

“Society is defect, now it is up to us”

*Building worlds beyond the human/nature divide in
the Norwegian youth environmental movement*

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Abstract

The climate and environmental crisis is growing more tangible and extreme every day. From being a threat in a distant future, it is now taking lives and destroying livelihoods across the world. Further, the crisis is triggering action as more and more people realize that it is caused by the systems (re)producing the oppression and exploitation of humans and nature alike. The climate and environmental crisis is as such not only a crisis of nature, but a violent expression of and reaction to the crisis of human and nature co-existence in the modern world (Blaser, 2013; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar, 2019; Latour, 2018; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Moore, 2017). It is within this context that I have written my master's thesis.

In my research I have asked how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and practice nature-human relations within the context of the climate and environmental crisis, the collapse of old worlds and (re)emergence of new worlds. To explore this I have worked with my own active engagement in the field, building on my knowledge and personal experiences through 'autoethnography'. I have had conversations with other youth who are active in the young climate and environmental movement in Norway, and I have taken part in actions within three central struggles: The school strikes for the climate, the Riehpovuotna-struggle and the Førdefjorden-struggle. Building on the theories and work within political ontology, post-development and Science and Technology Studies, the thesis tells stories of the climate and environmental crisis and of other possible futures through the perspectives of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, including myself.

In the thesis, I show that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, through their experience of urgency, practice of solidarity and enactment of nature-human interdependency, call for radical change and co-produce ways of worlding that are different to the modern. Going beyond the modern world's human/nature divide, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and practice nature-human relations in a manner that is radically different to the modern world. Thus, in a time of ravaging climate disasters, mass extinction and ecological collapse, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway enact futures that confront the modern world and represent radically different ways of being and knowing; they enact radically different worlds.

Acknowledgements

As a young climate and environmental activist, I am often asked if I have hope for the future. The obligatory answer is yes, because otherwise my commitment does not make sense to people. Yet, I am often filled with sadness, anger and fear for the current and future state of the Earth and all of us who inhabit it. Sometimes I feel that all the work we are doing gets us nowhere, and that I and we have taken on much more than we can handle. This is a feeling I have also had while writing this thesis; when sitting in the rain, chained to an excavator, trying to stop an environmental crime, and when people I admire and believe in have shared their feelings, struggles and dreams. However, what has gotten me through it and gives me hope, is the knowledge, commitment and strength of youth who will not back down, but continue to struggle for justice for all. No matter what. Because of your knowledge, commitment and strength, I know that it is possible to build better worlds (beyond the human/nature divide).

I want to express my sincerest gratitude to all of you who have contributed to the knowledge and experiences shared in this thesis. To all the participants I have had conversations with, to all the people who created and took part in the actions and protest camps I engaged in, and to all of you with whom I have discussed my work; I hope that I have managed to respectfully share and build on your knowledge, work and experiences.

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This thesis is also a product of my personal climate and environmental engagement, and I would especially like to thank my parents for allowing this engagement to blossom; my dad for our conversations about degrowth and environmentalism in the 70s, my mum for the support during the ups and downs of my activism and this thesis work. To my partner, Solveig, thank you for all the support and the love you give me every day, and the joy you bring into my life. To my sister Karoline, thank you for believing in me and for joining me in the direct action against the destruction of Førdefjorden. In addition, I would like to thank Henry, Solveig, Stine, Marie and Bella who have read and given me feedback on my thesis text, and the person called Sara in this thesis, who helped me translate and correctly communicate the Sámi words that I use. Finally, I would like to thank all the amazing people at SUM who have inspired me, supported me and made the everyday life while writing this thesis fun and rewarding. I could not have done it without you!

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Part 1: Collapsing old worlds and emerging new worlds

1. Introduction

We pass through an open fence, past some rusty metal scraps and towards a large construction. Below the construction, there is a hole in the ground. It looks endless. We are shocked; how can they just leave it like this? It is so dangerous, and what a scar in the landscape! There is a road going up from the mine and we continue our hike. Past an open container with oil barrels inside, a large building and a gate into the mountain. We realize that we have not even seen half of it and need to speed up. Further up the hill we see the contours of a ditch, the mountain has been dug out from one side. We get closer and the ditch grows into a crater. It is so deep and steep - I do not dare get close to the edge. For each new part of the mining area, I think that I have seen the worst. Up a hill, in between some dug out walls, the mountain opens up. It rises up above us, falls down below us, and behind the mountain walls to the left it continues where we cannot see the end. A small stream trickles right across from us and reminds me that the toxic heavy metals may pollute the water. In the bottom the water puddles are light blue-green, some a bit yellow. Two of us want to go and see how deep the hole is. Again, I am afraid they will fall in; the hole must be hundreds of meters deep and at the bottom a toxic pool of water. They would not survive the fall. - The Riehpovuotna-struggle

Through their destructive practices, extractive industries are at the core of the climate and environmental crisis. As is echoed above, extractivism¹ has come to represent the magnitude and gravity of destruction caused by the modern world (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018). Thus, climate and environmental struggles often confront extractivism, opposing both the over-consumption of natural resources including fossil fuels, and the destruction of nature caused by extractive practices.

In recent years, the climate and environmental crisis has become increasingly visible and tangible across the globe. The disasters projected through numbers and figures only a few years ago are now starting to materialize in lives and places, through floods and storms killing thousands and displacing millions, heatwaves and droughts causing record temperatures and wrecking food security and livelihoods. However, while communities in the Global South have been feeling such effects for years already, it took deadly storms, floods and heatwaves in the Global North to awaken the powerful. Meanwhile, the ravaging losses of nature,

¹ De la Cadena and Blaser define extractivism as, “the accelerated extraction of natural resources to satisfy a global demand for minerals and energy and to provide what national governments consider economic growth” (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018, p. 4)

biodiversity and ecosystem processes still struggle to catch the attention of the ruling elites. As we are entering the sixth mass extinction, the loss in biomass since the industrial revolution is over eighty percent of wild mammals and fifty percent of plants (Kolbert, 2015; Pörtner et al., 2021). This loss of nature is caused by increased consumption, overexploitation of nature and unprecedented changes in landscapes (Pörtner et al., 2021). Already we have exceeded four out of nine planetary boundaries defining the “safe operating space for humanity” (Steffen et al., 2015, p. 736).

Yet, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), this is just the beginning. The most recent assessment report of the IPCC shows that global warming will exceed 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius within the 21st century if deep reductions in greenhouse gasses are not achieved this decade (IPCC, 2021). Further, the report presents business as usual scenarios of 3-4 degrees warming by 2100, transgressing climate and ecological tipping points that gravely intensify warming, causing destruction and suffering unlike anything human society has ever experienced. Though new reports present updated projections, knowledge about the climate and environmental crisis is not new. Already in 1906, Svante Arrhenius warned about the climatic effects of increasing carbon emissions (Arrhenius, 1906). Still, yearly emissions have soared from 2.55 billion tons in 1906 to 36.7 billion tons in 2019 (Ritchie & Roser, 2022). By the time the international community finally agreed on climate action through the Paris Agreement in 2015, the IPCC warned that there were only a few years left to keep global warming below catastrophic levels (IPCC, 2018).

Global society is facing an unprecedented crisis of existential proportions, caused by human actions and practices. Specifically, the actions and practices of the modern world. Yet, while governments and businesses are posing as front-runners of climate ambitions, greenhouse gas emissions and ecological destruction continue to increase. Hence, in order to impede irreversible loss and damage, extensive injustice and suffering, people are calling for radical change (Alberro, 2021; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; De Moor et al., 2020; Eiterjord, 2020; Kothari et al., 2019; Lea, 2021). They recognize that the cause of the crisis is not only emissions, but the systems and structures that (re)produce the oppression and exploitation of nature (Moore, 2017). The climate and environmental crisis is as such not only a nature crisis, but a violent expression of and reaction to the crisis of human and nature co-existence in the modern world (Blaser, 2013; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; De Moor et al., 2020; Escobar, 2019; Latour, 2018; Mies & Shiva, 1993). Thus, people are realizing that the future once

promised by the modern world is turning into one of disaster, distress and despair. Reacting to the crisis and the loss of a future, people across the globe are now searching for and enacting ways of being and knowing otherwise (Burman, 2017; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Kothari et al., 2019).

It is within this context of collapsing old worlds and (re)emerging new worlds that I am writing my master's thesis, with the aim of exploring how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway respond to the crisis.

Through three parts, this thesis tells the stories of the climate and environmental crisis, its causes and solutions from the perspectives of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway (often referred to in the thesis as 'youth'). Throughout the text, I provide personal narratives from observations through vignettes that connect discussions and the field in a personal manner. Part one provides background to the research; it includes the introduction you are now reading, a conceptual framework presenting key academic conversations and responses to the crisis, and a methods chapter including reflections on my research methods, methodology, field and fieldwork.

Part two of the thesis introduces and discusses the knowledges and practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in light of the background presented in part one. This part contains three chapters, presenting empirical materials and discussions, and is organized by categories derived from my fieldwork. Chapter 4, 'Urgency in climate and environmental struggles', addresses how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience the climate and environmental crisis as an all-encompassing crisis, and a crisis demanding immediate and radical change that goes beyond and/or against the practices of the modern world. Chapter 5, 'Solidarity in climate and environmental struggles', addresses the solidarity arising from understanding and experiencing the injustice of the climate and environmental crisis, and how this solidarity is based on difference, responsibility, and interdependency between humans and nature. Chapter 6, 'Human and nature in climate and environmental struggles', looks into how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and practice relations between humans and nature in the context of the crisis.

Part three, ties together and broadens out the discussion through a final empirical chapter and a conclusion. In chapter 7, 'System change, not climate change', I explore the futures imagined and enacted by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, and how these futures build on their understandings of nature-human relations, solidarity and urgency.

Finally, in chapter 8 ‘Conclusion: Radically different ways of worlding’, I go through the above chapters and findings in dialogue with the conceptual framework and make my concluding remarks.

I will now turn to academic responses to the climate and environmental crisis, in order to provide the necessary background for the discussions in part two. Through the conceptual framework I address how academics are, in reaction to the ongoing crisis, critiquing dominant practices and drawing out alternatives by rethinking the old and opening up space for the new.

2. Conceptual framework: Crisis and academic responses

By Riehpovuotna in Hammerfest, Sápmi/Finnmark the mountains Nussir and Gumpenjuni (Ulveryggen) contain one of the largest sources of copper ore in Norway. There have been several attempts to extract the metal and in the late 70’s a mine was set up, but the company went bankrupt after a few years – leaving large wounds in the mountain and a fjord polluted by mining waste. The Sámi reindeer herding districts Fiettar og Fálá, include both the mountains and fjord affected by the mine. Herds of reindeer cross the fjord between the summer and winter pastures, feed by the fjord side and on the mountains. The fjord is a national salmon fjord as it has an important role in sustaining the population of wild salmon and should therefore be protected from impacts that can negatively influence the salmon. Additionally, it contains several important spawning grounds for the coastal-cod.

Currently, a company called Nussir ASA are planning to set up a sub-ground mine to extract copper and dump 25 million tons of mining waste, including the heavy metals copper, nickel, zinc, lead, chromium, cadmium and mercury into the fjord. According to the Institute of Marine Research, the fjord deposit will result in severe chemical and physical pollution. Further, evaluations done on behalf of the Sámi Parliament show that the mining project and fjord deposit is a major threat against reindeer herding, and hence a threat to Sámi people’s right to exercise traditional practices in their territories. The Sámi Parliament have therefore made official complaints against the project.

During the spring of 2021 Nussir ASA claimed to be ready to start their work in Riehpovuotna, and a protest camp against the mine and fjord deposit was established by local people and *Natur og Ungdom* at Markoppneset, close to the area regulated for Nussir’s processing plant. The camp was called *Markoppsynet*, *oppsyn* meaning supervision in Norwegian. – The Riehpovuotna-struggle

For many, such as for Sámi people by Riehpovuotna, the climate and environmental crisis is present in their everyday lives, and has been for years. It is forcing them away from their

livelihoods and practices, and triggering reactions that counter the modern capitalist/colonialist system, which may in turn open up space for radically different ways of being. Such struggles have long driven academic research and debates regarding the causes, consequences and responses to the crisis.

Triggered by crisis

At the center of these academic debates regarding the climate and environmental crisis are responses that search for ways of being and knowing otherwise. The crisis shapes the debates, and through the impacts of the crisis the debates are pushed into people's everyday lives. In his book 'Down to Earth', Bruno Latour presents a metaphor of the modern world in crisis through a plane that is not able to land at its destination, nor return to its point of departure (Latour, 2018). Having believed in only these two options, the passengers (the people of the modern world) are now starting to realize that the promised future destination of the modern world is impossible, while also realizing that there is no way back to what was. The situation of not being able to picture any future defines the climate and environmental crisis. This understanding can be said to build on a well-known definition of crisis; "crisis consist precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci & Hoare, 1971, as cited in Wilson & Orlove, 2019, p. 33). However, the current crisis is slightly different: The climate and environmental crisis consist precisely in the fact that the old is killing us, while not allowing us to birth the new.

According to Ben Anderson, the neoliberal present produces "the absence of otherness of the future" by delegitimizing alternative futures and claiming the inevitability of the modern future (Anderson, 2017, p. 466). This entails that a collapse of the modern future, is a collapse of the only possible future. For Arturo Escobar, the climate and environmental crisis should be understood as a crisis of modernity as "modernity has failed to enable sustainable worlds" (Escobar, 2007, p. 197). Escobar here points to how the crisis forces people to understand that the modern world is not only flawed, but the root cause of increasing ecological collapse. Further, Escobar addresses how modernity's failure of enabling sustainable worlds, and as such possible futures, is defining for the crisis of modernity itself. However, Anderson (2017) argues that recognizing climate change and environmental collapse as an emergency, entails seeing it as a turning point and therefore an opening for the possibility to believe in other futures. Further, it is an affirmation that it is still possible to change the future, and that action can make a difference. As such, recognizing emergency becomes the rupture of the normal and a way "to step out of the continuous time of the linear reproduction of the

emergency/everyday.” (Anderson, 2017, p. 475). For Latour (2018), the issue to resolve before the plane can find a place to land (‘Où atterrir’ is the French title of his book) is humans’ sense of belonging to earth. As such, Latour places human-nature relations as the key to imagining possible futures and breaking out of the crisis (Kerr, 2020; Latour, 2018).

Scholars such as Latour and Escobar are among those who search for alternative ways of being and knowing as responses to the growing climate and environmental crisis, and the crisis of the modern world. Among the fields studying the collapse of the modern and the rise of alternative worlds is ‘political ontology’, the study of power in relation to ontology or realities, and the idea of a ‘pluriverse’, a world where many worlds fit (Blaser, 2009; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar, 2017; Kothari et al., 2019). In this literature, the Global North is often seen as dominated by the modern. Hence, I was for a while unsure if I would find anything speaking to these issues in my fieldwork. However, as my fieldwork developed so did my literary research and my thinking. For every critique of the western world in interviews, for every explanation of the root causes of the climate and environmental crisis, for every person stressing the importance of indigenous peoples’ knowledge and practices, the studies of alternatives to the modern world came back to me. Researching the literature anew, I found calls for studies in the Global North (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020; Law, 2015; Law & Lien, 2018). I found research in indigenous territories in the North (Joks et al., 2020; Kramvig & Avango, 2021; Lassila, 2021; Normann, 2022). I found the calls from the people I interviewed reflected in the literature. As such, I am inclined to say that my fieldwork brought me to my literature.

This chapter is an introduction to the literature and theories that spoke to me during and after my fieldwork. Functioning as a conceptual framework, these scholarly conversations and theories are what I found useful when attempting to explore the responses of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway to the crisis. Through this chapter, I will especially point to that 1) the climate and environmental crisis changes everything, 2) the hegemony of the modern world is in crisis, and 3) the worldings challenging the hegemony of the modern are rising and becoming visible across the globe.

Some points of clarification

Modern sciences often refer to ontologies as reality and epistemology as knowledge of reality. In the theories of political ontology it is common to speak of onto-epistemologies, showing that there is no clear divide between ontologies and epistemologies but that these mutually

produce each other (Escobar, 2017). Further, political ontology is based on the understanding “of divergent worldings constantly coming about through negotiations, enmeshments, crossings, and interruptions.” (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018, p. 6). The terms ‘worlding’ or ‘lifeworld’, is used by scholars to address how “concrete and situated practices are ways of coming into being in a lifeworld and [...] by a lifeworld” (Burman, 2017, p. 931). Or, simply how reality is enacted (Blaser, 2013; Law & Lien, 2013). The terms lifeworld and worlding both refer to processes, practices and beings of realities, hence they are at the same time fluid and material. This understanding of realities as enacted is key for studying a pluriverse, both because it allows for its existence, and because the practices are available to study, giving access to a multitude of realities. I find these terms useful in the literature, though their use is more limited in everyday life as I want to write for the people I am studying (practicing collaborative knowledge production). Hence, I will try to avoid using terms such as ‘ontology’, ‘epistemology’ and ‘onto-epistemology’, and rather speak of worlds/worldings or realities and knowledge, referring to multiple enactments of reality continuously changing and overlapping. With this foundation, it must be understood that people interpret and use connected terms such as ‘understandings of reality’ and ‘worldviews’ in different ways. Often such terms do not explicitly refer to ontologies or epistemologies but simply what is and how it is understood, not necessarily making a specific divide. These discussions of what is and how it is understood are the basis of my engagement with field of political ontology.

Further, it is important to note that the literature uses analytical categories that are (as theory always is) not perfect representations, but merely categories made for analysis based upon the research and interpretations of some scholars, from their specific positions. This is especially important to note in relation to categories such as ‘the modern’ and ‘the Global South’ or other terms that may be understood as grouping various peoples, knowledges and practices together without reflecting their differences. For many of these categories different terms can be used interchangeably, such as ‘western’/‘modern’. Here, I have decided to use the terms as they are used in the literature I engage with. Further, addressing ‘alternatives’ or something ‘non-human’, ‘non-modern’ etc. is to define something out of what it is not rather than based on its own qualities. I find this problematic as it reproduces dualisms, anthropocentric, Eurocentric and/or patriarchal ways of knowing. However, I have yet to come up with better terms, which are accessible and understandable without too much explanation.

The hegemonic modern world

The hegemonic system that constitutes ‘the modern world’ is produced in the Global North, based on and reproduced by its practices and further transported across the globe through capitalism/colonialism and imposed on the Global South (Escobar, 2007; Law, 2015). Often the modern world is defined through three elements; divides, hierarchies and linear time. According to Mario Blaser, it is the specific arrangement of these elements that constitute modernity (Blaser, 2013). Most central is the human/nature divide, of which other binaries or divides follow its logic. Humans or culture are seen as the opposite of nature, mind the opposite of matter. Further, these differences are ranked hierarchically following linear time. In the hierarchy of human/nature or culture/nature, it is the modern (western) culture that is seen as the most different to nature and therefore placed on top. Hence, ‘other’ cultures follow in a hierarchy of difference to the modern, where those seen as closest to nature are placed in the bottom. Modernization and development are accounts of how these hierarchical divides follow linear time, where a place or culture can start in the bottom and work its way up through modernization/development towards the modern, western ideal (Escobar, 1995).

The modern/non-modern divide is the second great divide according to Blaser (2013). Today it is claimed that all are modern, which according to Blaser shows the modern world’s hegemony. John Law (2015) argues that the modern world’s hegemony effectively excludes all other forms of knowing and hence all other worlds, enacting itself as a ‘one-world world’ (OWW). The enforced ‘sameness’ builds on the idea of a single container; an all-encompassing reality. As such, the modern one-world world denies and dismantles all other ways of worlding through the process of development and colonialism, where knowledges and worlds different to the modern are seen as inferior in the hierarchy of difference and addressed as cultural beliefs rather than realities and knowledges (Law, 2015). Rejecting this process, Law (2015) argues that people’s knowledge and practices, especially of inter-human-nature relations do not simply reflect one’s beliefs, but enact reality. As such the modern world is producing the human/nature divide as real, whereas other worlds may produce nature-human inter-relations and interdependency as real (Law, 2015). Through my thesis, I explore how the practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway relate to the above discussions on the modern world in crisis and alternative worlds being enacted.

Deconstructing the human/nature divide

The modern human/nature divide is an idea often traced back to the Enlightenment, and specifically to René Descartes (Hverven, 2018; Vetlesen, 2015). For Descartes, intrinsic value

was granted based on having a mind and specifically the ability of reasoning - all else merely has instrumental or use-value to humans. As such, Descartes divided the mind from matter, seeing them as opposites in a value hierarchy. This is often called Cartesian dualism, where human (mind) is divided from and defined in opposition to nature (matter) and all other beings that are seen as incapable of thinking (Vetlesen, 2015). As the mind/matter dualism is based on the ability of reasoning, the dualism separates out all other forms of knowledge that are not based on reason such as bodily experiences and emotions (Hesse-Biber, 2011). These ideas have largely shaped modern sciences, and are still dominant in the production of scientific knowledge as well as in society at large (Vetlesen, 2015).

Feminist scholars were among the first to critique how the human/nature divide and connected dualisms such as masculine/feminine, reason/emotion are based on hierarchal difference that require the superior (human, masculine, reason) to dominate and control the inferior (nature, feminine, emotion) (Plumwood, 1991). Building on this critique and empirical studies of how men were seen as closer to culture, while women were seen as closer to nature, feminists have long studied the combined oppression of women and nature (Merchant, 1980; Ortner, 1997). Similarly, research on colonialist oppression and exploitation shows that the hierarchy of racism is “placed in the line separating humans from non-humans” (my translation, Grosfoguel & Cohen, 2012, p. 43). Where people of color are placed below this line, thus equating them to nature. As such, feminist and post-colonialist scholars argue that these divides and categories are socially constructed within systems of power. Hence, these must be reconceptualized to end the oppression (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Ortner, 1997; Plumwood, 1991).

Further, feminist scholars show how modern western sciences, building on rationality and discounting emotionality, exclude knowers and ways of knowing not building on the scientific definition of rationality, producing them as ignorance (Hesse-Biber, 2011; Mies & Shiva, 1993). Pointing to how modern science reduces human ability of knowing nature to inert matter, uniformity and mechanics, while also reducing nature’s abilities of regeneration, Vandana Shiva argues that reductionism is the logic of the modern world (Mies & Shiva, 1993). Moreover, Shiva argues that this “reductionist science is at the root of the growing ecological crisis” (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 25). Shiva compares modern science with other ways of knowing that build on organic rather than mechanic understandings, on diversity rather than uniformity, showing how these enact interdependency and reciprocity. Similarly, Val Plumwood argues how rationalism is central in modern western oppression of women and nature, and that to challenge the human/nature dualism the qualities excluded and seen as

inferior by rationalism must be recognized (Plumwood, 1991). Pointing to the qualities of reproductivity, sensuality and emotionality, Plumwood argues, “one basis for discontinuity and alienation from nature is alienation from those qualities which provide continuity with nature in ourselves.” (Plumwood, 1991, p. 18). Hence, Plumwood calls for alternatives to mechanistic and rationalist worldviews, and highlights the need to reconceptualize human and nature so as to no longer define their qualities in opposition. Building on the work of feminist scholars, I explore how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of emotional and embodied knowledge in their responses to the climate and environmental crisis.

The critique of the human/nature divide is different in different disciplines, yet common to many is the call to end the divide (Blaser, 2013; Hverven, 2018; Moore, 2017). Though there are strands that aim to strengthen or rather ‘complete’ the divide, such as eco-modernism, I will not go into them, as these views are not reflected in my data (Asafu-Adjaye et al., 2015).

Key in philosophical debates are questions regarding anthropocentric (human-centered) views and the value of nature. It is argued by many that in order to respect the intrinsic value of non-human nature, one must adopt non-anthropocentric worldviews that place nature at the center rather than humans (Callicott, 1984; Curry, 2011; Hverven, 2018). Eco-bio or zoo-centric value theory have been much debated in philosophy, and an important scholar in this debate is Arne Næss (Næss, 1975; Sessions, 1995). In the article ‘The Shallow and the Deep’, Arne Næss critiques shallow understandings of ecology and goes on to present his ideas for a deep ecology. Næss’s ‘Ecosophy T’ is based on the intrinsic value of nature leading to a state of ‘biospherical egalitarianism’, where all have “the equal right to live and blossom” (Næss, 1973, p. 96). In chapter 6, of this thesis I briefly address how Næss and the Norwegian ecophilosophy of the 70s has influenced climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, and their responses to the crisis. Also addressing how they discuss the ideas and practices of ‘wilderness preservation’ common in many forms of non-anthropocentric environmentalism.

The concept ‘deep ecology’ has for many years been (mis)used and connected to different forms of non-anthropocentric environmentalism, some of which have been highly critiqued for appropriating south-Asian culture, and for being misanthropic (dislike or hatred of humans), neo-malthusian or eco-fascist (Bradford, 1989; Guha, 1989). This anti-human environmentalism can partly be understood through the arguments for the conservation of pristine ‘wilderness’, untouched by humans (Cronon, 1995). This depiction of nature entailed that humans have no place in nature, yet humans should protect nature. According to William Cronon (1995), wilderness protection is a paradox, with an absurd solution; “if nature dies

because we enter it, then the only way to save nature is to kill ourselves” (Cronon, 1996, as cited in Vetlesen, 2015, p. 28). He goes on to argue that humans have always used and changed nature; hence, there is no such thing as ‘untouched nature’. The definition and performance of nature is according to Abram and Lien (2011) at the core of environmental conflicts. They argue that environmentalism as protection of wilderness enacts specific nature categories, where some forms of human presence and actions are deemed natural whereas others are not (Abram & Lien, 2011). This further produces other distinctions between for instance, the cosmopolitan nature lovers and the locals, or the conservationist and the developer. Abram and Lien further point to how enactments of nature as wilderness reproduce the human/nature divide (Abram & Lien, 2011).

Specifically addressing the devaluation of nature embedded in Cartesian dualism, Arne Johan Vetlesen argues: “The longer nature is treated as a mere means to human-centered ends, the more degraded it will become.” (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 15). Placing anthropocentric value systems as the key cause of the climate and environmental crisis, Vetlesen calls for a move away from the instrumental view of nature to an acknowledgement of nature’s intrinsic value. Vetlesen further argues, echoing the works of eco-feminists such as Shiva, that the human/nature divide is produced and reproduced through capitalism (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Vetlesen, 2015). Hence, critiques of the human/nature divide, of anthropocentrism and of an instrumentalist view of nature are critiques of capitalist exploitation (Blaser, 2013). Building on a similar understanding, Jason Moore (2017) argues that it is not ‘humanity’ as a singular entity that is responsible for environmental destruction and climate change. For Moore, the root cause of human destruction and oppression of nature is the capitalist/colonialist system, as this system has enacted the hegemony of the human/nature divide and intensified the exploitation of nature (Moore, 2017). In my research, I see this understanding reflected in the calls for change and practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth. Building on this understanding, it is the separation between of what is seen as human and what is seen as nature, and the value hierarchy nature and humans are placed within, that legitimizes the exploitation and domination over nature and over those seen as closer to nature. Thus, these ‘hyper-separations’ between human/nature, male/female, reason/emotion are not merely false, but dangerous (Plumwood, 2002).

Worldings that challenge the dominant modern

According to Marisol de la Cadena & Mario Blaser (2018), protests from worlds threatened by human exploitation of nature are arising as reactions to the climate and environmental

crisis and exploitation. They argue that the current historical moment, when the possibility of the destruction of all life is recognized, is specific in that “[the] world of the powerful is now sensitive to its own destructions” (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018, pp. 2-3). Further, they argue that the tension between the recognition of crisis and the recognition of worlds arising are opening up critical spaces for imagining a pluriverse (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018).

If we are to believe Mario Blaser and Bruno Latour there are conflicts between worlds ongoing at this instance, that have been ongoing for quite some time (Blaser, 2013; de Castro & Danowski, 2018; Latour, 2002). These are conflicts between different realities, and the implications of these realities, often referred to as ‘ontological conflicts’ (Blaser, 2009, 2013). The two authors tell slightly different stories about the struggles (that I will not address in detail). Yet, their expected outcome is the same; the hegemony of the modern world will collapse, for it must. For Blaser and Latour, the hegemony of the modern world is in such a crisis that it is visible to the naked eye, and the worlds in spite of modern hegemony are rising to the surface (Blaser, 2013; de Castro & Danowski, 2018; Latour, 2002).

The rise of these ‘stories in spite of’ the dominance of the modern, shows, according to Blaser (2013), that the hegemony of the modern world is in crisis. This is not to say that the modern world is no longer dominant, but that it has to sustain its dominance through coercion (Blaser, 2013). Further, the implications are that through the “cracks and fissures in dominant reality, actors carve out new spaces for themselves” and for their radically different lifeworlds (Burman, 2017, p. 932). Scholars of political ontology and Science and Technology Studies (STS) argue that there is not one single reality ‘out there’, rather there are multiple realities that are interconnected and in relation to each other, a fractiverse, a pluriverse or a multiverse (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Demaria & Kothari, 2017; Kothari et al., 2019). This section looks further into how this happens, what some of these radically different worldings or lifeworlds look like, and how these processes are studied.

Studies in indigenous territories and social movements in the Global South show that multiple worlds and ways of knowing are not only visible but in constant interaction (Escobar, 2017; Kothari et al., 2019). Many of these are what is often called ‘relational ontologies’ or worlds produced through interrelations (Escobar, 2019). According to Álvarez and Coolsaet, these are “organized around radical interdependence and reciprocal relations between the land and those who inhabit it, including non-human beings” (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020, p. 56). This can be seen in the interactions between the indigenous Aymara in the Bolivian Andes, and the “animate landscape of other-than-human subjectivities with agency, intentionality, power, and

an avid will to communication” (Burman, 2017, p. 926). It is visible in the southern Pacific rainforest of Colombia, where Afrodescendant communities are born, grow and know in interrelations with the Yurumanguí river, and are as such ‘thinking-feeling with the earth’² (Escobar, 2019). And in the landscapes of Sápmi that are produced through the activities and interactions taking place between multiple beings and the landscape itself (Kramvig & Avango, 2021). In these relational worlds, “things and beings are their relations” (Escobar, 2019, p. 18). As such, worlds that can be understood as relational are radically different from the modern world and its human/nature divide that implies humans’ right to exploit nature.

Though these have long been denied existence through the modern one-world world, many are now (re)emerging, and their existence is communicated across the globe. As the idea that there are ‘ways of worlding’ other than the modern spreads, it may trigger the emergence of oppressed worlds or of new ways of worlding elsewhere (Burman, 2017). Based on this understanding, it is necessary to acknowledge that within societies often seen as modern there is also a multitude of worldings. These may be visible through elements not in correspondence with the modern world such as practices and ways of knowing that are based on nature-human interdependency and interrelations (Burman, 2017; Law, 2015; Law & Lien, 2018). Though these show the existence of multiple ‘reals’, they might still insist on only one real reality (Law, 2015).

Multiple worldings exist within the modern world

According to John Law (2015), the modern one-world world assumes there is only one real world, and reduces other worlds to ‘cultural beliefs’ contained within this one world. Though one might accept that the relational worlds of indigenous peoples are real for them, one still assumes that they are wrong in terms of what is the actual reality ‘out there’ (Law, 2015). As such, there is a division where one allows for the existence of multiple cultures or beliefs, but not the existence of multiple real worlds. Blaser (2013) argues that this divide builds on the human/nature divide. It is assumed that the modern world has a “privileged access to reality” as it ‘knows’ that culture and nature are separate and does not confuse reality with culture, whereas other cultures “cannot really separate what is knowledge from what is society” (Latour, 1993, as cited in Blaser, 2013, p. 550).

² Escobar speaks of how the knowledges and the enactment of reality within relational ontologies come from ‘thinking-feeling with the earth’, and are as such practices of human-nature co-existence. The term thinking-feeling (*sentipensar*), which Escobar borrows from Orlando Fals Borda, refers to living in a manner where one thinks with the heart as well as with the mind (Escobar, 2019, p. 14).

As such, it is clear that the human/nature divide of the modern world is key in producing and upholding the one-world world, and therefore the denial of all other worlds and ways of worlding. This is further visible in the ontological struggles arising as multiple worlds are enacted ‘in spite of’ the modern (Blaser, 2013). According to Escobar (2007), such struggles are often based on how humans relate to nature, where communities enacting relational worlds are contesting and resisting the exploitation and oppression of nature inherent in the modern world. Escobar argues that environmental struggles should be understood as “struggles for the defense of cultural, ecological, and economic difference” because they build on models and practices of the natural that are different to the modern (Escobar, 2007, p. 197). Especially within grassroots protests against extractivism, de la Cadena and Blaser (2018) find alliances of multiple worldings fighting together though not having the same interests. These may according to de la Cadena & Blaser be capable of countering the modern one-world world, and imagine a world of many worlds. In my thesis, I will explore the inter-relations between environmental struggles and ontological struggles, especially through looking at three central cases within the young environmental movement in Norway (for descriptions of the cases see chapter 3, p. 20-22).

