

Henrik Ibsen

and the "Outdoors"

(friluftslivet)



Henrik Ibsen was likely the first person to use the concept 'outdoor life—friluftsliv'. It appears in his poem, "On the Heights", published in 1859. "On the Heights" is first and foremost a psychological drama where the protagonist experiences a split personality: on the one hand are personal ideals and expectations of society and on the other instincts and personal needs. Can the poem be read as a commentary to the developing phenomenon 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' which Ibsen observed in the society around him. The author of this article points out that the drama reflects historical and ideological events which were relevant to the growth of Norwegian 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' during the first half of the 1800s. The article discusses whether or not Ibsen was inspired by a historical person when he wrote the poem.

Henrik Ibsen and 'Friluftsliv—Outdoor Life' ¹

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Henrik Ibsen is likely the instigator of the concept '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life' ² It appears in his poem "On the Heights" as early as 1859. ³ The poem portrays a psychological drama where Ibsen's protagonist experiences a split personality: on one hand are personal ideals and the expectations of society and on the other instincts and personal needs. The focus of this article is whether or not the poem can also be read as a commentary to the developing social concept of '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life'. Ibsen observed this developing phenomenon in the community around him.

The goal of this article is to analyze how the drama reflects historical events and ideologies relevant to the growth of '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life' during the first half of the 1800s. Another interesting question is whether or not Henrik Ibsen was inspired by a historical person in creating the 'I' character in "On the Heights". The first issue is Henrik Ibsen's personal relationship to '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life.'

Henrik Ibsen's '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life'

What we know of Henrik Ibsen's later years would cause us to think that Ibsen's own '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life' was limited to an occasional walk in the park on Sundays. Many people were convinced that he was; "[...] a sofa poet whose legs were used for sitting and in general was in bad shape". ⁴ We can visualize him with his long coat and top hat on his way to '*Theatercafé*—The Theater Café', in Oslo, as he appeared from 1891 when he settled down in Kristiania after 27 years (self-imposed exile) abroad. ⁵ In his youthful days, however, he was a passionate hiker who walked energetically and enthusiastically in the mountains. ⁶ Erik Werenskiöld is to have expressed the following of young Henrik Ibsen's physical fitness: "[...] he is actually a little compact giant". ⁷

¹ All translations, both the article and quotations in this article, are from Norwegian freely translated to English by Judith McGuinness Torvik.

² Tordsson 2003.

³ Ibid, <http://www.ibsen.net/index.gan?id=621&subid=0>

⁴ Østvedt 1972, p. 26.

⁵ Ibid, p. 135.

⁶ Ibid, p. 27. Bull 1949, p. 69.

⁷ Ibid.

Henrik Ibsen's enthusiasm for mountains is frequently expressed in his writing. The following verse from *Peer Gynt* is probably most well known:⁸

*Jeg vil opad, høit, på den bratteste tinde;
Jeg vil endnu engang se solen rinde,
Stirre mig træt på det lovede land!*

I want to get up as high as I can to the steepest peak;
I want to see the sun rise again,
Stare at the promised land until I weary!

According to Professor Einar Østvedt Ibsen was an outdoorsman: "When we find deep tracks of indelible mountain impressions in Ibsen's writing, we understand the clear connection to his outdoorsman ship and wanderer lust from his youth till he was an old man".⁹

Henrik Ibsen's most well-known mountain hike is undoubtedly the long journey across the *Sognefjellet* Mountain Chain in 1862. With a university scholarship of 110 'spesidaler—Norwegian dollars' to collect folk sagas, he set off on an expedition which took him across the *Sognefjellet* Mountain Chain to Sogn and on to Sunnfjord, Nordfjord, Sunnmøre and through the valleys of Romsdalen and Gudbrandsdalen and back to Kristiania.¹⁰ He writes the following from this journey across *Sognefjellet* Mountains in his very brief diary: "Bæverthun – Hestbræpiggen – Smørstabtinden – Galdhøen – Fanaraaken (these majestic mountain peaks are wonderful!)"¹¹ He revels in the view of Smørstabtindene and of Hurrungane on his trek toward the west coast. We get a picturesque image of Henrik Ibsen the outdoorsman through Einar Østvedt's description of Ibsen's arrival at Fortun and Skjolden in Sogn:

It was a curious sight for the people of Sogn to see Ibsen coming down from the mountains. A little, compact man in his thirties, with a sun-burnt face, almost completely hidden by a bushy, reddish brown beard. Wearing a pair of leather military boots, shabby knickers, a thick, tight-knit woolly sweater and an old felt hat—and on his back was a square leather backpack which held his food, writing equipment and paints, which he always brought on his expeditions. In addition, a rough walking stick and a fishing rod, swaying to the walking rhythm.¹²

⁸ Henrik Ibsen, according to Østvedt 1972, p. 107.

⁹ Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 27.

¹¹ Henrik Ibsen's collected works, 100-year edition, Vol 19, p. 85.

¹² Østvedt 1972, p. 50.

Previous to his hike across *Sognefjellet* he had walked in the mountains in Telemark, across the *Fillefjell* Mountains to Bergen and also in the mountains surrounding Bergen. During his self-imposed exile from 1864 he is known to have walked in the Albaner Mountains in Italy and also in the Tyrolean Alps.¹³

Evidence of Ibsen's mountaineering impressions are also found in well-known literary works such as *Peer Gynt* and *Brand*¹⁴; further, we find descriptions of Ibsen's personal 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' in other less well-known works.



The drawing is a portrait of Henrik Ibsen the wanderer

In one of the verses in the poem "*Reisebilleder—Images of Travels*"¹⁵ he writes about a trip up *Ulrikken*, the highest mountain in Bergen's city mountains:

*Vi vandred i timer, vi vandred i tre
Alt udi så lykkelig følge
Og så fik vi Folgefonden at se,*

¹³ Ibid, p. 27, 106. Another trip is the hike during the summer of 1856, from Bergen to Hardanger and back across to Voss. (Ibid, p. 34).

¹⁴ As early as 1909, 3 years after Ibsen's death history Professor Yngvar Nielsen claimed that Ibsen's hike across Sognefjellet in 1862 had poetic importance. "He saw the Rondane Mountains and found material for *Peer Gynt*, he saw Sognefjellet Mountains and got the idea for *Brand*". (Yngvar Nielsen, according to Østvedt 1972, p 66). See Østvedt 1972, p. 73 - 75, 81 - 87, 103 - 107.

¹⁵ Henrik Ibsen, her etter Østvedt 1972, p. 31. The verse indicates that Henrik Ibsen took poetic licence in his writing. The glacier Folgefonna cannot be viewed from Ulrikken.

Jeg vil det ikke fordølge!

We wandered for hours
together with pleasant company
then we saw the Glacier
which I will not keep a secret!

A good example of Ibsen's enthusiasm for 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' is the poem
"Vandresang—The Wandering Song"¹⁶ This folk song has been frequently listed in
numerous folk song books through the years:

*Vi vandre med freidig mod,
Vort sind er let og rap vor fod,
I høiden, opad fjeldet,
I dybet, til fossevældet.
Lad veien gå, hvor hen den vil,
Vi vandre frem med sang og spill.*

We wandered with daring courage
a light mood, and quick foot
in the heights, up in the mountains
in the depth of the waterfalls
let the path take us where it will
we wander forward with songs and games.

