Nei til Ringnes Kvinnepark!

Looking for Norwegian identities in protests against building the Ekebergpark in Oslo.

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The Abstract:

The following study is an analysis of the media debate around building the Ekebergpark in Oslo. The goal of this paper was to establish what this debate can tell us about modern Norwegian society. It will be demonstrated that some assumptions behind the Ekebergpark were clearly (even if unintentionally) aimed against certain components of Norwegian identity and thus caused protests to escalate. In order to investigate those components, critical opinions about the park were examined in a historical and social context. Protests against the Ekebergpark could be seen as a manifestation of the integrity and values embraced by the Norwegian nation. Upon examination of the debate, it becomes clear that the discussion gave voice to what is important for Norwegians today, what was important in the past, how certain values are a continuity of previous experiences, and what lies in the hope for the future.

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This thesis was a special process for me. It summed up all the cultural encounters and wonders connected to the process of studying abroad. Reflecting on the identities of a nation you are not a consistent part of has been a really significant, personal journey, and one that I am deeply grateful for.

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents—Krystyna and Andrzej—and to thank them for their warm support, unconditional love, and caring. Thank you!

Table of Contents:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ekebergpark in Oslo was officially opened on September 26, 2013. The park spreads across an area of 66 acres of woodland on Ekeberg's escarpment on the east side of Norway's capital. The Park is a project entirely sponsored by the foundation of Christian Ringnes, C. Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse (CLRS), and it is a result of cooperation between a private actor (Christian Ringnes) and a public authority (Oslo Kommune).

From the first announcement of the project, Ekebergparken became a topic of lively discussion in the Norwegian media due to a few highly controversial aspects. Among these major concerns were:

- the suitability of a project with such an enormous budget;
- the intentions of private investment in a public forest;
- the sponsor's cooperation with the local authorities (Oslo Kommune); and
- the selection of artworks that were to be placed.

There was also another major controversy associated with the park, namely, the theme suggested by its billionaire sponsor. Christian Ringnes' wish was that the park should become a tribute to "femininity in all its glory." This caused some critical response and doubts as to the billionaire's intentions and perception of ¨the feminine." It was commonly believed that the sculptures proposed by Ringnes would manifest his personal taste and would eventually jeopardize both the character of Ekeberg's woodland and its public-space-related politics.

An article that serves as an example of the critical responses was published in *Aftenposten* on July 27, 2007. The authors of this article presented quite an alarming perspective on both the investment and the possible legal issues that the contract between Oslo Kommune and CLRS might later result in:

> På et 230 mål stort område bak Ekebergrestauranten ønsker Christian Ringnes å bygge en stor skulpturpark. 230 mål er bare noen mål mindre enn Vigelandsanlegget, omtrent akkurat like stort som Slottsparken. Her vil han plassere over 100 skulpturer, han har bare satt et kriterium: De skal være kvinner. Ringnes selv har lenge omtalt planen som "Parken i kvinnens ånd".- Det høres redselsfylt ut med en park med statuer av bare kvinner. Temmelig arkaisk og problematisk, sier kunsthistoriker Ina Blom ved Universitetet i Oslo. (Assheim, Audestad, 2007)

In many articles from that period (2007-2013), which will be analyzed later, there is a particular focus on the Ekeberg Park as "one man's project"—a project of Christian Ringnes. The

comparisons to monumental Vigeland Park or the central park surrounding the palace are not to be underestimated in this context. Vigelandsparken is the signature Oslo tourist attraction and the biggest sculpture park in the world built according to a single artist's concept. Slottsparken is also a park of significant size, placed on the top of Karl Johans gate—Oslo's most central and touristy area. Comparing Ekebergpark to those two commons served to evoke scepticism concerning the real size of the investment and the impact it would have on the local milieu.

It took two years to accomplish the park after the contract between CLRS and Oslo Kommune was signed. During those two years, public debate around the project significantly intensified. As a result of this debate, Ekebergparken became one of the most controversial architectural adaptations of public space in Oslo after the Second World War. Besides representing a certain level of intrusion for the local people, Ekebergpark caused other significant controversies. When the project was approved in 2011, it was considered an insult to the ideals of community and democracy. Christian Ringnes was accused of trying to commercially exploit a public area, while the city officials were accused of corruption after granting Ringnes the rights to develop the area at his own expense. Norwegian society is mostly based on an egalitarian system financed by taxes, not private donations, which made this kind of philanthropy rather suspicious and not very welcome. The extraordinarily generous donation (300 million Norwegian kroner at first, though the costs later expanded to around 350 million) from the private investor presumably encouraged people to look for a hidden agenda and business purpose rather than to accept it as a philanthropic gesture. The problems deriving from Ringnes' social status and patronage culture in Norway will be given a broader discussion in chapter 6.

The protests against the park went further than press publications. There were organized demonstrations including tree-hugging, which sometimes ended in police interventions. Behind those active protests stood, in most cases, Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekebergskogen (FBE)—an organization established in April 2010. Led by charismatic freelance journalist Marianne Sunde, Folkeaksjonen's mission was to protect the Ekeberg forest from being transformed into a sculpture park.

There was a certain change in the undertone of the publications that followed the Ekebergparken's opening in September 2013. *Aftenposten*, which had been mainly publishing skeptical opinions prior to that point, came out in October 2013 with an apologetic article titled

“Ok da, gratulerer!” (Nyeggen, 2013). This article could be seen as a sort of publishing breakthrough and a signal for public approval of Ringnes’ investment. It does not, however, mean that the problems surrounding the project stopped. The debate took another three years and involved some very dedicated actors, including politicians, social activists, and representatives of Norwegian academia. Some of these people still questioned the investment and its implications for Oslo. Problems that the park represented became, therefore, a trigger for a broader debate about nature, gender, politics, and social conditions in Norway in general. Consequently, the critical articles that are a written testimony of these doubts concerning the park illustrate the characteristics of Norwegian society and the factors constituting the various aspects with which a society identifies.

1.1 Introducing the concept of this thesis

The idea behind this thesis came from the assumption that there is a reason why building a sculpture park in this particular place, sponsored by this particular person, caused so much trouble in terms of social disagreement. The purpose of this paper is therefore to investigate the history and character of the conflict caused by building Ekebergpark, with an emphasis on the three main controversies it raised:

- using a notion of the female body in the public space;
- adapting (changing) the natural environment; and
- processing the remains of a Nazi monument.

In addition, Ekeberg escarpment has a cultural history of its own; it for a long time had been a strategic place both in terms of geography and politics in the history of Norway’s capital. The analysis in the following chapter seeks to combine all these different aspects of the public debate in an attempt to investigate what identity-notions those protests represent for Norwegian society.

Since the main assumption of this thesis is that the debate around Ekebergpark was a platform for expressing several identity-related problems, the goal will be to investigate those problems as expressed in the debate and see if their source can be found in the society’s social and cultural identity, which is always more likely to manifest itself when confronted with a potential danger to the values that shape the distinctiveness of the society. As Mercer puts it, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (Mercer, 1990, p.

43). The protesters used different methods and approaches in order to manifest their disagreement with the project. The goal of this paper is not to study Norwegian identity as such, however, but rather the complex nature of identities that shape society in its modern form. There were several particularly strong opinions in this discussion around the Ekebergpark; they regarded different matters and they all have something to say about Norwegian nation. This clearly shows that "identity" is not a fixed concept in itself and it has never been fixed, nor is it unchangeable. "Identity" is a notion in constant motion both individually and collectively. Accordingly, there is no point in studying the particular Norwegian identity at this moment in time, because there is no such thing; however, we still have a pattern of values, beliefs, and standards that shape the core of Norwegian identities through different discourses, practices, and representations.

In consequence, I find the debate around the Ekebergpark a good example to study aspects of the identities in Norwegian society in the present time. Many groups in society relate to these different values, which they evaluate and organize in different hierarchies. Relations to nature, gender equality, and the occupation of Norway are relevant for constructing Norwegian identity, but they are, of course, not the only aspects of it. Accordingly, I am not attempting to focus on one notion of identity, but rather on a few aspects regarding the discussion about the park. These aspects also involve different time frames. For example, the notion of nature is more attached to Norway's origin and something timeless. Gender equality is more an aspect of the present time and a sincere hope for the future progress of society, while the Nazi cemetery debate concerns the past.

In the light of this problematic debate, there are many questions to be asked regarding the relationship of society to nature and the sense of common responsibility towards a public space. Does highly commercial art (Dali, Renoir, Rodin, Turrell) continue the mission which stood behind the city's purchase of the land for the enjoyment of all social classes back in 1889, or does it interfere with the established character of the place? Is it permissible to change and adapt the historical remnants of the Nazi stairs? If yes, which requirements of monument preservation need to be taken into consideration when it comes to a renovation of this type of historical monument? These are difficult questions, and the answers depend on the given perspective. Instead of presenting solutions, this thesis seeks to look at the different perspectives and the reasoning behind them.

1.2 An Escarpment like no other

> "Landscapes can be understood to have a biography that has accumulated across centuries, or aggregated over millennia. This stretched temporality is significant, and in tandem with it, the researcher's atonement to the multivariate agencies that co-produce landscape. Generosity shown to the 'more-than-human' demands a certain pliability of thinking, not only about the kinds of lives that might be subject to study, but also about what can be recovered of a life. The results can be generative and liberating: presenting the life worlds of animals and birds, plants and trees, objects and structures, and many other "beings" besides these. By the application of close and careful attention, each can be said to have a life history (not simply as a species or a multitude) but as individualized biographical subjects." (Kolen, 2015, p. 18)

Kolen claims that landscapes write biographies on their own. It can be argued that a place's complexity is found in studying both nature and history. "Landscape" is a word with a much more distinctive meaning than nature. As Sabine Brigitte Henlin-Stromme puts it in her Ph.D. dissertation: "Landscape, as a genre in painting, emerged with the rediscovery of the science of optics during the Renaissance…[and] referred to a visual portion of the earth viewed from one vantage" (Henlin, Stromme, 2012, p. 13). Therefore, the value of landscape will, in most cases, depend on the local perception of it. The local value of Ekeberg escarpment is defined by a long history of providing people with natural resources. From farmland through a public park to a locally cherished woodland, this place has been a witness to crucial historical events, from military conflicts between Sweden and Denmark-Norway to occupation by Nazis during the Second World War.

Before the park became a publicly managed space, the area of the escarpment had resided in hands of farmers and private investors. The first archaeological findings on the west side of the hill revealed traces of a 9500-year-old settlement, which is the oldest settlement discovery ever found in Oslo (Geelmuyden, Johannesen, Malmanger, Mikkelsen 2013, 37). This is proof that the Ekeberg escarpment was one of the first dry peaks in the Oslo area after the ice started to melt around 11,000 years ago, enabling the first Stone Age hunters to settle there. Also, Oslo's eldest cultural heritage site—a 7000-year-old petroglyph illustrating a scene of deer-hunting—is located on the opposite side of Kongsveien, beside the Kongshavn Videregående Skole.

On the Ekeberg escarpment in 1889, Oslo Kommune bought around 66 acres of land from private hands in order to initiate what would later become the first socio-political project in Norway—a park for all social classes[1]. At the time, all public parks in the city were situated in

[1] I base my historical background on materials available in the Ekeperparkens Musem for Historie og Natur (exhibition) on Kongsveien 23

the western parts (St. Hanshaugen, Frogner, Slottsparken); therefore, since the city was socially divided, these parks were used solely by the bourgeois class. The idea behind the first park on Ekeberg was to create a sustained, green, outdoor space for all citizens of the city that was then known as Christiania. The project was especially intended for the working class inhabitants of the eastern part of the city. With working conditions in factories being extremely unhealthy, those people needed a place nearby to provide them with fresh air, where they could rest on warmer days, enjoy the view over Christiania, and restore their strength after a hard week's work. For many years the park was also used for natural resources. People were allowed to collect timber in the woods, pick fruits, and let their animals feed on the lawns (there were sheep grazing on Ekeberg escarpment until 1964).

After the opening of a music pavilion in 1907 and the park's first restaurant establishment in 1916, the park became a more popular destination for social life in Christiania. In 1929, after two years of construction, the main Ekeberg restaurant was finally built—a functionalistic project by Lars Backer called *Den nye tid,* which still sits on the top of the hill and can be seen from many places in Oslo.