The understanding of environmental struggles as ontological struggles is supported by studies such as that of Anders Burman (2017) in the Bolivian Andes, where Burman argues that “within the struggle for climate justice, a low-intensity “ontological conflict” is taking place” (Burman, 2017, p. 931). Further, in their study in Guovdageainnu/Kautokeino in Sápmi, Kramvig and Avango (2021) show how the local Sámi community’s fight against the Biedjovággi mine is an ontological conflict. The Sámi community is opposing the mine on both environmental grounds and ontological grounds. Kramvig and Avango (2021) argue that the mining corporation and state are producing the Biedjovággi landscape though the culture/nature divide and therefore denying Sámi ways of knowing and enacting the landscape. The study of Kramvig and Avango shows that environmental-ontological conflicts are not limited to the Global South, but are also present in the indigenous lands of the north. I will in this thesis build on the work of Kramvig and Avango to explore some of the interactions between Sámi struggles and environmental struggles driven forwards by youth within the fight against the mine and fjord deposit in Riehpovuotna presented above.

Critiquing the understanding that the northern is in fact a one-world world, John Law stresses that also “in the ‘North’ we [...] partly participate in multiple realities” (Law, 2015, p. 126). According to Law, a multiplicity of worldings and modes of nature are enacted in the North

“alongside one-world imaginaries” and it is therefore possible to “*create imaginaries within the North that include difference*” (Law, 2015, p. 135). Building on this, and especially in relation to environmental concerns, scholars across the Global North have long developed theories of human and non-human co-existence. Common to most of these is their critique of the dualism between humans and nature, following theories of how this came into being, into hegemony and how it might eventually be cast aside (Descola, 2005, 2014; Ingold, 2021). Well known among these are the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) discussed by among others Bruno Latour, and the call for making-kin by Donna Haraway (Haraway, 2010, 2015; Latour, 1996). Both theories, building on Science and Technology Studies, stress how non-human beings have agency and intention, and further that reality is created through situated practices. These are similar to the ecotopias studied by Heather Alberro (2021) in that they reject the hegemonic modern world, separating humans and nature, and call for a different future. According to Alberro, utopias are ‘great refusals’ of the Now and stories of the ‘Not Yet’ (Alberro, 2021). In her study of the ecotopias produced by radical environmental activists, Alberro argues that these strive for a “reconstitution of human-nature-animal relations” and to “live better alternatives in the here and now” (Alberro, 2021, p. 36). Though not addressing the existence of multiple reals being enacted and altered in relation to each other, this gives important insight to what the worldings in the Global North may contain and how they can be studied. In my research, I explore the utopias of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway in a similar way as Alberro, also finding that youth refuse the Now.

Enacting worlds

In their article ‘Performing Nature at World’s Ends’, Simone Abram and Marianne E. Lien specifically look at the enactment of nature in what is often called modern world (Abram & Lien, 2011, p. 4). They propose thinking through performativity and relational ontology in order to better understand how nature categories are used and made into relation. In other words they propose studying “how nature is produced, enacted or performed, discursively as well as in material and relational practices” (Abram & Lien, 2011, p. 12). This builds on the turn to ontology and performativity in Anthropology where it is argued that realities are enacted through practices and understandings of reality, making realities relational. Abram and Lien find that nature is produced in multiple ways, and that with these nature categories dualism such as the human/nature divide are being (re)produced (Abram & Lien, 2011). However, studies showing the production of wilderness and the human/nature divide also

show the production of multiple and divergent forms of nature, hence “enacting [reality] as both multiple and singular” through a wide variety of practices (Law & Lien, 2018, p. 132).

In their work to “trace the making of nature in the so-called modern”, John Law and Marianne E. Lien propose to denaturalize nature or reality in order to change it (Law & Lien, 2018, p. 132). Presenting studies of how nature is produced in Norway, including of tourism and salmon farming, Law and Lien argue that nature is produced as single and multiple, including and excluding humans in different ways. In my research I work with this understanding of reality as enacted to study the practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth. Building on the works of Isabelle Stenger, Law and Lien (2018) argue that through the acknowledgement of difference, and of reality as enacted they find “that reals start to multiply and the framing assumption that there is a single reality, a universe, starts to dissolve.” (Law & Lien, 2018). According to Law and Lien, this is a political opportunity as it shows that modernization never completely colonized all worlds and that it is therefore time to rearticulate these worlds, also within modernity (Law & Lien, 2018).

Cast away the dogma of the one-world world, and we find that the assumptions of one reality out there and several cultural beliefs within this reality is not merely false, but it denies the existence of multiple realities, a fractiverse or a pluriverse. The understanding of a pluriverse implies that multiple worlds exist and are enacted through practices and ways of knowing, while continuously changing, partly overlapping, partly existing side by side, partly in conflict. A key conflict between the modern world and relational worlds, as we have seen above, is the human/nature divide. As this divide is practiced through the modern world it denies the existence of relational worlds. Further, it is this very divide that legitimizes the one-world world, through the modern belief in a ‘privileged access to reality’ (Blaser, 2013). This means that the human/nature divide is not only denying nature-human co-existence, but also the co-existence of multiple realities. As such, struggles to challenge or end the divide are struggles to create space for the co-existence of nature, human and of multiple worlds as the hegemony of the modern world cannot be sustained without the human/nature divide. In this thesis, I explore the concept of a pluriverse within the modern world in order to make sense of the realities enacted by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

Studying responses to the climate and environmental crisis

This master’s thesis builds at large on the above-described responses to the climate and environmental crisis, focusing on theories of political ontology and human-nature co-

existence. Within these some understandings and concepts are particularly important to my study. I have in this chapter especially shown that; 1) The climate and environmental crisis changes everything as it reveals the failures of the modern world and triggers an urgent need to enact other futures. 2) The hegemony of the modern world is in crisis due to its failure to create sustainable futures and to the rise of other worldings that disqualifies its one-world world myth. 3) The worldings that challenge the hegemony of the modern are visible across the globe, also within societies often seen as modern, and often enact ways of being in relation to nature that are radically different to the modern. Combined, the above elements make up a multitude of ontological struggles that emerge as reactions to the climate and environmental crisis. Within these, interrelations between humans and nature are central. Hence, studying responses to the climate and environmental crisis within the modern world entails having a particular focus on nature-human relations because such relations are key elements of difference, fundamental in the crisis, and central within struggles between worlds.

Based on this literature and concepts I have developed the following research question:

How do climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and practice nature-human relations within the context of the climate and environmental crisis, collapsing old worlds, and (re)emerging new worlds.

In the empirical chapters to follow in part two we will see how it is the practices or enactments of worldings or lifeworlds, through human and non-human agents, that are available to study (Abram & Lien, 2011). My studies show that lifeworlds are not set in stone but are continuously being produced; hence, they include multiple worlds at the same time and different worlds at different times. In line with Burman, I will argue that this allows for “the coexistence without complete fusion of elements from, as it were, different realities in one and the same lifeworld” (Burman, 2017, p. 935). Further my studies show, building on Law (2015), that this is also the case within the Global North where the hegemony of the modern world is stronger. However, as noted above, the multiple worldings within the modern might still insist on the existence of only one real reality. As such, it is the elements that counter the modern, such as rejections of the hierarchal human/nature divide and the pushback against diversity, that are visible elements of multiple reals and ontological struggles within the modern world.

Taking the climate and environmental crisis as the starting point, my master’s project works with academic discussions searching for ways of worlding that do not build on the

human/nature divide as this is understood to be foundational to the modern world's destructive practices. Especially focusing on ways of worlding otherwise within what is often seen as the modern world, my research field is the young climate and environmental movement in Norway. Further, building on the understanding of knowledge as situated and derived from experiences and emotions, I use myself as the main tool for research. As such, this thesis is an ethnographic inquiry into the lifeworlds of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, including myself.

3. Methods: An autoethnographic inquiry of lifeworlds

Some days before I arrive at *Markoppsynet*, there are reports of civil disobedience actions. Nussir ASA have tried to start their work, and images of activists chained together blocking the road and machines appear in the media. Activists from around the country are told to prepare for a summer at the *Markoppsynet* protest camp.

Approaching Hammerfest municipality during the early night hours, we pass a ghost forest at a plateau, the larvae *lauvmakk* has attacked the trees. Some reindeer pass the road in front of us, and the river 'Riehpovuonjohka' appears as we start descending. This is where the salmon from Riehpovuotna spawn. The river dances through the landscape, sometimes flat and slow, sometimes fast and steep. When we arrive at *Markoppsynet* in the middle of night, the light is soft, like in the morning. The bus drops us off by the banner "Welcome to Markoppsynet, *Mii gáhttet vuona ja váriid*" (We protect fjord and mountain) and a poster saying "*Velkommen til protestleir mot Nussirgruva*" (Welcome to the protest camp against the Nussir mine) followed by an invitation to enter for a chat and some coffee.

The entrance to the camp is a birch tree-arch with the banner "*Velkommen til Markoppsynet, Ellos eana min eadni*" (Welcome to Markoppsynet; Let earth live, our mother) in colorful letters above. The first thing that meets the eye is a large *lávvu*, with the writings "*Ellos Vuotna*" (Let the fjord live). In front of it a poster titled "Sannheten" (The truth) shows the exact statistics of pollution of the fjord in the event of a mine-deposit. The center of the camp is a large bonfire with reindeer skins and plastic chairs around it. Birch-tree constructions are set up for different activities and protection from the weather. Above the camp, there is a road, and sometimes cars honk their horns as a celebration or a threat to the camp. Before I arrived, there was a case of vandalism, and a letter sent to threaten the activists. We are around 10-12 people who live at the camp now, but during the day there are always more people.

We do not know when Nussir ASA will start their work and have set up a guard-*lávvu* at the construction site. However, before we can engage in direct action, we need training. A person from *Natur og Ungdom* is guiding us: we tie the chains around our waists, no need for large

padlocks today. When the police arrive, we should relax all muscles and try to be as heavy as possible so that it is hard for them to carry us. Movements and tight muscles are dangerous because they can be interpreted as violence. We shout “*ii fal Nussir*” (Never Nussir) as people acting as police untangle our and chains and carry us away. It feels strange – fun but serious. We laugh but know that we need to learn this. Will I react the right way if I see the machines rolling in? One machine is already at the site, and someone has put a banner on it, “No mining waste in our fjords, *Allet nuoskkit Riehpovuona ruvkebázahusaiguin! Ingen gruveavfall i Repparfjorden*” The actions function as a double tool: we stop the work physically and create public debate that can help us stop the company through political and legal means.

The last night in the camp I sleep in the big lávvu, and wake up in chaos the next morning. Suspicious things are happening at the construction site – Get ready for actions! The other people in the lávvu jump up, get dressed and run out. Two activists have slept in the guard-lávvu. When they woke up around 6am they saw some people park their car at the top of the road, and run through the forest, down to the constructions site. The people, workers hired by Nussir ASA, barely managed to arrive at the machines before they were stopped by activists. The two activists had politely told them to stop their work and leave. And so they did, taking their machine with them. The action lasted only a few minutes and was highly successful.

I leave the camp two hours later with some other activists. This was their second time here, and they will go back if needed. We did not know it then, but the action that morning was the last one for a very long time. A month later, the world’s largest copper producer dropped its contract with Nussir ASA, and after two months, a complaint on Nussir ASAs permits was sustained by the state, stopping the company from starting their work until the permit is re-evaluated. – The Riehpovuotna-struggle

Doing fieldwork through my personal engagement as an activist within the young climate and environmental movement has meant practicing activism through for instance the *Markoppsynet* protest camp as I would otherwise, and writing my personal narratives from these practices such as above. The story follows me and other activists preparing for direct action to save the fjord, but it also describes practices of inter-relations that go against the fjord deposit and copper mine. As such, I am at the same time studying and producing the field and struggles. This is visible in my participation in conversations and practices in the protest camp as described above, but it also happens through the stories I share of the fields and struggles after I leave the physical space of the protest camp. Thus, I am always both activist and researcher, and I cannot exit the field I study or the positions I embody.

My entrance to this study of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, is my own active participation in the field, and my wish to explore how this engagement may open spaces to imagine and work for alternatives to the dominant modern world (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Law & Lien, 2018). Hence, from the very start I have been studying my own community and struggles, though it was not at first clear to me how I would end up using myself as a tool for the inquiry through what scholars refer to as ‘autoethnography’ (Ellis et al., 2011). This chapter is an account of my research, and the messy process that has ended up as the thesis you now hold in your hands.

My field(s): The young climate and environmental movement in Norway

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway make up multiple webs of actors that interact in various ways and spaces. As such, the field is not limited in time and space, though some of our practices are more place-bound. Through my research, I have engaging in three fields or sites within the field; the Riehpovuotna-struggle, the Førdefjorden-struggle, and the School strikes for the climate (see Appendix I: Overview of vignettes). These struggles take place in specific locations; however, they do not exist independently of the broader field.

The young climate and environmental movement in Norway goes back to the 1960s, and includes strong ties between activists and scholars such as Sigmund Kvaløy and Arne Næss (Anker, 2020; Kielland, 2017). In the history of Norwegian environmentalism there are especially two struggles in the 70s that formed the movement and that influence today's activism. These are the struggles against the damming of the Mardøla waterfall and the Alta-Kautokeino river. These mark the start of civil disobedience actions for the protection of nature against interventions (Kielland, 2017). Further, the Alta-struggle was central in securing Sámi rights in Norway and throughout Sápmi (Gjengset, 1981; Nilsen, 2019).

Today, most activities within the youth movement are done through organizations where *Natur og Ungdom* (NU) (Young Friends of the Earth Norway) is the largest. Other youth organizations visible in climate and environmental debates are; *Miljøagentene* (Eco-agents), *Spire*, *KM-Global* (Y-Global), *Changemaker*, *Extinction Rebellion Ung* (XR Youth) and *World Saving Hustle*. In addition to these, there are youth political parties and organizations that work with climate and environmental issues, some indirectly. Youth organizations usually have an upper age limit between 25-30 years, and have members across the country, though most have their headquarters in Oslo.

The past few years, and especially from 2019 to 2022, some struggles are and have been particularly important and visible within the movement. Among these are the school strikes for the climate and the struggles against fjord deposits in Riehpovuotna and Førdefjorden. Although some of these struggles have a longer history, they have re-emerged and triggered new actions the past years that have brought together the young climate and environmental movement. These are the struggles within which I have done my observations.

School strikes for the climate

In 2019 the Fridays for Future (FFF) school strikes shook leaders and polluters across the world, including in Norway (De Moor et al., 2020). On the 22nd of March 2019, 40 000 children and youth gathered to fight for climate action across the country (Eiterjord, 2020; NRK, 2019; Randøy & Bøyum, 2020). The strikes in March were mainly organized by *Natur og Ungdom* along with *Grønn Ungdom*, *Changemaker*, *KM-Global* and *Spire*, in addition to ‘individual’ activists³. These formed a working group to organize strikes and to collectively decide upon and voice political demands through the strikes. The demands were for the government to stop all new oil-licenses, cut 53% of emissions by 2030, and give 65 billion NOK in climate finance to developing countries every year (Randøy & Bøyum, 2020). Both before and after the March strike smaller and larger strikes have been organized in different cities and towns across the country. Although covid-19 restrictions put a stop to physical gatherings for several months, youth still organize strikes, and often in correspondence with global strikes initiated by Fridays for Future. These build on the same format as earlier strikes, and where common features are speeches, slogans, posters and music.

The Riehpovuotna-struggle

Nussir ASA have since 2005 been planning to extract copper from the Nussir and Gumpenjuni mountains in Hammerfest municipality, and hold a license to dump 25 million tons of mining waste in Riehpovuotna (Repparfjord) (Nussir ASA, 2021). The waste masses contain high levels of heavy metals and the fjord deposit will lead to a severe chemical and physical pollution of the fjord, with concentration of heavy metals transgressing legal limits (Naturvernforbundet, 2022b). There have been several mining attempts before, and the fjord has recently recovered from an earlier waste deposit (Naturvernforbundet, 2022b). Currently, the fjord is a national salmon fjord, and houses a rich fjord ecosystem including several

³ Many other groups and people were also active in organizing and supporting the strikes. A list of organizations supporting the strike on the 22nd of March 2019 can be found in the Facebook event for the strike: [Skolestreik for klima - Oslo \(facebook.com\)](https://www.facebook.com/SkolestreikforKlima-Oslo).

important spawning grounds for the coastal cod. The fjord is used for recreation, fisheries and every year herds of reindeer cross the fjord between their summer and winter pastures. The mountains hold the former mine as an open scar in the landscape, yet reindeer feed both in the mountain area behind the old mine, and in the area where Nussir ASA are planning to establish their processing plant. As the project plans to use renewable energy, and copper is used in “green technology”, Nussir ASA are framing their project as part of the “green shift” (Nussir ASA, 2021). However, people fighting the project and environmental destruction understand this framing as “greenwashing”. *Natur og Ungdom* have together with local people, Sámi organizations and *Naturvernforbundet* worked through legal and procedural measures to stop the mining project. As the company declared that they were ready to start their work in the spring of 2021 the organizations decided to set up a protest camp, *Markoppsynet*, and prepare for civil disobedience actions (Natur & Ungdom, 2021).

The Førdefjorden-struggle

By Førdefjorden in Sunnfjord municipality, the company Nordic Mining ASA have since 2006 been planning to extract the mineral rutile from the Engebø mountain in Vevring, and to dump their mining waste in Førdefjorden (Nordic Nordic Mining ASA, 2021). They hold a permit to deposit 250 million tons of mining waste in the fjord (Kielland, 2017). In addition, the company is permitted to dump 2 tons of the chemical Sibix each year, for thirty years. Just like Riehpovuotna, the Førdefjord is a national salmon fjord, due to its importance for sustaining the population of wild salmon. It houses several endangered species, and the future dumpsite is currently one of the largest spawning places for coastal cod in the region. The fjord is one of the cleanest in the country and is used of recreation and fisheries by the local population. Norway is one of two countries in the world that still allows new projects with ocean deposits (Naturvernforbundet, 2022a; Nipen & Barstad, 2022). The mining project has long been met with high local resistance, and is criticized by environmental organizations and the Institute of Marine Research who call it an environmental catastrophe (Christensen, 2020). In February 2016, the company attempted to drill for samples and was met with the largest civil disobedience actions since the Alta-struggles in the 80s (Kielland, 2017). In the early spring of 2022 new actions were planned as the company claimed to be ready to start their work. Together with the local population, *Natur og Ungdom* established an protest camp in Vevring, and were ready to stop the work through civil disobedience.

Autoethnography: Telling my own story

My role throughout the research is a complex one. I am a researcher, a friend or acquaintance, an activist with several different former roles and positions, and currently a member of the Norwegian government's '2050 Climate Change Committee' (Klima- og miljødepartementet, 2022). My current and prior engagements have been very important when accessing and knowing spaces and people. I have been able to understand and access information about the young climate and environmental movement in different ways than 'an outsider' would have been able to do. Additionally, I have prior knowledge about the people and the topics in question that may be both a benefit and a challenge. Further, I have personal emotional and embodied experiences of the movement and the struggles that have been both valuable and challenging when understanding and relating to practices within the field.

Searching for ways to work with my position and my personal engagement in the climate and environmental movement within the research, I found autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography can be described as a method of telling one's own stories, recognizing the importance of identity and how the researcher co-creates the field (Ellis & Adams, 2014). As scholars in the 70s and 80s began to include themselves in their work more actively, rejecting the epistemological and ontological limitations of social science and especially the idea of objectivity, autoethnography grew out as a space for personal and emotional scholarships (Ellis & Adams, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011).

In their work, Carolyn Ellis and Tony E. Adams (2014) draws out some guiding principles of autoethnography. The first is to acknowledge the importance of personal experience as a source of knowledge, in a way that can combine the personal and academic. This can be done through "complete-member research", using one's own experience as a member to explore the group and its relations (Ellis & Adams, 2014, p. 261). According to Ellis and Adams (2014), this practice "invites readers to enter the experience and feel it with body and emotion, as well as with head and intellect" (Ellis & Adams, 2014, p. 262). The second is to be familiar with existing research in the field that one can build on, add to or counter. These two principles are crosscutting, while the following five are advantages of autoethnography: Describing and critiquing culture, appreciating insider knowledge, (re)claiming voices, healing or maneuvering through emotions, and creating accessible research.

By using personal experiences, one can describe and critique culture through lives in ways that promote and practice social change. As such, the research does not only disrupt the status

quo, but produces change through social and relational acts. Through being an insider and moving away from calls for distance and objectivity, an autoethnographer can use and value insider knowledge. This knowledge is not necessarily better or worse than knowledge from the outside, but it is different and might not be available to others. Further, representing cultures based on respect and care such as called for by feminist, queer and indigenous research might get easier, as it becomes a representation of oneself. This representation of oneself can be a way to (re)claim one's own voice, as no one else is speaking on one's behalf. While recognizing the experiences of others, one can add to and nuance research and debates with personal experiences, emotions and perspectives that are often disregarded in traditional research (Ellis & Adams, 2014). Autoethnography might also help as a way to heal and maneuver through negative emotions as it can give the autoethnographer ways of understanding experiences differently. Finally, writing or performing autoethnography allows for a more emotional, engaged and connected first-person story that may pull the reader into the story and that highly differs from the abstracted and disengaged expert stories often told through academic writing. As such, the writing of autoethnography often takes the form of personal narratives that express personal thoughts and feelings in combination with collective practices through vivid and contextualized scenes (Ellis & Adams, 2014).

In practice, autoethnography does not necessarily differ greatly from other forms of ethnography. Fieldwork may be done through a combination of interviews, detailed notetaking and collection of different forms of text. However, the research field may be difficult to define as the "self and the field becomes one" (Ellis & Adams, 2014, p. 267). Because one cannot enter and exit the field as within traditional ethnography, autoethnography may become a way of living. Hence, in terms of research approval and ethics, there are different dilemmas. According to Ellis and Adams, informed consent is necessary for interviews, however for personal narratives this depends. Ellis and Adams therefore stress the importance of "relational ethics", considering ones relations with the people and communities one engages with through the research (Ellis & Adams, 2014). This includes making sure people are not identifiable if they do not know that they will be written about, making sure people and communities can respond to what is written or explaining well why it may not be possible, and engaging with people respectfully before, during and after research. Finally, Ellis and Adams show the importance of reflexivity, in the intersections of the personal and political, the particular and general, and in relations between the researcher/member and other members of a community (Ellis & Adams, 2014).

Methodology: Ways of knowing otherwise

Inspired and motivated by the literature on worldings that challenge the dominant human/nature divide, and in pluriverse-thinking, I struggled to find my way through methods books. The modern scientific traditions I have been schooled within builds on the same thinking as the human/nature divide and the one-world world (Beuving & De Vries, 2015; Law, 2004, 2015). As addressed in chapter two, modern science creates hierarchal divides of what is considered science and not, separating out emotional and embodied knowledge, non-experts and non-expert knowledge (Hesse-Biber, 2011; Mies & Shiva, 1993). As argued by Plumwood and Shiva, this entails that the capacity humans have to understand nature is reduced, hence also reducing human capacity to understand nature-human relations (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). These scholars then question if it is at all possible to do an inquiry into nature-human relations building on the modern scientific tradition.

Looking for alternatives, I turned to research in areas where the one-world world has not successfully excluded all other forms of knowing. Here I found fields and practices reflecting ways of knowing that does not build on the human/nature divide, and that challenged my assumptions (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020; Escobar, 2017, 2019; Kramvig & Avango, 2021). With guidance from supervisors, anthropology, STS, feminist methodology and autoethnography, I found that I could build on my own experiences as an active participant in the field I was studying. Further, I found that in order to study “the mess” of different ways of knowing and practicing that constitute the lifeworlds of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, I needed to emerge myself within this mess (Law, 2004, p. 2).

Understanding that processes, practices and relations are “complex because they *necessarily exceed our capacity to know them*” (Law, 2004, p. 6), I have throughout my thesis work engaged in a continuous process of unlearning and exploring other ways of knowing. Especially through my use of autoethnography, I have engaged with “knowing as embodiment”, “knowing as emotionality and apprehension” and “knowing as situated inquiry” (Law, 2004, p. 4). This unlearning and learning differently both include the content of my research and the methods I use. Building on practices of anthropology, which acknowledge that research methods are often based on modern western assumptions, I have attempted to move away from my expectations of what research is and what outcome it should have. This especially relates to concepts such as certainty, validity, reliability, generalizability, and also how ‘proper’ research should be presented (Ellis & Adams, 2014;

Law, 2004). This work has been challenging, but I have found it useful to lean on my reflections, interviews and observations throughout the research process and in this thesis.

I have tried to understand the field through an inductive approach, in practice leaning heavily on my empirical data to tell the story of the thesis. This is especially important as the ‘data’ is the lived experiences, knowledges and practices of the people I have interacted with, including people I share close relations with, as well as my own personal knowledge and experiences. I therefore aim to communicate what people have shared with me in a respectful manner. As such, the research and communication of stories is a process of collective knowledge production between the different actors, landscapes, and myself.

Further, I base my research on the work of Donna Haraway (1988), who addresses knowledge as situated, and shows how within modern science the male, western, white and educated position is historically seen as objective, whereas other positions (female, southern, racialized and lower classes) are seen as subjective, incapable of producing objective science. Haraway refers to this act of placing oneself outside positionality as “the God trick”, where western, white, educated males see themselves as able to study the world from the outside, such as God (Haraway, 1988). Thus, moving away from the search for objectivity and research from the outside, entails recognizing and thoroughly reflecting over how all knowledge production is situated and therefore never objective or generalizable (Haraway, 1988; Law, 2004).

Finally, I am, both as a researcher and as an activist, producing the very reality I study together with the other participants (Hesse-Biber, 2011; Law, 2004). Thus, as a researcher I have an explicit responsibility to do good (rather than to only ‘do no harm’) within the field I study. This reflects on my role as an active participant in the field, and on the stories I tell through the thesis – but also on how I have conducted the research, the methods I have chosen and how I have performed them, especially in light of power relations within the field.

Methods: Enacting the research

I have continuously adapted my work to the field and findings. This I have done through discussions in reflection notes, in study groups, and through dialogue between the field and literature. I faced several challenges and subsequently made changes to my research. The thesis has therefore grown out of the field as a co-production of knowledge between participants, landscapes and me as researcher and activist. Building on autoethnography, I have combined interviews with observations and text in the form of banners and posters.

Below, I describe how I have completed my interviews, participatory observations and analysis in the light of my methodology and autoethnography as described above.

Participatory activism?

In the beginning of my research process, I struggled with searching for a conventional field to engage in participatory observations. I found no events related to school strikes, and I did not at first understand how to use the *Markoppsynet* protest camp in Riehpovuotna that I attended in July 2021. After the winter, I saw that there would be a global climate strike organised by Fridays for Future on the 25th of March 2022. However, I had not found signs of people organising strikes in Norway. As I was on the lookout for this, another case emerged. The mining project and fjord deposit plans in Førdefjorden, addressed by many of the people I interviewed as a potential environmental catastrophe, had re-emerged after years of mixed signals and now the mining company claimed that they would start their work. *Natur og Ungdom* and many others (youth and locals) hence made plans to engage in direct action against the mining-project and I had decided to go there with some friends in the beginning of March. After careful considerations, I decided to participate in the protest camp against the mining waste deposit as an activist, and then write about my experiences afterwards.

After having done autoethnography during the protest camp by Førdefjorden, I reflected on my experience at *Markoppsynet* and decided to write about this as well. In addition to my memory and notes during my stay, I used pictures that friends and I had taken to remember slogans on banners and posters. As the global school strike now approached, I was invited to a strike in Oslo through social media, and decided to use the same method there. However, as the strike is a more public format than the protest camps, I was able to use some of what was said in speeches in addition to my personal experiences. Finally, as I had ended my fieldwork, there were reports from Førdefjorden that the mining company had secured their final licences and would start work. As I was determined to action against the plans to destroy the fjord, based on my personal convictions, I decided to go there in May. Although I thought I had completed my fieldwork, this experience was too important for me to leave out as it completed the story of the struggle (as of now). Hence, I wrote about my experienced and perspectives of the direct actions as well.

I have presented my personal narratives from my activism throughout the thesis as vignettes and used them in the same manner as interviews in the analysis. This shows that these narratives function as personal experiences and perspectives, in the same way that interviews do. Keeping the focus on my personal experiences and perspectives, I did not need

permissions and consent-forms from participants, though people I engaged with closely knew I was using the experiences for my thesis. Further, I have made sure that no other people than I are recognizable from the texts to people who did not take part in the activities.

Conversations with fellow environmentalists

For this thesis, I have had 12 conversations or interviews with youth who are engaged in climate and environmental struggles, where one interview was with two people. The participants I spoke with are not explicitly connected to the sites within the field, but are active in the broader young climate and environmental movement. To anonymize participants I have given them the pseudonyms using a random-name generator. The first conversation in October 2021 was a test-interview with 'Beate' that I, with permission, decided to keep. The second conversation was with 'Frida', a central actor who gave me the information I needed to follow up the school strikes, and who recommended other potential participants. Later I spoke with 'Elias', 'Kirsti', 'Aina', 'Jarle' and 'Lilly'. Finally, in January-February 2022 I had interviews with 'Christel', 'Nikolai', 'Helena' and 'Sara'. In addition, I did one group-interview with a working group that is active in one of the organization referred to in the description of the field. The group usually has four members, and two participated; 'Martha' and 'Guro'. Though I had planned to do more group-interviews, I am content with the one I did. The move away from group-interviews is mainly due to a lack of physical activity in the movement due to Covid-19. In addition, none of the other participants were active in groups that I could speak with, and the usefulness of group-interviews was therefore reduced.

Further, I had hoped to do only physical interviews, however due to covid-19, five were digital. Although this influenced the setting, which was not as casual or noisy as a café where I had the other conversations, I felt that people were used to this type of meetings and the conversations were not highly affected. However, there were some technical challenges with internet and the possibility to sign the consent form when participants did not have access to other means for signing. Two participants therefore gave oral consent, and one interview was attempted but moved to a later date due to lack of internet-connection.

The conversations were based on a simple interview-guide with key topics to address. I started conversations with information about my project, where I asked if the participant had understood the information letter and signed the consent form, and if I could start recording. The initial topic was about their climate and environmental engagement, the second about their understanding of nature-human relations and the third about their visions or utopian ideas of a future where their goals are fulfilled. Most conversation often developed quite

naturally where we all spoke quite freely – if we did not address an issue, we would get back to it through either my questions or the participants themselves. I specifically did not bring up any matters that people did not address themselves, except if I knew that this was something they had been vocal about before. This especially applies for the human/nature divide as a dominant understanding, the relation between climate change and environmental destruction, and topics regarding solidarity and indigenous rights and cultures. This is because I am especially interested in these topics and I did not want to lead people into talking about them, without them voicing their views beforehand.

Allowing the 'data' to speak

Throughout the research process, I have included analysis into my fieldwork, going back and forth between field, reflections and literature. All conversations were recorded and transcribed, and in February 2022, I made a field report giving an overview of what I had done and of some re-occurring concepts from the data. Building on an inductive process, the data itself is at the centre. Hence, the analysis works as a tool allowing the data to speak, instead of threading a theoretical framework upon it to force out the analysis. However, there is still dialogue between data, literature and my reflections.

Building on concepts used by people in my fieldwork, I made an outline for the thesis with names for the different chapters that reflected some groups of concepts – Human in nature, Solidarity, Urgency and System change. As explained above it is important to me that the stories and knowledge that people share are communicated in a respectful manner. For that reason I have tried not to (over)simplify statements and stories, but rather present them as they were shared to me. As such, they are not completely drawn out of context for me to analyse but shared in their context so that every reader can understand it for themselves. The analysis I have done is to broaden the context and link different statements, experiences and perspectives with each other, finding what is reoccurring across conversations and experiences from the field and connecting this with literature.

Reflections and relational ethics

The research has been approved of by *Norsk senter for forskningsdata* (NSD), and I have followed all requirements for data privacy. Throughout the research, I have focused on reflexivity, especially regarding how I relate to participants and others in the field, and how I will communicate their stories following the principles of autoethnography and my methodology presented above. One challenge with this has been anonymity, as it would have

been preferable not to anonymize participants so that their knowledge could have been better contextualized and attributed to them. Yet, some people appreciated being anonymized as it allowed them to share more freely. Finally, as I set out with anonymization due to NDS recommendations, it became too late and complicated to change it when I realized the potential benefits of not anonymizing, so the anonymization had to be a final decision. Further, I have strived to make the participants non-recognizable also to people active in the movement, and have therefore had a ‘gatekeeper’ read through the quotes to check if they recognize any participants (Bryman, 2016). In order to make the content more personal and accessible I have used pseudonyms for participants, checking that participants are comfortable with the names. Additionally, I have checked all quotes with participants, and edited them according to their feedback to ensure clarity and the respectful representation of participants.

