "restrictions" as an act of teaching different, perhaps humbler, ways of being human in the world.

Friluftsliv as early childhood pedagogy starts from the premise that children are different from adults. This suggests that there is the potential to engage more easily in the work of cultural change that wild pedagogies is advocating. If children are seen as not yet fully socialized into the existing norms and values of the adult society, then they are potentially more open to learning from, hearing from, and being influenced by the more-than-human world. Such flexibilities might be seeds for growing a more ecologically just society as the children may contribute to a sociocultural change through their alliances with both nature and various adult communities.

Another interesting difference between children and adults is in the way children perceive time, and in how their perception of it allows them to re-engage more quickly with nature, when given the opportunity. It is apparent that this question of time is important for both *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies, and yet there are interesting differences in these discussions that might open further pedagogical possibilities for both. If children are indeed able to re-engage more quickly, as proposed by *friluftsliv*, then perhaps they are also able to experience time itself differently from the linear time that afflicts, even oppresses, so many of their parents.

By accepting children as different and worth attending to, and by recognizing childhood as valuable in its own right, the Norwegian early childhood culture—including pedagogies of *friluftsliv*—positions children as empowered individuals, and even citizens. In *friluftsliv*, this includes seeking the experience of a freer, more self-directed childhood (Wold et al., 2020). Viewing children as empowered, acknowledging their influence, and allowing them status in their local context opens the possibility for their agential contribution to an expanded culture (Heggen et al., 2019). In this way, the assumed hierarchy in western society between adult and child is challenged. Yet, change does not happen simply by taking children outdoors. Change involves the thoughtful work of critical teachers who are able to self-reflect and make explicit these new values in their practices with children (Blenkinsop & Ford, 2019). So, while *friluftsliv* opens up space for children as agential and empowered, and while it accepts that nature has intrinsic value, the advantage to adding wild pedagogies to the discussion is that it potentially opens further possibilities for hierarchies to be challenged. Nowhere is this truer than with regard to the politics implied in accepting nature's agency and the potential to actually change culture itself.

View of Nature

Human relations with the natural world vary dramatically across cultures, and

it is apparent that both *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies take the modernist, neoliberal, scientistic, capitalist, anthropocentric position of the global north as the location of their critiques. But even within that purview, *friluftsliv* has a historical longevity and context that might require updating in light of changing worldviews and perceptions of nature. Part of the challenge too is that the meaning and implications of *friluftsliv* itself are malleable making its positionality in a modernist frame hard to clearly discern.

An example of changing worldviews in relation to the more-than-human might be in order here. As this paper has already mentioned, in environmental activities, nature tends to be posited as having a concrete location within a gradient of "natural" and "cultural" influences. Underlying this positionality there is a duality which sees nature as both part of and separate from humans (Fletcher, 2017). In connecting with nature, wild pedagogies goes further than pedagogies of *friluftsliv* normally do by striving to find the wild where one is, as well as by refusing to simply accept that the wild has been found because a place appears uncultivated. Wild pedagogies goes beyond perspectives of individual children's experiences and connection to the natural world; it argues that nature has an agency of its own and that the natural world is in a colonized position with regard to the modernist human north (Blenkinsop et al., 2016; Blenkinsop & Ford, 2018). These realities have implications for both how we educate and how we are educated. Here, the more-than-human is not simply a resource humans can manipulate as they wish; rather, beings that comprise the more-than-human world are rights-bearing stakeholders and educational partners.

View of Knowledge

At one level, wild pedagogies agrees with the Aristotelian tripartite concept to which some *friluftsliv* theorists subscribe, and it supports a pedagogy that seeks to engage with multiple knowledges. However, at another level, wild pedagogies is trying to move beyond the implicit humanism that perpetuates Aristotle's epistemology. For wild pedagogies, knowledge is a shared endeavour, it is dynamic and changeable, it arises in tangled masses of knowing beings, it is never complete, and no single expert or species can claim sole possession of it. In this posthuman convergent move (Braidotti, 2018), earthworms, vipers, berry bushes, and steep mossy rocks are all knowers. Knowing, incomplete though it may be, is what happens when beings come together in place.

In some ways, the question of knowledge is the most challenging of our three threads. Although there is a form of agreement between our framed proposition of the epistemology of *friluftsliv* and our "reading between the lines" analysis of wild pedagogies, we think the implications for education writ large are potentially dramatic. If educators are to take seriously these positions on knowledge—as being the purview of the many beyond just humans, as being fluid and incomplete, as being surprising and spontaneous, as being interconnectable

and non-linear—then many structures of modern western public education and the epistemological assumptions that sustain them would have to change. Not only is the human teacher decentred from the position of expert and all-knower, but the accepted ways of creating lessons, prioritizing particular learning outcomes, testing and assessing, and developing education (as examples) are also re-examined. This is because all these pedagogical practices rest on epistemological assumptions that *friluftsliv* and wild pedagogies challenge: that knowledge is the exclusive purview of humans and experts within the species; that knowledge is fragmentable and transferable in clearly understood and organizable bit sizes chunks; that meaning is made in a recognizable and generalizable order; that meaning-making is an ever expanding and always improving, yet completely repeatable, process; that the older one is the more one knows; and that anyone's knowing can be accurately tested in quite simple ways. For us, re-conceptualizing these epistemological assumptions is a project that is sorely needed.

Our hope is that the key threads outlined here, and those yet to be explored, might inspire further dialogues about wild pedagogies and *friluftsliv*. These two pedagogical orientations can learn from each other as they bring their particular strengths to bear in theoretically and practically extending their visions of children, nature, and knowledge. Beyond this, our hope is to encourage others to seek out the diversity of pedagogies, educators, and allies that are going to be needed in order to do the imaginative change work (ie. cultural, social, ecological, and human identity) that our current situation appears to demand.

Notes on Contributors

Kari Anne Jørgensen-Vittersø is an Associate Professor at Oslo Metropolitan University Norway, in the Department of Early Childhood Education. She has a PhD from the University of Gothenburg, the focus of which was on children's encounters with natural landscapes and places. Her research studies and publications include friluftsliv in primary school and early childhood education, outdoor play and learning, and environmental education. She teaches nature, health and movement, and international courses in outdoor education, and she has worked with international projects on children's culture and outdoor learning.

Henrik Neegaard is an Assistant Professor at Oslo Metropolitan University in Oslo, Norway. He teaches outdoor education and movement in early childhood education, and his recent research and publications focus on friluftsliv in an early childhood education setting. His earlier research on the usage of GoPro action cameras in early childhood education research led to an international publication. Neegaard is especially interested in small children's connection to nature and the importance of place in early childhood education.

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

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

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