A certain decrease of interest in the park was a direct result of the occupation during the Second World War. During that time, Nazi soldiers took over the houses on Kongsveien and built a cemetery for fallen soldiers on the western side of the hill. This radically changed the character of the area. In or around the same time, Oslo Kommune stopped maintaining the area. The Ekeberg restaurant was closed in 1997.

For the past two decades, the woodlands of the Ekeberg escarpment have not had a particularly good opinion among Oslo residents. The woods were believed to be a shelter for all sorts of criminal activities. Things changed slightly for the better after the reopening of the Ekeberg restaurant in 2005. Christian Ringnes bought the restaurant building in 2003 using his investment company, Eiendomsspar AS, in order to proceed with a total renovation. In 2005, Bjørn Tore Furset AS, one of the largest restaurant groups in Oslo, leased the building and opened the new Ekebergrestaurant. Now open for more than 10 years, the restaurant has proven to be a successful venue, bringing more life to once-popular park and uplifting a valuable, functionalistic building from the disrepair it had fallen into. Christian Ringnes became the man who "saved the Ekeberg restaurant." This is how in 2007 *Dagbladet* described the upcoming plans for Ekebergparken:

"Alle som har mye, bør gi av sitt overskudd», mener eiendomsmagnaten og småflaskesamleren Christian Ringnes. Han er, blant mye annet, mannen som reddet Ekebergrestauranten fra å bli en ruin (...) Men Ringnes tenker enda større. Han vil lage en skulpturpark til kvinnens pris i skråningen rundt Ekebergrestauranten, der folk i generasjoner har tømt mange av de flaskene Ringnes samler på." (Ramnefjell, 2007)

Accordingly, investing in Lars Backer's fallen project not only strengthened Ringnes' position as an investor-philanthropist, but presumably inspired Christian Ringnes to look for opportunities to adapt the natural surroundings of the restaurant. In particular, he looked for the possibility for creating a bigger art-related venture.

Ringnes had been previously known for his considerable art collection and his interest in sponsoring artwork in public spaces—the tiger sculpture outside Central Station, the peacock fountain outside the National Theatre, plus several sculptures around the Ekebergrestaurant, to name a few examples. However, the project of the Ekeberg Sculpture Park was much bigger and much more expensive investment than any of Ringnes' previous art-related ventures. Therefore, already by 2003, Ringnes had created a foundation to support his venture—C. Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse (CLRS). On Ekeberg Park's official website it states that:

"The foundation was established in 2003 by Christian Ringnes. Its aim is to build a solid capital base and distribute grants for public interest purposes, with a primary focus on the arts, culture, experiences and environmental protection. The foundation may also itself contribute to the mediation of arts, culture and experiences."[2]

Accordingly, the foundation's main project is Ekebergparken. From the budget that Ringnes devoted to the project (first estimated at 300 million NOK) 100 million NOK was for development of the park, 100 million NOK was for the purchasing of sculptures, and 100 million NOK was the management fund. The foundation is responsible for maintaining, revitalizing, and development the park for a 50-year period, starting from September 2013.

In August 2011, the City Council voted 57-2 in favor of the new plan for development of the area proposed by CLRS. The plan included the creation of the Sculpture Park and preservation of its cultural heritage. The assumption was intended to ensure the Ekeberg area's unique natural, cultural, and historical value. As a part of the contract, a professional art committee charged with recommending the purchase and placement of sculptures has been established. The park opened with 30 sculptures spread across the whole of the (approximately) 66-acre park. By the end of 2015, that number has increased to 34, and further additions are planned for the coming years. The rezoning plan for the area allows for up to 80 sculptures, but

[2] http://ekebergparken.com/en/stiftelsen

the actual final number of artworks is yet unknown (although it is agreed that it will not be more than 80).

The C. Ludens Ringnes Foundation is led by a board consisting of three members. Christian Ringnes is the chairman of the board, while Berit Kjøll and Øyvind Klevar are executive members. The board is appointed for a year at a time and meets as needed. Ina Johannesen is managing director of the foundation and Ekebergken's chief executive.

1.3 My role in the park, challenges and perspective that follows

I started to work in Ekeberg Park in October 2013, only one month after the official opening in September 2013. I was first employed as a student intern, and later became a co-worker responsible mainly for public and customer service work.

When I started to work in the park, I was not entirely aware of the scale of controversies this venture had evoked. However, during my first months at work, I gradually studied the debates that arose during the years preceding the Park's opening. Eventually I began to use my work as an opportunity to talk to my colleagues, park visitors, and other actors involved. I also read the press publications about the park and all available sources regarding the debate, which included blogs, short movies, and social media. It came to a point where I realized that the controversies surrounding the park could be seen as a form of expressing identity—local, political, and national identity, as well as identity based on gender and social location. This is when the idea of this thesis was born; I saw it as a possible narrative about the society, including perspectives on memory, social construction, and a spectrum of identities that are not a stable concept but depend on context and situation and, first of all, people.

The fact that I worked in a place that I constructed my thesis around has had an obvious impact on my personal relationship with the park and the people that work there or that have been in any way involved in this project. I thought this was worth mentioning, since it may be assumed that my personal opinion would jeopardize the character of this thesis. This could, to some extent, be true; however, I wanted to be certain that the method I used for this paper would not permit such situation to happen. Therefore, I chose to resign from field work, including interviews and observation, and to focus on studying the general character of protests by analyzing media-related sources. Even though I had a chance to speak on a daily basis with a lot

of park visitors, enthusiasts, skeptics, and people involved in building this project, I was myself a CLRS employee. In my opinion, that would sometimes impact both the character of an interaction and the level of honesty involved, from both sides. Accordingly, I decided that this was not a strategy that would allow me to use the broad perspective essential for this sort of academic work. It was necessary to take a step back.

Chapter 2: Theory, approaching term "identity"

(…) "identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization and are constantly in the process of change and transformation." (Hall, 1996, p.4)

In the above quote, Hall is emphasizing the complex structure of identities, which has been an interest for several other cultural and social scholars[3], especially in the postmodern period. Our perception of identity as such covers very often mainly an individual identity or an ethnic identity, the existence of which is slowly losing its meaning in the process of globalization. Even anthropologists are more reluctant to focus on ethnic diversity and instead choose to emphasize the cultural aspect. Hall claims that the processes involved in construction of one's identity/identities are much more complex than simply possessing one or another cultural background, class, or nationality. He describes it as a notion constructed across discourses[4], practices, and positions. This is the understanding of identity/identities that will be used later in this paper. It is additionally worth mentioning the way Peter Burke, in his collaboration with A. Stets, defines identity:

"An identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is occupant of a particular role in society, a member of the particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person" (Burke,Stets, 2009 p.3).

Accordingly, these scholars similarly to Hall define an individual as a part of the broader context of meaning; even though our identities are expressed on an individual level, they are caused by the tendencies constructed in our milieu, and we choose what we want to define ourselves with. In the light of Hall's theory, the right approach towards studying identities seems to be by studying the factors that were involved in its creation, looking for the result of, and the reason

[3] For example, Zygmunt Bauman, Aleida Assman, Peter Burke, Paul Graves-Brown, Julian Thomas.

[4] The fact that Hall presents identity as a sort of attachment is deriving from Foucault's understanding of the discourse. Foucault claims that our thinking and actions are based on common assumptions—philosophical and social prejudices and stereotypes that relate to specified things, phenomena, or ideas and express the current relationship to them. Discourse is created by social, institutional, and what we understand as ideological factors that affect the way a subject expresses itself and defines what proposals it formulates. As the result of the discourse's impact, the subjectivity is tamed and becomes only the passive element of it. The ideology alone is a very problematic term in Foucault's philosophy, since it only covers discourse like a "sophisticated and foggy style" used as an implementation of practices (Veyne, 2007, p.31), but it can never truly describe them, since they are only the contours of bigger historical changes. Foucault uses the word "discourse" in order to introduce us to those changes.

for, its development. Therefore, this study's material was analyzed with an interest in both the actors and the discourse, since these factors are clearly dependent on each other.

Another problem concerning the term "Identity" is that is has been used in different fields in different contexts of actions, and it is not clearly defined as integral to any one discipline. It is therefore necessary to specify in what sort of context the term will be used. This is why in this thesis, it was decided to emphasize three different aspects of the debate and to connect them with aspects of cultural identity and collective memory.

When it comes to the debate concerning future plans for Ekebergpark, the issues that people protested against seem to express important national and social values, empowered by the strength of the notion, "We are standing together against what we think is wrong." This approach triggers factors that stand behind collective identity based on shared discourse. It means that, even though our identities are also constructed on the individual level, we are a part of the bigger cultural landscape of class distinction, gender sexuality, nationality, and race, elements that transform our individuality into an integral part of society. This is how collective identity can be understood—as a part of the local environment (family, friends, beliefs, "local" values) that becomes part of the bigger discourse in order to specify our place in the community where we want to belong. Similarly, Zygmunt Bauman claims that seeking an identity is in fact looking for something well-known and understood, in order to create a sense of safety and belonging. However, in a time of constant changes deriving from globalization, the stiff sense of identity in belonging to one land only is not a well-recognized distinction any more (Bauman, 2007, p. 30).

Among different categories of identities, the notion of national identity has a special place in this thesis. The problems illustrated and analyzed in later chapters seem to be triggered by the idea of the nation—something that is actually "national" because it gathered a group of people that belong to the same nation and have similar values. However, as Benedict Anderson sees it, a nation is a form of imagined community, and aside from real socio-political relations of power it emerges out of contexts of social and cultural experience which are imaginatively conceived (Anderson, 2006). Therefore, to study the protests against the park is also to study a social and cultural experience that formed the community. What must be further discussed, though, is not only that we are talking about an imagined community. This Norwegian nation is an imagined community, but inside the imagined communities are other communities with imagined connections, because components of the national identity are equally as unstable as

they are for the individual. What I mean by that is, through the protests against the park emerged particular tendencies that could define the character of a nation, but at the same time it is impossible to define a nation as such.

2.1 Terms "identity" and "memory" as a main theoretical concept

It has already been established that identity is not a fixed concept but instead has to be treated as a resemblance within a certain discourse, for the actors, and in the conditions it has been established. As Hall puts it:

> "Society is not, as sociologists often thought, a unified and well-bounded whole, a totality, producing itself through evolutionary change from within itself, like the unfolding of a daffodil from its bulb. It is constantly being 'de-centered' or dislocated by forces outside itself. Late-modern societies (...) are characterized by 'difference'; they are cut through by different social divisions and social antagonisms which produce a variety of different 'subject positions' - i.e. identities - for individuals. If such societies hold together at all, it is not because they are unified, but because their different elements and identities can, under certain circumstances, be articulated together. But this articulation is always partial." (Hall, 1995 p. 600)

I decided, therefore, that I would dedicate each chapter to discussing one problem at the time. This does not necessarily mean that the issues discussed were not involved in some sort of cross-fire, meaning that, for example, those who were against rebuilding the Nazi stairs were not also concerned about protecting the natural environment. In fact, that was not the case; however, different aspects of this debate call for different approaches.

It will be useful to use both Stuart Hall's concept of identity as well as Aleida Assman's thoughts about social and cultural memory. The origin of identity is a process that Hall describes as an identification:

> "Identification is constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation. In contrast with the 'naturalism' of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed - always 'in process'." (Hall, 1996, p.2)

Hall emphasizes that the factors involved in creating identities are the same as those that impose social and cultural boundaries. Accordingly, identities manifest themselves when confronted with another, contrary factor that is undermining the attachment to certain values. A similar process took place in the debate around the park. It can be argued that the process of gaining an identity is, at the same time, a process of transporting memory from an individual to the collective and, accordingly, that collective identity could not exist without some sort of collective memory.