Many of my reflections before and after interviews and during observations have addressed my relations with the people I engage with and my own role as a researcher and member of the field. I have strived to keep an open, respectful and balanced dialogue with all people within my fieldwork, and reflected on power-relations within the movement, as well as personal relations that may influence me, participants and the setting. Specifically I have reflected over prior interactions, age and experience in the movement, organizational affiliation and roles. Only a few people have addressed my former and current roles in the movement explicitly, and reflecting on my current role in the climate committee has made me understand that this role not only gives me ‘power over’ people, but it makes me a potential actor to influence. However, I have not come across statements or concerns where I can see that this has influenced the conversation explicitly. Therefore, I am led to think that this is rather something that might influence people more indirectly, or subconsciously.

This is also true for my other roles, and for relations with participants based on earlier work together and what we know of each other. Before each conversation, I have reflected over what I think I know about a person, what they might think about me, and how this might influence the conversation. Afterwards, I have critically considered if and how prior relations and knowledge may have affected the conversations and in what ways. Especially reflecting over power-relations between me and participants who are younger than me and who have known me through my different roles in the movement. Further, I experienced that some of those I did not know as well needed more time to open up to the conversation and express their views freely than those I knew well from before. I am quite confident that my continuous

reflections have helped me in keeping a critical view and an open awareness to the concerns of power-relations and prior relations.

Further, I have reflected over my prior knowledge, experiences and opinions regarding topics and struggles addressed in interviews and observations. I have tried to critically reflect over my assumptions and made myself aware of how I act and speak in regard to certain topics, and how this might influence conversations. However, I have from the start found it important that conversations flow naturally, and it is therefore important that I participate in the conversation, not trying to play the role of an 'objective interviewer'. In one case, the conversation kept returning to issues that were rather outside the focus of my study. I wanted to move on, but felt that these issues were important to the participant, and let them lead the conversation. This is how conversations are give-and-take situations. I have power as the interviewer, and the conversation is structured around topics I decide which creates a risk that I might lead the conversation too much. Yet, this is also true for the interviewee who speaks freely with my topics as a starting point, but can steer the conversation as they wish. Who has control or power is a continuous deliberation and sometimes the interviewee takes more control than I would have anticipated because it is important for them to share.

Finally, my research can be critiqued for building on autoethnography and therefore being explicitly subjective. As I have accounted for above, this research builds on the understanding that no researcher is objective and that actively working with one's personal experiences, assumptions and views through reflexivity is valuable in and of itself. Still recognizing that the knowledge produced through such research is neither better nor worse than knowledge produced by research from a position more on the outside. The observations and experiences described through personal narrative are explicitly my own, and must therefore be read as stories of my personal engagement in the field, shaped by my understandings of the field. For me, the gains from practicing autoethnography are that the research has become deeply personally engaging and has allowed me to explore relations and ways of knowing that I could not access otherwise, and which are essential to the stories of change I now share.

Through this chapter, I have presented the ways in which I have completed my research on how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and practice nature-human relations. Central in my research is the recognition of knowledge as situated, and the appreciation of various forms of knowledge including emotional and embodied knowledge gained from experiences. This has allowed me to place my own experiences within the research through autoethnography and therefore gain different insights than studies from an

outside perspective. I have throughout part one provided the background of this thesis; the climate and environmental crisis and the search for and research on futures that rise as responses to the crisis. Now I will move on to part two, where I will share the empirical material from my fieldwork and discuss the knowledges and practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in the context of the above presented background.

Part 2: Empirical dimensions of radical change

4. Urgency in climate and environmental struggles

On the 25th of March 2022, Fridays for Future International organized a Global Climate Strike called #PeopleNotProfit:

“The catastrophic climate scenario that we are living in is the result of centuries of exploitation and oppression through colonialism, extractivism and capitalism, an essentially flawed socio-economic model which urgently needs to be replaced. A system where rich nations are responsible for 92% of global emissions and the richest 1% of the world’s population are responsible for double the pollution produced by the poorest 50%. Guided by historical struggles and lived experiences, led by the most affected people and areas (MAPA), we are demanding climate reparations.” (Fridays for Future, 2022).

In Norway, a strike in front of the parliament in Oslo was initiated by *Natur og Ungdom Oslo* in collaboration with other youth organizations and political parties.

Three years after the largest school strike in Norway, none of the demands have been met. Earlier this week I looked at pictures from the strike on 22nd of March, 2019 and remembered how it felt. I guess this was part of the reason why I wanted to go to the strike today. To find that feeling of being exactly where I need to be; in a massive crowd of people fighting for climate justice. I can already hear the shouting and see the posters. The first thing that meets me is a banner saying “There is no planet B”. On the other side of the square I see another large banner with the text, “*Skolestreik for klimaet*” (School Strike for the Climate).

- It feels great to be here.

I take in the growing crowd, the posters, slogans and colors. We do not fill the square to the brink, but it is a good crowd. The flags of Extinction Rebellion to the left, ‘*Rød Ungdom*’ (Red Youth) in the back, ‘*Sosialistisk Ungdom*’ (Socialist Youth) and ‘*Besteforeldrenes Klimaaksjon*’ (the Grandparents Campaign) in the middle, ‘*Grønn Ungdom*’ (Young Greens) and *Spire* to the right. Some people are standing on a bench in the back with their colorful and decorated posters; “Choose ECO not EGO”, “System change, not climate change”, “*Kjære voksne, skjerp dere!*” (Dear adults, get it together) and a drawing of a hand holding the planet, with the text “*Ta vare på den*” (Take care of it). I walk around, take some pictures, and read signs. The front row of people is partly covered with banners: “*Støre du må høre*” (Støre you must listen), “*Planeten koker, Politikerne loker*” (The planet is boiling, the politicians are dawdling), “*Jævlig skuffa*” (Damn disappointed). As more people gathered *Natur og Ungdom Oslo* welcomes the school strikers and thank us all for joining. The short welcome is followed

by slogans: “*Hva vil vi ha? – Klimahandling! Når vil vi ha det? – Nå!*” (What do we want? – Climate action! When do we want it? – Now!).

A dance group appear in front of the crowd, I see them pop up, down and around in between people and posters. “*Jeg har fortsatt håp! Ikke skuff meg*” (I still have hope! Do not disappoint me), “*Klima kan ikke vente*” (The climate cannot wait). “*Grønn vekst er umulig*” (Green growth is impossible). “*Bevar naturen*” (Protect nature). “*Vi har ikke tid til å loke, ikke la kloden koke*” (We don’t have time to dawdle, don’t let the earth boil). As the dance group leave slogans are shouted – “*Norsk olje koker kloden, la olja ligge!*” (Norwegian oil is boiling the planet, keep the oil in the ground!). “*Støre du må høre; få oss ut av olje kjøret!*” (Støre, you must listen; get us out of the oil drive)

Hilja, a musician with her band, sets up instruments in front of the crowd⁴. The first song is called “Take them down” and is about the oil-industry and lobby. The next is about micro-plastic and the third about having hope. She says she was in Riehpovuotna this summer (applause) and Førdefjord recently (applause) to fight the mining waste deposits in the fjords. She wrote a song that they are now recording, and they want to record us singing with them. “*Fjorden er ikke vår*” (The fjord is not ours). Hilja sings about the struggles in Alta, where they said “the river is not ours, let it live”, have we not learned? Now we say, “the fjord is not ours, please let it live!” As the sun shines through the clouds the crowd sings “*Fjorden er ikke vår*” in harmony, over and over and over again. “*Vær så snill å la den leve*” (Please let it live).

The leader of Changemaker speaks about climate justice. About how people have to flee their homes because we want to get rich from oil. About indigenous struggles and the need for our solidarity (applause). We cannot accept that politicians are not taking their responsibilities. The global struggles for justice need us, and what a time to be an activist because it is now or never. The leader of ‘*Unge Venstre*’ (Young Liberals) speaks about the problems with the current government, their massive oil-exploration and destruction of nature. They demand no more oil, no more destruction of nature and a lot more renewable energy. The leader of *Spire Oslo* is up next. Climate struggle is class struggle. Climate struggle is women’s struggle. We need a new economic system, where life is worth more than money, a circular and sustainable economy. Who has the power? Who takes the power? It is the people (applause). The person from *Natur og Ungdom Oslo* thanks everyone for fighting together. As the strike ends and the crowd spreads out ‘The International’ plays through the loudspeakers. “*Mennesker og miljø før profit*” (People and environment before profit). – School strike for the climate

⁴ Hilja makes music about the climate and environmental crisis and is herself part of the young climate and environmental movement. She often performs at climate and environmental demonstrations and events, such as school strikes. More information can be found on her website: <https://hiljamusikk.com/>.

The school strikes for climate in Norway as in other countries express an explicit sense of urgency calling for immediate and strong climate action, as activists know that the climate and environmental crisis is already here, wrecking their futures. Through the strikes, children and youth define the crisis and necessary measures in their perspectives and share their understandings with the public. As such, the climate strike is a space created by and for youth to voice their concerns and responses to the crisis, and it is filled to the brink with urgency.

In this chapter, I will go into how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and express the climate and environmental crisis through urgency, and what this entails in terms of their calls for action and their practices. In my interviews and observations some elements of urgency are highly reoccurring. These can be grouped in the two categories; time and scope. Further, urgency is highly experienced and expressed through emotional and embodied reactions to the crisis. These feelings of or reactions to urgency play a central role in how urgency is understood and communicated, as well as how urgency is acted upon. All these elements and experiences of urgency tell us something about how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand the climate and environmental crisis, nature-human relations, and how they envision climate and environmental action.

Climate and environmental urgency in the literature

Urgency is often associated with lacking time and a grave situation, but also the need for action to face this situation. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, urgency is “the quality of being very important and needing attention immediately” (2022). Further, Wilson and Orlove, define urgency as a motivation for action where an external situation triggers an inner sense of urgency (Wilson & Orlove, 2019). As such, urgency is defined both through what it is made up of and through what it does. This is also the way urgency is spoken of by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway (Haugstad et al., 2021).

Urgency should according to Joost de Moor, be understood as a “driving force” of climate activism as he points to three central “urgency-induced debates” (de Moor, 2021, p. 1). One addresses whether it is the state or the people who can best fight climate change within the limited time available. Demands for what de Moor calls DIY-activism are often based on arguments about the state being too slow. However, FFF and XR are now calling for state action through their “unusually strong message of urgency” (de Moor, 2021, p. 6). The second debate focuses on what scale of action is needed within the short period of time. Building on the long-standing discrepancy between reformist and radical environmentalism, de Moor

(2021) argues that the current sense of urgency does two things. Firstly, it pushes climate activists to call for more radical change, and currently there is a rise of demands for radical action. Secondly, it pushes the view that there is no time for transformational change such as the end of capitalism. Further, de Moor again points to the specifics of FFF and XR in their calls to go “beyond politics”, arguing that “FFF activists likely experience a distinctly urgent climate temporality” (de Moor, 2021, p. 9). In the final debate fear and experiences of failing to address the climate crisis is met with post-apocalyptic optimism in terms of what can be done to adapt to the crisis and make up for losses.

Though not addressing “postapocalyptic environmentalism”, Heather Alberro (2021) in her study of Radical Environmental Activists points to a similar dynamic. According to Alberro, the immediacy or ‘nowness’ of climate and environmental breakdown triggers a “critical redeployment” of hopelessness where the grief over loss is used as an action motivator (Alberro, 2021, p. 50). The action triggered by this redeployment of hopelessness is both directed to the ‘here and now’, and to the construction of ecotopias – ecologically just and sustainable utopias. This redeployment of negative emotions is studied by Stanley, Hogg, Levison and Walker, who argue that though eco-anxiety or depression might lower climate engagement, anger is a “key adaptive emotional driver of engagement with the climate crisis” (Stanley et al., 2021, p. 1). For Ben Anderson, recognizing the emergency is in itself “an act of hope” in that it both shows how action is needed and enacts the present as a turning-point or a rupture, opening up the possibility of other futures (Anderson, 2017, p. 474). As such, the recognition of emergency is the recognition that there is still time to act and that “the future is alterable” (Anderson, 2017, pp. 470-471).

As addressed in part one, chapter 2, the recognition of the climate and environmental crisis, including the recognition of its causes, entails an all-encompassing scope as the cause of the crisis is the pillars of the modern world. Further, as the modern world separates humans from nature it hides our interdependency, and hence the scope of the crisis. As such, the crisis is merely recognized as a crisis of nature, rather than a crisis of the entire earth including all its interdependent beings and things. This is also true in terms of the multiple temporalities of the crisis, as the modern world divides human time from the time of nature.

According to Michelle Bastian (2012), modern society has long treated nature as its constant backdrop, understanding the pace of nature as slow and the pace of human society as fast. This understanding is based on the long timelines of evolution, the confusion of time and progress, the “hyper acceleration” of some human systems, and the human/nature divide

denying shared time (Bastian, 2012, p. 24). These assumptions of time are according to Bastian “deeply embedded in Western systems of knowledge” (Bastian, 2012, p. 24). Bastian argues that the divide between the time of humans and of nature hides the interrelations of humans and nature, the destructions of the crisis and what can be considered ‘timely’ action as it hinders co-ordination (Bastian, 2012). With emerging climate and environmental destruction, the times are turning and modern society is not able to change fast enough compared to the changes in nature (Bastian, 2012). However, modern assumptions of temporality make it difficult for us to comprehend other forms of time such as the timescales and pace of ecosystems and the climate system. As such, the modern world is struggling to understand that the climate and environmental crisis is outrunning human mitigation and adaptation. Bastian hence, calls on scholars to transform the systems that (re)produce the separation of nature from culture through showing the alternatives, as well as “the inherent difficulties of coordination in a complex multi-species world” (Bastian, 2012, p. 45).

By showing how the modern world is incapable of recognizing the multiple (non-coordinated) temporalities and therefore the urgency of the crisis, Bastian addresses another key issue. The incapability of recognizing the crisis relates to the modern assumption that (rational) humans will, when given the necessary information, process this and act accordingly. Thus, it is assumed that information about the crisis only needs to be accessible for it to be understood and acted upon (Suldovsky, 2017). This assumption would entail that everyone experienced the same sense of urgency when given information about the climate and environmental crisis; however, this is not the case. Building on the above literature and my fieldwork, I will now go into the many ways in which climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and experience the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis.

Crisis, urgency and action

[...] there are many people, the great majority, who agree that we have a climate crisis, that has to be solved. - Kirsti

Throughout my interviews and observations climate change and environmental destruction is addressed as a crisis. The climate crisis, environmental or nature crisis are common terms that are not actively defined. People rarely explain or argue why they see climate change as a crisis. Sometimes the crisis term is used if there is a need to specify or stress that it is a crisis, however it is often used interchangeably with climate change and environmental destruction. The crisis understanding is hence common, however it has not always been this way and it is not common in all parts of society. The quote above shows us that there is an experience that

“the great majority [...] agree that we have a climate crisis”, hence there is a minority that does not agree. The backdrop of the quote is also the long struggles to get to this point:

While a few years ago I think there were many who, myself included, who felt that it was more like; ‘here we are, trying to get people to understand that it is very severe, and then no one cares’ sort of. – Kirsti

As pointed out by Kirsti, communicating the severity of climate change and environmental destruction has long been an important task for the movement. Thus, the common use of the term crisis is rather a victory after long struggles than a given.

I do think that the school strikes have been quite instrumental in that people might feel the urgency more. Until then it was more like; ‘Yes we understand all the problems, but it is difficult to solve’. Then the school strikers came and said that is it maybe not as difficult as one could claim, it is just uncomfortable to fix it. - Kirsti

Following the definition of climate change and environmental destruction as a crisis people express a strong sense of urgency. Kirsti here tells us that the feeling of urgency has grown due to the school strikes, which stress the need for action. The strikes are hence seen as triggering urgency and action. This is reflected in the work of de Moor (2021) who claims that the strong message of urgency spread by Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion has changed urgency-induced debates, and in the study of Haugestad et al. (2021) finding urgency as a key motivation for youth to engage in school strikes in Oslo.

If you actually take it in on a personal level and stop sort of explaining it away and pointing at others, but just take in how existential it is. And how life threatening it is, and how unjust it is. Then today’s politics do not make any sense. At all. And that is what I did as a twelve-year-old. – Christel

Christel here explains how severe the crisis is, triggering a sense of urgency through her expression of both the threat of the crisis, and of the political inaction. This combination is common as it is not only the crisis in itself that is understood as dangerous, but the dissonance between the crisis and societal action. The experience that one’s sense of urgency is not shared is often addressed as a trigger for personal action, such as expressed by Frida:

My starting point was that rainforest protection was a matter of my heart, and then later when I learned about climate and environmental [issues] I got very surprised that people did not, or that the politicians did not take it really seriously, and it was like; ‘What? That is not possible!’ And through that I started my environmental engagement. – Frida

Often people express that they were chocked when realizing that others, especially politicians did not share their sense of urgency and did not act accordingly. Hence, a reoccurring experience is that one is not a climate and environmental activist by choice but by necessity, an “involuntary activist” (Frida). When asked why they got engaged in climate and environmental issues most people point to this understanding of crisis and sense of urgency.

It felt so urgent that it was pointless to not [...] put energy into working with it. - Nikolai

As expressed by Nikolai people find it impossible not to act, because of their understanding of the crisis and urgency. Hence, even though urgency is expressed in various ways it is always linked to action. In addition to how inaction is central in triggering urgency, urgency will trigger action. The understanding of crisis and urgency both creates a personal need to act, and an urgent need for large-scale climate action. As they acknowledge climate change and environmental destruction as a crisis, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway enact the crisis as a turning-point and space/time for action (Anderson, 2017). What action is triggered however depends to a large degree on the content of the urgency. In my fieldwork the urgency experienced by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth is not only a matter of having little time but also a matter of the different temporalities and scope of the crisis.

Elements of urgency

Time

Much of what I am talking about is [...] this feeling of already seeing clear signs of climate change in the north. In the north of Norway, one can see it. Weather phenomenon such as sudden large thunderstorms. There has been thunder before, but not three, four, five in one summer. - Elias

Some of the main elements of urgency are the different frames and perspectives of time as urgency addresses something immediate or acute. Time is highly stressed and often addressed through conveying information about climatic changes and consequences happening today such as the above. Pointing to “clear signs of climate change in the north” shows us that climate change is already happening, though it also addresses that climate change is not only current, it is also future. The phrasing “clear signs” tell us that this is only the beginning. As such, the climate and environmental crisis is understood to have several temporalities, it is current, soon, and in the distant future.

Now there are over one billion children, today, who are acutely threatened by climate change. It is not a future scenario, it is not even some thoughts about how it will be, it is just right now, as it is now. - Helena

In the above quote Helena stresses that the threat of climate change is acute, distancing it from future scenarios, though not opposing it from future impacts. Again, the understanding of several temporalities is visible. She is aware of future scenarios but feels the need to stress the current. The experience of needing to stress such a fact is linked to how climate change is often addressed as a future threat, followed by promises of future action. Stressing current consequences of the crisis is hence connected to a demand for immediate action.

[Activism] is to be impatient [laughs]. Always. And I think we need that because we have a system that takes its time. And bureaucracy is important. But it is not suited for the crisis we are now facing. So I think it is important to always be the impatient voice. – Christel

The demand for immediate action and the impatience of climate and environmental activism is both based on the different temporalities of the crisis and the scope of the crisis. As addressed by Christel there is an experience that the pace of the climate and environmental crisis is faster than that of social systems attempting to halt the crisis. This is according to Bastian (2012) at the core of the issue as it hides the consequences and urgency of the crisis, while the modern world is not capable of recognizing the pace of the crisis.

[...] but the problem with the climate crisis is that one cannot wait for the crisis to hit. Because then it is latent. Even if one stops then and it really becomes a crisis, and one realizes that; 'okey now it is enough', then it will still get worse. When it is already really bad for many. – Nikolai

As stated by Nikolai, if one waits until the crisis hits it is too late to stop it from getting worse. The element of time is therefore further complicated as it is not only a matter of climate and environmental crisis in the present, near and distant future. It is a matter of action in the present, near and distant future, affecting the changes and destruction in different timeframes. This issue of how to secure current action to avoid future impacts is at the core of the crisis.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth and the Fridays for Future movement are well known for engaging with the different timeframes. Fighting for both a livable future for children and future generations, and for reparations for those affected today. In my interviews and observations, this is addressed in several ways. From Frida commenting that it is “maybe most efficient to talk about the future of children in Norway” to the school strike presented

above calling for immediate action and justice for the people affected by climate change right now. Further, these questions of time and action are often spoken about in relation to responsibility and injustice as will be addressed in chapter 5.

[...] because it is we who will inherit this crisis. And I think there are a lot of people who have this feeling of betrayal. - Aina

The statement by Aina points to all these elements. The responsibility for creating and dealing with the crisis, the injustice of not being responsible but being hit by the consequences, the element of time as one inherits after the other and the immediacy of crisis. Further, Aina addresses the “feeling of betrayal” connecting the elements above to emotions and embodied reactions. Betrayal and disappointment are terms commonly used in school strikes – “I still have hope. Do not disappoint me!” (see vignette p. 33). Such statements show how it is the responsibility of adults and politicians to deal with the crisis, because action is urgent or maybe too late. A scene from the school strike in March 2022 makes this very clear:

The leader of *Grønn Ungdom* talks about how she has felt powerless in the face of climate change, how climate change threatens our freedom, health, food security, animals, women’s rights and the fight against poverty. To the sound of ‘booing’ she says that the polluting politics of the current government is a betrayal against our generation. And applause when she says that we sacrifice our free time and education because we must, that we have no time to spare. She ends her speech by shouting slogans: “*Hva vil vi ha? – Klimahandling! Når vil vi ha det? – Nå!*” (What do we want? – Climate action! When do we want it? – Now!)

– School strike for the climate

These speech acts can be understood as communication strategies, ways of triggering reactions of solidarity and urgency in others, particularly adults. However, they are also in themselves enactments of reality. By actively practicing the climate and environmental crisis as urgent, the crisis necessitate urgent action; hence, those in power now are responsible. This enactment breaks with the divide between human time and nature’s time presented above, and produced shared timeframes between humans and nature (Bastian, 2012).

[...] then we asked the question, but what was actually there first, the reindeer or the road, the reindeer or the city? And it felt to me that this western way of thinking, and how maybe many western countries think is more capitalist, that it should grow. One should put cities and infrastructure everywhere, and one should earn money. And it is sort of what controls it all. But then, the reindeer did actually come before the city and before the road. So it should not have to suffer for it. – Sara

The situation Sara is referring to above is how some people in a city were cross that there were reindeer in the city center and on the roads. By addressing the different temporalities of human settlements (specifically capitalist western societies) and of reindeer Sara shows the need to understand multiple perspectives of time to address climate and environmental issues. Her understanding of the time perspective of reindeer in relation to that of human settlement has implications for what action she prefers. The reindeer was there first and “*should not have to suffer*” for human desires and actions. Sara also shows us that there are more dimensions to climate and environmental crisis and urgency, than time. Pointing to the constant expansion of capitalist western societies, she addresses the scope of the crisis and how it advances. Or as Elias puts it when addressing environmental destruction, “[...] it is lost bit by bit, it is not one intervention”. These quotes point to how loss and destruction is pushed in the search for short-term profit, denying the longer time perspectives such as that of the reindeer. However, they also point to some different elements of the scope of urgency such as the scales of loss and destruction. The several small-scale losses leading to large-scale losses, and the extent of destruction as they express a broader understanding of who and what is affected.

Scope

Such as now, I feel that the climate debate in Norway has derailed completely from dealing with human lives, to the price of gasoline. I find it very difficult to relate to. - Frida

Central in the understanding and experience of urgency are the different elements making up the scope of the crisis. As described by Frida the debates regarding climate action in Norway often address the consequences of policy changes. The scope of the crisis in such debates can be seen as narrow, focusing on small-scale emissions reductions and how policy changes can economically influence people in Norway. Frida experiences this debate as “derailed” as her understanding of the scope is broader “dealing with human lives”. Her critique is hence more than a disagreement with the different positions in the debate; it is an experience that the debate fails to address the full scope, and therefore the urgency of the crisis.

With continued climate change we will have to just focus on, well to a much larger degree, focus on managing to survive. To take care of what we love, get enough food, enough nutrition, living in a safe home. Get a home that is at a safe level when it comes to sea level rise and such. – Helena

A common denominator in the understandings of the scope of the crisis is that life on earth will be drastically different in the future, and that people are already dying. According to Helena, climate change will force us to focus on safety, pointing to how the crisis threatens

human access to food and safe housing. Her understanding of the scope, addressing the scale and severity of the crisis, implies a grave understanding and experience of urgency.

[...] and saw the destructions and interventions in nature, and the dimensions of it. It sort of. There was something there that one could not turn one's back on. And it again made me go more into how it all is, and I just got more and more frightened. - Nikolai

For Nikolai, seeing the scale of destructions made him “frightened” and unable to turn his back on the crisis. The emotional and embodied reaction of fear and urgency related to experiencing the magnitude of injustice against nature triggered a need to act. Further, Nikolai addresses how gaining more knowledge about the crisis, increased his sense of urgency. Later in the interview, Nikolai expresses:

[...] it has grown on me this with the nature crisis, because first it was only climate change that I thought was dangerous, but then I have studied it more and understood how they interact and such. - Nikolai

The focus on knowledge and experiences of the interactions between the two crises can help us make sense of Nikolai's experience. Nikolai does not separate the two crises, but see the two as part of a larger interdependent crisis, while in the past he saw the two as separate. This shows that Nikolai is *now* aware of and engaged against the nature crisis because his understanding of interdependency has broadened his understanding of the scope of the crisis. Further, it shows that having a broad understanding of the scope of the crisis strengthens his sense of urgency. In the different expressions of the scope of urgency, the acknowledgement of both the climate and nature crises and their interactions are central.

[...] and the recognition that we have a quite serious nature crisis as well. There is a massive loss of biodiversity, and there we have interventions as the main driver. But it is also what we will need when facing climate change, functioning ecosystems that can produce food and prevent major flooding and all that. Mitigate the consequences of climate change. And then there is no point of taking the last nature area to produce electricity to stop these destructions, when one destroys it first. – Elias

Elias first explains the nature crisis through biodiversity loss and interventions, and further connects it to climate change. Through his explanation, the nature crisis is a crisis in itself, but as it is connected to the climate crisis it becomes part of a larger crisis and urgency understanding. As such, the scope of urgency is both crises in combination. As Elias goes on to address the mitigation of climate change through nature it is visible that he also connects

the two in his definition of solutions. Both crises are seen as equally important and therefore they need to be solved together. Elias also stresses the need to recognize the nature crisis, pointing to how the nature crisis often is less addressed than the climate crisis.

[...] the biodiversity crisis is very often overshadowed by the climate crisis I think, in the larger perspective. And we learn a lot about nature at school, about ecosystem services and the value of biodiversity, and how loss of one species can suddenly collapse an ecosystem. And how the world is connected and all services we have, no matter if they are economical for us humans or just necessary for life at all. It is because of life, and that we have so complex species, and different species and that we have lost 60% of them since the industrial revolution, it is, it is a crisis, and it is really not addressed enough. - Guro

The experience that the climate crisis overshadows the biodiversity or nature crisis as expressed by Guro can help us understand why Elias stresses the need for its recognition. Further, this experience is supported by how Nikolai did not at first know as much about the nature crisis as the climate crisis. Again, the lack of common understanding and experience of urgency is addressed as people are aware that their sense of urgency is not being shared. Further, there is a clear difference here as people feel the need to explain why environmental destruction is a crisis, while not feeling the need to explain why climate change is a crisis as addressed before. They both point to how there is lack of recognition of the nature crisis, and then tell us why it is necessary to recognize it. Further, Elias and Guro explain that the crisis is connected to our dependency on the nature we are destroying, and that destruction has large consequences, both for us and for all life on earth. This is for instance made clear in Guro's expression "And how the world is connected and all services we have, no matter if they are economical for us humans or just necessary for life at all". The understanding of interdependency is central in Guro's experience of the climate and environmental crisis, and hence in her sense of urgency.

We are all connected to each other. I feel that this is so essential in order to understand the climate crisis, and to really take in. - Lilly

According to Lilly the understanding of interconnectedness or interdependency is needed to "really take in" the crisis. This understanding broadens the scope of the crisis to encompass climate, nature and humans in multiple ways.

It is terrifying [...] to think about the fact that the climate crisis is actually that comprehensive, that it puts all our rights at risk, that I find very important to convey. – Helena

As expressed by Helena, the scope of the crisis is “that it puts all our rights at risk”. In the interview, Helena refers to human rights and the specific rights of children, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities. The scope is all-encompassing, influencing all human life on earth because of human interdependency with the nature that is being destroyed. Hence when all climate and ecological systems are affected, so are all human systems. Thus, as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth address the scope of the crisis not only in terms of scale and severity but including the nature crisis and interdependency of human and nature, their sense of urgency is strengthened. Helena, expresses that this is “terrifying”, showing how she understands and experiences the urgency of the crisis through both facts and feelings.

Experiencing urgency

[...] one needs to be able to be angry, one needs to be able to have feelings – Aina

As visible throughout interviews and observations, people experience and understand urgency in multiple ways, through scientific, emotional and embodied knowledge. Knowledge about the time and scope of the crisis, and about inaction triggers feelings such as fear, anxiety, anger and disappointment. Further, emotional and embodied experiences are key in both gaining and dealing with this knowledge. These experiences and understandings are intertwined and in dialogue. However, the statement by Aina that there needs to be room for feelings tells us that feelings are often excluded from climate debates. Aina is here referring to the school strikes, which in her experience created more room for youth to express their feelings related to the crisis, showing that feelings are present and important for the struggle.

We do not take in how terrifying, all-encompassing and sort of existential it is [...] But that is dangerous with the climate crisis [...] [as] it is actually we who need to change. When one lets oneself really take in how insanely fucked up it is, how scary it is, and how many millions of human lives, billions, it is about. How many humans who will die, and it could have been you and me. And not just to say it so we hear it, but actually try to take it in and let oneself fill with the anxiety for a moment. I think we do this too rarely. And if one does, it is impossible to at the same time, it is completely impossible to defend today's politics. – Christel

Christel here stresses the importance of embodying feelings of urgency. The process of taking in the all-encompassing and existential crisis is described through experiencing feelings such as anxiety and fear. Further, it is connected to an expected realization of urgency in terms of it being “impossible to defend today's politics” if one takes in the crisis. This idea of really taking in the crisis, the scope, temporalities and inaction, is often used when explaining one's own sense of urgency and action, and the lack of urgency among others. It points both to a

personal experience of taking in the urgency and to the idea that if others do the same, they would react in the same manner. For instance, in the interview Nikolai stated that politicians do not fully take in the crisis as an explanation of why they do not act as they should, and do not understand their own inaction.

[...] we have politicians who have gotten way too good at burying themselves in argumentation and distancing themselves from that feeling of urgency. And not just the feeling, when one speaks of feelings it sort of becomes so unserious, but the certainty of the magnitude of this crisis. - Christel

The idea of “distancing” oneself from urgency is here both addressed in terms of feelings and as a “certainty” of the scope of the crisis. The statement can be understood as a separation between facts and feelings, “when one speaks of feelings it sort of becomes so unserious”, but also as an understanding of how interconnected feelings and reason are in terms of taking in the crisis as addressed above. Christel hence expresses the need for both, taking in “the certainty of the magnitude of this crisis” and to “let oneself fill with the anxiety”. The view that feelings are more “unserious” is connected to the reason/emotion divide discussed in chapter 2 and should be understood in connection to the lack of room for feelings as expressed by Aina. The experience that feelings are less serious makes feelings of urgency a lesser argument in climate and environmental debates. In several interviews, this experience was expressed in relation to climate debates. Beate talked about how she would rather lean on climate science than personal experiences when discussing climate action with people. While Kirsti explained how pointing to the intrinsic value of nature often was disregarded as *føleri*, being led by emotions, in climate debates. This reoccurring disregard of the space for and role of feelings and embodied reactions in climate and environmental struggles is highly connected to the experience of oneself and others taking in the urgency of the crisis.

I feel that people do not necessarily disagree, but they think I overdo it with my reaction. They agree in principle, but practically it is not important enough or something. I do not know why people are not as desperate.[...] It is very interesting why it hits me so heavily and others not.
– Lilly

The experience of Lilly is that other people find her reaction to the crisis exaggerated. In other words, they agree with her facts but not with her feelings. She further addresses that it hits her harder than others, showing that ‘it’, the information, is common but that the emotional and embodied reactions are different.

[...] since no one else reacted or were like me, like; 'ah this is a crisis', I felt like; 'what if I am wrong, maybe there is something I do not understand'. - Lilly

The experience of not being taken seriously and not seeing others react as she did made Lilly second-guess her own reactions. The society around Lilly challenged her embodied knowledge and her room to express her emotions. However, Lilly later states that “since I feel it so strongly I still think it is important (laughs).” showing that she is confident in her emotional and embodied reactions, something that allows her to express her experiences.