The plots of poems such as "Høifjeldsliv—Mountain Life" and "Paa vidderne—On the Heights" are situated in the mountain range. Both poems clearly indicate that Henrik Ibsen had a close acquaintance with 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' in the mountains. I will now turn to the poem "Paa vidderne—On the Heights" and show how this drama reflects historical events and ideologies which are closely related to the development of 'friluftsliv—outdoor life' in Norway.

"På viddene - "On the Heights"

In this first person drama the protagonist throws his walking stick over his shoulders, carries his loaded rifle in his hand and takes off for the mountains.¹⁷ This protagonist is a young man of marriageable age. He lives on a farm in one of Norway's many mountain villages. As many of the other males in his village he is going deer hunting. He bids farewell to his mother and

¹⁶ Henrik Ibsen, here according to Østvedt 1972, p. 33.

¹⁷ Ibsen 1991, p. 479.

to his fiancé from a neighboring farm. He promises to return home as quickly as possible, but this is not to happen. Circumstances lead to his search for solitude in the high country.

In the mountains he meets a stranger, a hunter with dogs. The fellow has traveled far from the south and has crossed 'wide waters'. The stranger teaches the young man the 'new wisdom' and they become partners. The main character is troubled by worries about the partnership: if it is good or not. He says: "I would break it off, 'if only I could.'" When our hero longs to get back to the village, the stranger convinces him to stay by comparing the joys of deer hunting to toiling in the field:

*Over vidden flyger renen;
Efter den i vind og væde! —
Bedre det, enn bryte stenen
Opp av fattig jord der nede!*

Reindeer race across the moorland;
After them, go hell-for-leather! —
Better that than clearing poor land
Down there, piling stones together!

The protagonist retorts that he hears the church bells calling to worship. The stranger replies by criticizing the church and Christian spiritual life; the hero is convinced and gives in:

*Nu, så kom! I vær og væde
Over viddens hvite bølge!
La så kirkestien trede
Hvo som vil, - jeg slår ei følge*

Hell-for-leather then! Come, wander
O'er the fells' white hump and hollow!
Let them walk to church down yonder,
Those that choose to, — I'll not follow!

Ibsen dramatizes an inner conflict in "På viddene— On the Heights".¹⁸ The main character is torn between his "mother's home" and "the brown hills of the high plateaus". Social norms and his own ideals pull him toward the daily farm work in the valley. But his instincts and inner nature pull him toward the free life in the mountain wilderness. Our hero stays in the mountains even when the village folk leave the mountain farms in the fall. He is plagued by

¹⁸ Meyer 2006, p. 176

doubt, but the stranger supports his instincts and helps him forget his worries. The first person voice gradually finds peace and says:

*Dagens dåd har intet merke,
Slik som den der nede drives;
Her blir mine tanker sterke,
Kun på vidden kan jeg trives.*

*I den øde seterstue
All min rike fangst jeg sanker;
Der er krakk, og der er grue,
Friluftsliv for mine tanker.*

Dale-life stifles emulation!
Drudgery for mere survival;
I found *here* my stimulation,
I need fells and moors to rival.

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

In spite of high ideals of a mountain life, his doubts and his loneliness breaks him down. Late in the fall he decides to go back to the village: only for one day. Winter and snow storms have in the meantime made the roads impassable. He must remain in the mountains through the winter, but there is no reason to lose courage:

*Vinterliv på ville vidder
Setter stål i veke tanker, - [...]*

Winter in these wildernesses
Steels weak thoughts I need to master, —

On Christmas Eve he stands looking down into the valley and watches his mother's farm burn down. The stranger points out how beautifully the red flames brighten up the darkness of the night, especially if you look through your clasped fist.¹⁹ At mid-summer season he watches as the woman he loves marries another man. He is now liberated from all emotional ties and no longer feels any need to return to his old life in the valley:

¹⁹ Meyer 2006, p. 177.

Nu er jeg stålsatt, jeg følger det bud
Der byder i høyden å vandre!
Mitt lavlandsliv har jeg levet ud;
Her oppe på vidden er frihet og Gud,
Der nede famler de andre.

I'm resolute now, respond to the call
That bids there are heights to wander!
I've lived out my life as the lowland's thrall;
Up here there is freedom and God withal,
The rest merely grope down yonder.

Henrik Ibsen himself expressed the following: "Everything that I have written is carefully intertwined with what I have lived *through*, if not lived *for* [...]".²⁰ This statement refers particularly to *Peer Gynt*, but according to Ibsen's biographer, Michael Meyer, the poem "*På viddene— On the Heights*" is *personally meaningful* for Henrik Ibsen. He maintains that Ibsen was: "[...] torn between his ideals and his daily work on the one hand and his instincts and his inner nature on the other [...]".²¹ The hero in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" experiences a similar contradiction. The poem is commonly referred to as "Poetry for the lonely".²² He is all alone with his personal, psychological drama.



The picture shows Henrik Ibsen
photographed in Christiania in 1863, by
Daniel Georg Nyblin.

²⁰ Meyer 2006, p. 280.

²¹ Ibid, p. 176.

²² Ibid, p. 355.

"*På viddene— On the Heights*" clearly describes a psychological drama, at the same time as it can also be read as a commentary to a developing social phenomenon; Henrik Ibsen called this phenomenon '*friluftsliv*—outdoor life'. New phenomena require new terminology in order to be adequately described. The concept '*friluftsvandring*—outdoor wanderings' was already in use in Norwegian literature, by Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen, in the story "*Kvernsagn*", published in 1845.²³ The main character, who speaks in first person, in '*På viddene— On the Heights*' extends the concept further than the storyteller in "*Kvernsagn*". Instead of taking little evening walks to go fishing, he now fully inhabits the great outdoors—*friluftsliv*. We can ask ourselves: What is this new phenomenon Ibsen is writing about? Hadn't people subsisted for hundreds, even thousands, of years on what they could find in the woods?

Esthetic nature experiences

The poem's main person distinguishes himself from the villagers in several ways. He hunts, but this is not a traditional hunt for food; he does not return home to the village and the farm with the meat after the hunt. For him the hunt is no longer exclusively an element of the necessary gathering of food from nature in the daily cycle of life. The hunt and life in the mountain country is life itself, not first and foremost because it is useful, even necessary, not because he must but because he wants to. In this way he not only breaks away from the social norms of his community but also with contemporary pietism, which rejected worldly enjoyment to a large extent. Work and rest were considered correct use of one's time, while there was no place for leisure time—*fritid*. The concept leisure time—*fritid* was barely conceived of,²⁴ and possibly only familiar to a small group of well-off people in the cities. Thusly, leisure time—*fritid* was most likely considered immoral by many of the main character's village friends.²⁵

One might ask if it was really so strange for the villagers to take a break from the hard farm work at that time. Hunting trips, and not least mountain farm life in summers, were cherished breaks from the daily routine for many. The clear difference here is that our hero in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" is totally absorbed in his new life so far from the village. To go for

²³ Asbjørnsen, 1995, p. 7: "When the world is against me, and that happens often enough, I have always found a great relief from my small worries and concerns by taking a walk outdoors.". Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen portrayed flyfishing in the story "*Kværnsagn*". It is interesting to note that Asbjørnsen is considered the most prominent Norwegian pioneer in flyfishing in Norway. (Søilen 1995, p. 16).

²⁴ The concept "leisure-time—*fritid*" was used for the first time by Henrik Wergeland approx. 1840. (Nedrelied 1993).