Aleida Assman argues that two types of memory (cultural and political) differ from social and individual memory, because they are not embodied in life experiences, but rather are founded in external symbols such as museums, libraries, monuments, along with "various modes of education and repeated occasions for collective participation" (Assman,1995, p. 6). This is the manner in which she discusses what Connerton includes in the term "*commemorative ceremonies"*; an element of recollection of social memory, Assman calls it political because of the institutionalized manner in which such memories are made a transgenerational experience, something that will last even when no direct witnesses are left. This type of memory is selective, depending on both political pedagogy and the level of patriotic fervor. I choose to use Assman's approach in the chapter dedicated to memory and nature, because those are the topics with the strongest connection to remembering and transforming memories. However, cultural memory has a capacity for ongoing changes because, unlike political memory, it is not strictly defined by a high degree of homogeneity (Assmann, 1995, p. 11). This memory has a new, complex character, since we may redefine it through works of art, performances, and challenges, but this is only possible when the there is no fear that the dramatic events will repeat themselves.

To summarize the theoretical approach followed herein: The most important part of this thesis includes the assumption that that the problems that occurred, as expressed in the intense objection to the building of the park, were caused by the sense of identity. This was not the first time in Oslo that an architectural project created so much controversy. Similar protests, for example, took place in the debate around building Frogner Park and were caused by similar objections—the concept of nudity in the public space and the possible to the natural environment. The biggest difference between those two debates is the degree of media attention. Ekeberg Park had full media coverage during the years when the project was under discussion. While studying the articles from that time, I observed a certain tendency for the media reports to use those factors that seemed most controversial about the project, and to use them extensively; however, the terms "identity" or "memory" barely appear in any of them.

Chapter 3: The method

As mentioned before, the main challenge that can occur while writing a thesis based on one's working environment is the attempt to remain as objective as possible. A hermeneutic method is therefore the chosen approach in this paper. The analyses presented herein focus on publications from the newspapers that were the most active in presenting the topic of the Ekeberg Sculpture Park, mainly during the years 2009-2013. Among the most discussed sources will be articles from *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet,* and *Nordstrand Blad* during the period between 2007 and 2013. *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* are the biggest papers in Norway. According to research conducted by TNS Gallups, *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* are among the top three most read papers in Norway [5]. Research conducted in years 2014 and 2015 proves that *Aftenposten* is the top paper and that *Dagbladet* is overtaken only by the tabloid *VG*, which figures in second place on the list. *Norstrand Blad* represents a different press category, because it is a local newspaper dedicated to the affairs of the Norstrand district in Oslo. Ekeberg Park was an intensely discussed local issue; therefore, *Norstrand Blad* dedicated a lot of publication space to discussing the park as a project as well as the protests around it. One other media actor is also worth mentioning, namely, *Vårtland. Vårtland* covered the debate regarding the renovation of the Nazi cemetery stairs to a much greater extent than any of the other Norwegian papers involved. *Vårtland* is dedicated to a national audience, but the topics discussed there often center around religion and politics.

The year that was most "fertile" when it comes to media coverage about the park was 2011, when the contract between CLRS and the Oslo Komnune was signed. Consequently, most of the study's sources originate from that year and the year of the park's opening (2013).
A better overview on the debate is another reason for using a hermeneutic method, because the selected articles studied in this paper presumably serve as the best form of expression of the public opinion. Only by studying the press publications it is possible to cover the four years of discussion without using too much time on personal agendas, but rather focusing on the general character of the problems described.

There was no field work conducted for this thesis. Taking into account how many people were personally involved in the protests against the park—and including both public and private

[5] More about the conducted research can be read on the TNS Gallup website in the section dedicated to that research: http://www.tns-gallup.no/medier/avis

actors—field work could seem as a very fruitful. I did, in fact, conduct a few interviews and observations; however, from my experience, personal interactions with people and their opinions would have put more emphasis on their personal issues and consequently discoloured the judgment and character of the analysis. Instead, this thesis focused on articles that presented the project of the Ekebergpark as a danger to certain values. The construction of this thesis was meant to investigate how the integrity of the nation depends on the values that were expressed in protests against the Ekebergpark. Naturally, media were most interested in the controversial aspects of the project, fueling public debate. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the negative reactions were the only opinions. To some extent, the park was defended as fiercely as it was criticized. In 2012 Christian Ringnes was quoted in a media interview as claiming that, according to conducted research, there were more people in favor of the park that against it:

> (...) "jeg har holdt på så lenge med eiendom at en viss motstand var forventet. I denne saken har imidlertid tilslutningen vært uvanlig stor, på alle meningsmålinger og undersøkelser på Facebook og så videre er 60 prosent positive og bare 20 prosent negative. Det er svært høy oppslutning om et prosjekt som ennå ikke er realisert." (Christian Ringnes quoted in Haug, 2012)

The intent of this study is, however, to give an overview of the negative response to the Ekebergpark, since that reaction seems to tell a more interesting story. Also, since some of the issues were constantly recurring, it can be assumed that the problems covered in this may be universal for Norwegian society and were simply catalyzed by the establishment of the park.

The sources describing the conflict, mainly newspaper articles, were collected and analyzed according to topics which were of particular interest in the debate. Therefore, the first important part of the work and an essential aspect of the thesis was structuring and sifting through the material for the analysis. This resulted in the decision to divide the paper into three main analysis chapters, each dealing with one of the most significant problems that appeared during the debate. Those three main chapters will deal with issues regarding gender, nature, and the occupation during the Second World War (identity based on remembering and forgetting the past). The various articles represented in this study were chosen because they give the best outline of the issues, and they are followed by a presentation of the theory that will build the foundation of the analysis. Besides the four main sources of articles identified earlier (*Dagbladet, Aftenposten, Vårtland,* and *Nordstrand Bland),* I would occasionally reach for other sources depending on their relevance to the topics discussed in the analysis chapters. Those

sources include social media pages (Facebook), blogs, short movies, or discussion panels available from the press or other media platforms.

3.1 The outline—three main chapters

Both the analysis and the discussion of this thesis are contained in three main chapters. In those chapters, the three main problems that sparked most of the debate and caused most of the controversy surrounding the Ekebergpark will be discussed. Accordingly, the theory used will differ from one chapter to another, but they will all base on the same principle – finding and analyzing the notions that caused the most of the conflict.

Chapter 4, regarding the problematic renovation of the Nazi monument

In this part, I will investigate the Norwegian memory of the Nazi occupation. During the war, Nazi soldiers lived in buildings on the Kongsveien that are now part of the park. In 1941 it was decided to build a cemetery at the top of the Ekeberg hill for fallen German soldiers. The plans for the place were far greater. Among them was building a Stonehenge-like construction and mausoleums, in order to create a complex memorial. After the war, Oslo Kommune decided to move the cemetery away and send the bodies to Alfaset and Germany.

When the contract between the CLRS and Oslo Kommune was composed, the Culture Heritage Management Office suggested that the stairs that once had been a part of the Nazi cemetery should be renovated for the opening of the sculpture park. This provoked a discussion about the consequences of this action for the case of remembering and narrating the region's history.

In this part I would like to focus on the way Norwegian people remember and reinvest in the memory of the occupation period and what exactly was so disturbing about the renovation of those stairs, what sort of memories they invoke, and how the war is remembered in Norway in general.

The period after the war suggests that Norwegians may have been dealing with some sort of after-war trauma, which made it impossible to enjoy the place that had been inhabited by soldiers of the enemy. In her book, Anne Eriksen claims that Norwegians remember and relate the period of the Second World War as a dark and traumatic experience (Eriksen, 1995) despite the fact that life was going on as usual for many and, comparing to other European countries

involved in the conflict, Norway was not that badly injured or destroyed. Eriksen suggests that the memory of the war is, by and large, extending a narration retold again and again such that it has modified the reality into an image based on emotional trauma. These feelings were awoken by the time that the stairs of the Nazi cemetery were supposed to be renovated.

Chapter 5, regarding Norwegians' relation with nature and value of a local landscape

In this part I will look into the protests against the Ekebergpark that were based on the notion of protecting the natural environment. Those were most significant protests both in terms of material published regarding this topic and actual activism. In this chapter I will investigate the connection of Norwegian society and nature and how it influenced the debate around Ekebergparken. The protection of the environment is crucial in Norway in terms of politics, activism and education, but protecting the Ekeberg forest was a cause that also involved also many locals that shows that the woodland on Ekeberg had a distinctive value for those who lived there. Therefore, the plans proposed by Christian Ringnes, and later conducted by Oslo Kommune, were seen as an intrusion into the local affairs, but also an undemocratic process that excluded the local people from deciding on the environment that they have been using for their leisure purposes. Nature is important for Norwegians, there is no doubt about that, and there are certain reasons why the natural environment is so cherished by Norwegian people. In this chapter it will be examined how protecting the Ekeberg forest could be result of the deeper going processes in Norwegian society; from national romantic to deep ecology

Chapter 6, presenting patronage and conception of the female body as a problematic theme

This chapter will deal with the discussion based on the notion of this park serving as a "tribute to the females. Christian Ringnes represent a certain taste and social status that many would not find relevant when it comes to designing the public space. Theme of the park seemed particularly problematic. Female body is a spectrum of meanings, but Ringnes proposition seemed to be only associated with erotic art that would jeopardize the character of the park

This chapter represents an opportunity to discuss other possible issues Norwegian society has with accepting sponsorship as proposed by Christian Ringnes. Additionally, it will discuss identities based on not only political and social notions, but also identities based on gender equality and *habitus* as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu.

Chapter 4: Collective memory and problematic renovation of “Nazi stairs”

Figure 1 Photograph of German cemetery on Ekeberg (year unknown)

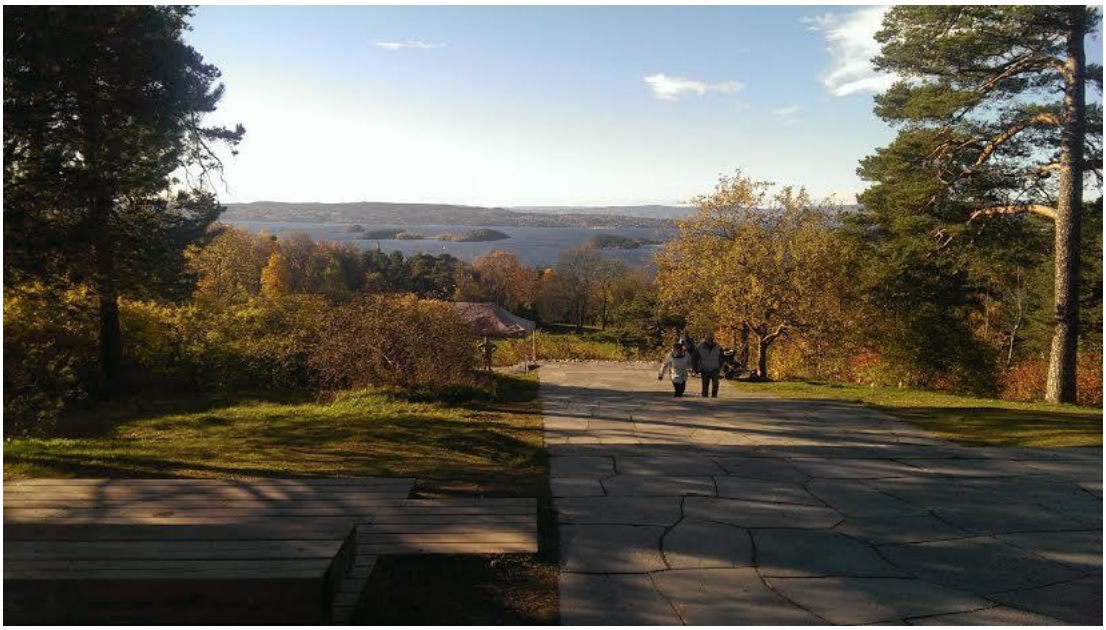

Figure 2 Ekeberg stairs, Ekebergparken (Joanna Pacula, 2015)

Over 70 years has passed between the dates of the two pictures above. Even though they are taken from a different angle, they illustrate the same place—stairs that once were the main architectural element of a Nazi cemetery in Oslo. The cemetery was raised on the top of the Ekeberg hill in spring 1940. Although the date and photographer of the first picture remain unknown, it may be estimated that the picture was taken around the year 1941—at the time the war-cemetery was built.