The more engaged I was, the more I noticed that less people spoke about it and the more afraid I was that nothing was happening. Then it just became more and more intense, this feeling that: Either it is I who have misunderstood something and it is not as bad as it seems, or we have a heavy-handed system that does not function and that will drive us off the cliff. It was very heavy to realize that it is actually not I who have misunderstood. It is actually that the prime politicians of this country do not care. Or, have not understood something, or has this sort of dissonance in their brains that make them able to read climate reports and continue business as usual. I think for me it was a bit like this 'Santa is not real and your parents are not flawless'-moment [laughs]. – Christel

For Christel second-guessing her own understanding was strengthened by the inaction of others. This shows that she initially trusted others to act if they felt the same urgency as her. Building on the assumption that politicians have the same information, and therefore the same sense of urgency that triggers action, the conclusion of Christel is that they do not care or understand. As such, Christel expresses a grave difference between how she and politicians react upon the crisis, as if they did take part in the same reality.

I sort of got it confirmed like; 'Ok, I should not have had this fear to speak up because it just took some more time before people managed to take it in'. [...] And then one can see that on climate change it has flipped, so that now there are many people who are engaged [...] It is maybe also because we see more and more of the consequences now. With the forest fires and extreme weather and all that [...] and that the information is so available. It is easy to see the statistics and science showing that it actually gets warmer. – Lilly

Lilly got her feeling of urgency “confirmed” through others joining the struggle. Further, she claims that knowledge about the crisis is more available now, both in terms of consequences and in terms of scientific information. This again stresses the importance of knowledge for people to take in the crisis, as she assumes that people will react to the knowledge they gain. Above, Lilly addressed the information she and others accessed as the same, but the reactions

as different. Now, she addresses the reactions as the same but the information as different, in scale and accessibility. Further, she states that “It just took some more time before people managed to take it in”, pointing to people’s capacity to take in the urgency of the crisis.

The discussion of ‘taking in’ the crisis and urgency is interesting as it addresses some key assumptions in enlightenment thinking, and mixes this up with emotional and embodied knowledge. Central is the assumption that once people have knowledge they will act (rationally) on this knowledge (Suldovsky, 2017). An assumption that can be seen as proven wrong by the climate and environmental crisis where knowledge and information is plenty, but action is lacking. However, this assumption has a strong hold on modern systems of knowledge, as can be seen in the above quotes. Yet the assumption does not take its conventional form as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth address how knowledge and information must be ‘taken in’ to trigger action. Through their focus on emotional and embodied ways of knowing they turn the assumption around and show how it is the sense of urgency (an emotional and embodied reaction) that triggers action, not the scientific information itself. Though holding on to the importance of scientific information about the crisis, they add an element that connect information to action. This element is the emotional and embodied sense of urgency.

As such, emotional and embodied experiences are recognized as forms of knowledge, equal to other forms of knowledge. According to affection theory, affection or emotion “serve as means of relation to other[s]” (Thrift, 2008, as cited in Kramvig & Avango, 2021, p. 5). In this understanding the emotional and embodied reactions to the climate and environmental crisis do more than triggering a sense of urgency and action, they are in themselves means of relations between human and non-human nature. As it is through the emotion that the relation is experienced. This role of emotion is central in the understanding of interdependency between human and non-human nature that according to Lilly strengthens feelings of urgency; “We are all connected to each other. I feel that this is so essential in order to understand the climate crisis” (Lilly). The importance of interdependency is supported by Nikolai:

What we are trying to avoid here is the [destruction of] the foundation of all that we love. And when that is understood then one will open a whole other space for what is possible politically. And what is acceptable. That in our society there are so many things that we are dependent on for our habits to continue. And to take that in, then another spaces for what is possible will open. – Nikolai.

According to Nikolai the understanding of the crisis and of the urgency, in terms of nature being “the foundation of all that we love” is key to open up new spaces of what action is possible. He phrases this as “to take that in”, referring to a deeper understanding of urgency including emotional and embodied knowledge as well as scientific knowledge. Further, Nikolai claims that ‘*what is politically possible*’ depends on this understanding of urgency.

Urgency-induced debates and action

According to de Moor perceptions of urgency affect the strategies, politics and goals of climate activism (de Moor, 2021). Elements of the ‘urgency-induced debate’ addressing who is responsible and able to act, the state or individuals through DIY-activism, is visible in my interviews and observations.

It is also about that I think the cause of the climate crisis lies within the system. That it lies higher up than with humans as individuals. If one is to solve the crisis it is not enough with individual actions, one needs to change the whole economic system and how the world works.
– Beate

As expressed by Beate, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway do not question the responsibility and capacity of those in power to act according to the urgency of the crisis. Rather, they find that only large-scale changes will suffice, as the whole system needs to be changed and individual action is not enough. However, they criticize the lack of political will to act. As such, their specific understanding and experience of urgency, leads to a disregard of DIY-activism, not seeing individual actions as strong enough (de Moor, 2021). Hence, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway focus on what they need to do, in order to trigger climate and environmental action from those in power. This is visible in the school strike where calls for action are directed to the Prime minister and Minister of climate and environment.

The Minister of climate and environment, Espen Barth Eide from the Labour party (AP) is introduced to speak. Someone in the back of the crowd starts shouting “*Støre du må høre!*” (Støre you must listen!). Espen responds how we should all listen, and that dialogue is important. He speaks about how he agrees with us and about what the government is doing, but is interrupted again by someone giving him the finger. Espen replies, clearly annoyed, that it is important to be upset, but it is also important to be engaged in specific climate policy solutions. “Dear friends” he states before he is interrupted again; “Fuck AP!”. The person in the crowd says that we have listened to their promises long enough and that they need to start doing something. Espen responds with talking about cooperation, justice between countries

and generations. He ends by saying that now the crowd can shout as much as they like. The applause is scattered and low. Someone shouts; “Green growth is impossible!”.

The person from *Natur og Ungdom Oslo* takes the microphone and addresses Espen, thanking him for showing up, but firmly states that we do not agree that they are doing enough, the oil-age is long gone! – The crowd bursts out in applause and cheers. Someone gets the microphone and explains why they interrupted the minister: It is because he has rejected our demands, we are tired and do not trust these empty promises. – School strike for the climate

The scene shows how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience a dissonance between political measures and the crisis. Their experience and knowledge of urgency is not met with adequately urgent measures from those in power, those responsible. Hence, they experience that the politicians in power do not share their urgency. As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth find their world colliding with that of people in power, as they do not have the same basic understanding of the reality at hand – the climate and environmental crisis and its solutions. This is also reflected in the comment by Jarle on what is necessary for people to understand the crisis and to act accordingly:

And to show that we do not have a choice. You can vote for something else, but then you're fucking with the world [laughs]. And with future generations. - Jarle

Following their specific understanding of the world, of the crisis, and of urgency, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth expect specific actions and do not see these actions or changes as an option but a necessity, as argued by Jarle above. This leads us to another urgency-induced debate, addressing what action is needed, and what action is possible. This debate is clearly reflected in the statement by Elias:

It is something with this thought of time, and a crisis understanding both connected to the nature crisis and climate crisis. To make large radical changes in economic systems... one actually has to do something within the frames one has, for it to be done fast enough. – Elias

As addressed by Elias “large radical changes in economic systems” take time and in his understanding of urgency it is better “to do something within the frames” of the systems. Here Elias does not argue that radical economic changes are not needed, but that they are not possible due to the immediacy of the crisis. However, this does not mean that Elias wants to leave things as they are, rather he calls for changes in human attitudes to nature and value:

[...] those attitudes to what one values will apply no matter the system. That is where I think the critique is flawed in both critiques of capitalism and systems, because one speaks as if that

is the root of all evil, while the root to all evil are the attitudes to nature, and the attitudes to use and the attitudes to what one values. To get rid of one system and replace it with another, when one has not really changed what are the attitudes and foundational values. I think that will make no difference. Then one would simply destroy nature and the climate within a different system. - Elias

This shows how the time and scope of the crisis is important for what action Elias calls for. Within his understanding of the crisis, Elias sees nature-human relations as central and therefore necessary to change in order to actually make a difference. This perspective is also reflected when Nikolai claims that recognizing human-nature interdependency will trigger a sense of urgency that opens new possibilities. As such, making visible and recognizing the inter-relationships between humans and nature are seen as necessary to take in the urgency of the crisis. This is supported by Bastian (2012), who argues that it is key to counter the separation between the time of nature and of culture in order to secure timely action. As climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway continuously stress how the crisis out-runs the responses of society, and how the scope of the crisis is all-encompassing due to human interdependency with nature, they counter the human/nature divide and trigger urgency.

Finally, de Moor (2021) points to how some climate activists are focusing on saving what can be saved. In my interviews and observations there are elements that can be connected to this debate. For instance, Helena claims that the focus in the future to a large degree will be on survival. This shift in focus to adapting to the crisis is based on the understanding that some changes and destruction are too late to stop (de Moor, 2021). The recognition of the emergency by Helena and other climate- and environmentally-engaged youth can be understood as acts of hope because it enacts a rupture in the “emergency/everyday”, where action can make a difference (Anderson, 2017, p. 475). This is visible in how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth point to the importance of understanding and truly taking in the urgency. Within this debate Christel earlier pointed to how one should “let oneself fill with the anxiety” to take in the urgency. However, Christel later clarifies:

[...] But we talk a lot about that it does not solve anything to sit there and hate people and be filled with anxiety and depression. It does not make a good activist. - Christel

As expressed by Christel there is an understanding that anxiety and depression related to the climate crisis is limiting action, and studies of climate psychology shows that many youth experience eco-anxiety (Hickman et al., 2021). Here negative emotions connected to the climate and environmental crisis are addressed in terms of “psychological stressors [that]

threaten health and wellbeing” (Hickman et al., 2021, p. 14). However, according to Stanley, Hogg et al. (2021) there are differences between eco-anxiety, eco-depression and eco-anger, especially in terms of action. Their study shows that anger and frustration related to the crisis is central in triggering climate activism, and can hence be understood as “emotional driver[s] of engagement” (Stanley et al., 2021). Further, in their study of school strikes, Haugestad, Skauge et al. found that feelings of urgency, frustration, guilt, injustice and fear connected to the climate crisis and political inaction “seemed to motivate collective action with a great sense of urgency.” (Haugestad et al., 2021, p. 4). These findings resonate with the theories of Ben Anderson (2017) and Heather Alberro (2021), that negative emotions and the acknowledgement of crisis may be used to trigger action and hope. Moreover, they resonate with my fieldwork where climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of emotional and embodied experiences to take in the urgency and act accordingly.

Chapter conclusion: An all-encompassing sense of urgency

Through this chapter we see that the crisis definition, knowledge and experiences of climate change and environmental destruction triggers feelings of urgency. This urgency is made up of different elements that can be grouped as time and scope. By exploring these elements and the emotional and embodied experiences of urgency, this chapter shows how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand, experience and act on the urgency of the crisis.

The elements of time addressed through my interviews and observations show that the crisis and solutions are understood to have several different temporalities. There is not only the short-term perspective, which often is seen as the key aspect of urgency, but also long-term perspectives. Further, there is not only an understanding of human time, but of the multiple times and varying pace of natural systems and non-human species. As such the understanding of time can be seen as holistic in that there is not a binary separation between short and long, human and nature, but an understanding of the multiple interactions, scales and pace of time. The understanding and enactment of humans and nature sharing common timeframes, and nature as changing faster than humans, actively counters the human/nature divide. This in turn produces experiences and knowledge of human-nature interdependency, further strengthening the sense of urgency experienced by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

Further, the elements of scope expressed in interviews and observations tell us that the crisis is understood as all-encompassing, which in turn shapes how urgency is experienced, and what action is triggered. Central elements of scope are the scale and severity of destructions,

where broader understandings of this triggers stronger emotional and embodied reactions. Further, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of recognizing the nature crisis as well as the climate crisis, seeing the two in interaction. Knowledge about the importance of nature strengthens the understanding of interdependency between human and non-human nature which is seen as central in taking in the urgency of the crisis.

As shown throughout the chapter, urgency is experienced and expressed through emotions and embodied reactions. These are in constant dialogue with each other and with other forms of knowledge. Still, emotions are often attempted separated out and excluded from discussions, directly and indirectly. This is visible through peoples own critique or second-guessing of their experiences and knowledge, and through reactions from others in society. However, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of emotional and embodied knowledge for fully understanding the urgency and for triggering action. This is often addressed as ‘taking in’ the crisis and letting oneself react to it. The understanding that ‘taking in’ the crisis will trigger a sense of urgency and action is highly reoccurring. As such climate- and environmentally-engaged youth partly reproduce the enlightenment assumption that knowledge triggers action. However, as they focus on the importance of emotional and embodied knowledge they turn the assumption around and show how it is the sense of urgency (an emotional and embodied reaction) that triggers action, not the scientific information alone. Thus seeing the emotional and embodied sense of urgency as the element that connect scientific information to action.

Action permeates all conversations on urgency, and the content of action is based on the content of the urgency that trigger calls for action. This is visible in the urgency-induced debates where climate- and environmentally-engaged youth call for large-scale state action rather than DIY-activism, or for action that is possible within the timeframes of the crisis. Further, it is visible in the view that if one understands and takes in how all-encompassing the crisis is, including the nature crisis, the severity of destructions and how interdependent all life on earth is, as well as the different temporalities of the crisis, one cannot accept today’s practices. The sense of urgency is hence so great that the status quo becomes unacceptable, and climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience that their reality clashes with that of politicians and people in power who do not act according to the urgency of the crisis.

5. Solidarity in climate and environmental struggles

Arriving in Vevring by Førdefjorden, I find the place similar to my home in Sunnmøre. High mountains dressed in snow, the fjord mirrors the sky, steep hills, narrow roads, heavy spruce forest, small birch trees and almost everything is covered in moss and lichen. There is rain in the fresh and cold air. The fog drapes itself around the mountaintops and trees. From time to time, the sun passes through the clouds. In the day, the light touches islands, the fjord, forests and villages that get to bathe in the sun for a while until it hides behind the clouds again. In the evening when the sun sets it touches the mountaintops, with a pink light so beautiful it draws you in. The villages also look like home. White or yellow houses, all with red barns. The fields are marked up with stone fences. Rivers, paths, bridges and houses are also built up with stones. The villages lie by the fjord and stretches out several kilometers, each farm and bay have its own name. Here is a church, a kindergarten, a school and a small grocery shop.

The largest difference is maybe all the art. People call it “the art village Vevring” and there are figures, statues, paintings and shapes everywhere. By the road an art-installation is set up as a critique against the mining project: A glass front with the writing ‘*Er eg til for lønnsemd*’ (Do I exist for profit), and through the letters, the Engebø mountain appears in the background.

Many of the houses are usually uninhabited, but now the village houses an additional population of around 50 activists from across the country (some even from other countries). A refurbished barn functions as the kitchen and eating hall. Up the road a family has opened up their large living room - ‘*steinstua*’ is where meetings are held and where people gather when it is raining. We live in houses and cabins opened up to us by the villagers, they are happy to host us, but some also keep their distance.

Tonight, Nordic Mining are hosting an information meeting, and the villagers have asked us to join. We do not know what will happen and have decided not to speak and take up space, but stand by those who invited us. Our banners speak for us: “*Fjorden, fisken, naturen vi trenger ofres for litt ekstra penger*” (The fjord, the fish, the nature we need is sacrificed for a bit more money), “*La stå: Førdefjorden*” (Let be: Førdefjorden), “No dumping in our ocean”, on fences, statues and a camper van. At the entrance of the school where the meeting is held: “*La Førdefjorden leve*” (Let Førdefjorden live), “*Dritt skal i do, ikke i fjordene*” (Shit goes in the toilet not in the fjords), “*Gruveslam er Norges skam*” (Mining waste is Norway’s disgrace), “*250 000 000 tonn gift i vår fjord*” (250 000 000 tons of poison in our fjord).

Nordic Mining present their plans. It does not sound too bad. However, ‘clearing the area’ is code for destroying the houses, ‘bio neutrality’ code for greenwashing. It is not really clear to me before the crowd starts asking questions and making comments. There is lack of funding, the lack of plans violates regulations, two public complaints are not yet handled, and people

are still living in Engebø. Why are they saying they will start next week, when it is clearly not possible? The discussions intensify and the company say they want to ‘minimize’ the waste masses and ask for suggestions. It becomes clear that it is possible to have a mining project without the fjord deposit, so why are all the evaluations and permits based on the assumption that this is impossible? Someone from the company holds up a brochure they have made about the fjord deposit, claiming that it is really not that bad; but nobody wants to hear their greenwashing. People in the crowd talk about how it is to live here, to have grown up with the fjord and fishing, the fear of the project starting up soon; the fjord will be left dead for 40 years or more. At the end of the meeting, the crowd walks out in protest.

I have stares in my eyes and butterflies in my stomach. Wow, this was intense and engaging. Outside the school, people from the village and people from the camp gather. We tell them how great it was to hear them speak up as they did, how impressed and grateful we are. I want to show that I feel their anger, stress and fear. If my fjord, my village, my home was threatened like this I would not have known what to do. We are here in solidarity with them. We discuss fishing and how people use the fjord, how challenging it is to fight the company, and how much it affects the village. The fjord deposit is the main threat and some say they would support a mine without the fjord deposit, while others prefer no mining at all.

‘*Steinstua*’ is filled with people, music and laughter for the evening gathering. The meeting with Nordic Mining is the main topic; we are impressed by the local population and excited to fight the company. Still, there are more good news! We have just heard that Nussir ASA in Riehpovuotna have lost their construction permit after complaints by Natur og Ungdom and Naturvernforbundet. There will be no mine and destruction of Riehpovuotna this year! Now we can focus on saving Førdefjorden. This has been the best day this year, someone claims.

As I leave the protest camp a few days later, I feel a pressing engagement for the fjord and the village. The fjord will not be destroyed, not on our watch! – The Førdefjorden-struggle

In the fight against the mining waste deposit in Førdefjorden, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth join hands with the local population who have worked against the deposit plans for years. Local people open their homes and invite the activists into the struggle. When local people share their space and knowledge, activists provide new energy to the struggle, and power in numbers. As such, the fight to protect the fjord is a solidarity struggle.

In this chapter, I will show how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth counter and practice alternatives to dominant nature-human relations through exploring their solidarity. Solidarity is a reoccurring topic throughout my observations and interviews, as climate and environmental issues are understood as issues of injustice, triggering a wish and need to act.

The connection between experiencing or seeing injustice and wanting to act is expressed as solidarity. Further, this solidarity is understood to build on some specific ideas and experiences. There is the feeling of identification, building on the idea that “if it affects someone else it might as well affect me” (Aina) or interdependency, “that we are dependent on each other” (Nikolai) and in the struggle together, “fighting for each other” (Helena). The feeling of a moral obligation to care and act, or a responsibility through the understanding that “there is someone polluting and someone else who has to live with the consequences” (Christel). Finally, emotional and embodied experiences such as love, pain, anger and joy are key in triggering solidarity, but are often difficult to express. All these ideas and feelings around solidarity are intertwined and sometimes ambiguous. There are no clear lines between these dimensions, as the feelings and practices are constantly changing and in dialogue. However, it is clear that these feelings of solidarity are not limited to humans.

Solidarity in the literature

Both in academia and in social movements there has long been a focus on climate and environmental justice, placing solidarity at the center of climate and environmental struggles (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020). As a much-used concept, solidarity is defined and understood in various ways, though a common description is that solidarity entails “*positive obligations to act*” in the common interest of one’s own community (Bayertz, 1999). However, in debates regarding solidarity during the climate and environmental crisis, scholars oppose the importance that is formerly granted to identification and moral obligations in the emergence and practice of solidarity. Central here are debates on feminist solidarity, the decolonization of solidarity, and solidarity with the more-than-human.

In a paper developing a relational solidarity and arguing for decolonization Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, critiques the colonial logics and complicity of solidarity that “obscure the very dynamics of colonization” and that is not based on decolonial demands (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 43). Focusing on the possibilities opened up by “intensified encounters with difference”, Gaztambide-Fernández calls for rethinking human interactions and as such “what it means to be human” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, pp. 41-42). This redefinition of humans is according to him at the center of decolonization, and it builds on the increasing Indigenous resurgence and diasporic alliances opposing disaster capitalism. According to Gaztambide-Fernández, a solidarity based on difference is one that opens up for imagining decolonial and anti-oppressive modes of human relationality building on Judith Butler’s call to see “the human as a site of interdependency” (as cited in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p.

42). For Gaztambide-Fernández, to decolonize solidarity is to break with the history of solidarity as a means of domination (moral obligations demanding obeisance) and to build solidarity on radical difference rather than sameness (limiting solidarity to one's own).

Rather, Gaztambide-Fernández points to modes of solidarity that are based on radical difference and “relationships of incommensurable interdependency” such as relational, transitive and creative solidarity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 46). Relational solidarity builds on relational ontology, the understanding that all exists through and in relations. As such, this opens for a re-imagining of humans based on interdependency rather than reason. In addition, this form of solidarity shows that all actors have multiple perspectives at the same time. Further, Transitive solidarity points to how solidarity is praxis that both changes the injustice and the actors in solidarity, meaning that solidarity cannot come from a static human essence of set moral obligations but is continuously transformed and transformative. Finally, creative solidarity refers to the solidarity that cannot be expressed in words; solidarity through encounters and ways of being or feeling that confront and rearrange the hegemonic hierarchal order of colonialism and modernity. According to Gaztambide-Fernández, relational solidarity entails “a different ontology”, transitive solidarity “a new kind of praxis” and creative solidarity a “more accurate conception of culture” than the one “imposed by the colonial project of modernity” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 57). As such, decolonial solidarity builds on relational worlds and ways of knowing and practicing that break with the dominant.

The three modes of solidarity presented by Gaztambide-Fernández makes solidarity a praxis of ethical encounters that transform structural conditions, rethinking what it means to be human, and as such it becomes a practice of decolonization building on the experiences of “those who have suffered the most” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 59). These encounters are according to Gaztambide-Fernández made possible through the conflict between disaster capitalism and the (re)emergence of indigenous and diasporic communities and their struggles. As such, the space for relational solidarity is opened through the ontological conflicts between the modern world and the (re)emerging indigenous and diasporic world, as well as through the consequences of the modern world's destructive practices such as colonial oppression and the climate and environmental crisis (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012).

In his essay ‘Solidarity with nonhumans as an ontological struggle’ Jesse Bazzul (2020) evokes the creative solidarity of Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) to explore modes of solidarity that “cannot be easily expressed in the current order of things” such as extending solidarity to nonhumans (Bazzul, 2020, p. 2). Building on the book ‘Empire’ by Hardt and Negri (2000),

the work on solidarity by Timothy Morton (2017) and on speculative realism, Bazzul argues that extending solidarity to nonhumans is a form of resistance to the controlling forces of modernity; a form of ontological struggle. According to Bazzul, the climate and environmental crisis means that people are “ethically compelled to think differently”, hence social theory should “challenge anthropocentrism” and “explore wide-ranging symbiotic relationships with nonhumans” building on ontological plurality and the ongoing ecological collapse (Bazzul, 2020, p. 2).

Seeing solidarity as a “rely-on” quality and interconnection between all beings, solidarity is fundamental to being and therefore not limited to humans (Bazzul, 2020, p. 3). As such, solidarity becomes a reaction to the separation between humans and non-humans and is according to Morton extended to nonhumans automatically (Morton, 2017). Bazzul (2020) argues that modernization, through its violent and controlling forms - capitalism, colonialism and agrolitics - separates humans from non-humans and denies difference, plurality and interdependency. Hence, dismantling capitalism entails reconstituting and nurturing the interdependency and “inexhaustible quality of things” (Bazzul, 2020, p. 4). Critiquing Enlightenment thinking’s notion that only (certain) humans have access to reality, Bazzul argues that solidarity with nonhumans is a way to recognize their experiences of reality. Further, Bazzul argues that the “fuzziness of boundaries means that worlds overlap and can be shared” (Bazzul, 2020, p. 6). As such, solidarity builds on this overlapping and sharing of worlds. However, this solidarity is being restricted by the separation between humans and nonhumans, as it is not acknowledged that other beings exist outside human understanding.

Discussing the political solidarity of Val Plumwood and Sally Scholz, Chaone Mallory argues for an ecofeminist political solidarity with “the natural other” (Mallory, 2009, p. 3).

According to Mallory, Plumwood’s ecofeminist critique of deep ecology confronts the moral extensionism used to justify the defense of nature, as it is based on considering the more-than human to be ‘like us’ or an extension of the ‘Self’ (the expanded self) (Mallory, 2009). This assumed identification or unity becomes a “denial of the importance of difference” that is totalizing and human-centered (Mallory, 2009; Plumwood, 1991; Warren, 1999, p. 259). Rather, Mallory calls for a solidarity with the natural-other based on “mutuality without hegemonic over-identification with the oppressed by the privileged” (Mallory, 2009, p. 3).

Mallory uses Scholz’ political solidarity to build on Plumwood’s solidarity with the more-than-human world. According to Scholz, solidarity is a reaction to injustice and a willingness to engage in political activism for “social transformation” (Mallory, 2009, p. 10). Scholz

argues that those acting in solidarity are not necessarily oppressed themselves; they might even benefit from the injustice, but are equally committed to ending it. As such, political solidarity is according to Scholz not based on sameness or a “shared experience of oppression” and thus it allows for more diversity within the solidarity group as well as focusing on the commitment to action (Scholz, 2008, as cited in Mallory, 2009, p. 12). Though Scholz (2013) herself argues against political solidarity as a form of solidarity with the more-than human, Mallory (2009) argues that this political solidarity can be understood as equal to Plumwood’s solidarity with natural others as it is based on the commitment to act (politically) to end injustice and oppression, often countering ones’ own benefit of the oppression. This entails a recognition that one has multiple positions, one can be at once both oppressor and oppressed. Hence, solidarity requires, that “one must ‘betray’ one’s own kind, become a ‘traitor’ to a certain narrative of the human” (Mallory, 2009, p. 9).

According to Mallory, ecofeminist political solidarity joins the human and the natural other in an intellectual and emotional recognition of oppression and injustice, as well as in the struggle for change. Additionally, it shows the entanglements of multiple systems of oppression such as racism, patriarchy, and the oppression of animals. Mallory further argues that an ecofeminist political solidarity must permit or even require action on behalf of the natural other without denying their agency (Mallory, 2009). Standing with the natural other is according to Plumwood and Mallory a recognition of diversity and responsibility, without assuming the incapability of the other to act for itself and without acting egoistically, it is a “solidarity with the other in their difference” (Mallory, 2009, p. 14). This ecofeminist political solidarity is hence not compatible with the human/nature divide of the modern world.

Justice, emotion, and action

[...] what is the most unjust in the world? That is the climate crisis. And for me it is so obvious and easy to understand. – Christel

When asked to describe the climate and environmental crisis, young people speak of justice. When asked why they are engaged in climate and environmental issues, young people speak of justice. When asked how to solve the climate and environmental crisis, young people speak of justice. As such, the climate and environmental crisis is defined as an issue of justice from the very start. This definition arose throughout my research, sometimes based on requests to explain the crisis, sometimes on inquiries of why people are engaged, and always as a reoccurring topic throughout conversations, action-calls, and slogans. Further, perceiving and experiencing the injustice of the crisis triggers emotional and embodied reactions:

I think that for me it is largely about that I have always been passionate for justice. It is not only about the environmental crisis, but also about refugees and things like that. [...] I cannot ignore it, and it is the same with the environmental crisis. It is so immensely unjust that those who are affected by it ... and that we live as we do ... For me it does not add up right. And it makes me so angry and so sad and I really feel it in my body. That frustration. – Lilly

These emotional and embodied reactions are translated into a societal and personal need to act. Aina describes it as “if something is unjust, you have to say it”, and expresses this as a common and relatable experience for many. The reasoning from defining the climate and environmental crisis as a crisis of injustice, to stating the need to do something is highly reoccurring in my interviews. It is often described as the main reasoning for why people get engaged in climate and environmental issues, such as here by Elias:

I think it is mostly that feeling of injustice and the feeling that one has to do something. I knew that climate change and things was a crisis, and I knew that it felt very natural to be a part of it. - Elias

The experience of a correlation between understanding the climate and environmental crisis as an issue of justice, and engaging to fight this injustice is described through interviews as solidarity. Through this understanding, solidarity becomes the experience or feeling that connects injustice to action. This is supported by Francesco Tava (2021) who argues that solidarity is based on negative emotional reactions to injustice, oppression and exploitation (Tava, 2021). Further Tava shows how solidarity is a precondition for social and political change, where the reactive and offensive character of solidarity comes from the redeployment of emotional and embodied reactions to injustice (Tava, 2021). As such, the solidarity expressed by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth comes from their perception of the climate and environmental crisis as unjust, as it is based on their emotional and embodied reactions to this injustice. Further, this solidarity is experienced as key in triggering their engagement in climate and environmental struggles.

Dimensions of solidarity

Feelings of solidarity are in my interviews and observations often expressed through experiences of identification or interdependency with those affected and in the same struggle, and feelings of moral obligations or responsibility for solving issues. These different expressions of solidarity can be seen as dimensions that solidarity is based upon. As these dimensions constantly change and the borders between them are fluid, they can be understood in various ways. By looking more closely into some expressions of solidarity, in light of the

academic discussions addressed above, I will in this section show some of the interactions between these dimensions and how they play out in the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

Identification or interdependency

[...] if it does not affect me it affects someone else, and if it affects someone else it might as well affect me. - Aina.

The dimension of identification in solidarity builds on the understanding of being equals, and of seeing oneself in others. As described in the section on literature this identification has historically been quite limited, building on sameness and separating out the ‘other’. For Aina solidarity implies understanding that the consequences of the climate and environmental crisis affecting some, might as well affect her. Those experiencing the climate and environmental crisis are her equals, and she understands both emotionally and intellectually that their pain and suffering could be hers. This basis of solidarity is also visible in the Førdefjorden-struggle as my constant comparison of the fjord and village with the place I grew up is to place myself in the situation of the villagers in Vevring. Seeing how this “affects someone else” makes it clear to me that “it might as well affect me”. However, this dimension of solidarity is not only limited to those experiencing injustice, but is also key within the struggle against injustice.

In such a global perspective, with youth from other places in the world, I think that the feeling of solidarity, with fighting for each other. And that you also love those you do not know [...] In the way that we are human and are fighting for each other. I experience that as a very established thought in much of the youth climate movement when I have spoken with people from other countries as well. This thing with humanity and solidarity, and with love, these feelings and wish to fight for each other and what we all love, for me that is activism. - Helena

Such as described by Helena the common struggle is key as she defines solidarity as active. Helena focuses on being together in the struggle, and it is through this collective struggle that Helena experiences identification or rather a form of interdependency with those in solidarity. Equally, in the struggles in Førdefjorden I do not only understand the pain of local people fighting the mine and fjord deposit, but I understand that they need me in the struggle as much as I would have needed them if it did in fact affect me. Joining hands with the local population in Vevring is hence a practice of interdependency in the struggle. Further countering the traditional definition of identification in solidarity, Helena shows how solidarity is not limited to her own as she claims; “you also love those you do not know”. Here Helena addresses an important point from Tava (2021); the key for solidarity is not

sameness but emotions, hence solidarity is not limited to one's own but can be extended to all those one has emotional relations with. The discussion above shows that, rather than disregarding the dimension of identification such as argued for in the literature (Mallory, 2009), climate- and environmentally-engaged youth expand identification from sameness to include all those they experience relations with, hence leaning over to interdependency (Bazzul, 2020; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Rather than a form of identification by sameness, theirs is an identification through interdependency both in terms of the consequences of the crisis and in the struggle against the crisis.

Moral obligation or responsibility

In the literature, solidarity is often defined as a moral obligation either enforced on people or deriving from a core human essence (Bayertz, 1999; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Though not addressing moral obligations directly in my interviews and observations, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth express feelings of responsibility based on their knowledge of the crisis and their positions. For Beate, living in a rich country entails a responsibility to help those more affected by the climate and environmental crisis than herself.

I think it is connected to the fact that we are so lucky in Norway, and we are just lucky because we were born here and not in another, in a poor country. And if you live in one of the best countries in the world, then you have to look outwards. [...] In my understanding what is maybe the most unjust is that an island state will disappear or that a person is in a refugee camp due to droughts or floods, maybe more than Norwegian environmental issues. - Beate

Rather than the feeling that “it might as well affect me”, Beate expresses that ‘it does not affect me’ and that is unjust. This feeling of responsibility is often based on the understanding that someone is responsible for pollution while others live with the consequences. Where Norway is one of the countries that pollute the most, hence the responsibility becomes a personal and collective responsibility.

We have a special responsibility for the countries that have contributed the least to climate change but who experience higher consequences, because we have had non-sustainable politics. - Beate

The responsibility is both indirect in that one is privileged and therefore should help those less privileged (a moral obligation), and direct in that one is responsible for causing the crisis, and has as such gained from the injustice one is now fighting. As stated by Christel below, it is both a “moral problem and a distribution of responsibility”:

Just like, in order for some people to be insanely rich, someone has to be insanely poor. There is a correlation there. And already a kind of moral problem and distribution of responsibility. And it is the same with the climate crisis. For someone to pollute insanely much, then there is both someone who has to pollute insanely little, but also that there is someone polluting and someone else who has to live with the consequences. All that, it is so logical, it is so simple. - Christel

As explained by Christel, the privilege and wealth gained by the privileged is directly at the cost of those less privileged, both in terms of wealth and climate change. As such, for a privileged person, fighting against this injustice implies fighting against one's own privilege. Mallory (2009) shows how this is a central feature in feminist solidarity as both oppressor and oppressed can be in solidarity, but the oppressors need to betray their own. This form of solidarity is based on mutuality, not in terms of identifying with the oppressed but in the collective struggle against oppression. According to Mallory (2009), it is a form of solidarity in difference rather than sameness, where diversity and responsibility is recognized.