²⁵ Thorsen 1993, p. 60.

a hike for no particular reason was nearly taboo among villagers at Ibsen's time. This attitude is clearly frequently expressed in travel literature from the 1800s when mountain tourists meet villagers.²⁶ It simply was not done! A farmer did not take time to run around mountain tops where there were no deer to hunt or sheep to collect. The few registered climbs in Norwegian mountains achieved by country folk before 1850 are most likely exceptions to the rule.²⁷

Ibsen's protagonist is portrayed as having a unique sensitivity for the gentle nature experiences on his journey. He describes how the fjord and valley are bathed in 'misty moonshine'. He sees how glaciers and peaks "burn" in the sunset, while the fog weaves its way in the valley. The esthetics of the mountain landscape pervades the poem. According to Meyer "[...] an extreme form of esthetics [...]".²⁸ The esthetical climax is reached when he is filled with admiration on viewing his mother's farm in flames. Whether or not Ibsen's protagonist is distinctly different from his neighbors in his admiration of nature is difficult to determine. What do we actually know about the outdoor experiences of country folk around the middle of the 1800s? Today it is surely inconceivable that people at that time did not fully appreciate the spectacular Norwegian landscape, the rich colors, and the amazing light. We surmise that nature experiences such as these were simply unimportant because at that time one did not primarily hike in the mountains to enjoy the view; the whole purpose was a necessary effort to secure food and maintain a livelihood. The protagonist in "*På viddene—On the Heights*" is distinctly different because his purpose for being in the mountains is first and foremost to experience the great outdoors for its own value.

Romantic ideas from the Enlightenment – romanticism and rationalism

Not many Norwegians climbed mountains in Ibsen's time. Norwegian botanists were sure to have found their way up into Norwegian mountains from the end of the 1700s. Surveyors and geologists had climbed several of Norway's highest peaks.²⁹ Students and "multi-functional scientists" left for the mountains with thermometer and barometer in hand. Ideas from the eighteenth century European Enlightenment had arrived in Norway; common sense and rationality became the guidelines for the well-educated. This group of intellectuals did not

²⁶ Keilhau 1874, p. 104. Møller 1994.

²⁷ Sandegga at Sunnmøre (Rasmus Vassbotn - 1776), Romsdalshorn (The local blacksmith and a friend - 1829), Lodalskåpa (Gabriel K. Bødal, Jon S. Bødal and Ole A. Dragsæt - 1844), Glittertind (Jo Gjende and Gullbrand Steinfinnsbø - 1844), Galdhøpiggen (Steinar Sulheim, L. Arnesen and S. Flotten - 1850).

²⁸ Meyer 2006, p. 250.

²⁹ Snøhetta (1798), Gaustatoppen (1810), Hårteigen (1812), Falketind et.al. (1820), Nautgardstind et.al. (1827), Surtningstind (1840), Høgronden (1841), Glittertind et.al. (1841), Keilhaus topp (1844).

seek out the high country for its own value: the esthetics of the mountain experience was secondary for them as well. In fact, outdoor experiences among scientists could also be negative; mountains have been described as both ugly and dangerous.³⁰

Several travel descriptions, on the other hand, express such great enthusiasm, both for the mountain landscape and for the outdoor life that it is legitimate to suggest that we can find persons who are scientists and outdoorsmen at one and the same time.³¹ Is this perhaps an indication that the Enlightenment and interest in nature paved the way for what we refer to as romantic ideas and esthetical experiences of nature?³² The ethnologist, Olav Christensen, maintains that the idealization of nature: "[...] which lies in the Norwegian infatuation with the Enlightenment can be seen as the first step toward a romantic cultivation of nature".³³ To distinguish clearly between the Enlightenment and the Romantic Period is thusly problematic. Norwegian philosophers maintain that ideas from the Enlightenment were moderately and pragmatically developed in Norway. For this reason no powerful Romantic reaction appeared in Norway, compared to Germany, for example. Instead, expressions of Romanticism were integrated into the ideas of the Enlightenment.³⁴ This is why a pure Norwegian Romanticism was not very influential.³⁵ For this reason it is more precise to suggest that a characteristic "infatuation" with Norwegian outdoor life resulted from the Romantic Enlightenment rather than pure Romantic ideas.³⁶

The farmer and the mountain as national symbols

Ibsen's protagonist in "*På viddene—On the Heights*" can be considered a child of the contemporary ideas of the Romantic Enlightenment. The fact that the farmer-son is the hero and that he makes the choice to live his life precisely in the freedom of the mountains is surely not a coincidence. The background for these choices—the farmer-son as hero and the mountain setting as freedom—is clearly situated in the spiritual life of the Norwegian elite of which Henrik Ibsen was a part. In the 1840s and 1850s intellectual thinking in Norway was characterized by a broad and powerful range of cultural ideas which attracted the national community and the national character toward Romanticism and its ideology.³⁷ The ideas of the Romantic Enlightenment were thusly uniquely aligned with other Norwegian

³⁰ Horgen 1999, s. 72 f. 80.

³¹ Horgen 1999, p. 77.

³² Caspari 1917, p. 17

³³ Christensen 1993, p. 78.

³⁴ Eriksen and Sørensen 2001, p. 48.

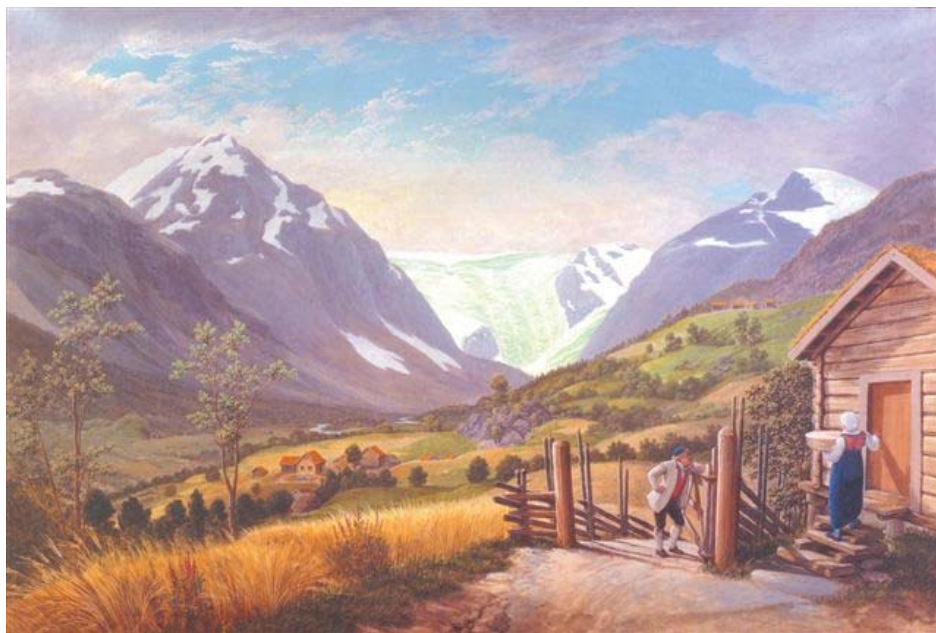
³⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

³⁶ Eriksen and Sørensen 2001, p. 48.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 164.

characteristics. The period referred to as 'National Romanticism' is often limited to the 1840s and 1850s, in spite of already emerging elements of National Romanticism and the idea of a Norwegian national culture had begun to develop towards the end of the 1700s.