The picture below was taken by me in September 2015, two years after the Ekebergpark was officially opened. The view is aimed toward the fjord. In the picture, the new, rebuilt stairs can be seen to feature a decorative stone pattern, with a new addition on the left side—wooden benches.

Situated in the same surroundings, yet renovated and rearranged, these stairs have nothing to do with the previous character of the Nazi construction. As a matter of fact, the cemetery itself was moved away in 1952. Since then, the architectural leftovers of the previous Nazi construction were left without any formal attention from the local authorities or any attempts at preservation. There was also no information about what was there before, so only those with a particular interest in history and those who witnessed the occupation of Oslo had any idea of what those graffiti-covered ruins were the remains of.

Today the stairs are fully renovated and adapted to the newly built Sculpture Park. On the Ekebergparken's map they are identified as "Ekebergtrappen"[6]. Nicely composed amid the surrounding landscape and placed among trees and benches, they serve as a stone terrace and one of the best views of Oslofjord that the city can offer. They have become a popular destination attracting tourists and locals, especially on summer days.

The difference between the two pictures above is striking, not only when it comes to quality, but also in terms of atmosphere and associations. The first picture is an immortalized dark aspect of war; symbols, uniforms, and figures evoke certain kind of feelings even for those who do not have a living memory of the Second World War. The picture below is an idyllic landscape, clean, spacious, and bright. The way we feel while looking at pictures taken during the Second World War is an essential part of how we remember, or how we are told to remember. Accordingly, emotions—though not deriving from our personal experience—are reflections of what we are told and what we have learned.

The fact is that living memory of the occupation is fading. We do not have the same, direct connection to the events of the Second World War as did the generations before us. There are a few eye witnesses left who can still share their memories, but transported memory is also a memory transformed, since we use someone else's experience rather than our own. Accordingly, the way we collect our knowledge about WWII is mainly through sources of many types—articles, literature, museums, and monuments. Those more interested in the topic can study memoirs, archives, and different publications. As a result, the idea of the last, biggest conflict in Europe that most of us possess is an accumulation of what we have read, heard, and transported from previous perspectives on the subject. This is what Jan Assman defined as "collective memory"—"a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiations (Assman, Czaplicka, 1995, p. 126). This is the approach towards the collected experience of a nation that will be useful for further analysis in this chapter, where the collective memory's impacts on the sense of national and historical identity will be discussed.

Ekeberg has a complex historical background. Starting from the oldest cultural heritage site in Oslo—cave paintings dating back to 4000-4500 BCE—through wars with Sweden and

[6] The map can be viewed online on Ekebergparken's official website: http://ekebergparken.com/nb/kart

finally, to the period under Nazi occupation. All these historical events and traces of cultural heritage were used as arguments in support of building the new sculpture park under the slogan of "art, history, nature." This is the theme that Oslo Kommune agreed on. Accordingly, not only is Ringnes' foundation responsible for maintaining the park on a daily basis and providing it with new artwork, but they are also obliged to take care of its cultural heritage by means of preservation and education. Therefore, a museum has been built in a villa on Kongsveien 23 with a permanent exhibition concerning the cultural history of Ekeberg. Additionally, around the park there are information boards introducing different aspects of the area's cultural heritage; displays include information about Ekeberg restaurant, graves from the Bronze Age, the early Iron Age and the Viking Age, previous "folkepark," and several other significant, historical places[7].

As a part of the historical preservation and dissemination included in the contract between CRLS and Oslo Kommune, the Culture Heritage Management Office (Byatikvaren) suggested that the stairs that were once part of the Nazi cemetery should be renovated. This idea turned out to be very controversial, especially for the academic milieu. Twenty-two professors from the University of Oslo signed a protest letter, in which they argued that renovating a Nazi monument to become a part of the Sculptural Park was the wrong approach towards preserving the cultural heritage associated with WWII. The renovation caused a negative response from private actors and some politicians. Nevertheless, despite the protest letter, articles, and negative opinions, the stairs were renovated. This renovation was done without recreating any symbols that could recall the past function of the construction. Instead, CRLS management decided to place an occupation-related exhibition in Ekebergparken's museum and to install an information board at the top of newly renovated stairs:

[7] More information about Ekeberg's cultural heritage may be found on Ekebergparken's website: http://ekebergparken.com/nb/historie

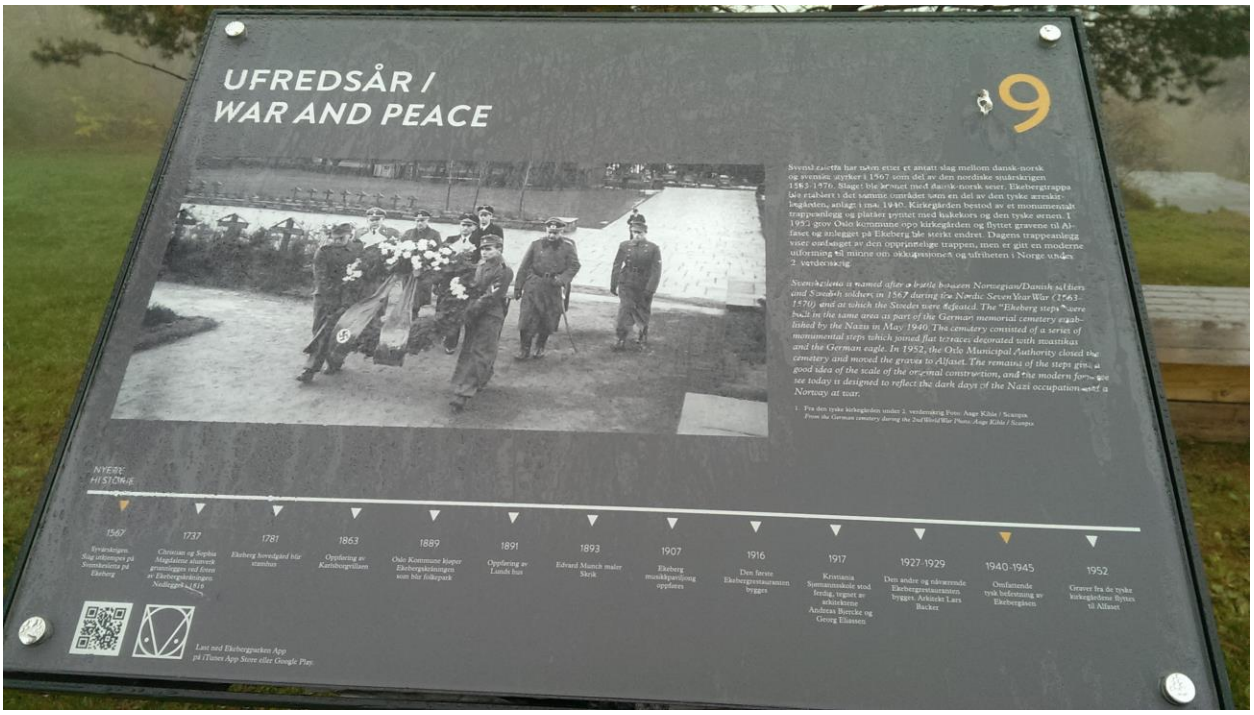

Figure 3 Information board, Ekebergparken (Joanna Pacula, 2015)

Studying the debate that took place before the renovation was executed evokes certain questions. Is it a new tendency at this moment of history that allows us to put all the dramatic experience of the Second World War behind—to rebuild it, tame it, and make it our own? Or is it quite the opposite—are we are obliged to pay it respect, by leaving monuments like this alone to let them fall apart? Should the falling monuments be marked it in order for us to remember and reflect upon the events of the past? Who is responsible for the nation's memory? Those are questions about the historical identity of the nation, understanding our history, our relation to the war, but also about the plan for teaching the past and remembering in general. Those are questions to which an unambiguous answer is not possible, as is proven by the difficult discussion created by this renovation.

This chapter begins with a brief presentation of Nazi cemetery, its origins and construction in the context of the German occupation of Oslo. It will later be discussed what sort of impact this place had on the existing park and how it transformed the landscape of Ekeberg. That will serve as a starting point to the discussion concerning Norwegian collective memory. Can memory recollection concerning WWII, as understood by Aleida and Jan Assman, be the

main reason behind the critical responses towards the renovation of the "Nazi stairs"? It will further be discussed what relevance the occupation has for the modern Norwegian identity—was it relevant in the past and forgotten now? Has its relevance changed? After discussing the aspects of collective memory, arguments from the renovation's proponents and protesters will be presented and analyzed in the light of the previous discussion. One subsection will be dedicated to a similar, controversial renovation that took place in Stiklestad, where during the war the Norwegian National Party raised a Fascist Monument.

4.1 The War and what came afterwards

War came to Norway on April 9, 1940. During the occupation period in Oslo, Nazi soldiers chose the historical villas on Kongsveien 21 and 23 that belonged to Oslo Kommune for their headquarters. These buildings, renovated by CLRS, are now the part of the Sculpture Park accommodating Ekebergparken's visiting center and small café-restaurant "Karlsborg Spiseforretning." Nazi plans for the Ekeberg escarpment were, however, far greater than merely establishing a place of residence. *Dagbladet*'s correspondent Asbjørn Svarstad quoted German magazine *Kampf um Norwegen* which in April 1940 was already presenting the concept of a monumental cemetery to be built in Oslo (Svarstad, 2013, p. 35). The plans also included a Stonehenge-like construction and mausoleums. Accordingly, the place was supposed to become the most complex memorial and monument raised in honor of the Third Reich in Oslo**.** The plans for building mausoleums and a new "Stonehenge" never came to fruition, most likely because they were time-consuming projects and by 1943 problems on the front were forcing Nazi authorities to focus their attention elsewhere. However, the cemetery was accomplished. The work on the cemetery started early in May, only 19 days after the invasion of Norway began (Diesen, 1990, p. 73). The first bodies that were buried on the top of Ekeberg were soldiers who died in the massive explosion on "Blücher."

"Blücher" was one of the Admiral Hipper-class heavy cruisers of Nazi Germany's *Kriegsmarine.* During the invasion of Norway in April 1940, Blücher served as Konteradmiral Oskar Kummetz's flagship. The ship led the flotilla of warships into the Oslofjord. The goal was to quickly seize Oslo and take over the power in the city. However, torpedoes fired by land-based batteries on Oscarsborg struck the ship, causing uncontainable fire aboard. The fire led to the massive magazine's explosion. The ship sank and as many as 1000 Nazi soldiers lost their

lives and were later buried at the Ekeberg cemetery. The explosion of “Blücher” delayed the German invasion, which gave the king time to safely leave the country. The wreck of the Nazi heavy cruiser still rests on the bottom of Oslofjord (“Blücher”, Norsk Krigleksikon, 1995, p. 46).

Later, when the Germans seized power in Norway, the Nazi cemetery project could be continued. Oslo Kommune representatives had been unsuccessfully suggesting other, less central locations for the Nazi necropolis, like Sogn, Huseby, or Grensen. Eberhardt Gunther, German language teacher and a Nazi Party (NSDAP) member residing in Oslo, was purported to have argued against local authorities’ attempts with the words “Vi, tyskere skal ligge høyt og fritt” (Svarstad, 2013, p. 35). Therefore, the area above “Svenskesletta” with a panoramic view over the Oslo fjord was chosen as an ideal location for the most important Nazi graveyard in Norway. The cemetery’s construction included two lines of monumental stairs leading to a plateau topped with a wall-built installation of the Reichsadler holding a swastika, as illustrated in the picture above. The actor involved in building and planning the cemetery was Norwegian landscape architect’s company Norske Hager. When the war ended members of associations that were accused of cooperation with Germans were punished through co called "honor trials". Norwegian Hagearkitektlag conducted such a process in the months after liberation in May 1945. It led to the garden architects from Norske Hager were excluded by the association (Jørgensen, 2015, p. 129)

After the cemetery was built, funerals could be carried quite frequently, as often as every week. Ceremonies were accompanied by the solemn parades that were characteristic for the Nazi-German hero cult. Eventually, the place became an important spot for Nazi soldiers stationed in Norway. Seven or eight Norwegian cohorts also received graves on “Svenskesletta.” The cemetery was visited by high-ranking Nazi officers including Goebbels, Heydrich, and Himmler. Every grave was marked with a wooden cross with the engraved name, birth, and death date of each fallen soldier. During the period of the German occupation of Norway, almost 3,000 soldiers were buried at the Ekeberg cemetery.