Decolonial, eco-feminist solidarity

After the morning meeting the first day, we go for a hike up the Nussir mountain to see the old mine. We pass through an open fence, past some rusty metal scraps and towards a large construction. Below the construction, there is a hole in the ground. It looks endless. [...] Two of us want to go and see how deep the hole in the bottom is. I am afraid they will fall in; the hole must be hundreds of meters deep and at the bottom a toxic pool of water. They would not survive the fall. As we walk back to the camp, we discuss the use of civil disobedience and why we are here. The feeling of being where it is all happening, in the middle of our most important struggles, the relation between indigenous struggle and environmental struggle. For some this mining project would have been acceptable without the fjord deposit, for others the struggle is in solidarity with Sámi people. “*Folket og fjorden*” – The people and the fjord.

While waiting for the machines to roll in, we get visitors, drink coffee, discuss and learn Sámi words and handicrafts. Someone in the camp is studying Sámi handicrafts and have brought equipment to weave by hand. They talk about the traditions of handicrafts in Sápmi. How they have recently made their own *gàkti* (the traditional Sámi outfit) with hand-woven ribbons for the waist and shoes. I weave as fast and nice as I can, to finish before they leave and need the equipment back. The result is a belt, in a pattern of blue, green and yellow. I can barely tie the ends together but wear it for the rest of my stay.

It is my turn to stay in the guard-lávvu and after some calm hours two men drive past us and park next to the excavator. They are here to say they want the mine; the jobs are needed for

people not to leave the area. They say they enjoy fishing and being out by boat, and hope the fjord will not be too damaged. If it would have been possible to have the mine without the fjord deposit they would have preferred it, but add that arguments from the Sámi population are not to be trusted. Saying Sámi people falsely claim that their reindeer are killed by traffic to get compensation. They are from the area and might know more about the project than me. But is this not racism? Are these claims of lies not the stereotypical claims that majority Norwegians say to disqualify Sámi-struggles and knowledge? They cannot say this. I should talk back, tell them what I have learned about how impacted the reindeer areas will be due to the mine. But the conversation jumps to a different topic, and I am too upset to say a word.

Back at the camp we discuss racism against Sámi people. Some people from the camp went to a political meeting in Hammerfest today and one of them, wearing their *gàkti*, was approached with accusations about reindeer herding Sámi people actively causing conflict and with racist comments about Sámi people being sly and deceitful⁵. Many people have heard racist slurs and jokes at the expense of Sámi people after arriving in Finnmark. For many of us it comes as a shock, realizing that this is happening here and now, as a ghost from Norway's colonial past. However, seeing the mining project in the light of this new knowledge, or the realization that we lack knowledge, helps us understand that this is a part of Norway's colonial present.

- The Riehpovuotna-struggle

The Riehpovuotna-struggle is for climate- and environmentally-engaged youth a solidarity struggle as the mountains and fjord affected by mining and the deposit are important for Sámi reindeer herding. The use of Sámi areas for industry and profit for the Norwegian society, at the cost of Sámi societies, is understood as a continuation of Norway's colonial practices. As visible in the Riehpovuotna-struggle, the climate and environmental crisis is often seen in connection to other struggles for justice such as gender equality, human rights, indigenous people's rights, children's rights and the rights of people with disabilities:

Many people think like nature and school strike and climate, that it is exclusive. But then you might forget indigenous peoples' perspectives, if you do not see the full picture. You forget that those who are the most affected are minorities such as people with disabilities and many such issues. So I cannot see it as only an environmental issue, I see the full picture. – Aina

⁵ Through later communication, the person tells me that this sort of situation is rather common; hence, they are always nervous and fearful when wearing their *gàkti* in Hammerfest. Further, having to “carry all Sámi conflicts on your shoulders” and defend Sámi people and practices when being visibly Sámi is something that they have experienced throughout their childhood and that they see as pushing Sámi youth to not acknowledge that they are Sámi. Pointing to examples of racism and hostility towards Sámi people in Hammerfest, they explain that many people in the area are of coastal Sámi decent but have through the Norwegian assimilation and modernization project distanced themselves from their Sámi identity and cultural practices. This has in turn led to a major loss of coastal and reindeer herding Sámi inter-relations, though some still hold on to the practices.

By addressing the entanglements between multiple struggles against injustice, oppression and exploitation people define these struggles in connection to larger structures and systems of oppression and injustice:

For me it is important to see the full picture, that these things are connected. That environmental protection is connected to indigenous people's rights, which is connected to human rights and democracy. It is about those who are systematically oppressed and that it is the same systems that exploit natural resources and creates the climate crisis. - Frida

As claimed by Frida, the systems creating the climate and environmental crisis are oppressing and exploiting humans and nature alike. As such, these systems are seen as key causes of climate change and environmental destruction, and key in worsening the consequences of the crisis. Central in this “full picture” understanding of the crisis is colonialism, as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth build on knowledge and experiences of historical and current colonial exploitation and oppression, to understand the injustice of the crisis.

What the state calls the “green shift” I, and many others, actually call “green colonialism”. The thing is that this colonialism and forced assimilation that one thought we were done with many decades ago, well it actually continues today, also with youth. – Sara

Solidarity with indigenous peoples through fighting oppression and respecting indigenous knowledge and cultural practices is made highly relevant for youth's engagement in climate and environmental issues through my interviews and observations. The struggles of justice for Indigenous peoples are seen as important in themselves, but also as interconnected with the climate and environmental crisis. This becomes clear in the Riehpovuotna-struggle:

For me this is such a typical issue that is incredibly old-fashioned, especially in Repparfjord [Riehpovuotna]. Here we come in to a land that is highly used by Sámi people and other people, and then the whole local community has to suffer because someone will get rich. It is just an ach-example of colonial behavior that I just; ‘Oh’, it hurts just thinking about it. - Aina

In Riehpovuotna the mining company Nussir ASA claims to be “a pioneer in the climate context” through “zero emission mining” of copper that they argue is needed in the “green shift” (Nussir ASA, 2021). Compared to similar cases such as the wind power projects in Fosen and Øyfjellet studied by Susanne Normann (2021, 2022), the mining project in Riehpovuotna should be understood as green colonialism as the ‘green’ profile of the project is used to legitimize its dispossession of Sámi territories and exclusion of Sámi cultural practices. The practices of green colonialism tie colonial oppression with the climate and

environmental crisis and make the profound injustice experienced by indigenous peoples visible to climate- and environmentally-engaged youth. While the mine is a direct assault on reindeer herding practices, the mistreatment, racism and distrust against Sámi people and their practices is the backdrop of the protest camp in Riehpovuotna. As expressed by Aina the injustice is striking and triggers negative emotional reactions and feelings of solidarity.

[...] the feeling of actually not being fairly treated [...] I think that Sámi youth most often just want to, how to say it in Norwegian, 'beassat leat ráfis', well just; 'I want them to let me be' sort of. - Sara

The injustice of colonial exploitation and oppression takes many forms and is explained here by Sara in a personal manner pointing to “the feeling of actually not being fairly treated” and longing to let Sámi people be. In this, Sara shows the current injustice and control of colonialism that she later connects with the climate and environmental struggle.

And really my engagement started first and foremost with the Sámi. And then the issues of climate also became very relevant in the Sámi areas [...] since we feel the climatic changes very strongly here. So it is very relevant for us to try to influence, or to do something about it. – Sara

Often solidarity with indigenous peoples in climate and environmental struggles relates to how Sámi and other indigenous peoples are more affected by both climate and environmental issues and the policies implemented to deal with these issues. This is reflected in the work of Sámi-rights organizations and climate- and environmental organizations such as the international Fridays for Future movement. In interviews, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth often express the understanding that many indigenous peoples live in ways that make them more dependent on nature. This is understood as problematic in terms of the consequences of the crisis, but also inspiring and good in terms of solutions to the crisis.

[...] areas controlled by Indigenous peoples actually have a lot higher biological diversity, and a lot better climate solutions because they store more carbon in the forest that is used, or because it is used more than protected forest as protected forest often gets old and burns down and creates problems. With someone who actually takes care and makes sure that the forest lives, it will to a larger degree give climate results. – Elias

In this example, Elias shows how a forest may be equally dependent on the people who use it, as the people are on the forest. The specific learnings from indigenous practices that Elias shares are some of many examples of how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth look

to indigenous cultures, practices and knowledge for aid and inspiration. This is especially true in terms of the perspectives indigenous cultures may have on nature-human relations that are different from dominant perspectives. As becomes clear from the above, different factors influence feelings of solidarity with indigenous peoples, where many build on the entanglements of multiple struggles against injustice and the interdependency between people and nature that may make both humans and nature vulnerable or resilient. Further, the dimension of responsibility is also very strong.

It made an incredibly strong impression to meet people from the reindeer herding districts, to learn more about Sámi culture and reindeer herding as a cultural bearer. And also the assaults and abuses that have been done against Sámi people in Norway. I felt so bad because I did not know more about this. [...] The tables have turned sort of. Because in all those struggles that I usually engage in, if it is climate and environmental struggles or it can be women's struggles, then it is I and we who are sort of the underdogs and minority, and those who are standing up against the large society. And now I was a part of that large society, and by not actively engaging myself and contributing, I have sort of placed myself on the wrong side. I felt a great responsibility to make up for it, but also to take an active stance much more than I have done before. – Christel

This sense of responsibility leans into a feeling of guilt. As noted by Christel this is different from the other struggles she engages in. She has been aware of and fighting the inequality of the climate crisis, “standing up against the large society”, however in terms of Norway’s oppression of Sámi people she has been on the side of the oppressor due to her lack of knowledge and active engagement. The oppressor, who is usually a ‘they’ becomes a ‘we’, and hence there is a direct responsibility not only to make up for the historical oppression and injustice created by others, but to one’s own participation in this oppression and injustice.

As such the dimension of responsibility is actively transformed from a moral obligation based on being privileged, to a need to betray one’s own due to one’s gains from and guilt in (re)producing the injustice of colonialism (Mallory, 2009). It is hence not a feeling of responsibility derived from a human essence of solidarity or set moral obligations, but from an understanding and experience of interconnectedness, and the production of injustice. As described above this is extended to climate and environmental struggles as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth define the injustice, oppression and exploitations of the crisis as entangled with and produced by the systems of colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy and other systems of oppression. Further, the active focus on not only the injustice, but also the

knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and other societies oppressed by modernization, is defining for the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

The specific focus on the entanglements of systems of injustice, particularly colonialism, and the climate and environmental crisis, in addition to the focus on the need to learn from and build on indigenous practices and knowledge open up for a decolonization of solidarity.

Building on the work of Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), it is visible that the solidarity expressed by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth is constantly being transformed and is transforming its actors. Further, through their solidarity, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth encounter others; other people, knowledges and practices, other ways of being and natural others. Through these solidarity enforced encounters with others, space is opened up for new forms of solidarity to emerge and be practiced. These forms of solidarity largely build on the understanding of interdependency or connectedness, including the entanglements of different systems of injustice, the interdependency between indigenous peoples and nature, the interconnectedness of all actors such as those gaining and loosing from different systems of injustice. As such, practices of solidarity open up space for new forms of solidarity that again opens up more space for yet new forms of solidarity, such as solidarity with nature.

Solidarity with nature

I think that we are a part of nature and not above it, so that we cannot separate ourselves from the nature around us. And solidarity, well it is also about solidarity for the nature around us, as much as it is about the people. – Helena

The solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth is to a large degree extended to non-human nature. This “solidarity for the nature around us” is understood and expressed in various ways. Often it comes from the understanding “that we are a part of nature”, a feeling of humans and nature being equal, in the same struggle, and interdependent. Further, it is connected to the responsibility humans have to “take care of” nature (Helena), but also how humans are responsible for the destruction and exploitation of nature.

Identification

Well that one identifies with other school striker in other countries. I identify myself with front-line communities and indigenous groups, who have it worse than me. And I identify with the planetary, right. And the global [...] - Nikolai

The dimension of identification in solidarity with nature can be based on several different foundations. For Nikolai the identification with the planetary, referring to all there is across

planets, is the same identification as with other school strikers and those “who have it worse than me”. He does not specify the basis of this identification across seemingly different beings and things. Such as addressed before, this identification includes all those struggling together, and those who are affected by the injustice. It is hence not only an identification based ‘sameness’ but also on difference. The act of identifying oneself in nature is discussed by Mallory (2009), who builds on Plumwood’s critique of the expanded self in deep ecology. Here ‘the deep ecologist’ claims to be nature, the tree, animal or whatever part of nature that is exploited or in pain. According to Plumwood, this action of moral extensionism denies difference and focuses on the human. It becomes a “hegemonic over-identification with the oppressed by the privileged” (Mallory, 2009, p. 3). Rather, Mallory and Plumwood call for solidarity based on mutuality where humans and nature are joined through the recognition of injustice and the struggles against it. The quotes by Nikolai and Helena above show elements of both identification and mutuality in the struggle. What is key however is that their identification is not claims of being or experiencing the same, but claims of difference and being part of a larger whole. They are claims of interdependency and communality.

Interdependency

It is this recognition that [...] nature is a part of me [...] the ecosystems are a part of sustaining the life that I have [...] and that is also a sort of Anthropocentrism. But it is [...] an interaction between human and nature where one cannot put the human above, and all other life-less things only gets to be instrumental [...] but that it is an interaction there with respect. And with dialogue. That one listens and understands that we have different thresholds and we are dependent on each other. – Nikolai

The solidarity with non-human nature expressed by Nikolai comes from the need for “interaction between human and nature” based on mutuality and difference, and dependency. Remembering the above quote on identification by Nikolai, it becomes clear that the solidarity of Nikolai is more similar to that called for by Plumwood than the deep ecology expansion of the self that she critiques (Mallory, 2009). The claim that “nature is a part of me” is not a claim that ‘I am nature’, but rather one expressing the interdependency of nature.

It is something about looking at our history and to sort of see that all we have, all that we have become has been because of nature. I do not think we understand how much we need nature. [...] We take it for granted, and when you respect something, you do not take it for granted. - Helena

The experience and knowledge of interdependency, both personally and historically as expressed by Helena, is key in triggering respect or solidarity. As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth base their solidarity on the understanding that reality is produced through inter-relations and interdependency, as argued for by Gaztambide-Fernández (2012). How such experiences of interdependency drive solidarity is particularly visible in the struggles against the mining-deposits in Riehpovuotna and Førdefjorden.

One day the sun decides to show up and we go for a hike up the Engebø mountain. We walk up the construction road, pass some machines and try not to step through the snow. The sun is strong and is reflected by the snow; Easter weather. The road goes all the way to the top, currently 340 meters above sea level, but if Nordic Mining complete their plans, it will be 290 meters. The company plans to dig 50 meters down from the top to reach the minerals, open-pit mining is a practice that is highly criticized. People say they will cut off the top of the mountain and put it in the fjord. We want to get a view and walk a bit further, past a picnic-table and traces of the test drilling in 2016. Some boulders and stones a bit out of place, a metal pipe on top shows why. We find a stone and some heather sticking out of the snow and sit down. Some meters from where we sit another metal pipe sticks out of the snow and heather, it is marked 'ENG' and some numbers. Coffee, biscuits, oranges and conversations about how beautiful the view is. From the top, we can see the ocean and islands at the end of the fjord, some salmon farms and boats float in the shimmering waters. The village is down the hill to the west. There are mountains to the south, east and north, the high and steep ones are covered in snow and look majestic. We hear an avalanche but cannot see it. Suddenly two eagles pass us; they must have been golden eagles because their tails were not white.

– The Førdefjorden-struggle

Looking at the two hikes, up the Nussir mountain with the “scar in the landscape” (chapter 1, p. 1) and up the Engebø mountain with the beautiful view, Easter weather, snow and heather, there are key differences. Hiking up Engebø is a harmonic experience of connection with the landscape, animals and weather; however, hiking up Nussir is an experience of injustice and exploitation of nature. Having experienced the Nussir hike first, the threat of mining in Engebø becomes stronger as I know how it might look in the future. As such, both experiences trigger solidarity for the place, including all its nature-human elements. The eagle that will lose its home, the hike in perfect Easter weather that will no longer be. Additionally, the engagement with local food and practices in both camps give direct experiences of how local people are in interdependent relations with nature, increasing the solidarity with both people and nature.

According to Bazzul (2020), interdependency is in itself solidarity. His understanding of solidarity, building on Morton, points to the “rely-on” relations between all and how this quality automatically extends solidarity to non-human nature. Further, Bazzul argues that solidarity based on interdependency is a reaction to the modern human/nature divide and its denial of difference (Bazzul, 2020). As such, the deconstruction and rejection of the human/nature divide, through practices of interdependency, allows for this form of solidarity to exist. As interdependency extends solidarity to nature, it also strengthens the solidarity with those whose livelihoods are more directly dependent on, and therefore more directly affected by climate and environmental impacts.

[...] deforestation of rainforest and coral reefs that disappear takes away the ecosystem services which are very connected to those who live there. With coral reefs that can stop tidal waves and flood attenuation from the forest. Of course it is a great global perspective with these things as they disappear, but also for the people who live there. – Guro

Knowledge of this interdependency between all beings and things, such as expressed by Guro entails that the solidarity struggle must be for all beings and things at once. Equally, as one cannot only fight for the people living by the coral reefs, but not the reefs themselves, one cannot only fight for Riehpovuotna or Førdefjorden and not all the beings who are dependent on it. These interdependencies strengthen the experience of injustice, an injustice produced by systems of oppression where different actors have different responsibilities.

Responsibility

What we are capable of doing as a world society, or at least the western parts of the world, what a grave assault that we are about to do, that we are doing, that we have done for many decades, and that we keep on doing. Against so many, both humans and animals. That can make you a bit, well properly shocked. - Christel

Central in the solidarity with non-human nature is different understandings and experiences of responsibility. Humans are often seen as caretakers where “humans have a stewardship responsibility regarding nature” (Frida) while also having a specific responsibility due to our possibilities to greatly affect nature. This responsibility based on capacities and practices of injustice, is well explained by Christel. Such as addressed above, this responsibility is highly based on the feeling and knowledge of being guilty in (co)producing the injustice, oppression and exploitation of nature. In this understanding “we” humans (specifically privileged western humans) are the oppressors, where nature, animals and marginalized humans are the oppressed. Such as in the work of Mallory (2009), this means that solidarity is not limited to

the inside group – where those being oppressed are in mutual solidarity – but that solidarity is practiced between all actors (oppressor, oppressed, nature, animals, humans). This is according to Mallory (2009) a central premise for solidarity to be extended to non-human nature as it shows that solidarity is based on difference and common struggle, not sameness.

[...] I have met a lot of youth who have said that in the climate struggle it is not about saving nature, but it is about having respect for it. Because, what we have respect for we take care of as well. I would have liked that we bring this thought more into the public debate about climate in Norway. Because that thought of respect, when it comes to relations between humans and nature, I think it is very important. We are actually destroying our own and others life-support systems. Yes, it is that simple. - Helena

Solidarity with non-human nature is often spoken about as having respect for nature. This respect is explained in many ways but a common thought is that “what we have respect for we take care of”. The idea of respecting nature is further linked to our dependency on nature, “we are actually destroying our own and others life-support systems”. Hence, the respect for nature is not only altruistic in the sense that humans should take care of nature to be good, based on a moral obligation. It is based on the understanding that we need nature to live, that we are dependent on nature to thrive for humans to thrive. The idea of respecting nature can have different meanings. For instance, Aina refers to the Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) “*Fjellvettreglene*”, the guidelines for common sense in the mountains, when explaining what she means with respect for nature. These say that one needs to respect the weather and mountains, as it can be dangerous when trekking. However, Aina stresses that this does not present the full picture, adding that “[...] we get so incredibly much back from nature that we do not even understand. And when one does not understand something one needs to have respect for it” (Aina). Rather than respecting the threats of being out in nature, Aina’s respect for nature is based on the intrinsic value of nature, nature-human interdependency, and the responsibility humans have in these interdependent relations.

Experiencing solidarity

The more personal experiences of being dependent on or being in solidarity with nature are often connected to emotional and embodied experiences and encounters. As argued by Tava, “[e]motions are essential to understanding how we value the world”, hence it is key to learn how to make good use of them (Tava, 2021, p. 11). In his claim Tava is supported by the Norwegian philosopher and environmentalist Sigmund Kvaløy, who argues that “[e]motions are therefore clearly within the frame of our task, and have the right to be considered” (my

translation, Kvaløy, 1975, p. 177). Thus, as youth attempt to practice ‘thinking-feeling with the earth’, they follow the calls of scholars (Escobar, 2019). Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth share stories of when they first saw and understood environmental destruction, and how this made them feel, while connecting this to the reasons why they engage in environmentalism. As such, they use their emotions and embodied reactions in their activism. For Jarle, his experience at Jostedalbreen has been important for his climate and environmental engagement, as seeing the difference year by year of how the glacier melted made him feel the changes in his own body. “Since the first time I was there it has withdrawn so much!” (Jarle). For others experiencing air-pollution or losing nature that they felt connected to in various ways has been key for their engagement. These are all experiences of the injustice, oppression and exploitation of nature that trigger reactions and action.

Though it is complex why I started getting engaged in climate and environmental issues, there are many reasons for that, one of them is definitely when I read that everything I love, and the whole ‘fristed’ [sanctuary] that was built up around me as a child, was in danger. Then it became very important for me to start fighting for it. – Helena

The experience described by Helena is one of solidarity with nature, where she has an emotional reaction to the injustice, oppression and exploitation of nature that she translates into action. Building on the theories of Tava, explained above, solidarity with nature is triggered by negative emotional reactions to injustice, just as solidarity with humans (Tava, 2021). For Helena the basis of her reaction is love, however this love is only turned into action when there is a threat or an experience of injustice; “everything I love [...] was in danger”. In the interview, Helena goes on to speak of a “wish for justice” hence showing that the destruction she reacts to is one she understands as injustice.

[It] makes me feel this immense grief over everything that I know will disappear. To read these numbers and statistics over everything that is wrecked, or to watch nature documentaries and hear how much is lost and how much is threatened, and to see images of things that will be lost the next decade, no matter what we do, it hits a weak spot. And it is another aspect of the climate and environmental crisis that is not about human lives and human destinies, and us as community, but nature itself. And also the nature that I will never see, or be close to [...] And I do think that one should, as an environmental activist, have a fundamental respect for nature – Christel

The strong negative emotional reactions expressed by Christel are according to her based on the current and future loss and destruction of “human lives” and “nature itself”. Further these

feelings and reactions are actively connected to respect for or solidarity with nature, equating love and respect for nature and the recognition of nature's intrinsic value.

[...] it is not possible to explain this away, that love for nature, when it is suddenly destroyed by a construction road in Lofoten then ... 'oh', it is so tangible that nature is wrecked in favor of more concrete and asphalt, and bad air and all these things [...] – Lilly

Lilly has a similar experience, where her love for nature triggers negative emotional reactions as nature is destroyed. The positive emotion is turned negative through the injustice that is practiced. It is common that this solidarity is expressed and experienced through embodied reactions. Frida explains it in the following way: “[...] speaking of things such as [...] interventions in nature I get like physical pain from it [...]” (Frida).

These emotions and embodied reactions and experiences of solidarity are often hard to explain with words (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Hence, they are often expressed as the above - destruction and loss triggers grief or physical pain - and explained through love for nature, respecting the intrinsic value of nature. The challenge to explain one's reactions and solidarity comes to a large degree from experiencing a need to explain oneself, because these reactions and solidarity are seen as breaking with dominant practices. This is both because emotional reactions in themselves are not acknowledged as legitimate ways of knowing, and because solidarity with nature is not acknowledged as equal to other forms of solidarity (Bazzul, 2020; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991).

When I for instance watch nature documentaries, and I know that it will be very powerful, then it is often that I prefer watching it alone because I will most likely cry. Because that represents something in me that is not fully lifeless. - Nikolai

The quote above both points to solidarity with nature based on emotional reactions to injustice and how this might not be acknowledged in society. The note that “I prefer watching it alone because I will most likely cry” both shows that Nikolai has emotional and physical reactions to seeing destruction of nature, and that he does not want to share these reactions with others. Similar comments occur in other interviews.

I can kind of become emotionally affected by being in nature, and seeing nice animals, and I feel that this comes gradually, and I wonder how it will be in ten years, if I then will be like [laughs]. – Kirsti

In the situation above Kirsti laughs and refers to characters who are seen as strange or funny because of their emotional reactions to experiences in nature or with animals. These examples

show how people experience a lack of space to show their emotions and solidarity with non-human nature, and how people are themselves internalizing the denial and ridiculing of their emotions and experiences from the dominant society. A reoccurring idea is that the expression of emotions concerning nature and animals is naïve and therefore not to be taken seriously.

It might sound a bit naïve that one loves animals, but one should sort of respect nature and the animals who live there because they sort of, were there before us... It is their area. - Beate

In Beate's explanation of why she reacts to the destruction of nature she is influenced by the idea that caring for nature is naïve. She is tentative in her phrasing, and her small smiles and giggles show that she finds, or wants to present, her views as naïve or ridiculous.

Well one destroys the living space [smiles] of animals then. And other living beings [giggles]. Who sort of have a right to be there [giggles again]. - Beate

The framing of solidarity with nature and emotional reactions as strange, naïve or ridiculous is key in the production of these experiences as of lower importance and less reliable. In effect, it becomes a denial of these experiences as representations of reality. The denial of emotional and embodied knowledge, and solidarity with nature builds on the human/nature divide in that the divide separates emotional and embodied experiences from rational knowledge, and further denies the existence of nature-human interrelations and dependency (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). According to Bazzul, solidarity with non-human nature is therefore a reaction to the human/nature divide, and an ontological struggle (Bazzul, 2020). Bazzul stresses the importance of creative solidarity in order to understand and express solidarity with non-human nature (Bazzul, 2020). This creative solidarity is as addressed above important for the solidarity that cannot be explained with words, such as the emotional and embodied reactions to environmental destruction. Building on the decolonization of solidarity by Gaztambide-Fernández, creative solidarity is key in the encounters and engagements between 'Others' that confront and rearrange the hegemonic hierarchal order of colonialism and modernity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Further, it implies an understanding of shared and overlapping worldings produced through these encounters that are constantly changing and in negotiation. Through this form of solidarity, spaces for new ways of being (in relation) emerge as the dominant order is challenged. Through my fieldwork it becomes clear that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience this ontological struggle through getting pushback from society when expressing their solidarity, and through their knowledge of other views in society.

I think the thing is that they might not have the same kind of respect for nature and for land areas, and for culture, or our culture, as we have. – Sara

As expressed by Sara above, there is a dissonance between her respect for nature and that of society at large. However, as claimed by Aina below, there is an experience that the understanding of the need for respect or solidarity is shared among climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

But I do think that many more are getting respect for the whole interconnection. And we should have that respect. – Aina

Chapter conclusion: Practicing nature-human interdependency

The feelings of solidarity that are expressed through my fieldwork and discussed above give important insight into how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and practice nature-human relations. Through their solidarity, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth critique and practice alternatives to dominant understandings and practices of nature-human relations. Their solidarity should be understood as rational, emotional and embodied reactions to the injustice, exploitation and oppression of the climate and environmental crisis and the systems of oppression that cause climate and environmental injustice, such as capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy and modernity at large. The understanding of the climate and environmental crisis as a crisis of injustice triggers a need to act, to fight against the injustice, which is expressed as solidarity. Hence, solidarity acts as a transformative element, turning the negative emotional reactions to injustice into the positive emotional, embodied and intellectual engagement to create change.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth describe and express their solidarity through emotional and embodied experiences, responsibility and interdependency. The dimension of interdependency has clear resemblance with identification, which has long been claimed as the basis of solidarity. However, where identification historically builds on sameness, interdependency builds on difference and interdependent relations to uphold life. References to identification in the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth are not limited to one's own group but extended to the other, including the natural other (Mallory, 2009). Further, the focus on solidarity in the struggle entails that all those struggling against the climate and environmental crisis are 'in it together' so to speak. Hence, solidarity is not limited to 'the oppressed' but includes 'the oppressor' once they are willing to betray their own and fight the system of oppression that they are gaining from. This is especially visible in

the dimension of responsibility, where the sense of responsibility is not limited to a form of moral obligation or a core human essence, but largely based on guilt and power. Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth address the power in the systems of oppression and injustice, and point out who is responsible for causing the crisis and other injustices. Including pointing at themselves. This shows a willingness to betray one's own as part of 'the oppressor' and to include a multitude of different actors in the solidarity struggle, as long as they are willing to see and take responsibility. Further, it shows an understanding of interdependent relations between humans, and between humans and nature.

These dimensions of solidarity, and the understanding of entangled systems of oppression presented above, show that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth practice forms of solidarity close to the decolonial solidarity of Gaztambide-Fernández and eco-feminist solidarity of Plumwood and Mallory (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Mallory, 2009). Their solidarity builds on difference in being, but mutuality in the struggle. It is relational, focusing on the interdependency between all beings and things. It is creative, practicing forms of solidarity not easily expressed in words but in emotional and embodied experiences, and through encounters with others (including the natural other). Finally, it is transitive as it is continuously being practiced and transformed through practice. The practices of solidarity with humans and nature alike transform both the solidarity itself, the actors and the causes of injustice. This is visible in the extension of solidarity to nature based on the understanding of interdependency gained through encounters with indigenous ways of being, with natural others and through personal emotional and embodied experiences. The space for these encounters and experiences are opened up through solidarity practices that again open spaces for other ways of practicing solidarity. Here the experience of solidarity with nature increases the space for and acceptance of emotional and embodied ways of knowing, that break with the human/nature divide and further strengthen the experiences of nature-human interdependency and therefore solidarity. The relations between human and non-human nature is central in the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth. The experiences of responsibility and interdependency with humans and with non-human nature does not exist in opposition. Rather, solidarity with humans is strengthened through understanding interdependency with non-human nature, and vice-versa. Such as in the struggles for Riehpovuotna and Førdefjorden: The people, fjord, fish and reindeer are interdependent, and can only thrive together; hence, the solidarity struggles in the protest camps includes them all.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth are through their solidarity, both in their speech acts presented through interviews and in their actions presented through observations, practicing nature-human interdependency. Further, these practices of nature-human interdependency confront and challenge the one-world world of modernity, as they build on understandings that break with the human/nature divide and include multiple ways of worlding. Especially the solidarity with nature experienced and expressed emotionally and bodily breaks with the modern world's human/nature divide. As addressed above the divide denies the practice of solidarity with non-human nature, while also denying room and validity of emotional and embodied ways of knowing. The importance of solidarity with nature in opposing the human/nature divide is made clear by the eco-feminist solidarity of Mallory (2009), that calls for solidarity based on difference and interdependency. According to Bazzul (2020) solidarity with nature is ontological struggle, and according to Gaztambide-Ferández (2012) solidarity building on difference and interdependency breaks with the modern world ontology, rather engaging in relational ontologies. As such, the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth are not only practices of nature-human interdependency, but enactments of other ways of worlding that confront the modern.

6. Human and nature in climate and environmental struggles

Through a small tunnel from the center of Vevring there is a place called Engebø with five small farms and a construction road up to the Engebø mountain. This is where Nordic Mining is planning to set up their processing-plant. Starting (maybe) next week they will 'clear' the area and start construction. We have base in the first house that will be demolished. The small farm which has not been used for years is now covered in banners; "*Vi voktar fjorden*" (We are guarding the fjord), "*Stem for ein rein Førdefjord*" (Vote for a clean Førdefjord), "*Velkommen inn*" (Welcome). On one of the walls hangs a large painting of two fishermen with traditional clothing, smoking pipes. By the entrance of the house, there are more banners: "*Beskytt fjordene*" (Protect the fjords) is written over a painting of life in the fjord, "*Ver kjær i di mor og din fjord <3*" (Love your mother and your fjord <3). The hallway is full of wet shoes and large 'chain-suits' (the thermos-suits people wear during actions to keep warm). We are allowed to live here and use the space as we wish by the former owners, but the house has been sold to the mining company and we have to move out once they start their work. Maybe Friday, maybe next week, the week after that or in a month.

A group of people are sitting on the ground outside the Engebø-house with chains and chain-suits on. They are holding hands and some hold signs: "Ditch ocean dumping", "*Nei til gruveslam i Førdefjorden*" (No to mining waste in the Førdefjord) is written around a drawing

of a hand dropping a mountain into the ocean, with a red line across (just like a prohibition-sign). The camp-coordinator is explaining what to do, and not to do when the police comes. The actions need to be non-violent. The only thing you can do is to be relaxed, and chant: “*Gruveslam er Norges skam, la fjorden leve!*” (Mining waste is Norway’s disgrace, let the fjord live!). Only two of the activists present were part of the actions in 2016, as many of the others were under-age then and could not join.