It is vital to note that National Romanticism in Norway did not suddenly appear only to disappear. Reference to this time period, from 1840s to the 1850s, is connected to the National Romantic ideas which dominated the intellectual community during this period. Norway's elite intensified the work to reconnect to the people of Norway and their history, the folk traditions, the poetry, music, language, among other things with a determination to recreate and idealize the past that the farmers had nurtured.³⁸ People of culture believed that the 'real Norway' was something that existed far away and long ago in Gudbrandsdalen".³⁹ This is why so many painters, story collectors, poets, linguists, composers and others of the distinguished elite travelled so extensively around Norway.



This painting shows a typical national romantic motif. "Krundalen og Bergsetbreen—Krundalen Valley and Bergset Glacier", painted by Johannes Flintoe in 1822.

The Norwegian farmer, in addition to being honored for having nurtured the true Norwegian soul and spiritual treasures of Norway, was bestowed with the status of being Norway's primary, national symbol endowed with values from the Enlightenment such as freedom,

³⁸ Eriksen and Sørensen 2001, p. 163. Sørensen 1998. Christensen 1993.

³⁹ Eriksen and Sørensen 2001, p. 162.

equality, culture and education.⁴⁰ Norwegian philosophers maintain: “A typical Norwegian trait was connected to contemporary ideas of individual freedom”.⁴¹ During this time period the national romanticist Henrik Ibsen heroizes the mountain farmer as the protagonist in a search for freedom in “*På viddene— On the Heights*”.⁴²

It is not a coincidence that he aims at the high country. Another well-known Norwegian author, Johan S. C. Welhaven, maintained in a speech from 1846 that the primeval Norwegian trait was cherish the unique nature of mountain territory. A world of national symbolism was waiting in the mountains for artists.⁴³ Henrik Ibsen knew enough to utilize these rich symbols.

In “*På viddene— On the Heights*” we are confronted with psychological realism in a national romantic drama.⁴⁴ Michael Meyer, the Ibsen biographer, maintains that Ibsen depicts: “the contrast between the pristine high country and life there with the impoverishment in the valley [...] symbolically and philosophically [...]”.⁴⁵ From the mountain top one can look down on life “down there” from a critical distance.

The nature of the mountain landscape is confirmed as truly Norwegian by Norwegian artists during the 1800s. The elitist ideas regarding the national character resonated with and were accepted by the citizenry and also the poor people.⁴⁶ This explains the status accorded to the mountain farmer and the Norwegian mountain territory by the citizenry already in the middle of the 1800s. This is also to a large extent the reason why upper class Norwegians began to develop a love of mountaineering as the outdoor life activity of choice during those years.

Impulses from abroad – “Norway - the Northern playground”

Turning back to “*På viddene— On the Heights*” we read that the young man does not think of cultivating outdoor life by himself. At this point a slightly mystical character plays an important role. Who is he? Where does he come from? We are told that he is a hunter who hunts with a dog in the mountains. He is from the south and has travelled far crossing “broad

⁴⁰ Eriksen and Sørensen 2001, p. 20 f. 163.

⁴¹ Ibid, s. 24.

⁴² Philosopher Gudleiv Bø characterized Henrik Ibsen as: “[...] a faithful national romanticist in the first decade of his authorship”. (Sørensen 1998, p. 120).

⁴³ Sørensen 1998, p. 102.

⁴⁴ Sørensen 1998, p. 120.

⁴⁵ Meyer 2006, p. 137.

⁴⁶ Ibid.ps. 19.

waters". He has brought with him "new wisdom" which turns the life of the young man upside down. Is the man that he meets an Englishman on a sporting hunt? We know that fowl (for example ptarmigan) hunting with a pointer dog was brought to Norway by British hunters in the 1800s.⁴⁷ It was not usual for Norwegian hunters to bring dogs on ptarmigan hunts, nor on reindeer hunts.⁴⁸ This type of hunting was first introduced by Englishmen and adopted by Norwegian sports hunters from the middle of the 1800s.⁴⁹ It is likely that Henrik Ibsen is referring to representatives from the British upper class as a vital impulse to Norwegian outdoor life.

We know that Englishmen, among others, had begun to visit the mountains of Western Norway near Jotunheimen as early as in the 1820s.⁵⁰ Just how extensive these visits were is not known. Because there was a lack of travel literature from this region the picture we get is inadequate. We do know, however, that there were a substantial number of tourists so that it became necessary to establish a system of guides for tourists on Jostedalsbreen Glacier as early as in 1828.⁵¹ A contemporary source (1853), Professor James D. Forbes, writes that: "[...] increasing numbers of travelers [...] annually pour into Norway".⁵² It seems conclusive therefore that outdoor life, to a large extent, came to Norway with the British upper class. The British nobility and other economically independent persons such as rich industrial giants expanded their 'playground' to include Norway. They brought their version of 'outdoor life' to the Norwegian mountain country; hunting and fishing as sports: glacier climbing and mounting climbing were among the activities they brought with them.⁵³ These same impulses were copied by increasing numbers of the Norwegian citizenry. These were the people who had time, money and leisure to follow in the footsteps of the British. Sports historian, Matti Goksøyr, makes the claim:

The mountain landscape which had previously been exploited only by mountain farmers, hunters, herdsmen and workers to support their economic livelihood through hunting, fishing and mountain farming was now open to a completely new activity.

⁴⁷ Søylen 1995, p. 16 f. 58, Frislid 1982, p. 451.

⁴⁸ Søylen 1995, ps. 58, Unsgård 2004. Norwegian sport hunters impressed fowl hunters from England, German, and Denmark during the last half of the 1800s. (Søylen 1995, p. 16).

⁴⁹ Søylen 1995, p. 22.

⁵⁰ "[...] The English have developed the habit of coming here [Jostedalen and Jostedalsbreen]". (Neumann 1824, p. 59). Norway was known for its natural landscape in England through the publication of Erich Pontoppidan's natural history of Norway: "Experimentation from the natural history of Norway", which was published in English as early as in 1755. (Søylen 1995, p. 16).

⁵¹ Horgen 1999, p. 128.

⁵² Forbes 1853, p. 159.

⁵³ Breivik 1979.

People without economic goals went to the mountains to experience nature. And this experience became an experience in itself.⁵⁴

The true son of the Enlightenment

One interesting question is if Ibsen employed a historical person as his role model for the hero in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" or if the story is fiction. The query is valuable in itself, in addition potential answers may throw light on outdoor life as a phenomenon.

We know that Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* is based on a historical person,⁵⁵ or at least on myths spun around several historical persons.⁵⁶ The similarities between the first person I in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" and *Per Gynt* are obvious. They are both freelancers and prefer hunting to farming, for example. Perhaps the role model is the same? It is likely that Ibsen was acquainted with the *Per Gynt* stories through "*Høyfjellsbilleder—Mountain pictures*" from Asbjørnsen's *Norske huldreeventyr og Folkesagn—Norwegian Fairy Tales and Folk Tales* which appeared in 1841, long before he wrote "*På viddene— On the Heights*".⁵⁷ An even more tempting role model connection to Ibsen's hero in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" than a historical *Per Gynt* is the legendary 'John Gjendin' today known as 'Jo Gjende'.⁵⁸ Jo Gjende's real name is Jo Tjøstolvson Kleppe (1794-1884) from Heidal, later Vågå i Gudbrandsdalen.⁵⁹ His life and work fits unusually well as a source of inspiration for Ibsen and his work with the poem. Jo Tjøstolvson Kleppe was a 'manager' for a trial period on his aunt's farm at Heringstad⁶⁰ and worked with cattle, but when he shot his first buck in 1812 he spent more and more time with reindeer in the mountains. As a cattleman he built up a small 'fortune' and with his simple lifestyle he could live off the interest.⁶¹ In the village he was considered a free thinker who despised ministers. Many people were prejudiced against him and refused to socialize with him; more and more people rejected him, but he refused to