After the war was over, the Nazi cemetery became an issue for the Oslo Kommune and locals. It was therefore decided to move it. This process had a problematic aspect, because among the buried bodies were Norwegian citizens. It was nevertheless deemed necessary to proceed with removal of cemetery, which started in the early 1950s; some bodies were moved to

Alfaset outside Oslo and others were sent back to Germany. All symbols that identified the ideological character of the Nazi construction, including the Reichsadler, were also removed.

What happened with the local perception of the "folkepark" after the Nazi cemetery was cleared suggests that Norwegians may have been dealing with some difficulties deriving from its association with the German occupation. There was a visible change in interest and general approach towards the public woodland on the Ekeberg escarpment after the Second World War was over. The once popular park began to become overgrown. Oslo Kommune failed to provide the necessary actions to maintain the green areas of Ekebergsletta. Ekeberg Restaurant also lost its prestige, to eventually become "åreknutten"—a dancing and meeting place for elders. The lack of new clientele and the loss of its old splendor contributed to the restaurant being permanently closed in 1997, in what was the apogee of the processes that turned the park into an unmaintained woodland.

4.2 The Second World Ward and (re)collected memory

In her book *Det var noe annet under krigen, 2. Verdenskrig i norsk kollektivtradisjon,* Anne Eriksen claims that many Norwegians remember the period of the Second World War as a dark and traumatic time, despite the fact that most of them did not witness the occupation. Eriksen suggests that the memory of the war is largely an extension of a narration retold again and again until it has modified reality by creating an image based on the emotional trauma of those who experienced it (Eriksen, 1995). The assumption that memory is transformable when retold as a narrative from those who experienced the history firsthand may be a good argument for defending collective memory as an existing phenomenon that stands behind the sense of collective identity. Aleida Assman argued in favor of this connection:

> "History turns into *memory* when it is transformed into forms of shared knowledge and collective identification and participation. In such cases 'history in general' is reconfigured into a particular version of 'our history', absorbing it as a part of collective identity" (Aleida Assman, 2006, p. 5)

It can therefore be assumed that the debate about renovating of what was left of the Nazi cemetery on the Ekeberg escarpment was an expression of the collective memory that creates a sense of unity and values that can be considered national.

Even though most of us did not witness the events of the Second World War, we can see what is left from its monuments and architecture. Some of these "leftovers" have no power of

political agenda left in it—such as, for example, roads, buildings, bridges, etc. At the same time, barely any of the monuments built for the glory of the Third Reich exist in their original form (except, of course, for those which eventually became part of a museum). They are deprived from their original, symbolic meaning, turned to ruins by passing time, or destroyed in some other way. As a result, they no longer serve as a place of Nazi propaganda. The stairs on the Ekeberg escarpment were no exception; once a monumental part of the biggest Nazi cemetery in Norway, they were deprived of their symbolic power after the war when the cemetery was moved and the Reichsadler later became part of the exhibition at the Military Museum in Oslo (currently, it is part of the exhibition at the Ekeberg Museum for History and Nature on Kongsveien 21). As will be pointed out in the next subsection, some historians feared that the stairs would become a place for neo-Nazi cults. This suggests that representatives of academia feel more responsibility towards preserving the history than other actors involved in the restoration's debate. Consequently, it can be discussed that collective, social memory is a part of the mechanism that builds national identity and creates our position towards the war and our history as a nation. Paul Connerton claims that all beginnings contain the element of recollection; we use the memories, places, and stories retold by others in order to establish our own—that is what makes it even more difficult to separate the present from the past, when the present involves a constant recollection of past experiences. And this does not concern only our own memories:

> "Concerning the social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order. It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society's past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions. The effect is seen perhaps most obviously when communication across generations is impeded by a different set of memories" (Connerton, 1989 p.3)

According to this theory, we may see that the debate about restoring the stairs is actually a discussion about what we are doing with our memory and how we going the shape the memory of those who come after us. On the one hand, we have an assumption that we are ready to renovate the ruins of a Nazi cemetery in order to make it a totally new concept, something that has never been possible before, since it was simply too early.

Connerton claims that recollection that always assists the new beginning's work in two areas of social activity: *commemorative ceremonie*s and *bodily practices* (Connerton, 1989 p. 7). *Commemorative ceremonies* are rites "not as a type of symbolic representation, but as a 'species

of performative'" (Connerton, 1989, p. 70). This is how the community is reminded of its identity, through this master narrative retold and reperformed again and again.

In Norway there have been certain educational attempts to reclaim the memory of the events of Second World War that we could include in what Connerton describes as *bodily practices*, namely, the institution of "white buses." This is a Norwegian institution that since 1992 has been organizing educational class trips to the Auschwitz memorial. These trips are organized in order to educate young people through experience. *Hvite Busser*'s statement is "En fremtid med menneskeverd, uten rasisme og ekstremisme."[8] The name "White Buses" commemorates the rescue operation that took place at the end of WWII, in the spring of 1945.This was a rescue mission that brought 20,000 prisoners from concentration camps around Europe. Foundation *Hvite Busser* chose to invoke the name of this unprecedented rescue operation to show the consequences an individual's actions can cause.

Building monuments is a part of this performance action, and it is different in the United States, where the war is considered to start in 1941; different in occupied Norway; and different in Poland, where the years of war are counted from 4:00 AM on the first of September 1939 and the occupants were not only the Nazis, but also The Red Army. The timing, progress, and individual experience are crucial for understanding the history and collective memory as an aspect of national identity. These are expressed in the monuments, the history lessons, and the shape of the nation long after the war is over.

4.3 The memory without a memorial–discussing the problematic renovation

There was no mention of restoration of symbols or any other architectural parts that could serve as a reminder of the original character of the construction in the renovation plans suggested by Byatikvaren. Instead, what seemed the most controversial, according to the articles and publications that covered this debate, were two possible outcomes of rebuilding the original Nazi stairs. First, the monument about to be restored was originally raised in honor of Third Reich, so reconstructing it would seem to be ethically wrong. Second, it seemed equally problematic that the construction would be most likely restored as an anonymous set of stairs in a privately

[8] Hvitebusser.no

sponsored Sculpture Park, which would jeopardize the previous historical character of the monument.

The debate caused by the renovation of the Nazi cemetery stairs involved on the one hand the opponents—intellectuals from Oslo's academic environment, environmentalists, journalists, and other individuals expressing their opinions in the public forum. On the other hand, among the renovation's protagonists were, of course, the sponsor, Christian Ringnes; his co-workers, including the general manager of the park, Ina Johannesen; Janne Wilberg, representing the Cultural Heritage Management Office; and the representative of Oslo Kommune who voted in the favor of the project. Looking from the present perspective on the debate, one may conclude that the great majority of people who took part in the media discussion were skeptical towards the renovation of the stairs; however, having the Cultural Heritage Management Office (who gave the plans and permission for the renovation) and Christian Ringnes, who sponsored the project, on the same side was the equivalent of a winning argument.

The negative response towards the renovation echoed in the language used in the media publications. The media made extensive use of the socially neglected Nazi association in order to emphasize the controversial character of the enterprise[9]. One of the biggest articles introducing both sides of the argument was attached to the online edition of *Vårtland* on February 21, 2013, and titled "Skal pusse opp Nazi monument." (Lorentzen 2013) *Vårtland* is a Norwegian newspaper dedicated to Christian and national values and was at the same time most active actor in the media debate about the stairs' renovation. The official statement of Oslo's Byatikvaren, made by Janne Wilberg, in *Vårtland's* article admitted that this sort of renovation could cause controversy; however, she claimed that the stairs monument would in a sense create a place of freedom. She ensured that she was cooperating with the Christian Ringnes Foundation and emphasized that the ruins of the cemetery would not be renovated in such a way as to resemble how the cemetery looked during the war. According to the arguments used by the Oslo Heritage Office we have an obligation to restore the ruins of the occupation monuments in Norway, as it is an important part of the land's history:

"Jeg forstår at dette vekker følelser hos mange. Men jeg mener vi må tåle ubehaget som noen kan føle ved at man tar vare på krigsminner som tilhører okkupasjonsmaktene. Den farlige historien er den som ties i hjel" (Lorentzen, 2013)

[9] It is worth mentioning that other titles included "Naziparken på Ekeberg," "Som å pusse opp uniformen til Brevik," and "Skal pusse opp Nazi monument."

Additionally, Janne Wilberg wrote more articles about the renovation of this occupation monument, she clearly understood that this was an uneasy project that would most definitely evoke strong feelings. However, in her arguments she emphasizes that the renovation would be fulfilled in a tactful way (Lorentzen, 2013). In the same article, Ina Johannesen, leader of the Ekebergparken, also agreed that the discussion about renovating monuments raised by Nazi soldiers is not easy, because it is still a delicate and painful topic for many, especially for those who survived the Nazi occupation in Norway. Johannesen's main argument in support of restoration of the stairs was that the monument would not restore any Nazi symbols or other architectural details other than the stairs themselves.

The arguments of the proponents seem to amount to a claim that the renovation was about making something positive out of the dramatic memories of the Second World War. The opponents, however, clearly disagreed with the idea that the renovation would be a "harmless" process.

Twenty-two professors from the University of Oslo signed a protest letter sent to Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and other political authorities, claiming that the idea of renovating the Nazi monument was wrong. In another article published in the online edition of *Vårtland* on February 22, 2013, Klaus Høiland, one of the professors that signed the protest letter, said that restoring something that the Nazi had built was like hanging up a uniform for Breivik in the historical museum. Dagne Ant Graven also signed the appeal to the Prime Minister. As an active participant of Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekebergskogen, she was not only certain that the natural environment of the Ekeberg forest should be left untouched, but also the Nazi cemetery should be transformed—"ruins should be left ruins since they are powerful enough to speak" (*Vårtland,* February 22, 2013).

When it comes to Norwegian society, Anne Eriksen claims that there is a tendency to look at the five year period of the Second World War as a time within its lines, almost a mythical period. Memories of the Second World War in Norway, created in a similar way to myths, are enriched with meanings that come not from reality alone, but from the way we read and interpret reality (Eriksen, 1995, p. 24). Norway was not affected as much during the occupation as compared to the losses of other European countries (Eriksen, 1995, p. 28); however, the memory of the occupation period and its consequences are constantly retold, in what Eriksen claims to be the *Etterkrigens fortelling,* closed up with the frames of assault-occupation and liberation

(Eriksen, 1995, p. 30). Eriksen claims there might be two ways that the mythical perception of history influences our position towards it. On the one hand, it creates a sense of social moral-solidarity, which enables the cultivation of similar values and understandings of history and thus binds identity. On the other hand, myth always leaves a possibility of different interpretations, which makes it ambivalent, shapeless, and unstable.

The refit of the Nazi stairs, therefore, brought up a period remembered as a dark moment in history, seen through terms such as occupation, resistance movement, and invasion. The leader of the Office of Cultural Heritage, Janne Wilberg, said that even though she understood that the memorial can arouse negative emotions and reactions, she felt that part of democracy is to preserve the history of all times, not only the history of the rich and the winners (*Vårtland* February 21, 2013). We may look to this theory when searching for arguments as to why Norway was ready to deal with the Nazi monument as was done, while in many other countries this would still be unthinkable. It shows that right now Norway may be in a unique place in history, where a change in the monument's culture may be established. Aleida Assman claims that this type of status can be placed in the framework of cultural memory (Assman, 1995, p. 1). She argues that those two types of memory (cultural and political) differ from social and individual memory, since these are not embodied in life experiences, but rather are founded in external symbols such as museums, libraries, and monuments, as well as "various modes of education and repeated occasions for collective participation" (Assman,1995, p. 6). This is the manner in which she discusses what Connerton describes using the term *commemorative ceremonies*; this is an element of recollection of social memory that Assman calls political, because the institutionalized manner is designed to make this memory a transgenerational experience, something that will last when no direct witnesses are left. This type of memory is selective, and it depends both on political pedagogy and on the level of patriotic fervor.