There is a constant turnover of people in and out of the camp. People talk about how beautiful the place is. The mountains, fjords and houses. Some have decided to fix broken things in the Engebø house and pick trash from the fields and shore. Some other people went fishing with someone from the village. Many work with social and traditional media while others cook, clean and organize things for the camp. I want to contribute to the community and volunteer to make lunch, clean after breakfast, bring the trash to the recycling station, paint banners and so on. The days are filled with different activities that both keep the camp running and spread information about the plans of the mining company. We all do our part, though some might do more than others. It is a continuous dialogue to keep the balance. – The Førdefjorden-struggle

The protest camps by Førdefjorden and Riehpovuotna are produced through the inter-relations between activists, the landscapes, and its inhabitants. As such, the camps and the fjord struggles are in themselves practices of nature-human relations within which various practices exist. These practices include physical actions, speech acts, materials produced for and within the struggles, and the emotional and embodied experiences of all participants. In the text above, the banners calling to “Protect the fjords” and “let the fjord live” are enacting specific nature-human relations based on interdependency and respect, as opposed to the nature-human relations enacted by the mining project.

Through my research, I have a specific focus on how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and practice relations between humans and nature, by addressing their own understandings, practices, and experience. The chapters above have touched upon these questions but not gone into detailed discussions. In this chapter, I will look more explicitly into the conversations I have had with climate- and environmentally-engaged youth about their understandings and experiences, as well as looking at the practices that I have co-produced through my fieldwork. Throughout my research, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth express their knowledge and experiences of how different societies and cultures address nature-human relations, pointing both to the human/nature divide as dominant in the West, and to nature-human interdependency. Further, there is a common

concern regarding human use of nature, stressing the dangers of use that builds on the human/nature divide and the benefits of use building on nature-human interdependency.

Understandings of nature-human relations

[...] this with human-nature relation, it is so natural to me that it is a bit hard to point out, because it is so completely obvious in everything I do, think and say. – Sara

As explained by Sara it is difficult to point out how one understands nature-human relations as it is embedded in our cultural, philosophical and religious understandings and internalized in our everyday lives. For Sara, as for most others, it is through her everyday life that she understands her relations with nature. However, it is sometimes useful to take a step back and look at the knowledge and experience people have of the context in which relations are acted out and understood. This section explores how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and relate to the practices of nature-human relations in society.

The dominant human/nature divide

We spoke about the term ‘culture’ at school recently. ‘What is culture?’ and then we made a clear, or the teacher promoted a very clear divide with culture being everything that is not nature. And that is a known definition, it is. But I stopped a bit because I do not like that divide. So much of nature is much more important to me than material culture. – Helena

Helena here refers to and discusses the human/nature divide where culture is seen as “everything that is not nature”. Such as Helena, many youth express that they are taught this divide through school and culture, but that it does not resonate with their own experience and knowledge. Claiming that nature is “much more important” to her, Helena specifically critiques how the human/nature divide is hierarchical, placing nature below culture in value and importance. Helena’s experience points to the dominance of the human/nature divide in modern knowledge. However, her reaction shows that its dominance is contested.

[...] I think that I see nature-human relations as something systemic in that one grows up with certain attitudes in relation to the system one lives in, and if that system is a consumer system then it is natural to think that one is a bit distanced. [...] for me it is quite natural to think that I am not independent of nature. - Frida

In Frida’s experience, “the system one lives in” is key in shaping one’s attitudes and understandings of nature-human relations. Her example of a “consumer system” refers to a culture and economic system dominant in Norway, that she argues is distancing humans from nature. However, Frida further states that her personal understanding is different as she sees

herself as “not independent of nature”. What can be understood from this is that Frida experiences a push from a larger system to be distanced and independent from nature, while at the same time experiencing interdependency with nature, making it clear that it is not only the dominant system that shapes attitudes and understandings.

In this setting, I think that [our western mentality] is to put humans at the center and the individual at the center and forget that or not think that we are a part of nature. - Christel

After Christel criticized “our western mentality”, I asked what she meant by the term, and the above was her answer. In Christel’s understanding, western mentality is the human/nature divide. As such she understands the divide as defining for western thinking. Moreover, she finds that this is mistaken, as she specifies that placing humans at the center is to “forget, or not think that we are part of nature”. This view is highly supported throughout my research.

We have thought that we could separate the one from the other [...] in our philosophical history Descartes came and was like; separate the soul and material [...] viewing animals as a mechanism [...] And nature just as this, everything is just parts that can be picked apart from each other. I feel that the more I learn, the more I understand that everything is connected together in so complex ways that we do not yet understand it. But that we might at least still understand that it is connected in nature. – Lilly

Lilly’s description points to the Cartesian dualism that, as addressed in chapter 2, has made a great mark on western philosophy and sciences (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991; Vetlesen, 2015). Lilly argues against this divide by pointing to our lacking understanding of the complexities and interconnections of nature. By referring to the origins of the human/nature divide, Lilly shows how it is not a universal truth but a construction; hence, she is able to counter it with more force.

[Dualism] it is a term we use a lot now that I have religion in the 3rd grade. Where one sees the world as divided in two and the human as divided in two. Where the spiritual is one dimension and the physical is in another dimension. So not just nature, but everything physical really. And that the spiritual is often higher valued than the physical, so I think that it is part of justifying [...] things one does with the physical, because it is sort of not that important anyways. Or that for instance with nature [...] it is not valued by virtue of what it is. – Frida

As explained by Frida this dualism is common in some religious teachings as the spiritual is seen as “another dimension” than the physical and “often higher valued”. The divide between the spiritual and physical follows the logic of the human/nature divide and other connected

dualism as addressed in chapter 2. According to Frida this dualism “is part of justifying [...] things one does with the physical” as it is not seen as valuable in itself. As such Frida sees this dualism as central in why nature is being destroyed, an understanding that is highly in accordance with academic discussions (Cronon, 1995; Moore, 2017; Vetlesen, 2015).

Countering the human/nature divide

I do think that nature has intrinsic value. And that nature, a bit the same as humans, get exploited way too grossly through the system we live in. And that in itself is not good. Not that natural resources cannot then be used by future generations, though that might be a way to appeal to people it is not my main reason. I think that over-consumption of nature in itself is bad, because nature in itself is good. – Frida

Frida counters the human/nature divide by stating that “nature has intrinsic value” showing this in her argument that over-consumption is bad not only because it uses up the natural resources for future generations, but “because nature in itself is good”. Further, in claiming that humans *and* nature are exploited by the system, Frida shows that though her focus is not on humans it is neither on nature, but on both humans and nature in relation.

I think that nature has value, but I think it can be a bit hard to argue why, or difficult to explain why it has value. [...] it is much easier to argue for the use-value of nature and I do feel that perspective is what society has [...] like; ‘what can it do for us?’ when speaking of ecosystem services. [...] But I think that animals and plants are also... they cannot just extinguish species just like that. Yes, it has a value, but I cannot really say why. - Martha

In Martha’s understanding nature has value in itself. However, she struggles to explain it as she says “it is much easier to argue for the use-value of nature”, experiencing a focus on the use-value and less room for addressing nature’s intrinsic value. The very need she experiences to argue, and explain why nature has intrinsic value show us the limited space for her understanding. It points to an experienced demand for rational explanation of intrinsic value for society to accept it. However, the experience of nature’s value might not only be rational, but based on other forms of knowing. This is highly reoccurring in my interviews and many address how others see their views as strange or uncommon.

I experience that, though it may sound fundamental, to be a part of nature and not the leader over it, it is a thought that I experience as quite estranged to many. [...] I experience it when I speak, and if I manage to communicate it in a way that is simple enough but also concrete enough to understand, then I experience that many have actually felt the same. – Helena

Looking at the experience of Helena, she refers to views on nature-human interdependency as feelings. Further, she shows how it is necessary for many to recognize these feelings in order to understand her expression of nature-human relations. The difficulty of explaining nature's intrinsic value might point to how this is more than a 'rational' argument, but rather an emotional and embodied experience. However, as is discussed in the conceptual framework, reason is placed above all other forms of knowing (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). As such, arguments, or explanations based on emotional and embodied knowledge are less valued and accepted.

I have started to feel that I understand a bit more this with nature's intrinsic value, more than that I have learned it [...] I experience it more maybe. That I can sort of become emotionally moved by being in nature and seeing nice animals [...] - Kirsti

Kirsti's expression of how she experiences the intrinsic value of nature shows how this is understood through multiple forms of knowledge including embodied and emotional knowledge. According to her this experience is different from having "learned it" in that it is stronger, "I experience it more".

I get so frustrated over that people [...] this anthropocentric time we live in, that people must be here [...] and must be above nature all the time. That we think that we are so much smarter and we think that as long as we have goods in our lives all is well. But nature has always been here, we are a part of nature but we have placed ourselves above it. Nature is a system that has worked so well for such a long time, in like harmony, and then we come and mess it all up and think that it is just humans that have value, that is very stupid, it is a very un-intelligent claim. – Guro

Yet embodied and emotional knowledge does not exclude other forms of knowledge. Building on scientific knowledge of natural systems Guro argues that it is "very un-intelligent" to claim "that it is just humans that have value". As such, we can see that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth practice ways of thinking-feeling with nature (Escobar, 2019). In her statement, Guro addresses how people place humans above nature seeing humans as smarter and prioritizing human needs by referring to 'anthropocentrism'. The critique of anthropocentrism, focusing on how humans are part of nature and nature having value, has long been key in Norwegian environmentalism. Norwegian philosophers such as Arne Næss and Sigmund Kvaløy have developed non-anthropocentric ecophilosophies while being influential and active in the environmental movement (Anker, 2020; Kielland, 2017). As addressed in chapter 2, the Ecosophy T of Næss is a philosophical understanding that

builds on the principle of egalitarianism in the biosphere, where all beings have the equal right to self-realization (Næss, 1975). Further, the ecophilosophy of Kvaløy is actively political as it responds to the crisis at hand, building on different realities of nature-human interactions and long-term perspectives (Kvaløy, 1975).

[...] I remember from past meetings when Sigmund Kvaløy used to be there [laughs], and give lectures about guiding principles. All this legacy of him and Arne Næss and that group there, what I think it means is that even if there were no humans to look at nature it would still be beautiful in itself. And that we as humans are a part of nature, but not raised above it, and that it does not exist for us. - Kirsti

As explained by Kirsti the legacy of Sigmund Kvaløy and Arne Næss has marked the guiding principles for much of the environmental movement in Norway. The understanding that “humans are a part of nature, but not raised above it” is key in these principles. Thus distinguishing them from what might be understood as the dominant views in society as addressed above. However, there are parts of the more traditional environmentalism that is critiqued by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth.

[...] then it is about protecting something from the actions of humans, or violence or what you want to call it. But here it is more about finding a balance. Where one has to realize that it is mutual [...] I do think that many, especially in the nature-parts of the environmental movement think that nature should be protected because it is beautiful [...] - Nikolai

According to Nikolai, the focus on protecting nature for its beauty is rather large in parts of the environmental movement, and as addressed by Kirsti this beauty of nature “does not exist for us”. The statement by Nikolai points to how such an understanding can lead to a protection of nature “from the actions of humans”. The environmental protection referred to here, builds on the idea of ecocentrism as opposed to anthropocentrism. These views are part of a more traditional form of environmentalism focusing on the protection of ‘wilderness’ (see discussion in chapter 2, p. 10-11). According to Cronon, the very idea of wilderness reproduces the nature-human divide and frames “any use as ab-use” (Cronon, 1995, p. 85). This form of environmental protection is often critiqued in my interviews for disregarding the inter-dependency of humans and nature, and several people reference how protection of natural areas from human use have led to the eviction of indigenous and local populations. Through their critique, youth stress that the protection of beautiful nature through the exclusion of humans is a continuation of the human/nature divide.

If we put the premise of nature a lot higher than that of humans, then we have misunderstood something I think. Because we are a part of nature. We are not necessarily above nature, but we need to care for nature, for it is we who have destroyed it too. It is we who are capable of destroying it. - Aina

What is common among climate- and environmentally-engaged youth is rather a call for recognizing humans' capacity for both care and destruction, and hence human responsibility as addressed in chapter 5. Aina's understanding of nature-human relations is neither anthropocentrism nor ecocentrism, but that relations are not based on a hierarchy of value and power. Equally, Nikolai claims that a recognition of nature as part of himself "is also a sort of anthropocentrism". As such, the relations people point to exist outside the human/nature divide also in terms of how it can be conceptualized.

I think that humans are a part of nature, and that I feel quite strongly. One is not above, one does not have the right to do what one wants with nature [...] We do not stand above and can protect or not use it at all, and put it away in the distance where we should only look at it, like; here nature is nice. But we do not either have the right to 'ta oss til rette' [take or do without asking] it is something we should take care of, and make sure that, both for humans, clearly we need nature, but also the thought that nature needs humans. – Elias

Pointing to nature's dependency on humans as caretakers and part of ecosystems, Elias expresses the need for an understanding that humans and nature are interdependent. The aim is hence not to place humans in center, or nature in center, but to place humans in nature.

Human use of nature

How we humans use nature, and what we get back from nature, that is maybe one of the greatest issues with how we run things today. That humans act as if we are above nature. That we can take what we want, just as we please without thinking about what it does to nature, and the animals and all the species in nature [...] – Beate

There is a common perception expressed in interviews that human use of nature both shapes and shows how we understand nature-human relations. This perception might be better understood through the work of scholars such as Simone Abram, Marianne Lien and John Law, who study how reality is produced through practice as addressed in the conceptual framework (Abram & Lien, 2011; Law & Lien, 2018; Law & Lien, 2013). Through this lens, it is easier to see how different understandings lead to different forms of use, again shaping understandings and further use. How humans use nature is often addressed through issues where human use is at the expense of nature, use that can be understood in the light of

reducing the value of nature as only instrumental for humans. Further human use of nature is also often addressed through solutions where human use is for the benefit of humans and nature alike. This form of use might reflect a more complex understanding of nature's value, not limited to the binary of use-value or intrinsic value. A key topic is therefore how different use of nature strengthens or weakens the human/nature divide, as the divide is understood to distance humans from our dependency on nature and further legitimize destruction of nature.

Nature as resource and financial value

[...] that money and profit is prioritized above humans and environment. That one has such a view of the world, that we humans are sort of above all else. Makes that one sort of allows oneself, to chop down the rainforest and emit greenhouse gases, because it is for the better for us humans, or some humans. Independently of how it affects nature. – Beate

According to Beate, the prioritization of profit “above humans and environment” is connected to “a view of the world” where humans are placed above nature. Beate therefore argues that it is not all of humankind but “some humans” and mainly the capitalist system that is the cause of environmental destruction. An understanding in line with academic critiques of the capitalist system and the modern world (Blaser, 2013; Escobar, 1995; Moore, 2017).

Everyone keeps pushing their profit to the very end because they do not want to stop. [...] So, it is this industrial capitalist operation that takes people away from [nature], even those who do animal husbandry or fishing, and to a certain extent reindeer herding, it takes away the cultural and natural elements from it. The animals become machines, and then one is not part of nature anymore, then one has put oneself very much above. And nature is just a tool for profit for you. – Elias

Elias here points to how animals are seen as machines and humans are placed above nature, referring to the Cartesian dualism as addressed above (Vetlesen, 2015). He connects this divide with a search for profit and over-use of resources. In doing so, Elias shares the understanding of Beate, addressing how the push for profit through industrial capitalism is a view and use of nature where nature is reduced to a “tool for profit”. This use and view of nature is at the center of his critique.

[...] when things are measured in an amount it becomes a very reductionist view of nature. You cannot manage to grasp all that nature is through money. No matter how hard you try. And that for instance, if one is to build somewhere [...] then you should always weigh nature considerations up against socio-economic considerations, as if there is an opposition there. As if it is possible to put considerations for nature up against socio-economic considerations like;

then you have forgotten that everything, everything is based on healthy and resilient ecosystems and the carrying capacity of nature [...] Now we are addressing the capitalist system of eternal growth. It is not possible. We actually have some carrying limits that we relate to and that is the carrying capacity of nature and that... and then we have sort of detached ourselves from reality. – Christel

Christel explains how reducing nature to financial measures is highly limiting. Her critique addresses the limits of financial calculations, “you cannot [...] grasp all that nature is through money” saying that nature has value beyond financial value. Further stating that all financial value is based on nature, hence nature and the economy cannot be placed in opposition. This shows an understanding of interdependency between nature and human (activities). Finally, Christel addresses how the belief in “eternal growth” is a disregard of nature’s carrying capacity, thus pointing to the large political and academic discussions regarding ‘green growth’ (Hickel & Kallis, 2020). Adding that disregarding nature’s carrying capacity means that we have “detached ourselves from reality”, Christel shows that this capacity, as a frame for activities, is central in her definition of reality. As such, Christel is rejecting the growth-paradigm that is foundational for the modern world, not only framing it as a different view of reality, but outside of reality.

One has understood to a larger and larger degree that one cannot calculate the value of nature, of what is lost when one does an intervention. One cannot either transfer nature back to how it was. And one cannot buy back species that are lost no matter how much one wants it. So, [...] money and business interests need to have a final limit where one simply cannot continue. We do not have respect for nature before we manage to set the limits that are needed, and I do not think we do that today. – Aina

The understanding that a focus on money is reductionist is highly reoccurring in my interviews. Aina follows the line of argument expressed by Christel when addressing the limitations of money and financial calculations to value nature. By pointing to how money and nature to some extent are incommensurable, Aina and Christel reject the capitalist assumption that ‘modern’ money is a universal tool for valuing everything that is considered material through the mind/matter (human/nature) divide (Maurer, 2006). As such, Aina and Christel counter the modern understanding of money that is a pillar in modern world systems. Further, Aina presents a link between how money is limited when trying to understand nature, and how financial interests should be limited to end environmental destruction. This link is respect for nature and the lack of this in a profit driven world. The

experiences presented above resonate with academic debates regarding the role of capitalism in environmental destruction and climate change. According to Vetlesen, the capitalist economy is key in the (re)production of the human/nature divide (Vetlesen, 2015). While Moore argues that it is the expansion of the capitalist economy that is the root cause of the climate and environmental crisis (Moore, 2017).

I simply think that many who have not grown up so close to nature have a too large focus on money and that one should earn [money]. That if it looks like there is un-touched nature that it is just to take from it, and that is not how it is. - Sara

The understanding that money or the economic system is central in shaping peoples view of nature, and further the over-use and destruction of nature, is highly reoccurring. Above Sara counters the capitalist/colonialist view that “un-touched nature” or wilderness is there to be taken and developed, following the idea of ‘terra nullius’ – land that is not owned (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018). This view and her critique show some of the tensions of different understandings and use of nature. When holding the power to define nature one holds the power to use and therefore shape nature. Further, Sara links people’s understandings of nature to physical closeness to nature in their upbringing. A link that broadens the term ‘use of nature’ beyond the search for profit through resource-use, and points to how use of nature is key in shaping one’s understandings of nature, and again one’s further use.

Nature as a sanctuary

I feel that many people are mostly concerned with the use-value of nature, of what nature can do for us by capturing or storing carbon or other things. And then there is a lot of people who also think that nature has value in itself, but maybe that is often people who are a lot out in nature themselves and care for ‘friluftsliv’⁶ [...] – Martha

A common understanding in my interviews is that *friluftsliv* is highly connected to seeing natures intrinsic value. According to the Norwegian environmental philosophers Vetlesen and Hverven, having direct personal experiences in nature is key for people’s engagement for nature (Hverven, 2018; Vetlesen, 2015). As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth follows in the footsteps of Norwegian philosophers, stressing the importance of being out in nature to understand and appreciate it (Anker, 2020; Næss, 1973, 1975).

⁶ The term *friluftsliv* in Norwegian can be translated to open-air living; being in nature as an activity or way of living. In Norway’s eco-philosophical tradition the concept is referred to as non-competitive activities in nature that gives people meaningful experiences of a physical and mental/emotional character (Faarlund in Næss, 1974, p. 205). Further, *friluftsliv* is central in the Norwegian national identity, and therefore actively managed and promoted by public institutions and non-profit organizations (Westskog, Aase & Leikanger, 2021).

That is maybe part of where my engagement comes from; with Arne Næss and all these 'ecosophers' or what they call themselves, and how they saw the world and nature. I learned a lot about that in high-school in the 'friluftsliv' subjects we had - I went to a 'friluftsliv' school. And the philosophy they had around this I found very interesting. I do not remember much of it, like in my head, but it is there a bit down in the sub-consciousness. - Jarle

As explained by Jarle the ecosophy of Arne Næss has been important in framing views of nature among people engaging in *friluftsliv*. For many this understanding is learned through culture and practice, as it has long been central in producing nature-human relations in Norway (Anker, 2020). Knowing the background of Norwegian environmentalism is helpful when looking at comments about people's understandings of nature-human relations such as; "I have always been this outdoors person. I love being outside." (Aina). Building on the knowledge that the assumption by Martha above is rather common, the statement does more than say that Aina likes to be outside. Through her statement, Aina points to the Norwegian philosophical and cultural history, where being an "outdoors person" entails that one has experienced the intrinsic value of nature. However, it is important to note that this might for some be understood as limited to the use nature for leisure.

Then [100-200 years ago] it was a tool to manage to survive. Now nature has become something completely different. Nature is like a 'fristed' [sanctuary], a space to develop oneself and maybe find a greater meaning. I think it has changed a lot as such. - Jarle

The idea of being "out in nature" as an activity you do for joy, pleasure or leisure is by Jarle presented as different from other ways of using nature. These other forms of usage may also refer to human use at the expense of nature as the focus is on what nature does for humans. Using nature as a sanctuary, however, is seen as more common now than in the past.

It was sort of this connection between human and nature that was, or some of the questions connected to this that was part of the reason why I started my environmental engagement. Ever since I was small, I have always been introduced to the nature in my local area [...] and we always used the forest, both as a resource when it came to picking berries and mushroom, and such, but also mentally. Maybe even more as a 'fristed' [sanctuary]. - Helena

For Helena, nature as both a place to harvest and as a sanctuary was introduced to her as a child (such as stressed by Sara above), and she directly connects this experience to her engagement. Helena addresses how she was introduced to using the forest mentally, pointing to emotional and embodied experience and knowledge. Later in the interview Helena stated, "I do not think we understand how much we need nature. Both of course for food and

resources but also mentally”. Helena is here stressing the importance of understanding human dependency of nature including the emotional and embodied dependency, in order to understand how to use and relate to nature. As such, Helena shows that use based on emotional and embodied interdependency enacts nature as a sanctuary, further producing the understanding of nature as a sanctuary and as mentally important for humans. This understanding and enactment of nature resonates with much of the traditional culture of *friluftsliv* in Norway, though expanding on how understandings of nature-human interdependency are necessary for and derived from the use of nature as a sanctuary (Næss, 1975; Westskog et al., 2021).

Dependency and distance

That it might distance people a bit, that people do not feel a responsibility to care for nature, that one gets so used to the abundance of things. [...] I think that if one is dependent on nature, and every day is dependent on weather and nature to know if one manages to harvest, that one then gets a different respect for it. But we who grow up in a country like Norway are used to the vegetables laying in the vegetable counter and the meat is packed in plastic and one forgets where it all came from, and what is behind it. – Beate

According to Beate, dependency is key in developing different understandings of nature-human relations. Her description of dependency focuses on direct experiences of everyday dependency such as a farmer’s dependency on the weather. Through the example of food, Beate makes a distinction between those more directly dependent on nature, the producer, and those who might be more distanced, the consumer buying vegetables and meat packed in plastic. Further, she connects these experiences of dependency to respect and feeling “a responsibility to care for nature” stating that those more directly dependent have more respect for nature than those who do not experience such a dependency.

One becomes very aware of like, ok all the trash I produce here I cannot just throw it out and not think more about it. Or if I take down some trees here, for firewood, then those trees disappear. It is much more local so that it becomes comprehensible and manageable. [...] Just to have all those parts of being human, in nature, sort of showing. Then it becomes much more manageable for the brain. Because I think when we live in a city then we are so far away from the consequences or from seeing the results of what we do, that it becomes completely abstract [...] - Lilly

Another explanation of direct dependency on nature is the experience of Lilly living in a forest and seeing the impacts of her activities. According to Lilly the impacts becomes more

“comprehensible and manageable” at a local scale where all “parts of being human” are visible. Her experience shows us that direct dependency and experiencing the results of human activities is key when trying to understand how humans affect nature in a negative manner. However, Lilly also addresses how humans can use nature in a more positive manner.

One wish was just this romantic dream of being closer to nature [laughs]. Such a wish to really be in touch with the elements. - Lilly

Her aim was to live more “in touch with the elements” or “closer to nature”, hence moving away from a life-style and use of nature she experienced as negative, to one she experienced as positive. This can both be understood as ‘romanticism’ as she herself addresses, and as an understanding that the dominant relations between humans and nature need to change (Law & Lien, 2018). Later in the interview Lilly explains that the romantic ideas quickly were proven wrong, and she is highly aware and critical of her romanticism. Her expression of the importance of experiencing dependency should therefore be understood in light of this. Lilly shows us that living “close to nature” can lead to a stronger experience and knowledge of dependency, further triggering a wish to change how humans use nature. Her experience points to how practice shapes understandings, which again shape practices. However, acknowledging human interdependency with nature is not always this easy. According to Vetlesen it is the vulnerability in being dependent on natural others for survival and wellbeing that is historically challenging (Vetlesen, 2015).

One might think that it is scary to learn so much that one did not know before, or to know how great something is or how complex an ecosystem is, how dependent we are on every little cell and every little part of nature. It can be scary, but I mostly think it is beautiful. Because, it reminds me of that overview, it allows me to understand how small I am. And for me that is not painful, for me it is nice to see how small I am in such a beautiful nature and beautiful world. So, to have enough knowledge about the nature around us, both what is close to us and in other parts of the world, I think is very important for us not to take it for granted and for building up enough respect. - Helena

Experiencing and understanding dependency through gaining knowledge about the complexities of nature is here addressed by Helena as beautiful and important. She points to how it might be scary or painful for some to gain such knowledge, especially addressing how small humans are. Through her statement, Helena challenges the assumptions that humans do not easily accept ones vulnerability and dependency on nature (Vetlesen, 2015). An assumption that is challenged by all ways of living that acknowledge nature-human

interdependency, and is hence limited to the modern world. Later in the interview Helena addresses how lacking knowledge of and respect for nature's complexities and greatness can lead to humans taking nature for granted, further legitimizing destruction.

I think the consequence is that we will take a hit. I think we underestimate nature and how much we need it. We build down so much of this indispensable resource and building block and foundational pillar. And there is so much we do not know, though we think we know everything about everything already. Still we can so quickly reach these tipping points, or take away that small building block that made sure the whole system was standing. And the consequences will be unforeseen, and so much greater than what we imagined because nature is so interdependent and so finely woven and yes, really magical [laughs]. – Christel

Throughout my interviews and observations, many stress the danger of humans not knowing enough about nature, but acting as if one does. This should be understood in light of Enlightenment thinking's difficulty to recognize the limits of human knowledge and capabilities, as well as its assumed privileged access to reality (Blaser, 2013). These assumptions both limit ways of knowing otherwise and produce uncertainty as something negative, thus limiting human capacity and willingness to adapt to uncertain changes. In my research there is a large focus on understanding human dependency on nature, and how vulnerable humans are to changes in nature due to this dependency as expressed by Christel. She here stresses the need for fighting the climate and environmental crisis for the sake of humans and nature alike. Placing humans in nature, the interdependency of nature must be understood as including nature-human interdependency.

When one thinks in large terms [...] we have after all been a part of the ecosystems. One can see it when one stops. When states take away the possibility for indigenous peoples to burn forest for instance, [...] there are very large fires and things are laid fallow because one stops doing the things one has done. [...] And if one looks at the Amazon where many people have been living. People have not only looked at nature and like; 'oh that is nice', one has taken care of trees and taken care of fauna. One has made sure that it is more productive to get more back from it. Though one has not done agriculture one has acknowledged that it is in the diversity there is a lot of value, and one has wanted to care for that diversity. – Elias

As stated by Elias humans are “a part of the ecosystems” and have used and taken care of these ecosystems for the benefit of humans and nature alike. This is an example of how dependency is mutual, hence a form of interdependency. Human use has throughout history contributed positively as well as negatively to the ecosystems making the ecosystems

dependent on human use to be upheld in their current state. This understanding is supported by Cronon who stressed that people have always used nature, to the extent that no part of nature is untouched ‘wilderness’ (Cronon, 1995). Building on this understanding it is not possible to protect nature by excluding humans as discussed above. The examples presented by Elias of indigenous use of forest, such as the Amazon, show that ecosystems can thrive through human use if this use is based on understandings of nature-human interdependency and mutual respect.

Sustainable use and indigenous knowledge

One does not acknowledge that the local population and indigenous peoples actually have knowledge about management of the areas, and one does not acknowledge that people have knowledge about the ecosystems one lives in. [One assumes] that this is something technical that one has to see from the outside [...] And that has caused inconceivably large problems across the world. People generally want to care for the areas around them, and know a lot about the areas around them, but the management does not take it in because the science is so incredibly slow and people have not researched it. Then it arrives, 30 years after, instead of actually listening to the people who know it in the research. – Elias

Building on the understanding of interdependency the use of nature can be managed in a sustainable way for the mutual benefit of humans and nature. Such sustainable use is according to Elias dependent on the acknowledgement of local and indigenous people’s knowledges and practices. A view that is supported by scholars studying relational worldings which are especially prominent in indigenous societies (Álvarez & Coolsaet, 2020; Escobar, 2019). In his example of management and science disregarding local and indigenous knowledge, Elias points to some assumptions of nature-human relations dominant in modern western thinking. Stressing that people “want to care for the areas around them”, Elias criticizes the assumption that humans use resources to their own benefit at the expense of nature. Further, Elias addresses how knowledge of ecosystems is understood as “something technical that one has to see from the outside” pointing to the human/nature divide in modern sciences including its denial of other forms of knowing (Escobar, 2007; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). The assumption that knowledge of ecosystems is “technical” and need to be understood “from the outside” denies nature-human interdependency, including knowledge and practices that are based within nature.

It is also this with the term ‘meahcci’, one does not really have the same term in Norwegian at all. ‘Meahcci’ it, well it can be translated to forest, ‘utmark’ [land outside of farmland] [...]

But it is still a bit imprecise because ‘meahcci’, it is not a concrete place where we go, but ‘meahcci’ is sort of around, and one has different types of ‘meahcci’. One has ‘luome meahcci’ that means cloudberries, cloudberry-field, when I say that I am going to ‘luome meahcci’ it means that I am going to pick cloudberries [...] I feel that in Norwegian it sort of becomes this automatic distance to what we call ‘meahcci’. ‘Utmark’ is sort of out somewhere but ‘meahcci’ is also here [...] – Sara

An example of how modern science excludes knowledge and practices based within nature is how the Sámi term *meahcci* is wrongly translated to Norwegian such as explained above by Sara. According to Sara the translation to Norwegian creates a distance between humans and nature, that is not present in the Sámi term. For Sara, *meahcci* refers to nature-human practices producing places. Similarly, Joks, Østmo and Law argue that *meahcci* shows how in Sámi, nature is not understood as divided and distanced from humans and human practices, but is produced through nature-human interactions only existing through these relations (Joks et al., 2020). The interdependency explicit in the term means that Sámi knowledge of *meahcci* can never be understood from the outside.

In a quote comparing Sámi and Norwegian language, Christel argues that seeing nature as something that “exists outside” is defining for Norwegian culture, thus giving nature a smaller place in society. In this manner, the human/nature divide is entrenched in the Norwegian language and culture. Her experience is supported by Joks et al. who discuss how some languages are not able to “articulate situated and radically relational ways of knowing.” (Joks et al., 2020, p. 305).

And when it comes to the Sámi then, we have always lived very closely with nature and there has really never been such a divide. But we as humans have always been a part of nature, and not at the top of the nutritional chain, but part of the all-encompassing. And we have always been dependent on nature, on the forest and ‘vidda’ [open mountain space] and the sea and the mountains and the animals, especially. – Sara

Sara tells us there has never been a human/nature divide in Sámi. However, she does not limit the interdependency to Sámi people stating, “we as humans have always been a part of nature [...] part of the all-encompassing”. In her understanding, all humans are dependent on and part of nature. The possibility of sustainable use for the benefit of nature and humans together is hence not limited to the indigenous Sámi people. It is accessible to all, if one recognizes and builds on ways of knowing and using nature from indigenous worldings.

When I was younger, I had this dream of [laughs] being able to live as one with nature, such as some indigenous peoples do. It is very fascinating that one for instance should not let anything from an animal go to waste. That one should use everything, all of it. And I think like, yes that really has to be the way it should be done. – Martha

The acknowledgement and appreciation of indigenous knowledge and practices is highly reoccurring throughout my interviews and observations. Some might come across as romanticism such as the dreams of Martha. However, most people are familiar with the specific practices they appreciate and build their appreciation on communication and interactions with indigenous peoples.