⁵⁴ Goksøyr 1994, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Ibsen wrote the following in a letter to his publisher in Copenhagen 8. August 1867: "If it is of interest for you to know, *Peer Gynt* is a real person who lived in Gudbrandsdalen, likely in Slutningen in the last or in the beginning of this century. His name is still well known among the poor up there [...]" (Meyer 2006, p. 272, Ottesen 2004, p. 30, <http://www.ibsen.net/index.gan?id=11120395&subid=0>)

⁵⁶ Ottesen 2004, p. 29. Who are people arguing about. There are several candidates. One of them is Peder Lauritsen (d. 1665), probably the grandson of Jon Gynther, and cotter at the Hågå farm at Nord-Fron, in Gudbrandsdalen. Another is Peder Olsen Hågå (b 1732), a later worker at the same farm. (Ottesen 2004, p. 18, 38).

⁵⁷ Meyer 2006, p. 272.

⁵⁸ There have also been speculations as to if Ibsen had Gjende in mind when he wrote *Peer Gynt*. (http://home.hib.no/mediesenter/per2peer/Jo_Gjende.htm).

⁵⁹ Barth 1873, ps. 35. Steen 1959, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Marit from Heringstad was Jo Gjende's aunt.

⁶¹ Barth 1873, p. 45.

change his beliefs or his mode of expression. For weeks he would disappear in the mountains; in time he spent up to six months of the year in the high country outdoors.⁶²



The photo shows Jo Tjøstolvson Kleppe photographed in the 1850s. The photographer is unknown.

Early in the 1840s he built a hut near Gjendeosen: one 9 square meter room with a fireplace, a table and a stool. For several years after he built this little hut he spent summer and winter alone in the mountains, miles away from civilization. He went to the village only when he needed something badly.⁶³ In time he became a professional deer hunter under the name "Jo Gjende".

Jo Gjende was interested in European intellectual ideas. The Norwegian author, Trygve B. Steen, writes the following about him: "[...] he was a true son of the Enlightenment".⁶⁴ He read Voltaire and Holberg, among others, was interested in natural science and 'sought truth' in nature. In addition to being a free thinking and hater of ministers, he was a rationalist. The villagers probably looked upon him with fear and wonder.⁶⁵

⁶² Barth 1873. Steen 1959, p. 43bf. 57-58.

⁶³ Barth 1873. Øvsteng 2000, p. 23 b. 25, Steen 1959, p. 73fb. 80.

⁶⁴ Steen 1959, p. 120.

⁶⁵ Barth 1873. Øvsteng 2000, p. 23 f. 25.

Just as a Per Gynt he hiked around in the mountains wearing woolen pants and a red cap. And just as a Per Gynt he was a brilliant shot, and skier, and, if not a fighter, he was at least well-known for his strength. Just as a Per Gynt he went his own ways. The author, Per Ottesen, has written about the potential connection to a historical Per Gynt: "Most people hated and admired a person who was so intent on going it alone. Just think: to nearly give away a farm and live a life like he did".⁶⁶

While many people despised and prejudged Jo Gjende, perhaps mostly for his unchristian behavior, they had respect for him, particularly for his skills as a deer hunter and being a good shot. Few, if any, were better at these skills. Many people were also fearfully respectful because he dared to live alone in the mountains with so many dark and dangerous creatures.⁶⁷ At that time most people were superstitious. A farmer was never alone in the landscape: there were supernatural creatures everywhere, under the earth were trolls such as *vetter* and *huldra*. It was safe to stay inside the farm areas and village space, while in the fields and mountains there were dark and dangerous powers to deal with.⁶⁸ These creatures were seen to control and influence nature and thereby also human life and work.⁶⁹ Contemporary travel literature confirms the strong and deeply anchored superstitions of the people in Jo Gjende's time.



The picture illustrates Ibsen's Per Gynt riding a buck.

⁶⁶ Ottesen 2004, p. 38.

⁶⁷ Steen 1959, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Nedrelid 1993.

⁶⁹ Frykman and Löfgren 1979.

Hunter or sports hunter?

In Gudbrandsdalen at this time there was a rifle on each farm and most likely every farmer went deer hunting. To choose hunting as a life style, however, as Jo Gjende did, was rare.⁷⁰ One might ask what a life style really is? Jo Gjende's life style included giving the meat away or using it in exchange for necessities, most likely hardtack with butter and cheese. Meat and fish he ate only when it was served to him. He was not aiming to supplement food supplies: Børsejegeren (Rifle hunter) Jo Gjende did not use traps, he hunted with his rifle and shotgun. In the mountains he hunted the large bucks, usually the ones with the biggest antlers.⁷¹

In many ways Jo Gjende had more in common with a sporting hunter from the British upper class who looked forward to trophies than many of the villagers. It is easy to understand why he developed a close and warm friendship to the sons of wealthy English families, Eardley J. Blackwell and Theodore W. Rathbone. In 1855 the two 22-year-olds settled in with 59-year old Jo Gjende. Through the long winter they spent day's practice shooting, hunting and fishing in the mountains. Blackwell returned to the village at Christmas, while Rathbone remained in the mountains all winter.⁷²

To better understand the difference between a sports hunter or sports fisherman and those who sustained themselves by hunting, trapping or fishing, it is helpful to read what Espen Søylen writes in his book, *Sportsmenn i Veideland*—Sportsmen in professional hunter territory:

It mattered to the sport hunter just how the ptarmigan ended up in the sack, or to the sports fisherman how the salmon got to land. Norms within sport hunting and sport fishing have been developed which are closely related to sport. Fair play was important, the wild animals or fish should get their chance so that each downed wild animal or landed fish was a victory over nature with the correct premises. [...] Only by following the sporting norms could one become a perfect sportsman, and only then could one enjoy maximal profit of the hunting or fishing.⁷³

⁷⁰ Steen 1959, p. 20. Before Jo Gjende people heard about "Store Hans Heringstad" (d. 1790) who lived more or less off his rifle in this territory. (Steen 1959, p. 29).

⁷¹ Barth 1873, p. 45. Øvsteng 2000, p. 23 f. 25.

⁷² Steen 1959, p. 102 f. 103, Øvsteng 2000, p. 23 f. 25.

⁷³ Søylen 1995, p. 33.

The method of hunting and fishing was strongly emphasized. In other words, it was first and foremost the method which distinguished the sports hunter from the professional hunter. Looking at how Jo Gjende hunted it is clear that he was inspired by British sportsman hunting.

Just as the hero in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" Jo Gjende left the daily life of the farm in the mountain village Vågå. He went straight to the mountains to hunt and live the outdoor life in solitude. He had seen his fiancé get married to a wealthy farmer. He gained 'new wisdom', new insights in opposition to the establishment. He sought to transcend the daily hardships in the field. He fled from the grip of the church and its suffocating spiritual life. In the mountains he formed a partnership with Blackwell and Rathbone for awhile, long-distance traveling hunters from the south, which had come across 'broad waters'. In the hut at Gjende he had a stool and hearth. There he could think free thoughts while the others fumbled down there.