Cultural memory, according to Assman, has the capacity for ongoing changes, because unlike political memory, it is not strictly defined by a high degree of homogeneity (Assman, 1995, p. 11). Cultural memory has a new, complex character because we may redefine it in works of art, performances, and challenges, but this is only possible when there is no fear of dramatic events repeating themselves.

Arne Johan Vetlesen, professor of philosophy at the University of Oslo, also put his name on the letter, claiming that the renovation would be strange and troubling renovation—

disrespectful for victims of Nazi atrocities both in Norway and abroad. He emphasized that a restoration of a Nazi monument as part of a landmark in the country's capital would be also seen as disturbing from the perspective of other countries that were occupied during the War. Arne Johan Vetlsen was one of the 22 professors of University of Oslo who signed the protest letter against rebuilding the stairs and against covering the history of the monument for the purposes of the sculpture park. Historian Øystein Sørensen even expressed concern about the place becoming a new place for neo-Nazi cults (Osloby, 2013). Meanwhile Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekebergskogen, the organization that worked for preservation of the Ekeberg forest against the park, led by journalist Marianne Sunde, not only protested against rebuilding the Nazi monument, but also declared that the rebuilding plans were concealed and not made public and therefore did not allow protesters to act in time (Sunde, 2013). The "Nazi stairs" were built by "the enemy"—Nazi authorities who seized power in Oslo in 1940. Renovation of the stairs was therefore seen as a move against liberty and possibly all those who fought for freedom, according to the argument of Norwegian history professor Østei. However, the discussion around this renovation certainly did not get attention comparable to other issues that will be discussed in later chapters.

In her debate article from *Dagbladet*, Marianne Sunde argued on July 22 2013 that the CLRS planned to rebuild a historic copy of the stairway and the ceremony area for the biggest and most important German honorary cemetery in Norway, which would be a worldwide-known novelty, but that Oslo Kommune and Byatkivaren negotiated and sealed the deal behind the citizens' backs. She emphasized that Oslo Komunne allowed the Ringnes Foundation to collaborate with the City Antiquarian, which led to the suspicious treatment of planning regulations (Sunde, 2013).

Christian Ringnes argued with those speculations, claiming that the idea of the renovation came from the City Antiquarian and was therefore historically verified:

"I henhold til godkjent reguleringsplan for Ekebergparken, skal reparasjonen av trappeanlegget godkjennes av Byantikvaren. Den opprinnelige skissen som viste reparasjon av kun et av de to trappeløpene ble forelagt Byantikvaren, som etter lang bearbeidelse av saken ønsket begge trappeløp reparert. Det er således Byantikvaren og ikke Ekebergparken eller undertegnede som er premissgiver i denne saken" (Lorentzen, 2013)

4.4 The case of the Fascist monument in Stikelstad

The reconstruction of the Nazi cemetery on the Ekeberg escarpment is not the first case of a problematic renovation of a WWII monument in Norway. Similar problems occurred while adapting the Fascist monument in Stiklestad. This monument was built in 1944 by Norway's national socialist party (Nasjonal Samling) as a tribute to the regime of the Third Reich.

> "By means of the monument at Stiklestad the party aimed to establish a spiritual and ideological link between the medieval king and patron saint, King Olav and the party leader, Vidkun Quisling (…). The monument was created by famous sculptor and NS member-member Wilhelm Rasmussen (…) the NS-monument was huge and dominating. It consisted of a large flight of steps, a relief displaying the battle at Stiklestad in 1030 and the death of King Olav, and a nine meter tall obelisk displaying with the sun wheel—the NS symbol, often worn by the storm troopers and party members as armlets and pins." (Fagerland, Nilssen, 2011, p. 80)

The monument in Stiklestad was removed just a few days after the liberation in 1945. The relief was destroyed and the obelisk, which was of a size that made it difficult to deal with, was taken down and buried.

Unlike the Nazi cemetery, the monument in Stiklestad was raised by Norwegians, not occupiers. Planning, building, and financing were undertaken by Nasjonal Samling (NS). Additionally, as shown by the archival research of Tom Einar Fagerland and Trond Risto Nilssen, the monument was supposed to support Vidkun Quisling and the party leadership in Oslo, while German authorities took steps to actually stop the project (Fagerland, Nilssen, 2011, p. 80).

In 2005 in Stiklestad, a conference was organized in order to decide how to proceed with the buried obelisk that was not destroyed during the liberation. It caused a discussion similar to the one that took place after it was publicly announced that the C. Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse was going to renovate the "Nazi Stairs." The conference in Stiklestad involved representatives from academia, locals, as well as resistance veterans and previous SS volunteers. The debate was mostly divided between those who saw the reconstruction of the obelisk as a direct glorification of the SS and a ceremonial place for neo-Nazi groups and those who did not see it this way—the latter of which were mostly younger people (Fagerland, Nilssen, 2011, p. 80). It is interesting how similar the arguments used at this conference were to those used in the public debate around the reconstruction of the Nazi stairs. The opponents, mostly from the academic environment, saw the danger of stairs becoming a new cult object for neo-Nazi followers. (The most significant

difference between the two is that the Nazi cemetery was planned and built by the occupiers while the Stiklestad monument was raised by local party members.)

In 2011, Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter presented a proposal to convey to the public this part of Stiklestad history. The plans included a proposal for the partial restoration of the Stiklestad obelisk as part of a more complex restoration that would include previous monuments. According to the saga, St. Olav fell in Stiklestad under Tore Hund's sword during battle in 1030. Some evidence indicates that there was already a memorial at Stiklestad in the Middle Ages ("Omstridt NS-bauta på Stiklestad kan bli avdekket," 2011). It is certain, however, that a new memorial was erected in 1710, and that this was replaced by the current "Olavsstøtta i 1807." The Olavsstøtta was later removed in order to make space for the Nasjonal Samling monument in 1944. This complex layer of monuments symbolizing different historical events became a problematic restoration issue. The discussion hovered around what should be revealed and what should be hidden.

The board of the SNK in February 2011 proposed to take a position on the proposal. The board felt it was important to decide whether to prevent its restoration or reconstruction or to "use a painful past as a basis for reflection" (said Per Steinar Raaen, head curator of SNK in the online edition of *Aftenposten* dated October 20, 2013). The board considered leaving the monument buried and untouched, moving it elsewhere, and moving it into a larger exhibition at the cultural center. Ultimately, Per Steinar Raaen from SLK came to the conclusion that at least the part of the obelisk with the descriptions and symbols should be made visible. No one considered similar attempts concerning the monument on Ekeberg. The Nazi stairs were stripped of symbols after the war, and it seemed that putting them back in was an inconceivable scenario, but the historians protesting against the reconstruction argued that, even without the Nazi elements, the stairs were a strong symbol that might cause members of neo-Nazi movements to use the stairs for embracing their agendas.

Though it seemed that a common agreement had been reached on partly restoring the obelisk in Stiklestad, the events of July 22, 2011, changed the plans of the authorities responsible for continuing the project. The leader of Nord-Trøndelag fortidsminneforening, Kolbein Dahle, who had previously been a proponent of restoring a part of the obelisk, changed his mind after the massacre of July 22, 2011. He claimed that it would be unreasonable to begin to dig up Nazi history in this way after what happened on July 22, 2011. He expressed the fear that an exposed

stone monument would attract extremists, since this had taken place previously, although it had been buried (Hofstad, 2012). In the same manner, professor Klaus Høiland in an interview with *Vårtland* in 2013 argued that restoring Nazi monuments creates a danger that the monument will become a place of pilgrimage. He also used references to July 22 in claiming that restoring the stairs would be like "hanging up a uniform for Breivik at the Historical Museum" ("Som å henge opp uniformen til Breivik" 2013). The fresh memory of the tragic events of July 2011 prevented further work on the Stiklestad monument (however, the proposal for the restoration was discussed again in 2014, as mentioned in the NRK article "Her vil Vigrid ha dåp og seremonier" from July 2012), but this did not stop the restoration of the stairs at Ekeberg. There are several possible reasons for that—including the facts that the Oslo Heritage Office stood behind the plans for Ekeberg, and that the financing of the project was secured by the private foundation. The fact that the project did not require public financing may have made it easier to persuade the city to proceed with the planned renovation.

As mentioned, the most striking difference when it comes to the discussion of these two projects is the fact that behind the monument in Stiklestad stood Norwegians from the NS party, while the stairs were raised by Nazi occupiers. By revealing the obelisk with its inscription, some of Norway's painful past had to be restored. Around 55,000 Norwegians were members of NS, but it is more common in Norway to picture the war as a period dominated by national unity (Eriksen, 1995, p. 42-94).

4.5 From fields to museums–memory transported

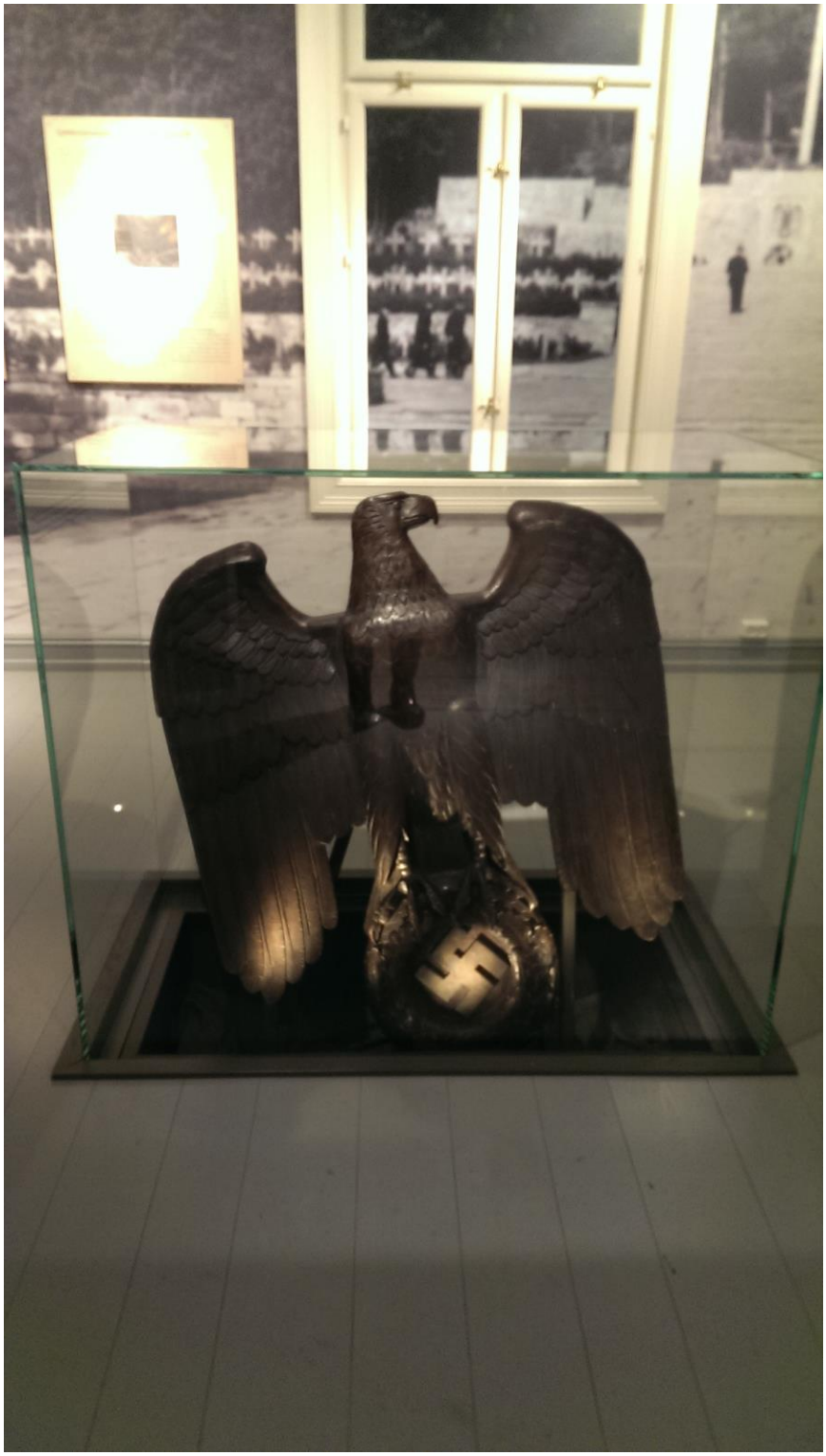

Figure 4 Reichsadler, Ekebergparken (Joanna Pacula, 2015)

The picture above was taken at Ekebergparken's visiting center. One of the rooms on the museum's first floor is almost entirely dedicated to the period of German occupation. Even though the Second World War is not the only military conflict connected to the Ekeberg's history, it certainly is the most recent one. It can be seen from the picture that an entire wall in the museum is papered with an image illustrating the cemetery while it still served as a podium to Nazi propaganda. In the middle of the room there is a glass cabinet, mounted specifically for the Reichsandler, the most symbolic part of the Nazi monument. All those physical remains from the occupation period are used as a form of historical narrative told in a manner that enables the objects in one way or another to influence our imagination. Museums give people the opportunity to meet the past at a level of interaction where we can decide how much emotional impact it will create.