I have found it very nice to listen to indigenous peoples from other places in the world speak about their views on nature and human. Because, often it is they who speak about this with respect. And that we need to respect that it is this earth that we come from, and learning and building that curiosity instead of destroying it. I often experience that they to a much larger extent have a thought that we are a part of it, not just standing outside. So, I think it is incredibly nice to listen to Sámi people, indigenous peoples in the rainforest, and their thoughts around this. - Helena

A common understanding is that different indigenous cultures such as the Sámi value and respect nature more than the dominant Norwegian culture does, hence driving the wish to learn from these practices that are seen as “the way it should be done”. Building on the quote of Helena this appreciation is due to such knowledge and practices being real alternatives to the human/nature divide people experience as dominant in Norwegian society.

Nature-human relations in the fjord struggles

The struggles over Riehpovuotna and Førdefjorden described in vignettes throughout the thesis, can be understood to build on different ways of using and producing the fjord landscapes (Abram & Lien, 2011; Law & Lien, 2018; Law & Lien, 2013). The use promoted by the mining companies builds on an understanding of nature as resources for financial gain (tool for profit). Through their use, the mining companies enact the landscapes as natural resources. The mountain becomes minerals and the fjord a dumpsite. This use and understanding explicitly (re)produces the human/nature divide as it for instance builds on the assumption that toxic waste can be dumped and as such disappear. Further, this production of the landscape comes into conflict with the various ways of producing the landscapes that are being reduced or denied through the mining projects (Kramvig & Avango, 2021). This

includes use such as fisheries, farming, reindeer herding and recreation that to different extents are limited by the mining and fjord deposits.

By Førdefjorden, the local population who use the landscape in their everyday lives currently enact the mountains and fjord as spaces of recreation and sustainable harvest. Based on the above characteristics of different forms of use, much of this use can be understood as sustainable and building on nature-human interdependency. However, Nordic Mining is through their plans and practices enacting the Engebø mountain as natural resources to be extracted for financial gains. The test-drilling in 2016 left its mark on the Engebø mountain and there is a history of extractivism that is known by the local population, hence the enactment of the mountain as resources is known, though not dominant. Further, the fjord will through the mining plans be enacted as a dumpsite. Yet, the company is not actively producing the fjord as a dumpsite through their speech acts. Rather they claim that the consequences will be minimal and that the fjord will not change. However, behind this rhetoric, the local population and activists are seeing the numbers that push the enactment of the mountain and fjord as inert material for human profit. The open-pit mine is not necessary, but it is more profitable, thus the reason behind the plan to cut off 50 meters of the mountaintop and dump it in the fjord is to earn more money. This production of nature can be seen as in conflict with the production of nature-human interdependency from local practices, therefore explaining some of the local opposition to the mining project.

In Riehpovuotna the situation is slightly different. The mountain Nussir is marked by a long history of extractivism with open-pit mines scarring the landscape. Further, the company has taken the name of the mountain and as such, it produces the mountain and the mine as the same. However, Nussir ASA are not planning an open-pit mine, but mining through tunnels. This means that the mine will not be as visible and might therefore not be at the cost of all other forms of use. The fjord on the other hand will be heavily affected, impacting all other forms of use. The fjord also has a history of being used as a dumpsite, though rather than legitimizing further dumping this has shown how heavily the fjord has been damaged. Now the fjord is almost restored, and the use of the fjord for recreation and fishing is high. As such, Nussir ASA's enactment of the mountains as a mine might be less problematic to some parts of the local population, as it does not deny all other ways of enacting the mountains. However, making the fjord a dumpsite once more denies most other enactments of the fjord and therefore it causes more conflict.

What is important to note in these cases is that the enactment of the fjord landscapes as mining and dumping sites is mainly triggering reactions when it comes into direct conflict with other ways of producing the landscapes. Such as in the case of the Biedjovággi mine in Kautokeino studied by Kramvig and Avango (2021). There, the mine was not necessarily seen as a problem before it was produced in conflict with other ways of producing the landscape (Kramvig & Avango, 2021). For Riehpovuotna the way of enacting the landscape that is denied through mining is mainly reindeer herding, but also harvesting, fishing and recreation. The reactions to the mining project are here clearly different between people who understand the landscape as reindeer pastures and the people understanding it as recreation and fisheries. For the people understanding the fjord as a place of recreation and fishing the mine is welcome, but dumping the mining waste in the fjord could preferably be avoided (see vignette p. 63-64). For local reindeer herders, both the enactment of the mountains as copper minerals to be mined, and the fjord as a dumpsite goes in direct conflict with and denies the enactment of the mountains as pasture and the fjord crossing. This shows that multiple ways of producing the landscapes can exist side-by-side and even overlap, however the conflicts emerge when one way of producing the landscape denies or limits the existence of others (Kramvig & Avango, 2021). At a closer look, it is mainly the forms of use deemed sustainable and based on human-nature interdependency in the above descriptions that are denied or limited through the mining projects. Building on Kramvig and Avango, this is due to extractivism (re)producing the human/nature divide, hence not acknowledging nature that is enacted through interdependency (Kramvig & Avango, 2021). Specifically in the Riehpovuotna-struggle it is the Sámi enactment of the landscape that is denied, thus showing how the human/nature divide is (re)produced through colonialism.

For the activists and local people fighting the mines and fjord deposits, the enactment of the fjord landscapes as sustainable is key. Much of this is done through speech acts, where activists and youth present the mountains and fjords as beautiful, important for biodiversity and cultural practices, and used in sustainable ways. However, during protest camps activists join local people in their practices such as fishing, marking of reindeers and hiking. Further, they engage in discursive and material practices that are less 'direct'. For instance, the camp in Riehpovuotna with its lávvos, reindeer skins and birch trees is a constant remind for activists and people visiting what nature-human relations they are fighting for. The different practices enact the landscapes through 'sustainable' use, hence strengthening the enactment of the spaces as non-mining sites. As such, people fighting the mining projects actively use

practices that enact the fjord landscapes not as mines and dumpsites, but as sustainable cultural landscapes, in their struggles against the mining projects. Through their practices, they strengthen the enactments of nature that are in conflict with the mine and (re)produce understandings of nature-human interdependency.

According to de la Cadena and Blaser it is often within protests against extractivism that alliances of multiple worldings form (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018). These alliances are formed of different actors with different interests who come together in the same struggle. In Fjørdefjorden and Riehpovuotna environmentalists struggling to protect life in the fjord come together with local and indigenous people trying to protect and uphold their livelihoods, as they all agree that these lives are interdependent. De la Cadena and Blaser argue that through this coming together of different interests, critical space for countering the modern world and imagining a world of many worlds is opened up (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018). The struggles by Riehpovuotna and Fjørdefjorden are no different, where various ways of enacting nature-human relations interact, come together or clash. In their study of the Biedjovággi mining project, Kramvig and Avango argue that “the mining prospects bring forth ontological conflicts” (Kramvig & Avango, 2021, p. 1). Thus, as the entanglements between Sámi and environmental struggles grow clearer and alliances grow stronger, such as through the Riehpovuotna-struggle, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth increasingly take part in the ontological conflicts in Sápmi

Chapter conclusion: Enacting ‘human in nature’

Through this chapter, I have shown that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth have knowledge and experiences of how nature-human relations are addressed and practiced in various systems. Specifically, youth address what they experience as dominant understandings and practices in the modern western world (western mentality/industrial capitalism/consumer system). In addition to what they experience as alternatives to these.

The understandings and practices that are seen as dominant and promoted in systems of the modern world are understood to build on a divide between humans and nature. The divide is explained and referred to in different ways such as; culture being the opposite of nature, a dualism between the spiritual and the physical, or more commonly, that humans are seen as above nature. People connect specific ideas to this hierarchal divide. Their understanding is that the divide distances people from nature, and creates an experience of human independency from nature. Further, the divide is connected to a devaluation of nature, not

recognizing its intrinsic value, but only seeing its use-value, further showing and promoting lacking respect for nature. People connect all these ideas to a society that places humans at the center, arguing that the divide legitimizes the destruction and exploitation of nature and humans alike. As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth deconstruct the human/nature divide, showing how the divide itself is a modern construct, with specific implications on how humans use and relate to nature.

Further, they show how the human/nature divide does not resonate with their experience and knowledge, pointing to experiencing interdependency with nature, and stressing the intrinsic value of nature. This knowledge of interdependency comes from alternative ways of understanding and practicing nature-human relations, often building on indigenous knowledge and practices as well as the legacy of Norwegian ecophilosophers. Sometimes it is argued through scientific knowledge of the connections between all of nature, including humans, and sometimes through one's emotional and embodied knowledge based on experiences. This shows that even though modern modes of nature-human relations are dominant, they are not hegemonic, and not successful in their exclusions of other modes of relation.

Building on the understanding that human use of nature both shapes and shows how we understand nature-human relations climate- and environmentally-engaged youth discuss how different forms of use have different implications. It is commonly expressed that the financial view and use of nature is based on and promotes the human/nature divide. Further, it is stressed that this use distances people from nature and legitimizes the destruction of nature. People hence argue to limit the search for and focus on financial profit. A common understanding is that experiencing dependency, and often a more direct form of dependency, is key to understand human-nature interdependency and to further promote sustainable use.

The focus climate- and environmentally-engaged youth have on human use of nature when addressing nature-human relations shows that they experience how relations are (re)produced through practice. This experience is supported by academic theories of how reality is enacted through practice (Abram & Lien, 2011; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Law & Lien, 2018; Law & Lien, 2013). An example is how nature understood as a tool for profit produces resources for the market through human-nature practices such as mining for copper in Riehpovuotna or rutile in Førdefjorden. Equally, practices such as small-scale farming, fishing, hiking, and using the fjord-landscapes as sanctuary or for subsistence enacts nature-human interdependency. Building on this, the practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth to influence peoples' understanding of nature-human relations and human use of nature,

can be understood as breaking the circle that reproduces modern world practices and relation. This is done through guiding practice and relations towards nature-human interdependency and respect for nature, through enacting ‘human in nature’.

This is especially visible in the fjord struggles, where climate- and environmentally-engaged youth form alliances with indigenous peoples and local communities, engaging in their enactments of the fjord landscapes. Thus, in these alliances various ways of worlding exist and interact, opening up space for countering the modern world and imagining radically different worlds. Building on this, and on the knowledge of ontological conflicts based on land-use in Sápmi, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth increasingly take part in these ontological conflicts through their alliances with indigenous Sámi people who are opposing extractivism and other forms of colonialism (Kramvig & Avango, 2021).

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the need to appreciate and recognize indigenous knowledge as this is understood to propose real alternatives to dominant views and practices. However, the human/nature divide is seen as denying space for indigenous knowledge as this (often) is based on the understanding of interdependency between nature and humans. Thus, as they critique and counter the human/nature divide, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth contribute to collapsing the assumptions that uphold the subordination of ways of knowing based on human-nature interdependency and emotional and embodied experiences.

In this chapter, I have shown that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth see the modern human/nature divide as dominant, though in their rejection of the divide they oppose its hegemonic stance and work to dismantle it. This they do through their practices of nature-human interdependency, such as their verbal claims of interdependency and their use of nature as a sanctuary, for harvesting and for mutual care. These practices, both discursive and material, enact nature as having intrinsic value, and humans as part of nature rather than the two being in a hierarchical relationship. Additionally, they directly counter and reject the modern human/nature divide, which is understood to be enacted through un-sustainable use, seeing nature as a tool for profit. The calls and practices of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth that dismantle the human/nature divide, are based on worldings that challenge the hegemony of the modern world and do not place humans in center, or nature in center, but that place humans in nature.

Part 3: Worldings that reject the human/nature divide

7. System change, not climate change

Nordic Mining have taken over the house at Engebø and started to destroy buildings and land. However, activists have through direct action hindered their work the past two weeks. Last week the police started arresting people and giving out fines that already mount to over 250 000 NOK. As we descend the mountain pass from east to west, the sky darkens and the rain hits us. It is still some hours until we arrive and we discuss if we will join the direct action; chain ourselves, be arrested and fined.

Before arriving at the protest camp in Vevring we pass Engebø, the village turned construction site. The area is fenced off with large machines and waste everywhere. The house, where we had our camp in March, is still covered in slogans and paintings of the fjord, fish and folk, but the windows are gone and the barn is half-way demolished. As we enter the tunnel in the Engebø mountain we pass a banner “*Fjorden får dei aldri!*” (They will never get the fjord!).

The next morning, we wake up at 5:50. It is pouring rain outside the windows and I am too tired to be stressed for what awaits. In the house, the breakfast table is set and we are told to eat well as it will be a long day. Many of the villagers chained themselves last week and tell us what to expect. As we hurry off, we are wished the best of luck and get a tarp and some chain suits to bring to the site. At 6:50 we are at Engebø where more and more people gather outside the fence, it is early but the news reporters are there already to make sure that they do not miss a thing. We repeat the plans and enter the area.

I speak with another actionist about why we are here engaging in direct action, and they tell me how they explained these protests to their grandparents: In Alta you said “let the river live”, now we say “let the fjord live”, and there was no more need of explaining.

As the police approaches Engebø we find a spot under an excavator, protected from the rain and visible from the road. Above us a banner reads ‘Save our Fjords! Ditch ocean dumping!’ We attach our chains into one another and the excavator, lock them and hide the keys. The time is 8:50, we have been here for two hours and have kept busy and warm with setting up everything, but as we sit down the cold starts to creep in. At least we are not sitting in the pouring rain like some of the others. The police will soon arrive so we start practicing our songs and calls. A person with a megaphone is leading the shouting.

“Å Førdefjord :// Er nydelig :// Å Førdefjord er nydelig, for vi har torsk og laks og breiflabb, å Førdefjord er nydelig.” (Oh Førdefjord :// Is beautiful :// Oh Førdefjord is beautiful, because we have cod and salmon and angler, oh Førdefjord is beautiful)

A melody from a children's song has been given new lyrics:

<i>“Åh jeg er så trist og lei</i>	<i>(Oh I am so sad and sorry</i>
<i>lenka sitter stramt om meg</i>	<i>the chain sits tightly around me</i>
<i>vi har ikke noe valg</i>	<i>we do not have a choice</i>
<i>fjorden legges ut for salg.”</i>	<i>The fjord is put out for sale.)</i>

As the police arrive the shouting grows larger and stronger, the person is almost screaming into the megaphone and we follow:

“Vi sitter her:// Med lenker på :// Vi sitter her med lenker på, for vi skal redde Førdefjorden, vi sitter her med lenker på” (We’re sitting here:// with chains on:// We’re sitting here with chains on, cause we will save Førdefjorden, we’re sitting here with chains on).

While we are shouting, the police comes to tell us who they are and why they are here. *“Vi sitter her: // Med lenker på: //”*. Saying that they will now first remove the people blocking the road and then come talk to us again later. We nod while shouting more quietly so that we can hear what they say; *“... for vi skal redde Førdefjorden, vi sitter her med lenker på”*.

The support manifestation outside the fence has now started and their shouting helps our tired voices. *“Gruveslam er Norges skam, fjorden får de aldri! Gruveslam er Norges skam, fjorden får de aldri! Gruveslam er Norges skam, fjorden får de aldri!” (Mining waste is Norway’s disgrace; they will never get the fjord!).* It is important to shout and sing in support of those being carried away and together with the people on the other side of the fence. We are here together and must be united in our shouting and singing. The person sitting next to me lives by the fjord in another village and is already looking for a new home, in case we will not manage to stop Nordic Mining and their destruction of the fjord.

“La fjorden leve, la Førdefjorden leve! La fjorden leve, la Førdefjorden leve! La fjorden leve, la Førdefjorden leve!” (Let the fjord live, let the Førdefjord live!)

The next police van arriving is for us. The police approach us and tell us that we are ordered to leave the area, as we are staying here illegally. We have 15 minutes to leave and we are banned from the site for 24 hours. If we do not leave, they will remove us by force. They ask if we have understood and we answer briefly. It is now 10:50 and we have committed a crime.

The lock is easily cut off and as they drag me out from under the excavator, I am calm, relaxed and heavy. I am shouting something as I am picked up and carried away, but my mind escapes me. They place me at the edge of the van and I get up into the van while still shouting. As the van drives away from the site, we continue to shout and wave to the people outside the window: *“Vi sitter her:// Med lenker på:// Vi sitter her med lenker på, for vi skal redde*

Førdefjorden, vi sitter her med lenker på!” though our chains are replaced with seatbelts.

– Direct action for Førdefjorden

Engaging in direct action is the final and most radical measure climate- and environmentally-engaged youth have in order to stop the ravaging of extractivism and other forms of crimes against nature. Through this, we protest against, spread information about, and physically hinder destructive practices. As such, the direct action against the mine and fjord deposit in Førdefjorden is both an expression and production of the changes and nature-human relations we want to see in the world.

[...] just to understand that the way we relate to nature, and when I say we I'm thinking like we who have grown up here in the West [...] we can learn a lot from that there are many other ways to interact with nature [...] it is not given that we have understood it. And it looks as if we have not understood it when one looks at the consequences [...] – Lilly

A central aspect of youth's climate and environmental engagement is to call for and present solutions for change. Such as Lilly, many argue that the thinking in the West is flawed and is one of the key causes of the climate and environmental crisis. Hence, they strive to propose alternatives to this thinking, for instance through learning from “other ways to interact with nature” in different worlds. Through studying the calls for change expressed and practiced by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, this chapter explores how the change they demand and work for challenges the hegemony of the modern world through proposing ways of thinking, acting and being otherwise than the dominant modern systems and mentality.

Critiquing the modern, western world

Yes, there are many different paths, but it has become quite clearly proven that our ideology, our worldview is not compatible with climate crisis and the real world. That there is an illusion. It is like the housing prices [laughs], that does not at all have anything to do with reality anymore. – Christel

What is common in people's calls for change is to take the currently dominant modern western world as their starting point and show how the systems, views and practices within this world does not take us to the futures they are fighting for. Rather, the modern world is understood to be the cause of the climate and environmental crisis. According to Christel the ideology or worldview is “not compatible” with reality, as it is the cause of the climate and environmental crisis and can therefore not be the basis of its solution. Defining the modern

world view as incompatible with the real world, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth look to alternative worlds and futures to fight for.

I wish to picture a future I can be a part of, and fight for a future that I can actually believe in. And it is very difficult to picture a continued future with the way we distribute resources in the world today, so unequally. Or the way we treat the earth. Without it changing, the continued capitalist future, or the thought that we should just own more and more and not see ourselves as part of nature but as the head of it. That is not a credible future. – Helena

For Helena, a future based on the current unequal distribution of resources and treatment of earth through the capitalist system is “not a credible future”. She stresses that the system based on the human/nature divide and over-consumption needs to change. As such, Helena and Christel do not only address the climate and environmental crisis, but the crisis of the modern world. They argue that the modern world is incapable of producing a realistic future, as its foundational pillar is the cause of the climate and environmental crisis (Escobar, 2007). This recognition that there is no future in the modern world is central in the rising conflicts between the modern world and alternative ways of worlding, as it opens up new space to imagine alternatives to the modern world (Blaser, 2013; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Latour, 2018). For climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway the process of imagining alternatives starts with “great refusals” of current systems and practices (Alberro, 2021).

There is so much we do not know, and then I think it is better to be precautionary. I do not either believe that the solution to the crisis is to just find new technology. We actually have to change our consumption patterns and see how we can live in a different way. And not just bury ourselves down into the old patterns that have not led us to any good paths. - Jarle

Above, Jarle argues that we need to move away from “the old patterns”, through changing our consumption, and how we live our lives as the “old patterns” have not been good. He calls for practices that recognize human lack of knowledge through the precautionary-principle, requiring that harm to nature should be avoided before any potential damage is done. Further, his critique is extended to future solutions based on the old ways of thinking, specifically relying on the invention of new technology to solve the crisis. As such, Jarle is not only criticizing modern practices in the past, but rejecting their continuation in the future. Similarly, Lilly points to how the optimism for the future is fading. According to Lilly, this optimism was connected to people gaining “better material wealth”, however people are now “seeing the consequences of the material wealth” and are therefore looking for alternatives.

I think that [by having growth as the goal] one does not take into consideration that there are limitations of both resources and capacity. And because of that, one gets into a negative spiral where those who actually get used, nature and humans, do not have the space to change it, since they are at the bottom of the hierarchy. Then one has a situation where those who have created the problems manage to fight their way out, but those who have not done so much to create them are very heavily hit. And that is quite foundational I would say, in the climate and environmental crisis [...] - Frida

In her critique of having (economic) growth as the main goal of society Frida brings forth how such a society uses and oppresses nature and humans, as it does not acknowledge the limits of natural and human resources. She argues that the system is inherently unjust, as those who live with the consequences do not have the capacity to change the system, while the ones who created the systems are not affected by its consequences. This form of oppression that is “foundational in the climate and environmental crisis” is, as addressed in chapter 5, key in triggering action among climate- and environmentally-engaged youth. In their critiques, youth point to multiple entangled systems of oppression and destruction, and to how fighting this injustice entails taking down the oppressive systems.

The Riehpovuotna-struggle is a clear example of how people and nature are oppressed by multiple dominant systems. The systems and worldview upon which the project is based allows it to exploit and oppress nature and the indigenous Sámi people. In the process of permitting Nussir ASA to destroy the fjord, the calls from the Sámi Parliament and the Institute of Marine Research to stop the project were not listened to (Sametinget, 2020). As such, the project is a continuation of the systems of oppression that have controlled and exploited Sápmi through history; a form of green colonialism. This is further confirmed through the struggles to stop the mining project and fjord deposit as the legacy of the Alta-struggle continues through the struggles in Riehpovuotna. The calls “*Ellos Vuotna*” (let the fjord live) and “*ii fal Nussir*” (Never Nussir), in addition to the protest camp set up based on Sámi practices is a constant reminder to all activists and visitors of what is at stake and why. Norway’s colonial present is still sacrificing nature and Sámi culture for profit.

Because for me [capitalism, economic systems] is sort of the cause of very much of the injustice in the world. The cause for why some countries are poor and cannot get out of it, and the cause of why people are displaced, and the cause of climate change and how it affects people. The system is built up in a way that makes money and profit more valuable than humans and environment. - Beate

In Beate's critique, the economic system values profit more than humans and environment, and is according to her the cause of oppression, inequality and climate change. The critique of how profit is placed above humans and nature in the dominant systems is highly reoccurring and often connected to debates over nature's intrinsic value.

[...] the thought of nature's intrinsic value is a form of system critique, because all that we humans have done for a very long time is to try to become the masters over nature. - Kirsti

Kirsti argues that respecting nature's intrinsic value, and therefore not placing humans above nature, can be seen as system critique as it counters the dominant thinking of society. This view is in line with the arguments of political ontology scholars stressing that the hierarchical divide between humans and nature is a central pillar in the modern world system (Blaser, 2013; Escobar, 2019; Law, 2015). As is discussed in the chapters above, it is the divide and capitalism/colonialism in combination that is a destructive force, as these systems (re)produce the divide across the world. Hence, a critique of capitalism is a critique of the human/nature divide, and a critique of the modern world (Blaser, 2013; Moore, 2017; Vetlesen, 2015).

The mining project in Førdefjord is often referred to as a case where profit is prioritized over nature and humans. As described in the vignette on p. 54, an art installation in Vevring explicitly challenges this: "A glass front with the writing 'Er eg til for lønnsemd' (Do I exist for profit), and through the letters the mountain appears". The project was first rejected by the environmental authorities, due to its potentially devastating environmental impacts. However, it was later approved as the government requested the environmental authorities to review it and focus on socio-economic benefits rather than environmental impacts. Later it became clear that it was in fact possible to extract the minerals with less environmental impacts, but at a higher cost, clearly showing that in all parts of the project, profit is the number one priority. This is often addressed in actions against the project, and several of the songs used during civil disobedience actions refer to this, "we do not have a choice, the fjord is put out for sale". Additionally, many of the songs and chants demand "let the fjord live", stressing that we do not own the fjord. Some might dismiss these as mere slogans, however, building on the above they must be understood as critiques of the dominant modern system.

Through their critiques of the modern western world, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth express what Alberro (2021) call "great refusals" of the now. These are according to her the foundation for imagining and practicing ecotopias as they show that nature-human relations in the modern world are "fundamentally wrong" (Alberro, 2021, p. 42). Further,

Alberro points to the importance of hope in ecotopias as “a future-oriented emotion” triggered by dissatisfaction with the present (Alberro, 2021, p. 41). Thus, when going from rejections of the old to dreams of new worlds, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth build on their hope and wish to act for the future triggered by solidarity and urgency. As such, the content of their dreams builds on their recognition of the crisis of modernity and the climate and environmental crisis, their refusal of the modern world’s human/nature divide, their solidarity with nature and humans alike, and their specific and strong sense of urgency.

Dreaming of better worlds

In all of my interviews for this thesis, I have ended with a request that people describe a better future, a utopia, a vision, a dream of a world where all the things that they fight for have been accomplished. The worlds described in this section are made up of people’s answers.

A relational world

A reality where one, the good life right [...] where one gets away from the materialistic and individualistic. Over to the collective and genuine. In that one sees what is important for health, and for life. Well that is good relations, that is experiences and other forms of safety. And to understand that a part of one’s own safety is not to get as rich as possible to protect oneself from dangers, but it is to live in harmony. – Nikolai

According to Nikolai it is key to move the focus of society away from “the materialistic and individualistic” and rather focus on “the collective and genuine”. With this, he refers to the importance of relations in his description of “the good life”, and of living in harmony. This harmony builds on interdependency as he refers to it through not only caring for and protecting oneself. Similarly, Lilly argues that understanding how all are interdependent on each other, “so therefore my joy is your joy”, would make life more harmonic. According to Lilly “it is really just simple things that are important”, pointing especially to relations, including relations with nature. Further, she opposes this focus on the “simple things” and relations, with the stress of the modern world by pointing to how these are made impossible through the hegemonic system modern system that “make us stressed”.

So that everything can be sort of individually in a large community. But also that one lives more locally, in groups. [...] So that one lives much more circularly, and understands that the more nutrients we give to the earth the better things grow. And just to see all the inter-relations [...] And people do not work to earn money but maybe it is more like a gift economy and that one gives from one’s capacity and one gets back, so the community cares for each other. – Lilly

In describing her relational dream world Lilly speaks of local communities with circularity, equal distribution and care. Further, Lilly ties this together through addressing the need to “see all the inter-relations” of humans and nature. These inter-relations come together in what Lilly describes as a large community that has room for everything individually; one that fits all (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Kothari et al., 2019).

I hope that in the future it will not be so that all countries must follow capitalism, or that they all must follow western standards or systems set up by the west. But that countries and people across the whole world can have the same foundation for participation [...] But I think that for me it is a lot easier to say how the world should not be, because it is so all-encompassing the capitalist system. I do not know how it is to grow up without living in a capitalist system, or without living as a girl for instance. I don't know. – Frida

Frida's dream world is also one of diversity, countering how all are forced to follow capitalism and western standards, and rather allowing all people to participate as equals. As such, it is a collective world that values different forms of sustainable knowledge and practice, where relations happen at an equal basis and include inter-relations between radically different ways of worlding. Frida ends with saying that it is “easier to say how the world should not be” because the capitalist system is all-encompassing. Frida's experience of not being able to imagine anything different than the systems she is forced to stay within should be understood in context of the one-world world denying the existence of all other ways of worlding and therefore all other possible futures (Law, 2015). For Frida this is experienced through not being able to imagine difference as she has not experienced it. However, as argued by Blaser, knowledge of different worlds elsewhere may enable critiques of the hegemonic modern world and space to explore alternative worldings (Blaser, 2013).

I look up too much of how I have understood that human-nature relations are among many indigenous peoples. [...] In relation to not having growth as an aim, but aims of living in a manner where one lives in an inter-relations that is sustainable. In the proper meaning of sustainable, that resources can be used again and again later. So a world without overconsumption and without growth as an aim. – Frida

For Frida indigenous knowledge and practices are key in changing the modern one-world world and imagining alternatives as these often are based on sustainable inter-relations. Frida connects her views to a critique of overconsumption and having (economic) growth as the main aim, as her understanding is that many indigenous cultures do not follow these unsustainable practices. As such, she ties the relation between indigenous ways of living and

sustainability to a critique of capitalism. A connection that is supported by Sara who calls on governments to “take in more indigenous perspectives”. Further claiming that this would entail that people and countries are “not as controlled by money”. As such, Sara addresses how the modern world denies the practices and knowledge of indigenous peoples, as these are not compatible with the hegemonic practices and structures. Yet they are important when facing the climate and environmental crisis.

It is common in reindeer herding that the whole family comes when it is time for slaughter. [...] one has a tradition to help because one might have smaller units and it is less industrialized, and therefore it is more work intensive. There is a culture for this, and this is something the society values. We value that one gathers the animals in a good manner. – Elias

In his example of Sámi sustainable practices, Elias argues that people should help each other during work intensive practices, and that society should value this. The example of the reindeer slaughter practice points to how inter-relations, the coming together of the extended family and the reindeer itself, are important for sustainability. However, Elias later explains how this is challenged by structures and practices of modern society that does not value but rather hinders people from helping their family. As such, Elias points to how it is not only the economic practices of the modern world that need to change, but all practices.

First of all, I think that to secure Sámi rights would be a very big part of it, that would have meant that one has to think anew. One would have to think of how to do this with renewable energy in other areas than our areas. Other areas than what they call untouched nature. [...] that one does not think that it always has to happen at the cost of nature and such. I think my dream is that Sámi perspectives and Sámi voices will actually be heard. – Sara

According to Sara it is specifically relations with nature that need to change. In her call to secure Sámi rights and include Sámi perspectives, Sara shows us that the climate and environmental struggle and indigenous struggles are so entangled that one cannot be met without the other. According to Sara, securing Sámi rights will force society to “think anew”, pointing to how current ways of using nature must be changed. Referring to how renewable energy facilities are established at the expense of nature and Sámi traditional practices, she addresses how the modern world places (some) humans hierarchically higher than nature.

[...] that we break with this idea of us being at the center of everything, but that we are rather a part of it all. And that earth has given us all that we have today. [...] We must have enough curiosity, enough courage, enough respect for the world around us, and for each other to try to understand ourselves anew. And understand our own role anew. - Helena

Ending the human/nature divide is also the key concern for Helena, who argues that breaking with the divide means that one has to understand that humans are part of nature, and that nature is the basis of life. According to Helena, this includes understanding humans in a new way, an understanding based on curiosity, courage and respect for the world. Her call to “understand ourselves anew” should be seen in context with the argument by Gaztambide-Fernández that a decolonial solidarity entails redefining what it means to be human (2012), and the argument by Plumwood (1991), that to end the human/nature divide we need to reconceptualise both what human and nature means.

Then [in my dream world] I think that one has placed nature as sort of the top priority, but what is nature? We are also nature, definitely. But a manner where one promotes life. More growth and that nature gets to blossom, that animal species thrive [...] Because what one can see now is that the number of animal and animal species is going down, and all of forest and trees, all that is beautiful and lively gets worse and worse living conditions. So, in a utopian world it is very lush and it blossoms in so many levels, of creativity, uniqueness and species and different ways to be human. – Lilly

The call to redefine humans in relation to nature is supported by Lilly who dreams of a world where there is room for “different ways to be human”, where humans and nature thrive together. Though Lilly argues to prioritize nature, she does so through a common understanding that humans are nature, and that a prioritization of nature means allowing nature and humans to blossom together. As such, Lilly redefines humans and nature in relation; she places equal value to humans and nature, and our inter-relations.

A just world

In my ideal society the economic differences are very, very, very small. You cannot close the borders, and there are no large wars and conflicts where people need to move across half the world and leave all that they have. [...] So, if we remove that need, we do not need this us-mentality either. And that is also something I am afraid of with the climate crisis. What does it do with us as a society when millions and millions of people must travel, when resources are getting scarce, when there is more war and conflict? There will be such a large movement or public opinion in Norway that is like; ‘build walls, protect us!’ What kind of society will we be then? Much worse I think. Also, for ourselves. What does it do to us as humans when we get these moral dilemmas in a much larger degree than what we have now? So, it is at least a world without war and conflict, without social differences, with a nature that is allowed to stand and repair itself in peace. – Christel

As injustice is central in triggering people's climate and environmental engagement through solidarity, justice is a key feature in their dreams. Christel here describes the justice she pictures as opposed to the injustice she sees today, but also the expected injustice of the climate and environmental crisis. According to her, a key danger to society is the lack of solidarity, the "us-mentality", as this will create more injustice. As such, the dream is a world that manages to overcome the expected injustice of tomorrow and that of today. This understanding builds on a view where justice is an aim in itself and that the climate and environmental crisis is a threat to justice.

My aim will be that one manages to reach the 1.5 degrees target, while at the same time creating a more just world, both between countries but also within countries, and that one creates a system that does not allow some people becoming super rich and some people trapped in poverty. – Beate

Beate dreams of change that curbs the climate crisis while creating justice. In her description, these are both aims in themselves, and interdependent aims, as they need to be met "at the same time". Her description of justice is a critique of un-equal distribution of economic resources as she calls for "a system that does not allow" economic inequality.