Whether or not Jo Gjende is Ibsen's role model for the first person protagonist in "*På viddene— On the Heights*" is highly uncertain, but not unlikely. In the course of the 1840s and 1850s people in Kristiania and also Henrik Ibsen may certainly have heard stories about Jo Gjende,. Ibsen travelled on a stipend up through Gudbrandsdalen in 1862,⁷⁴ but that was after "*På viddene— On the Heights*" was published.

⁷⁴ <http://www.ibsen.net/index.gan?id=621&subid=0>



Aasmund Olavsson Vinje's words on Jo Gjende's gravestone tell of the man's renown:

I am as you know well a man of the mountains and therefore I flee to the hills as often as I can.

It is possible that Ibsen can have heard about Jo Gjende through conversations with Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen and/or Jørgen E. Moe who have likely run into the name Jo Gjende during their travels (which also included Gudbrandsdalen).to collect stories from the middle of the 1830s. Ibsen may also have had other sources. We know that Jo Gjende was visited by 'city folk' at Gjendeosen as early as 1841. Three years in a row Captein Harald Nicolay Storm Wergeland⁷⁵ stopped by in connection with surveying in Jotunheimen. Ibsen may also have heard about Jo through A. O. Vinje who visited Gudbrandsdalen the summer of 1859.⁷⁶ Or perhaps he may have heard about the man from others. For example, Jo Gjende was visited by both Estate Warden J. B. Barth⁷⁷, and by Consul Thomas J. Heftye⁷⁸ and Lawyer Nils Nicolaysen the summer of 1859.

⁷⁵ Steen 1959, p. 101. Harald Nicolai Storm Wergeland (1814-1893) was the cousin of Henrik Wergeland and became in time one of Norway's most prominent military leaders. (Entered War School at 12). He surveyed and mapped out Jotunheimen and was the chair of *Norsk Jæger & Fisker-Forenings* Norwegian Hunting and Fishing Association the first 9 years. (Søilen 1995, p. 40).

⁷⁶ Vinje 1859.

⁷⁷ Jacob Bøckmann Barth (1822-1892) and his article "John Gjendin", in " *Meddelelser fra Kristiania News* from Kristiania, the publication of *Norsk Jæger- og Fisker-Forenings* Norwegian Hunting and Fishing Association from 1873 is our most important source of information about Jo Gjendes' life and work. Barth was among other things estate warden in Gudbrandsdalen District and is considered the father of the modern estate warden office. He learned the art of hunting from Halvor Heyerdahl Rasch (1805-1883), Professor of Zoology, father of the modern nature conservation management and one of the founders of both the Central Society for the dispersion of physical activity and use of weapons (1861), The Norwegian Tourist Association (1868) and Norwegian Hunting and Fishing Association (1871). (Søilen 1995, p. 40, 48).

⁷⁸ Thomas Johannessen Heftye (1822-1886), Norwegian banker, consul and co-founder of the Norwegian Tourist Association where he was chair from the beginning to his death.

Meeting between city and village—outdoor life disseminates

Jo Gjende can be said to be a personification of the idealized mountain farmer, whose living legend the citizenry appreciated. After he returned to the farm, 'Brurusten' in old age he was visited by a number of prominent people in Norwegian society.⁷⁹

As mentioned above there were individuals who found their way to Jo in his hut at Gjende during his major period as a deer hunter and mountain man. Several of the visitors such as Consul Heftye and Lawyer Nicolaysen in 1859, exemplify how the first real mountain tourists had begun to journey in the Jotunheimen Mountains.⁸⁰ These first, pure 'outdoor life folk' who appeared without any particular scientific agenda helped establish Jotunheimen as the most prestigious area for Norwegian mountain hikers.⁸¹

During the last half of the 1800s "valfartet" significant persons from elite circles in the capital city to Jotunheimen and surrounding areas such as Gudbrandsdalen, Sognefjellet, Hurrungane and Jostedalsbreen Glacier. Asbjørnsen og Moe, A. O. Vinje and Henrik Ibsen, among others have been mentioned. To the list we can add Henrik Wergeland, Ivar Aasen, the painter Johannes Flintoe, Professor Yngvar Nielsen and nobility such as Wedel Jarlsberg.⁸² In their wake other upper class Norwegians with money and leisure followed to realize their mountain dreams".⁸³

Words and images of the pioneers inspired these 'mountain dreams'. Several of the persons mentioned here have 'marketed' the mountains and outdoor life either in their texts or on

⁷⁹ Among others: A. O. Vinje, Officer and architect Theodor C. A. Broch, Colonel Harald Nicolay Storm Wergeland, historian Johan E. W. Sars, forstmann Jacob B Barth, author Theodor Caspari, Mayor C. A. Fougstad, Professor M. Aubert and others. (Steen 1959, p. 125 f. 126).

⁸⁰ Steen 1959, p. 110.

⁸¹ The name Jotunheimen is used today about the mountain areas between Ottadalen in the North, Gudbrandsdalen to the East, Valdres in the South and Sogn in the west. This mountain area which before 1800 only exceptionally was visited by others than hunters, workers and mountain dairy farmers had no common name before Baltazar M. Keilhau proposed the literary name *Jotunfjeldene* in 1823. As a geology student he carried out several first climbs in Jotunheimen together with medical student Christian B. Boeck in the course of the summer of 1820. They were inspired to carry out their scientific mountain trip by botanist Christen Smith, who some called 'The first wandering tourist', who had botanized in Jotunheimen as early as in 1813. In 1862 A. O. Vinje used the name *Jotunheimen* for the first time in his "Memories of a trekk summer 1860". Name giving is from the Nordic mythology. The name in itself, in the vicinity of Gudbrandsdalen—the valley of valleys and the 'real' Norway and the fact that the mountain area includes Norway's highest peaks has given this mountainous landscape a unique place in the national consciousness of Norwegians.

⁸² Steen 1959, p. 122.

⁸³ It is worthy of mention that Elise Aars, later Elise Aubert, a daughter of the minister, Julius Aars (vicar in Lom from 1851 to 1862) writes in her book "From the old vicarage" (1902): 'Walking trips have just recently occurred among students approximately 1850'. (Østvedt 1972, p. 60).

canvas. A number of Ibsen's important works involve mountains which provide the framework for the action. In Asbjørnsen and Moe's collections of fairytales bring to life nature and images of nature. Not least are paintings by Johannes Flintoe and other national romantic artist's relevant examples of mountainous motifs. Further, A. O. Vinje wrote his "*Fedaminni fra Sumaren 1860*—Memories of walks from the summer of 1860", Ivar Aasen describes his hike across "*Justedals-breden*—Justedals Glacier" in 1862, The Norwegian Tourist Association (DNT) began publishing yearbooks with travel literature in 1868 and in 1879 Yngvar Nielsen published "*Reisehaandbog over Norge*—Handbook of travels in Norway".



This picture "*Seterliv under Skagastølstindene*—Mountain dairying under the Skagastøl Peaks" painted by Johannes Flintoe in 1830 shows typical motifs.

This travel handbook, influential for the development of tourism and outdoor life, was clearly a very popular innovation with its demand for publication: all totaled 12 times up to 1915.⁸⁴ Of notable fame were Fridtjof Nansen's and Roald Amundsen's polar expeditions and the books that followed.⁸⁵ Nansen and Amundsen were inspirational heroes for generations; their fame was well known in every part of Norway and clearly contributed to a furthering of outdoor life.