There was a certain tendency in the debates about both Stiklestad and the Ekeberg stairs for those opposed to the project to use the notion of the July 22 massacre. Using that in the context of the Second World War is nothing new; the tragic events of 2011 could be only compared with the phantom of war. The significant difference lies in the "freshness" of the events. July 22, 2011, is well remembered by all; we all experienced it individually, and our individual memory can eventually expand based on the experience of others, especially survivors. During the 1950s, freshly liberated Norwegian society did not want to have anything to do with the Nazi heritage. The memory of the War was too fresh and painful to permit the existence of a Nazi memorial, especially in one of the best, most centrally situated viewpoints in the city. The cemetery was moved, the bodies were dug out and taken away, and so were all the symbols that might induce bad associations. Over 60 years later, we are still careful with Nazi-related marks; however, the renovation of the Nazi stairs in the Ekebergparken is a precedent in which the historical and political memory is overtaken by the present, urban circumstances. It seems that we again have an ability to create a new beginning without its reflection of the past, at least not in the same manner as it used to serve. On the one hand, we want to recover from the past; we do not want another war and we want to see ourselves as living in better times, and this serves as a hopeful idea. The stairs are a therefore a symbol of freedom and of a national memory that is no longer tied to the traumas of the Second World War. However, this does not change the fact that memory does not disappear; it may transform and fade, but we are left with

the monument to honor no one else, but ourselves—the privilege of peaceful times when we no longer live in the shadow of fear that something that may undermine our safe position.

There is a power in self-interpreting a strong, democratic society, standing for human rights, gender equality, and social equality. Building and re-building monuments is no longer dictated by dramatic events, but rather is captured from our perspective like American war monuments that express victory, but without a visible enemy; "the enemy is bathed in the nothingness of the color black, displaced and outshone by the gold of the victors" (Koselleck, 2002, p. 309). Koselleck also writes about modernization—"the transformation involves social and political sensibility, which has its own history and has had a productive as well as receptive effect on the language of memorials" (Koselleck, 2002, p. 324).

History is what created the understanding of nation, claims Polish historian Marcin Kula (Kula, 2015, p. 60), even though the existence of "nation" has been a subject of objection by scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Ernest Geller. What Kula is proposing, however, is that every nation has a different conception of cultivating one's history. Some nations do not put much effort in cultivating the past, while others do exactly the opposite. Many nations find it necessary to cultivate memory, necessary in terms of the nation's existence. Of course the right question to ask is, who is actually standing behind the memory of the nation and cultivating history?

The story of the war has claimed the Nazi stairs and the NS monument. It has also created national consensus and a set of values for the reconstruction, and thus for modern Norwegian society. At the same time it placed Norway in the international community and helped to create the image of the small but courageous and freedom-loving people, with moral integrity and highly developed sense of justice. It represents the time of war as an universal struggle between good and evil:

> "Den kollektive tradisjonen som oppstår rundt viktige begivenheter, som okkupasjonen av Norge, handler nemlig ikke bare om å huske. Den handler også om å glemme eller utelate, og om å tolke det som skjedde, på bestemte måter. Og ikke minst handler den om å forme den fortellingen som ettertida skal leve med. Det bildet vi har av fortida, sier kanskje like mye om samtidas sosiale og politiske behov og konflikter som det sier om hva som en gang hendte." (Ericsson, 2009)

What was the most controversial aspect about renovating the Nazi stairs was still the timing. Twenty, or even ten years ago it would be unthinkable. Some scholars doubt that such a thing as a collective memory exists, emphasizing that memory is to be considered as an individual phenomenon (Bjerg, Lenz, Thorstensen, 2011, p. 8).

Connerton on the other hand offers the example of the public execution of Louis XVI as an example of a public denial (Connerton, 1989, p. 8). The death was not the main purpose of the execution; instead, big show took place, performed in order to take away the king's status in public. The weapon of choice was forced. This is not, however, how it proceeded in Oslo, on Ekeberg hill; there is not a force that can make us forget the past, but there is also no continuity of collective memory as such.

When it comes to the history of the Second World War, we cannot depend any longer on the direct memories and experiences of those who survived. However, based on their experiences, as retold in the historical sources and sustained by performances and commemorative ceremonies, we are building our own identity, both individual and collective. Individual memory is based on our own experience, but it can be also transformed to us from family members, witnesses, and stories we encounter in the local environment.

The movie *Max Manus* and how it connected society represents positive aspects of the occupation history. How we remember is how we choose to remember. Therefore, rebuilding the stairs seems like rearranging the memory of the past. From the protests of the professors, it appeared that they were concerned about how easy it is to move and rebuild something with such a heavy, historical value. Their concerns were also about who gets to make such decisions. Even though the idea of renovating the stairs was coming from the Oslo Cultural Heritage Office, it was Christian Rignes' money that secured permission and made the project work.

Chapter 5: We are the nature and the forest is ours.

"In general terms, one way of encompassing the world we live in is to say that it is made up of society and nature with human beings belonging to both." (Teich, Porter, Gustafsson, 1997, p. 1)

The previous chapter discussed the problematic renovation of stairs that were once part of the biggest Nazi cemetery in Norway. It was concluded that the debate regarding this matter represented a broader discussion concerning post-war monument-politics, or in other words, the way WWII-related history is retold and what kind of impact it has on our connection with the events of the past. Consequently, generations that grew up without the living memory of the occupation must rely on the narrative of the war that is retold again and again. This collective memory affects our monument-politics and may influence the way we connect as a nation, since it shapes our idea of who we are in both historical and social contexts.

The problems discussed in this chapter are issues that arose when it became clear that the new Sculpture Park may cause damage to the forest growing on the Ekeberg hill. As will be pointed out later, many of those who protested against the park claimed that the last city-forest in Oslo would suffer irreversible damage. Accordingly, the sculpture park was seen as a danger to both nature and democracy. Many of the locals that had been using the forest daily for their leisure purposes felt that their voices had not been heard by the Oslo Komunne representatives responsible for the negotiations with Christian Ringnes.

The way the outdoors is used in the capital of Norway is a reflection of the relation between society and nature in the postmodern world. As Kristi Pedersen and Arvid Viken emphasize, the transformation of one's identity is closely linked to transformation of the landscape:

"[F]or most of the people nature, which until a few decades ago used to be an integral part of their subsistence and overall world view, had become a place of leisure and recreation. It is therefore completely possible today to experience urban lifestyle in these areas. The transformations that are taking place are also seen to be threatening: they fill people with ambivalence and conflicting ideas about how to use and conceptualise nature, how to regard themselves, and how to attain the necessary competence and knowledge to live where they do. Thus, what used to be taken for granted as practices, identities and world views is something that has to be discussed, negotiated, re-valuated and redefined. Despite the dramatic changes undergone during recent decades, people's conception of their own identities is closely linked to a notion of nature." (Pedersen, Viken, 2003, p.12)

The possible transformation of Ekeberg's woodland was not something easy to accept. This chapter investigates what kind of meaning this forest had not only for the local people, but in the broader context of how Norwegians perceive and protect the nature that surrounds them. Nature

is, without a doubt, important for Norwegians in the sense of both national and local identity. Among all the problematic aspects of building the Ekeberg Park, its location was the concern that received the most press attention and caused the most significant kind of protests—those that involved people physically, made them show up and express their disapproval towards the project by picketing and other actions. The artistic concept of the park was of secondary importance.

The park is placed on the hill of Ekeberg, which belongs to the city district of Nordstrand, but it is also easy approachable from Old Town (Gamlebyen). The location of the park was therefore a discussion that involved mostly locals from the east side of Oslo. As some of the opinions expressed in the analyzed articles suggest, building the Ekeberg Park was perceived as a sort of western intrusion into eastern affairs. Historically, the first park on the Ekeberg hill opened in 1889 and was meant as an investment for local inhabitants' health and well-being. The Old Town area at that time was populated mostly by working class people who did not have the same easy access to parks as those who lived on the richer "vestkanten." Consequently, the park on the Ekeberg hill was an important socio-political initiative, intended to be step towards social equality for all citizens of Christiania.

A hundred years later, Oslo is most definitely not as socially divided as it was in the late 19th century; however, the differences between West and East Oslo are still obvious for those who live here. The economic and social distinctions have not disappeared and neither did the sense of belonging to the local environment; in that sense, Oslo is still divided. The sense of being part of the "local" environment is important for many of Oslo's citizens. This division has been also a matter of socio-anthropological research. In 2014 Bengt Andersen defended his Ph.D. dissertation "Westbound and Eastbound: Managing Sameness and the Making of Separations in Oslo." Andersen observed that the current city division is a result of the actions of politicians, developers, and agencies, but also of regular people, who sustain their strong opinions on the matter of where they are from. Through an analysis of residential choice, social networks, and field work concerning how Oslo residents actually use the city, Andersen has shown how equality is sought and bordered. At the same time, he concluded that there is little to suggest that

the divided city will be united anytime soon[10]. Accordingly, the protests against rearranging the Ekeberg forest into a sculpture park could be seen as an attempt to protect something local and valuable not only for the sake of nature alone, but also for local independency.

This chapter investigates the debate around protecting the natural environment of the Ekeberg hill as a part of the protests against the park. First, I would like to sketch the importance of the relationship between society and nature as a crucial element of the Norwegian spectrum of identities. This is a relation that has been broadly researched by historians, cultural historians, and social anthropologists. The theory chosen for this chapter is built on research based on the culture of nature in Norway and on Norway's deep ecological foundations. In the previous chapter, the main source of material for studying the media debate was a nationally oriented Christian newspaper *Vårtland,* which covered most of the varying opinions regarding the renovation of the "Nazi stairs." Articles discussed in this chapter are deriving mostly from years between 2007 and 2013. The period where most of the publications occurred was the years 2011 and 2013. Most of the articles used in this chapter were published in *Dagbladet, Aftenposten, VG,* and *Norstrand Blad*. The most important assumptions of this debate are categorized in this chapter's subsections regarding the past, present, and future.

The way Norwegians connect with nature has been shaped through historical processes, but also by the way people in Norway use their natural surroundings. Therefore, it is important to sketch briefly the importance and symbolic value of nature in Norway. Later on, the local value of the Ekeberg forest will be discussed. The Ekeberg forest was considered by some to be the last "untouched" central woodland in Oslo and at the same time, a local "property" belonging to the east side of the city. As was mentioned before, the project of the park was mainly fought by locals who saw it not only as a danger to nature, but also as the ascendency of the rich "west side" mentality. In the final part of this chapter, I elaborate on the protection of the local landscape as a part of the bigger battle against the consequences of climate change and other environmental dangers. Accordingly, some of the protests regarding this local problem can be seen as a representation of global, environmental thinking.