If we would manage to be more careful with the resources we have, and to think long-term how we manage what we have around us. And in a utopia I would wish that the world gets more solidarity solutions, so that one actually manages to have the whole world, or at least many countries with us. [...] It is probably very important to actually have the justice perspective because if not, not everyone will be on board. And then the consumption will not really go down, it would just be a short-term solution. But we need something long-term. Where we let the oil stay in the ground and find ways to manage the resources we have better and more carefully. – Martha

Martha also argues for better management of resources. This management is connected both to keeping the oil in the ground, and to social justice. She describes the importance of justice or solidarity by stating that just measures are necessary for people and countries to be "on board". Otherwise, the consequence can be that it is not possible to reach the climate aims because "consumption will not really go down". As such, Martha frames justice as a necessity for the world to commit to and implement climate and environmental action, and for these actions to be successful.

I think [my dream world] is less of a consumption society, where we take care of goods such

as time and experiences instead of new things, and use and disposal. And no more fossil emissions. And rather protection of nature that is still intact and restoration of lost nature. There has to be more [...] global justice for any of this to actually happen. – Guro

Guro supports the argument made by Martha and expands on her dream world in a similar way. For Guro, in order to lower consumption, to get away from a society based on use and disposal of material resources and fossil emissions, global justice is necessary. By addressing how it may be “hard to convince the population”, Jarle refers to another frequently debated aspect of justice in the context of climate and environmental measures.

Well that one manages to get a more circular system. And, we actually have to use less as well. Though it is hard to convince the population, maybe one cannot have like three cabins per family and maybe one actually has to lower the living standard. [...] I do not think we get happier by having so much stress and so much mess [...] I think society could be put up in a different way and give us more joy, while at the same time destroying less nature. And then there are these systems that makes it more difficult to do things in the most sustainable manner. – Jarle

It is according to Jarle necessary to stop over-consumption, both in order to destroy less nature, and for people to get happier. Jarle points to how it is possible to change society, however stressing that this is difficult due to the systems that uphold un-sustainable practices. Building on a similar understanding Helena argues that moving away from capitalism to a future where equality, “solidarity, compassion and love are foundational thought” could make people happier as “capitalism does not do us any good”. Helena urges us to live sustainably, described as “to have enough with each other”, “to share the resources in the world more equally” and to “not take more than what we need”. Thus, Helena’s dream world is one of sustainable and equitable use, which demands a collapse of capitalism.

An imperfect world

In my future, bad things have happened as there is no way out of where we are now because of the large capital-interests, but I picture a society and a world where capital is less valued, while the forest and the indispensable is actually indispensable and has the value it has. – Aina

For Aina the value placed on capital is to blame for the climate and environmental crisis. Hence, in her dream world “capital is less valued”. However, she calls for a change that she herself does not fully believe in claiming that “there is no way out of where we are now

because of the large capital-interests”. Many climate- and environmentally-engaged youth share the experience that it is hard to imagine alternatives for a better future. As addressed above, they find that the only systems they truly know are those that currently dominate. Further, many stress that no matter what, the world will never be perfect referring to the urgency of the crisis at hand.

I feel that we are on our way there now, that it is about to go a bit wrong. So, it will go a bit wrong and then people will understand that; ‘okay, yes this was what we had to do’ and then people will come. It is of course not what is desirable [...] – Kirsti

According to Kirsti, it will have to get worse before it gets better, as people then will realize the need for action. Through her claim, Kirsti goes into the discussion on how to trigger a sense of urgency and action in others. She shows that in her understanding it is not enough for people to have information about what will happen in the future, but people need to experience the changes in order to ‘take in’ the urgency as discussed in chapter 4. Further, Kirsti addresses another urgency-induced debate as she expects that some destruction is unavoidable. As she herself states, “it is of course not what is desirable”, still she finds the need to address it in her description of a better world. Claiming that “humans will probably always harm nature”, Jarle expresses a similar concern and disbelief in a perfect world as he states; “it is sort of inevitable”.

And it really hurts to think about that the race is a bit lost. There is much more we can do, but we also have to acknowledge that we will lose a lot no matter what. – Christel

In acknowledging the inevitability of losses due to the climate and environmental crisis Christel reflects elements of what de Moor calls ‘postapocalyptic environmentalism’ (de Moor, 2021). As addressed in chapter 4, this form of environmentalism is based on the understanding that the crisis is unavoidable, and that action should be directed towards saving what can be saved. Though this acknowledgement might make people give up hope, Alberro (2021) finds that among radical environmental activist, hopelessness is redeployed to trigger action for what can still be done. Pointing to the climate and environmental struggle Nikolai expresses: “I think it is difficult to look at the future, because it will be painful. Because there are such strong oppositions”. However, rather than giving up because the perfect future is out of reach, climate and environmental activists use these emotions in their urgency and solidarity to keep on fighting.

I am a bit skeptical to this 'dream world' and 'dream scenario' [...] I think that there would always be something to fight for no matter what. I think it was Kim Friele who said it, no matter what minority it is, if it is Sámi people or queers in Norway or Finns, we have rights, but it does not really take much for these rights to be taken away from us, so there must always be fighting. One must always fight to keep the rights that one has. For there are some who decide, who give and take, and as easily as they have given they can take them away from us. So, I do think that there will always be something to fight for. – Sara

In Sara's statement "there will always be something to fight for" she shows how her struggle is not lost if the "dream world" is not reached. Her vision for a better world is therefore not a perfect one, but one where the struggle is central. Sara especially points to the rights struggles of different minorities, saying that those who have power can as easily take our rights away. With giving attention to the power structures that (re)produce injustice, oppression and exploitation Sara argues that protests and struggles will always be necessary both to create change and to sustain the positive changes one might accomplish.

I do picture that, this is not a utopia because protest is not something one wants, but I do not see any way outside it, that when those who earn the most of the status-quo are those least hit by the climate crisis and can buy themselves out of it. [...] To create something completely new it has to come from below. You must have projects and movements that create new spaces where one gets a completely different understanding of reality. - Nikolai

In addressing the profound injustice of the climate and environmental crisis Nikolai reiterates the call for continuous struggle. Further, he addresses the need for bottom-up movements in order to "create new spaces" and "different understandings of reality". He hence stresses the need for struggles that are independent of and therefore able to challenge the dominant systems including the understandings of reality.

Tensions of change

[...] society is defect, [...] now it is up to us. – Christel

The realization that the modern world is causing the crisis and is therefore incapable of solving it is often met with the thought "now it is up to us". The school strike movement can to a certain extent be seen as built up on the premise that it is now up to the youth to change the world, as the people and systems in power do not act. During most school strikes in Norway the most repeated call is for climate action: "What do we want? – Climate action! When do we want it? – Now!" was shouted across 'Eidsvoll's plass' on the 25th of March 2022, as it was during school strikes before (see vignette, p. 33-34). Most posters demanded

action and called out politicians and adults for their years of inaction. In addition, speakers would hear the crowd applaud their calls for change and action. This shows that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth want neither the future of climate and environmental crisis, nor the future proposed by the modern world.

According to Christel, “we need a sort of paradigm shift, a sort of revolution” in order to make room for “a different view of the climate crisis, and of human and nature”. Her focus on space for difference is in effect an end of the one-world world that in turn will make multiple ways of worlding visible. Further, Christel’s call for a revolution where “society should be turned on its head”, must be seen in connection with her earlier calls for changes in the dominant systems such as the economy and power structures. As discussed in chapter 4, calls for system change are often based on the understanding that the systems are the cause of the crisis, hence there is need for more than individual action, as the whole system needs to change. Discussions concerning the need for system change often trigger questions of whether it is best to work for change from the inside or outside of the systems.

It is either within a system or outside a system. I do not know yet what I want to continue with; should I be an activist inside or outside. But you can always be an activist. Because for me it is more about the thought and attitudes that you bring into your work. - Helena

As expressed by Helena a common understanding is that one either works as an activist inside or outside a system, and for her it is a choice she feels that she has to make for her future activism. An example that might shed some light on how action inside or outside the system is a constant negotiation in climate and environmental activism is the use of direct action in the Førdefjorden-struggle. The direct actions were a final resort after having used all accessible, legal, means to stop the mining project and fjord deposit. As the mining project, with its permits to operate, is considered legal by the system, actions to stop it were illegal. Activists physically hindering the work of Nordic Mining can therefore be seen as working outside the (legal) system. However, we were also using our freedom of speech, and invoking our right to stop a crime through *nødrett*, the right to act directly in order to hinder a crime.

The three of us are placed in a cell, but the doors are open and we pass friendly faces down the hall. I am taken in for questioning first. I do not say much; my head feels empty and I have prepared to say that I do not accept the fine as my actions are a lesser crime than the environmental crimes of Nordic Mining. I have acted in *nødrett*. The police note my statement and I am asked to sign the paper in the box noted ‘suspect’. As I wait in my cell, the calls and songs buzz in my head. “*La fjorden leve, la Førdefjorden leve! Gruveslam er Norges skam,*

fjorden får de aldri! Åh jeg er så trist og lei, naturen vil de ta fra meg. Fjorden eier ikke vi, den skal stå til evig tid.” And I think about the concept *nødrett*, wondering if I said the right thing in my statement, if I said enough or should have used more time to argue why Nordic Mining are committing a crime. I walk around in the cell as I have suddenly gotten cold after being warm for hours in the rain. At 12:50 I am released from the police station and I go to the address I was given before the action to meet the other activists.

Someone says we were 30 people arrested and 50 people supporting outside the fence. I write up a text, get some pictures from the photographer and send it to my local newspaper. They answer right away and will have the text on their webpage in no time. More people arrive from the police station and we fill up a car and drive to Vevring. We discuss how well we are taken care of. From the moment we arrived yesterday there has been support, food, clothes, housing and everything we need. Further, we discuss what comes next. The lawsuit and campaigns against investors. The driver lives right by the Engebø mountain and will have to move if the project starts. But that will never happen, nothing will be dumped in the fjord.

– Direct action for Førdefjorden

By building on *nødrett* and freedom of speech, the direct actions are working within and with the legal system. Further, the actions will be followed by legal measures as environmental organizations are now taking Nordic Mining’s permit to pollute the fjord to court. The direct actions outside the system are hence within a context of legal and political measures within the system. In addition, the actions gained much public support through social and traditional media, hence they can be considered inside the social system.

Well one way is civil disobedience outside the institutions right. The other is one that, organizations that also do civil disobedience, but that are more inside the systems in a way [laughs] and are approved of. – Nikolai

Nikolai is here defining the work inside and outside the system in a manner that frames the direct actions by Førdefjorden as activism inside the system because the public approves of it. As activists chaining ourselves to machines in Vevring we were fined, and our claims of invoking the right to act in acute defense against an environmental crime (*nødrett*) were rejected by the court; affirming that we were acting outside the legal system. However, as the direct actions are approved of in large parts of the public, building on a long history of civil disobedience in environmental struggles, we are also working within some systems. Though climate- and environmentally-engaged youth often gain support for our actions, our calls and practices of radical change are often met with pushback from society.

I think that quite a major change is ongoing. I think there is quite a strong divide between generations, with thoughts of industry and workplaces. [...] People will not work in the industry and shop in the stores, and accept that everything is separated. [...] I think there is an actual divide in how one sees the world that stands between younger and older generations. [...] Where the older does not understand that we do not see continued oil-industry as an option at all. [...] There are no possibilities to make it work and therefore it is not an alternative, hence we must look to other solutions. But they do not understand that, this divide here. We do not have it as an image, of it being part of the future, it cannot be. – Elias

According to Elias there is a great divide between how younger and older people see the world, including how young people do not want to live in a world where “everything is separated”. Referring to urgency, Elias argues that youth do not see the oil-industry as part of the future as they have realized that it is not an option. This divide affects people’s experience of what solutions are actually possible to implement, showing that youth do not believe in the future presented by the modern world and rather look for other ways of worlding. However, it also points to how polarized the climate and environmental debate is:

I do not really know how it will look and I think it is difficult to picture the way there, especially when I feel that there is such a massive opposition to it. Especially with the government elections and things that happen around the debates on climate and environment. There is so much resistance around ideas of not having growth as an aim. – Frida

For Frida the path to the future is difficult to picture due to the public opposition against climate action. Frida represents some of the divide described by Elias, as her perspectives going into the climate debate are so distant from other actors that the debate is experienced as hopeless. Frida further points to the resistance against alternatives to growth as a key obstacle to change and is supported by Guro and Martha in her views.

I think my utopia is impossible, because it is complicated and difficult. People love money, and for everyone to agree to manage this very quickly now it will be very difficult. [...] There are many who need to agree, many people with power [laughs]. – Guro

Yes, these are sort of utopias that well, overturn capitalism [Guro laughs]. And that I do not know if will happen. It would have been cool though. – Martha

We need to start finding different ways to live, because we did not manage to solve this now so in the future we must deal with the consequences. – Guro

In their dialogue, Guro and Martha address how the utopian futures they have described are “impossible” to reach as it would demand an overturn of capitalism. Guro first points to how

obstacles are both that “people love money” and that it would require “everyone to agree” quickly. Further, she laughs when Martha spells out that their utopias will overturn capitalism and follows up with a comment that “we did not manage to solve this now”, showing that for her it is in fact easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism (Anderson, 2017; Fisher, 2009). This dialogue points again to the urgency-induced debate addressed in chapter 4 and in the ‘imperfect world’ above.

At the same time, there is a sort of conflict inside my head. I do think that we need to deal with capitalist structures and tear them up. But we cannot wait to do that so that everyone is on board with that before we start cutting emissions. – Kirsti

The debate not only shows the sense of urgency experienced by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, but the pushback they experience from society when they present their calls for change such as presented in part two. Kirsti, Guro and Frida all point to the resistance against ending capitalism as their main argument for either not demanding this change, or not being able to picture the way to a better world. As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth call for radical change, but are limited and limit themselves by the pushback they get from the modern world.

I think the problem is that one does not fully agree on the root structures that are part of creating the climate problem and the loss of biodiversity, such as consumption for instance. [...] I think that is one of the great reasons why we cannot solve the problems, because it is this understanding of reality [...] that is different. Everyone agrees that we need to solve the problems, but everyone thinks, maybe a bit narrowly, on how we should deal with it. I think growth is for instance an issue, and our understanding of what it is to live good lives. – Kirsti

According to Kirsti the disagreements regarding the root causes of the crisis is a problem, as people do not agree on what action is needed. In her view these disagreements show that people’s understanding of reality differs. She especially points to those who have a ‘narrow’ understanding of how to deal with the crisis, as she stresses the need to address (economic) growth and “our understanding of what it is to live good lives”. The pushback from the modern world and the different “understandings of reality” in terms of causes of, and solutions to the crisis show the tensions of change within the climate and environmental struggle. Building on the study of Burman, these tensions make visible that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth take part in multiple worldings (Burman, 2017; Law, 2015). However, the reactions youth have to the pushback from society, including adjusting their dreams and self-controlling their expressions of solidarity and urgency (as addressed in

chapters 4 & 5), show that none of the worldings youth participate in are complete. Rather, these multiple worldings exist in a constantly changing relationship in people's lives, connected, conflicting and overlapping. As such, one can say that “a low intensity “ontological conflict” [...] is taking place” within the climate and environmental struggle in Norway (Burman, 2017, p. 931). Through this conflict and inter-relation, the cracks and holes in the modern one-world world become more and more clear to climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, who use this space to dream of and practice alternative worlds, worlds where a sustainable future is credible.

I think that if we manage to make the dream of a sustainable future clear enough, then it will become easier to work for it and be in it. But then we have to dream, then we must dream enough [...] And I wish that there would be more [space to dream]. I do not think it is naïve to dream, I think it is just way too complicated [laughs]. So, it is difficult, but it is about being able to think about, and dream of, and fight for, a credible future. I do think that the future, though the one I present now is only good, I do think it is credible. Yes, I do think it is credible, that it would be possible. – Helena

Helena calls for making “the dream of a sustainable future” more visible, as this will make it easier to achieve. For Helena there is a need for more space to dream, and a need to dream more. In her experience, it is through dreaming and fighting for these dreams that they become more credible and possible. These dreams for a better world show that it is possible to “create imaginaries within the North that include difference” (Law, 2015, p. 135).

Chapter conclusion: Refusals of the now and dreams of the future

That nature and humans are in symbiosis. So, in that way one can say that it is exactly this human/nature divide that [...] one has to find stories for this dichotomy to dissolve. Then one has gotten far, and it will have great political implications. Because one understands the urgency in a different way. - Nikolai

Through this chapter, I have depicted how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth dream of and tell stories of futures that dissolve the human/nature divide and the dominance of the modern world. As stated by Nikolai, these stories have “great political implications” as they express other ways of understanding reality than the dominant; they express radically different ways of worlding. This chapter shows that due to their understanding of the climate and environmental crisis, as a crisis of urgency and justice, and their understanding of nature-human relations, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth call for radical changes. These calls for change are built on the understanding that the currently dominant modern world and

its capitalist/colonialist system is the cause of the climate and environmental crisis. Hence, the crisis is also a crisis of the modern world. Thus, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth counter the old world, including its practices and structures of oppression and exploitation through colonialism and capitalism that are based on and reproduce the human/nature divide. Their critique should be understood as “great refusals” of the now, that according to Alberro (2021) form the basis of imagining and producing ecotopias as these critiques are continuously followed up with proposals of how to enact better worlds.

In their dreams for better worlds, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth call for justice, nature-human interdependency and a recognition of the urgency at hand. The relational and just, though also imperfect worlds described and enacted by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth build on knowledge of radically different ways of being in relation, that breaks with the human/nature divide and produce nature-human interdependency and justice. Calling for a recognition of the importance of relations, they dream of diversity in relations between different cultures and with nature. Further, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth build on their knowledge of other ways of worlding in indigenous cultures and local communities that are understood to practice nature-human interdependency. Breaking with the human/nature divide is seen as necessary both in order to fully respect these cultures and knowledges, and to end human oppression and exploitation of humans and nature alike. Further, it calls for understanding humans and nature in new ways that are based on interdependency rather than dualism.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of overcoming the injustice of today and of tomorrow, as the climate and environmental crisis is seen as a threat to justice. Justice is both seen as an aim in itself and as necessary to impede the climate and environmental crisis. For most people, this social, material and economic justice requires an end of capitalism. However, they struggle to see how it can be possible due to the urgency of the crisis, and the pushback against climate and environmental measure from society. Thus, they expect that also in a better world they will experience the consequences of the crisis, and that there will be a need for continuous struggle to uphold justice and to create space for radically “different understandings of reality”.

In their practices and dreams for the future, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth turn society on its head by working both inside and outside dominant structures such as through the direct action in the Førdefjorden-struggle. Thus, they both build on and counter dominant practices and understandings of reality, experiencing a divide between themselves and older

generations in the understandings and practices where they move away from the dominant. Although the pushback experienced by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth might limit their calls for change, these tensions shows that they take part in multiple ways of worlding, and that within climate and environmental struggles some “low-intensity” ontological conflicts are present (Burman, 2017, p. 931). It is through these conflicts and interactions that the cracks in the one-world world becomes clear to climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, who use the space this opens up to dream of and practice ways of worlding otherwise than the modern.

8. Conclusion: Radically different ways of worlding

The celebratory dinner starts in an hour and the place needs to be prepared. We decorate with field flowers and chains of light as the guests arrive; villagers and activists soon fill up the old barn. The ground floor has been rebuilt from a cowshed to a bar and there is enough space for everyone. Three women in *bunad* (the traditional Norwegian costume) enter; they have dressed for the occasion. The food is presented; bacalao with fish from Førdefjorden and game stew with deer from the mountains around. After some rounds of food the rest of the celebrations continue upstairs. The cake table is filled to the brink as the speeches commence. At the stage and in the crowd people are taking to tears, full of joy for the unity and commitment, full of sorrow and fear for the fjord. Central figures of the village and protest camp speak warm-heartedly of all the important work that has been done. Many thank the youth, who have come from across the country to protect the fjord, and many thank the village for their commitment to the struggle, the hospitality and support. It is said that everyone who have been arrested should frame their fine and hang it on the wall, because we are on the winning team and creating history. Many reference Mardøla, Norway’s first civil disobedience action. Some remember it and others have been retold the story growing up. People are clearly marked by the struggles we have gone through, together. From the first speaker to the last tears and laughter fill the barn, and the will to continue fighting is strengthened.

“Leve Førdefjorden!”

The next morning we pack down the whole camp. A barn full of people soon turns empty. The chaining-suits, banners and activists are leaving. Driving from the village the song “Fjorden er ikke vår” (The fjord is not ours) by Hilja plays from the loudspeakers. As we pass Engebø and the construction site, in full action, the driver speeds up the car and turns up the volume: “Fjorden er ikke vår, ver så snill å la den leve” (The fjord is not ours, please let it live).

– Direct action for Førdefjorden

Just as my last visit to Vevring and the Førdefjorden-struggle, this thesis ends with a celebration of the knowledge, practices and commitment of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, as well as with a recognition that the largest battles are yet to be fought.

Through this thesis, I have explored how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway respond to the climate and environmental crisis by inquiring how they understand and practice nature-human relations within the context of the crisis, collapsing old worlds, and (re)emerging new worlds. Using myself as a tool for research through autoethnography, I have engaged with various ways of knowing that build on an understanding of knowledge as situated and derived from experiences and emotions.

The discussion in chapter 7 ‘System change, not climate change’, shows that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth practice and portray stories that reject the human/nature divide, and as such the hegemony of the modern world. These stories do not only express other ways of understanding reality than the dominant modern; they represent radically different ways of worlding.

The stories and worldings build on the interactions between how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand the crisis and how they understand and practice nature-human relations. Combining their understandings and practices of nature-human interdependency, with seeing the crisis as a crisis of injustice, triggers a specific form of solidarity. Further, this solidarity founded on nature-human interdependency, strengthened their sense of urgency. Finally, this strong sense of urgency triggered by their solidarity with nature and humans alike makes it impossible for climate- and environmentally-engaged youth to accept the status-quo. They find that “society is defect” and that “now it is up to us” (Christel). Thus, they demand and enact radical change. Together, the dimensions – human in nature, solidarity and urgency – mutually enhance each other and lead to radical change. They make up how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and practice nature-human relations; enacting a new ethical landscape of ‘human *in* nature’.

Enacting ‘human in nature’

As discussed in chapter 6, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth critique the understandings and practices of nature-human relations that they experience as dominant in the modern world, while arguing for and practicing alternatives to these. By deconstructing the human/nature divide, they show how this modern construct has specific implications for how humans use and relate to nature. Referring to how the modern world places humans at

the center, or above nature, climate and environmental engaged youth show how this practice and worldview legitimizes the destruction and exploitation of nature and humans alike. Specifically, they connect the practices of the human/nature divide to capitalism/colonialism and the search for financial profit, reducing nature to a tool for profit. Further, these and other modern practices and ways of using nature are seen as distancing humans from nature, enacting human independency from nature.

However, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth assert that this divide and the connected practices do not resonate with their experiences and knowledge of nature-human relations, rather pointing to the intrinsic value of nature and to nature-human interdependency. By stressing the importance of experiencing direct dependency for people to engage in sustainable use of nature, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth show how different practices produce relations and reality. As such, their own practices of nature-human interdependency, through for instance the fjord struggles, should be understood as breaking the production of the modern world's human/nature divide, as it attempts to guide practices and relations towards interdependency and respect for nature. Additionally, they directly counter and reject the modern human/nature divide, which is understood to be enacted through un-sustainable use. These practices, both discursive and material, enact nature as having intrinsic value, and humans as part of nature rather than the two being in a hierarchical relationship. Thus, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth enact 'human in nature'.

In their search for real alternatives to the human/nature divide, through sustainable use of nature, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth turn to indigenous peoples' knowledges and practices. However, as these practices and ways of knowing are often based within nature and on nature-human interdependency, such as the enactment of *meahcci* in Sámi culture, these are denied space and recognition by modern systems of knowledge. Thus, as they counter the human/nature divide, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth contribute to the collapse of assumptions that uphold the subordination of knowledge based on nature-human interdependency, emotional and embodied experiences.

Practicing solidarity

As climate- and environmentally-engaged youth's understandings of nature-human relations build on the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, so does their solidarity. Because their solidarity is triggered by reactions to the injustice of the climate and environmental crisis, that is caused by the modern world, youth search for justice in

radically different ways of worlding. Through their solidarity with those most affected by the crisis, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience relations with ‘natural others’ and encounter ways of being that radically differ from and counter the modern (Mallory, 2009). The emotional and embodied experiences from relations and encounters contribute to the transformation of their solidarity, as youth through these understand and experience the interdependency of humans and nature. Allowing them to extend their solidarity to nature.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth express their solidarity through emotional and embodied experiences, responsibility and interdependency. Their sense of responsibility builds both on their experience of being privileged in the context of the crisis, and of being guilty of the injustice, exploitation and oppression they react to. Further, their sense of interdependency builds on knowledge and experiences of being in the struggle together, of how dependent humans are on nature and vice versa. This interdependency can also be understood as a form of identification. However, rather than identification based on sameness it is a form of identification with everything one experiences relations with, an identification based on interdependency. As such, the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth is relational. Also seeing how their solidarity is based on emotional and embodied experiences, and is continuously being practices and transformed, their solidarity is creative and transitive (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Thus, building on Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) and Mallory (2009), climate- and environmentally-engaged youth practice decolonial, eco-feminist solidarity. Through their solidarity, youth increase the space for and acceptance of emotional and embodied ways of knowing, that collapses the human/nature divide and further strengthen the experiences of nature-human interdependency and therefore solidarity.

Through their practice of solidarity with nature and humans alike, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth enact nature-human interdependency. This enactment breaks with the modern world’s human/nature divide, thus making the solidarity of youth central in ontological struggles between the modern world and relational ways of worlding. As such, the solidarity of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth should be understood as enactments of ways of worlding that counter and collapse the modern.

Experiencing urgency

The strong sense of urgency experienced and expressed by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth must be understood as building on their enactment of ‘human in nature’ and practice of solidarity, thus countering the human/nature divide of the modern world. Building

on specific elements of time and scope, as well as emotional and embodied experiences, the urgency of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway goes against dominant assumptions in the modern world that (re)produce the human/nature divide. As youth collapse this divide and ‘take in’ the crisis, through experiencing nature-human interdependency, their sense of urgency is strengthened.

Climate- and environmentally-engaged youth stress the importance of knowledge and experiences of nature-human interdependency, as this is understood to be central in taking in the urgency of the crisis. Following the understanding of interdependency within socio-ecological systems, youth stress the importance of recognizing the nature crisis as well as the climate crisis. Building on their knowledge of nature-human interdependency as well as the profound injustice connected to the crisis addressed above, the scope of the crisis is broadened as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand the full scale of the crisis and the severity of destructions. Further, youth understand the temporalities of the crisis in a rather holistic manner, not based on a binary between short and long, human and nature, but an understanding of the multiple interactions, scales and pace of time. Thus, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth actively counter the human/nature divide through their enactment of common timeframes. Again, strengthening their sense of urgency.

By stressing the importance of emotional and embodied experiences for fully understanding and acting on the urgency of the crisis, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth both counter and broaden the modern assumption that gaining knowledge and (rationally) processing this will trigger action. Through their focus on ‘taking in’ the crisis, youth counter how the assumption builds on the human/nature (mind/matter) divide, and rather connect it with their personal experiences of feeling and ‘taking in’ the urgency of the crisis through emotional and embodied experiences. According to climate- and environmentally-engaged youth, truly taking in how the crisis is all-encompassing, impacting all human and natural systems alike, shapes how urgency is experienced and what action is triggered.

The action called for by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth reflect their understanding of the crisis and enactments of nature-human relations. Youth call for large-scale state action, and transformation of systems that uphold and reproduce oppression while seeing individual action as too little, too late. However, they also discuss what changes are possible within the limited timeframes, compared to what is necessary. Key within their calls for action and change is their sense of urgency, as they have taken in how all-encompassing the crisis is, but do not see this urgency reflected in the actions of adults. As such, their sense

of urgency is so great that the status quo becomes unacceptable and their reality clashes with that of politicians and people in power who do not act according to the urgency at hand.

Taking part in multiple worldings

In this master's thesis I argue that climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway, through their experience of urgency, practice of solidarity and enactment of human in nature, call for "System change, not climate change" and co-produce ways of worlding that are radically different to the modern as they collapse the human/nature divide. As such, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway understand and practice nature-human relations in a manner that is radically different to the modern world, thus contributing to the collapse of the modern world and emergence of new worlds.

Throughout the thesis, I have shown that the participation of climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in these different worldings is visible through their critique of the modern world, their dreams for better worlds, and their engagement to enact these. The relational, just, and imperfect worlds described by climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in chapter 7, build on knowledge of radically different ways of being and understanding humans and nature. These worlds reflect the calls from academics to collapse the human/nature divide, and to enact credible futures outside the modern one-world world that are built on nature-human interdependency (Blaser, 2009, 2013; de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar, 2017, 2019; Latour, 2018). In line with scholars such as Vetlesen (2015), Plumewood (2002) and Blaser (2013), youth show through their refusals of the now and dreams for the future, that collapsing the modern world's human/nature divide is necessary in order to end human oppression and exploitation of humans and nature alike.

This break with dominant understandings and practices in the modern world is visible in how youth, rather than placing humans in the center (anthropocentrism) or nature in the center (eco-centrism), place humans in nature (Sessions, 1995; Vetlesen, 2015). It is visible in how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth base their solidarity with humans and nature on interdependency rather than sameness (Bayertz, 1999) or difference (Mallory, 2009). Finally, it is visible in how youth build on various forms of knowledge, combining reason, emotion and experience rather than separating out reason as a more valid and important form of knowledge (Escobar, 2019; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). As such, youth continuously counter dominant understandings that build on binary separations, binaries that

according to Plumwood (1991, 2002) and Blaser (2013) build on the logic of the human/nature divide.

The thesis shows how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth argue that (1) the modern world and its capitalist/colonialist system is the cause of the climate and environmental crisis, thus revealing the flaws and failures of the modern world and the urgent need to enact other futures. Further, youth show how (2) the climate and environmental crisis entails a crisis of the modern world that is made visible through its failure to produce sustainable and credible futures, and through the rise of radically different ways of worlding. Hence, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth search for and take part in (3) worldings that challenge the hegemony of the modern, through enacting ways of being in relation with nature that are radically different to the modern world and its human/nature divide (see chapter 2, p. 17).

In their struggles for change, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth experience various forms of pushback from society. This pushback, for instance through the delegitimization of their emotional and embodied knowledge, acts as denials of their experiences and knowledge as representations of reality. As such, these tensions between youth and the dominant society show how youth partly participate in multiple worldings within the modern that sometimes clash (Burman, 2017). Thus, as climate- and environmentally-engaged youth express and enact their realities, realities of urgency, radical solidarity and nature-human interdependency that demolish the modern world, they take part in and produce ontological conflicts (Blaser, 2013; Burman, 2017; Kramvig & Avango, 2021). Further, these conflicts and interactions between various ways of worlding collapse the one-world world and open up space for climate- and environmentally-engaged youth to dream of and practice ways of worlding other than the modern (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018; Escobar, 2019; Law, 2015).

The combination of enacting humans in nature, practicing solidarity and experiencing urgency, gives an understanding of the crisis and of nature-human relation that collides with the modern world. Thus, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth understand and practice nature-human relations in a manner that collapses the human/nature divide and its destructive practices including capitalism/colonialism, the exclusion of indigenous, emotional and embodied ways of knowing and the one-world world denying all other ways of worlding (Escobar, 2007, 2019; Law, 2015; Mies & Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1991). By partly engaging in multiple ways of worlding that counter the modern, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway show that it is possible to “*create imaginaries within the North that include difference*” (Burman, 2017; Law, 2015, p. 135).

With these findings, this thesis contributes to the production of knowledge about a pluriverse of worldings within what is often understood as the modern world, where academic research on ways of worlding is scarce and called for (Law, 2015; Law & Lien, 2018). Further, this thesis shows that for the enactment of radically different ways of worlding within the modern, space for encounters with other ways of worlding is key. This is for instance visible through how climate- and environmentally-engaged youth in Norway stress the importance of indigenous, emotional and embodied knowledge for their own understanding of urgency, solidarity and nature-human interdependency. Finally, it becomes clear through these findings that “a low-intensity “ontological conflict” [...] is taking place” within the climate and environmental struggles in Norway (Burman, 2017, p. 931).

However, building on the theories of political ontology it might take more than a “low-intensity” conflict to collapse the modern one-world world, forcing us to recognize that the largest battles are yet to be fought (Blaser, 2013). The injustice, oppression and exploitation of the modern world grows together with the climate and environmental crisis. Moreover, the urgency grows accordingly as the time for action decreases and the magnitude of change needed increases. Thus, climate- and environmentally-engaged youth live “at the intersection of dread and hope” (Alberro, 2021, p. 51), while fighting the injustice, oppression and exploitation of the modern world through enacting worlds beyond the human/nature divide.

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