⁸⁴ In 1923 "*Idrætsboken*—The Book of Sports" was published by 'Kristiania distriktslag for idræt—Kristiania's district association for sporting'; outdoor life was thoroughly dealt with. The chapter entitled "*Fjeldsport*—Mountain Sport" in volume V included as many as 167 pages and the chapter entitled "*Skiløping*--Skiing" in volume III mountain skiing covers 26 pages, an indication of the place that outdoor life received in textbooks at that time.

⁸⁵ Fridtjof Nansen: *Grønlandsferden*—The Greenland Expedition (1888), *Fram-ekspedisjonen*—The Fram Expedition (1893-96). Roald Amundsen: *Nord-vest passasjen*—The Northwest Passage (1903), *Sydpolen*—The South Pole (1911), *Nordøst passasjen*—The Northeast Passage (1922), *Nordpolen*—The North Pole (1926).

The outdoor life developed by the Norwegian citizenry finally spread to the native population toward the end of the 1800s and into the 1900s. Mountain climber Henning Tønsberg, who was active around 1930, claimed that the mountain farmers first were inspired to hike in the mountains for the joy of hiking after tourists and mountain sporting enthusiasts had led the way. The farmer Hans Olsen Vigdal's climb of Store Skagastølstind Peak just following Danish Carl Hall is an example of this:

In 1890 we are reminded of the innate skills of the native population with their convincing strides but only after others make notable achievements. The Danish victory inspired the man from Sogn, Hans Olsen Vigdal, to achieve similar results alone as he quietly snuck up the Skagastølstinden Peak and reached the plateau just below Hefteyrennen.⁸⁶

It seems clear that Tønsberg's comments described the general situation. According to the author Ben Johnsen, writer of the book *Jotunheimens Stortopper*—Jotunheimens Great Peaks, there are "[...] very few examples of climbers who independently took the initiative to make mountain climbs alone".⁸⁷ Studies of expeditions on the Jostedalbreen Glacier provide the same information. The villagers began to hike for 'the sake of hiking' on and around the giant glacier only after tourism had been common for several years.⁸⁸ It has been noted above that there have been few registered climbs of Norwegian mountains by the native population before 1850, a tendency which was also common in Europe.⁸⁹

The first interactions between mountain tourists and village people were characterized by wonder, even fear, on behalf of the villagers.⁹⁰ What was it these travelers were doing in the

⁸⁶ Tønsberg 1933, p. 26.

⁸⁷ Johnsen 1991, p. 84. Walt Unsworth, author of *Encyclopedia of Mountaineering* claims that the situation was similar in the Alps at that time: "The great peaks and glaciers were of no interest to the native population before visitors arrived". (Unsworth 1992, p. 23).

⁸⁸ Horgen 1999, p. 119 f. 121.

⁸⁹ The climb of the Wetterhorn in the Alps in 1854 is considered the start of mountain sports in Europe. Earlier climbs are seen as isolated events. (Unsworth 1992, p. 23).

⁹⁰ The travel descriptions of the Englishman Moorfield from 1888 is an example of the meeting of villagers and tourists in an isolated glacier. He and a friend arrived at Nystølen near Veitastred and experienced a great commotion on the mountain plateau: "Here we found, that they had so few visitors, that we were objects of great terror to the children, and of intense curiosity to the older natives [...]" (Moorfield 1888, p. 43). The Englishman William C. Slingsby had similar experiences after coming down the Kjenndalsbreen Glacier: "[...] The people received us very hospitably, thought we had come from the skies and were long before they believed our tale". (Slingsby 1881, p. 108). And from Hurrungane: "[...] when they saw us climb down from the Riingsbreen Glacier's dismal ports, where not living being had even gone in or out, we were seen as trolls of the underworld: huldre folk". (Slingsby 1990).

mountains? In time the native population got the taste for mountaineering. *Folketroen*—The Superstition in Norway, which to a certain extent had regulated the activity of the villagers in undeveloped land,⁹¹ was in the process of losing its grip on the people. At the same time the contact between the tourists and the travelers was increasing as the tourism and outdoor life expanded. During the last half of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s many of the village population were supplementing their livelihood with profits from outdoors activities and tourists. Examples of other activities were transportation by horse and boat, guiding in mountains, glaciers, and on fishing and hunting trips and not least providing accommodations and food and drink. There are a number of references that indicate that the old guides enjoyed their trips⁹² even shared as much enthusiasm as the tourists. Glacier guide Mikkel Mundal expressed this joy in his unique way when he said: "It is with mountain trips as with tobacco: once you get the taste of it, you just can't stop."⁹³ The author Espen Søylen expressed these thoughts: "[...] the hunters and fishermen in the villages were driven by desire. A man can't be a wimp if he wants to be a guide, wrote Guldbrand Andrisson Skattebu (1863-1925) from Øystre Slidre".⁹⁴ Guldbrand is an early example of a man from a village who appreciated outdoor life. He hunted and fished two months every fall, was manager for the Norwegian Tourist Association at Tvinnehaugen near Tyin from 1875 and was a guide for tourists in that areas for a number of years.⁹⁵

The similarities between Jo Gjende and this Guldbrand Skattebu are clear. Jo Gjende was likely exceptional for his period, but in time outdoor life expanded also to the villages. Jo Gjende and men like him exemplify how individual villagers eventually added a new dimension to the life sustaining activities in the outdoor areas. Harvesting exclusively for sustenance was supplemented at the same time as the activity was closely aligned with traditions. Instead of operating in the 'landscape of production' the villagers began to transcend into a new 'leisure landscape', a scene impacted with distinctly different cultural values.⁹⁶ This has been a tedious process which in some ways continues today. There are still Norwegians who hesitate to go for a walk just for the sake of walking and without a goal.

⁹¹ Baltazar M. Keilhau tells about how the simple faith of the people could regulate mountain activity of the native population in Norway approximately 1820: "Lodalskåbe Peak, a tall and steil peak which spreads its black edges over the long, light snow flats—it is said that no human being has ever climbed it and therefore it carries the power to induce the superstition that no one must ever enter it". (Keilhau 1874, p. 104).

⁹² Horgen 1999, p. 117 f. 118.

⁹³ Bing 1896 p. 27.

⁹⁴ Søylen 1995, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Søylen 1995, p. 34.

⁹⁶ Frykman og Löfgren 1994, p. 51 f. 52, 53.

However, no one can base their livelihood on profits from harvesting in the outdoor areas. Even activities with deep roots in a prehistoric hunting culture, such as reindeer hunting, will be commonly characterized as outdoor life activities today.

Outdoor life—a popular movement: folkebevegelse

It has been shown that outdoor life spread to the cities and villages just ten years after Henrik Ibsen wrote "*Paa vidderne—On the Heights*" and the Norwegian Tourist Association (DNT) held its first annual meeting on the initiative of A. O. Vinje and Thomas J. Heftye.

Membership in the new association grew from 223 persons the first year to 1000 in the course of a few years. From the turn of the century the membership increased yearly and numbered close to 50 000 by the start of WWII.⁹⁷ These figures indicate just how outdoor life developed in this period.

From the start the Norwegian Tourist Association put a great deal of work in laying the foundation for outdoor life as a national activity: at first—in the mountains—later in the woods and the coast. In the course of a short period of time the association began to build and purchase tourist cabins and also initiated the marking of paths.⁹⁸ In time the association organized its own patent office (1890) for various glacier and mountain areas; finally its own first mountain trips (1933) and glacier-walking courses (1958). A number of local and other national organizations and clubs which aimed to enhance outdoor life were established at the turn of the century.⁹⁹ Not least a broad range of local tourist associations were rapidly organized, from Kristiansand in the south to Bodø in the north during the 1880s and more were to come in the 1900s.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ DNT exceeded 100 000 members in 1987. Today the association has over 207 000 members.

⁹⁸ DNT bought its first cabin, Krokan near Rjukanfossen, in 1868. In 1870 Memurubu DNT cabin and the same year Tyinhytta cabin were completed, both in Jotunheimen. The first T-marked route in the Norwegian mountains was established in 1874. It coursed Besseter in Sjødalen over Besseggen to Memurubu, in Jotunheimen. This is the most popular T-route in the Norwegian mountains today.

⁹⁹ The Central Society for the Development of Practical Exercise and Use of Weapons (1861), Norwegian Hunting and Fishing Association (1871), Society for the Advancement of Skiing (1883), Bergen Mountaineering Club (1895), Norwegian Mountain Peak Club (1908), The Labour Association for Sports (1924), Oslo Labourers Hunting and Fishing Association (1927), The Working Man's Hunting and Fishing Association (1933), Oslofjord's Leisure Council (1933).

¹⁰⁰ In the course of 1887-89 12 local tourist associations are established in Norway: Skien and Telemark, Trondhjem, Stavanger, Kristiansand and Oppland, Drammen and Oplands, Kristiansund and Nordmøre, Kongsberg and Omegn, Ålesund and Sunnmøre, Molde and Romsdals, Arendal and Oppland, Bodø and Surroundings, also Bergens touring club. In 1988 DNT became a national association for all tourist associations. As of 17 June 2006 DNT is Norway's largest outdoor life organization with its 55 member organizations and over 207 000 members.

Arrangements that The Norwegian Tourist Association and other organizations carried out made it easier for increasing numbers of people to cultivate outdoor life; notable for the developing interest for outdoor life is the increase in numbers of travel writings from select mountain areas throughout the 1800s and 1900s.¹⁰¹ Making the arrangements was only one of many factors which contributed to increasing interest in outdoor life. In general it can be stated that outdoor life developed along with improved living conditions in the population. More and more people had more money and more energy and not least many leisure times. Approximately 1920 laws were enacted which gave workers an 8-hour work day, 48-hour work week and vacation with pay for two weeks. In 1937 the holiday act extended vacations from two to three weeks and in 1964 to four weeks. In the 1960s the work week was reduced to 42.5 hours.¹⁰²

The increasing division between work time and leisure time, together with the idea of the necessity of recreation was a requirement for the growth of outdoor life activity.¹⁰³ During the 1900s a number of laws were passed which intended to regulate the access of the population to natural areas.¹⁰⁴ Both public and private organizations put a great deal of work into strengthening the idea of outdoor life among the general populace. Early on work was concluded to secure free-access to the joys of outdoor life throughout the 1900s.¹⁰⁵ As early as in 1933 the newspaper "Arbeiderbladet-The Worker's Times" stated that "[...] working for the advancement of outdoor life for all has to a large extent shown great progress."¹⁰⁶

Improved communications contributed to making it increasingly easy for people to get outdoors. A number of the nation's railways were built during the last part of the 1800s and first part of the 1900s.¹⁰⁷ For example when the railway from Kristiania to Trondheim was completed in 1880 the entire Østerdalen Valley area was open to hunters from Kristiania.¹⁰⁸ Not least did the new railway stretches give greater access to the high country for the general population. Several of the large cities built local railways which connected the city closer to

¹⁰¹ Horgen 1999, p. 85 f. 92.

¹⁰² Tordsson 2003, Nedreliid 1993.

¹⁰³ Richardson 1994, p. 10 f. 13.

¹⁰⁴ "Law of Preservation of Nature" (1910), "Mountain Law" (1920), "Coast Law" (1937), "Outdoor life Law" (1957), "Environmental Conservation Law" (1970). (Tordsson 2003, DN 1997).

¹⁰⁵ For example the Worker's council in Oslo intensified the work to secure free-access areas from 1917. (Tordsson 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Tordsson 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Examples of railways are: Rørosbanen (1862-1877), Vossabanen (1884), Ofotbanen (1902), Nordlandsbanen (1904-1962) Valdresbanen (1906), Bergensbanen (1909), Rjukanbanen (1909), Dovrebanen (1921).

¹⁰⁸ Søylen 1995, p. 16.

the mountains, popularly called "marka".¹⁰⁹ Mountain road building during the last thirty years of the 1800s also contributed to easy access for mountaineers.¹¹⁰ Even if only a small minority of Norwegians owned cars, mobility was substantially improved whether one employed a car, bus or bicycle.

Outdoor life was an increasingly important aspect in the lives of greater and greater numbers of people, as was industrialization and urbanization. For example the percentage of the Norwegian population in urban areas increased from 20 % in 1866, to 30 % approximately 1900, to 50 % in 1945 and as much as 70 % in 2000. A gradually increasing number of Norwegians have thusly become detached from the rhythm of nature in the course of the last 150 years; no longer were the seasons a determining factor for how people organized their lives.¹¹¹ Perhaps it was the loss of a life close to nature which leads more and more people to seek the natural setting for outdoor life activities? It is likely that outdoor life became a replacement for the useful aspects of life in nature which one had grown up with and missed?

As people from various parts of the nation settled in different cities and urban areas in the course of the 1900s the culture of outdoor life was characterized by traditions from both city and country. The diversity of outdoor life in Norway today is in many ways a result of the integration of two cultures: city traditions and country traditions.¹¹² The country traditions have their roots in the usefulness of nature where sustenance, harvesting, supplementing the food supply are central. City traditions have their roots in the 'excess' of leisure time where recreation and 'walking for the sake of walking' is the main goal.¹¹³ This has resulted in rich outdoor life tradition, which to a large extent is forwarded from generation to generation, but at the same time is influenced by the surroundings which change in character from time to time.

¹⁰⁹ Local trams: Holmenkollbanen in Oslo (1898), Fløybanen in Bergen (1918), Gråkallbanen in Trondheim (1924).

¹¹⁰ Tordsson 2003. In this period Hans Hagerup Krag was Director of Roads (from 1873-1903). As a curiosity we note that Krag was appointed to honourable member of DNT in 1897. (Tordsson 2003).

¹¹¹ Richardson 1994, p. 10 f. 13.

¹¹² Breivik 1979.

¹¹³ Ibid.



The phenomenon that Ibsen saw the contours of in the 1850s has become a popular movement in Norway in the course of the short 150 years which have passed since Henrik Ibsen wrote "*Paa vidderne—On the Heights*". Outdoor life has in this time period developed into a distinct cultural trait in Norway. The future will show just how outdoor life will be maintained as a cultural phenomenon by the coming generations, of if it will eventually cease to exist in the same way as it gradually came into being.

The picture shows Henrik Ibsen photographed in Munich in Munchen 1878, by Franz Hanfstaengel.

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Pictures:

Forsidetegningen er et selvportrett(?) av vandringsmannen Henrik Ibsen. Tegningen er hentet fra Østvedt, Einar: Høyfjellet i Ibsens liv og diktning. Oluf Rasmussens forlag – Skien 1972.

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Tegningen av Jo-Gjende bue Per Gynt er hentet fra en brosjyre på Gjendesheim. Utgiver og tegner er ikke oppgitt.

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Bildet av Jo Gjende sin gravstein er privat. Foto: André Horgen.