[10] More about Bengt Andersen's project can be found at:
http://www.sv.uio.no/sai/forskning/aktuelt/arrangementer/disputaser/2014/andersen.html

5.1 Changes are coming

The Ekeberg Sculpture Park spreads across an area of around 66 acres of land and forest. At the moment, there are 34 works of art installed as part of the exhibition (three works were newly installed in May 2015, and there is at least one more coming in spring 2016). Oslo Kommune authorized CLRS to place as many as 80 artworks in total; however, the actual final number is still unknown. The artworks vary in size and amount of space they occupy. Between the years 2003 and 2011, the final shape of the park, the types of sculptures to be selected, and eventual consequences to the forest were not entirely specified—which created space for rumors and suspicions that echoed in the media debate. The critical voices came from politicians (mainly Miljøpartiet De Grønne and Rødt), organizations (Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekebergskogen), and individuals, including some of the locals that were using the space of Ekeberg forest for their daily outdoor activities. For some of them, the idea that the space was going to be adapted for a privately sponsored sculpture park seemed outrageous. Gjermund Andersen, the leader of Naturnvernforbundet, articulated the problem that would later become one of the most controversial aspects of the plans for adapting the Ekeberg forest. In an interview with *Dagbladet* in March 2011, Andersen said that Ringnes was "stealing" the public area in order to create his park (Hustadnes, Kristiansen: 2011). This opinion was shared by locals who felt that their daily activities and natural surroundings would suffer due the new investment.

During the preceding decades, the Ekeberg woodland had become popular as a destination for everyday activities, especially among locals who used the space for jogging and walking their dogs. One of the locals I talked to in the Park's museum remarked on the topic as follows: "I know it is selfish, but we [he and his wife] were against creating the park because we consider this place somehow to be 'ours,' and with so many people around it simply no longer seems so." Those who protested against the park often described Christian Ringnes' project as an "intrusion" that was taking something valuable and important not only for locals, but for all Oslo citizens of today and future generations. Even though the area of the Ekeberg escarpment had been a park before, due to its overgrowth and lack of care it became and was perceived as a forest; therefore, it was viewed as a space untouched, untamed, and consequently more "authentic" and valuable. Marita Synnestvedt, blogger, freelance journalist, and archaeologist, was one of the locals of the Ekeberg area who was very active in the media debate, cooperating

with, among others, *Nordstrand Blad* and *Aftenposten*. In June 2011, in the *Aftenposten*'s open discussion section, she wrote:

> "Dersom intensjonen med gave til Oslo befolkning fra Christian Ringnes ikke bare er å trekke flere kunder til sin egen bedrift, Ekeberg-restauranten, bør både ham og Oslo-politikerne være åpne for alternative plasseringer av kvinneskulpturene. Hensikten bør være å gjøre Oslo til mest mulig attraktiv by for alle, og ikke ødelegge attraktive områder bare for å få plass til noe nytt. Ekebergskogen bør således forbli et mest mulig uberørt naturområde" (Synnestvedt:08.06.2011)

According to Synnestvedt, there were other possible places that would be suitable for the female-centric sculpture park, so there was no good reason for rearranging a forest that was in itself of value. That was a common assumption among those who fought against Ringnes' project. The adaptation, rearranging, and building over of a local city forest could be an issue in any part of the world, not only in Norway. However, there is a distinctive relation between Norwegians and their natural environment—this can be seen in how nature is perceived, used, and cared for. Additionally, the figure of the project's main sponsor and idea of adapting the natural scenery to host artworks serving as tribute to women represented a serious intrusion on the values that Norwegians commonly emphasize in the public debate—democracy, gender and social equality, and green politics.

5.2 Nature and Norwegians

"Men engang før, tenker jeg,
må jeg vel ha smakt denne fred
eftersom jeg går her og nynner og er henrykt
og bryr meg om hver sten og hvert strå o
g disse synes å bry seg om meg igjen.
Vi er kjente."
(Knut Hamsun)

"Go into the forests around Oslo on Sunday and you may be one of about a hundred thousand other people who had the same idea." (Reed, Rothenberg, 1993, p. 20)

Probably one of the most distinctive Norwegian words, untranslatable to any other language, is the word "Marka." "Marka" means the forest surrounding the city that people use for recreational purposes such as skiing, walking, or biking. These areas are easily available from the city by both public and private transport, since they often have huge parking lots adapted for motorized visitors. The importance of the "Marka" is especially visible in Oslo. The biggest city in Norway is surrounded by green areas, which have developed to a sort of "sacred" space, visited on free days, celebrated and cherished all through the year with seasonal activities like skiing in the winter, camping in the summer, etc. The history of preserving the city's Marka goes back to the 19th century. It is reported that landscape artist Peter Balke observed about Oslo in 1873 that "he knew of no other capital city in the world blessed with such beautiful natural surroundings, but warned that without the political will to preserve them these riches would soon be squandered" (Reed, Rothenberg, 1993, p.21). Partly as a result of this statement, local authorities responsible for outdoor recreation agreed to buy and preserve 270 square miles of land and forest for public recreational purposes. In 1946 a new power line was planned to be established through the terrain of Oslomarka, but the venture met with massive protests. A demonstration of some 30,000 angry citizens gathered in what may be the largest single protest in Norway after the Second World War (Kirkebøen, 2009).

Since that time, the Marka has not lost any of its significance, and it is now officially protected by the law. Initiated in September 2009, the *Markaloven* enables preservation of the surrounding forests of Norway's capital city. The intent of this law was to encourage and

accommodate outdoor recreation, aesthetic experiences of nature, and sports. On the public launch of the new law, the environmental minister described it as a gift to Oslo's citizens[11].

Markaloven is an excellent reflection of the outdoor culture in Oslo. The natural surroundings of Norway's capital enable its citizens to enjoy the nature in a manner like no other capital in Europe offers. Natural circumstances obviously play their role, but the connection between Oslo's people and nature is defined by more than just the landscape's aesthetics. Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Holland Eriksen emphasizes that the meaning of nature for Norwegians is not only the romanticized myth of the past or a "trick" to boost the tourist industry's sales (Eriksen, 1996). He claims that the meaning and special relationship that Norwegians feel for their natural surroundings is an essential ingredient of their national identity, as expressed in the broad access to cabins, obligatory ski days for schools, and their chosen activities of everyday life. In his article "Norwegians and Nature," Eriksen analyzes the particular relation between the society and its natural surroundings. He emphasizes that Norway's national identity is definitely tied to its dramatic scenery and especially to its wintry image. However, according to the World Bank, 74% of all Norwegians live in the cities (Eriksen, 1996). This makes any green areas surrounding the urban landscape an attractive destination that must be preserved and taken care of, since it has to serve not only us, but also future generations born and raised in city traffic:

> "Hiking and going for walks are a way of getting out of the house, as Norwegians put it; you leave civilization and all its comforts and depravity behind to get in touch with your inner self and feel like an authentic person. Hikes and walks can be taken on a weekday after work, but are usually a weekend activity. A normal yardstick for gauging the success of a walk is the number of people you meet along the way. The fewer the people, the more successful the walk was." (Eriksen, 1996)

Eriksen emphasizes, partly humorously, the importance of isolation in the way Norwegians experience and enjoy their natural surroundings. It is not an overstatement to say that the space available in Norway is hardly comparable to any other European country. To be out "in the nature" is not only a pleasant way of spending one's free time, but it could also be an essential aspect of physical and mental health what Marianne Sunde brought up in one of her many arguments against the building plans for Ekebergpark:

[11]More about Markaloven is available at: https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2009-06-05-35

"Det er mange som priser seg lykkelig over trærnes sus og skogens ro så nær en larmende og stressende storby. Det er ikke alle byens borgere som kan reise til egen hytte på fjellet eller ved sjøen i helgene. Og Ekebergskogen er således særlig verdifull. Urørt naturen er den viktigste vi har for reakreasjon og sjelefred. Desto nærmere byen, desto verdifull." (Sunde 31.03.2013)

Nature has for years been an untamable natural source of isolation of communities in Norway. Two American philosophers, Peter Reed and David Rothenberg, were so fascinated by the relationship of Norwegians to nature that they moved to Norway in order to study this phenomenon. The result was a book published in 1993, titled *Wisdom in the open air: The Norwegian roots of deep ecology*. The book is an attempt to investigate the natural heritage of Norway and its impact on eco-philosophy. The writers claim that awareness of the importance of natural surroundings in Norway dates back to the Viking era and was revitalized by Peter Wessel Zapffe in the previous century. They also describe the country's unique relationship with nature as a direct result of isolation:

The convoluted coastline and barren mountain ranges led to the growth of small, isolated communities supporting themselves by a combination of fishing, hunting, and farming. The internal economic diversity of these settlements was mirrored by a diversity among them: different styles of clothing, architecture, and farming methods and a tremendous number of linguistic dialects attest to the effect of that isolation. "The sea unites us, the land divides us," runs one Norwegian expression, emphasizing the difficulty of overland travel throughout most of its history. Even the sea could be an infrequently traveled highway; it was not unknown for people in settlements on opposite sides of the same island to speak two different dialects. Regional differences with roots in geographic barriers persist today (Reed, Rothenberg, 1993, 6)

The year that the contract between the Oslo Kommune and Ringnes' foundation was finally sealed (2011) was the year in which, for the first time in the Norwegian history, the government had decided that the value of the natural ecosystems would be specified. On the official website of the Norwegian government,[12] one can read that a committee of experts had been assembled to establish the value of the Norwegian ecosystem and evaluate the biodiversity in Norway. The reason for these calculations was to estimate the value that a well-functioning nature and its services provides, including, for example food, fibers, and fuel, but also public goods such as water purification, pollination, and (last but not least) recreational value. Further, one may read on the government site that the destruction of nature is equally dramatic for Norway as for the rest the world in what is a direct consequence of climate change.

[12]More about the plans of the Miljøverndepartemente may be found here: https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/aktuelt/hva-er-norsk-natur-verdt/id661599/

Consequently, estimating the value of the natural diversity in Norway would allow for a much better overview of the ecosystem's services and the impact these have on economic development and the society's long-term welfare. This document is an example of how, all around the world, local authorities are taking action in order to prevent the possible horrific consequences caused by climate change. In Norway, however, nature has been a priority since long before the danger of climate change gained notoriety; establishing its value is merely a new political strategy for establishing the relationship between the society and its surroundings.

According to Douglas Kellner (1995, p. 153), in the postmodern age, fundamental changes have occurred concerning the foundations of identities. Whereas during modernity, identity was strongly related to family and work, postmodern identities are more centered on leisure activities and aesthetic experiences. The sources of construction of identities are principally open. However, for many people, sports, recreation, and nature-orientated leisure are significant points of reference for the formation of identity. Being physically fit, a mountaineer, a surfer, or a skier is an essential part of their postmodern identities.

5.3 Nature as a romantic Ethos

It is hard to study the importance that nature has in the development of the Norwegian society without some reflection on the period of National Romanticism. This historical period in Norway is characterized by two strong factors—creating the national identity and embracing the natural surroundings in different forms of art. The art sought to picture nature as a symbol of freedom and independence. The period of National Romanticism, beginning at around the 1900s, can be characterized by the particular appreciate of landscape both in art and philosophy. The notions of the National Romanticism were catalyzed by the ideas of German thinkers like Jean-Jaques Rosseau and his "state of nature," where nature represented something pure and authentic; or that of Gottfried Herder and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose theological view pictured nature as a reflection of God.

The period of National Romanticism was a period of embracing a sense of national identity. In the 19th century, Norway was forced into a union with Sweden. At this time,

particularly after the uprisings in 1848, a wave of nationalism rolled across Europe, and many small and independence-minded peoples became intent on defining themselves as nations, with the right to full political sovereignty. An important part of this process consisted in defining a national culture that was clearly separate from those of neighboring countries, thus embracing what was most unique about its culture. For Norwegians, therefore, it was especially important to prove that Norway was different from Denmark and Sweden. The consequences of this process were the discovery of the beauty and importance of the local landscape, which had previously been regarded as "ugly" and "dangerous." The landscape was elevated to a national and international ideal of beauty. Distinctions between the populace and the bourgeois, between urban and rural scenery, became evident during the 1800s. The contrast was strongest at the intersection of the country's rural population and its growing industrialization. A romantic view of nature characterized the urban bourgeoisie, for whom nature was an aesthetic, recreational landscape; this stood in stark contrast to the farmers' production landscape, with its tight connection to the natural household and pre-industrial times. For rural populations, the landscape was an environment that could provide resources to mankind through labor. These contradictory visions of nature between the urban bourgeoisie and the population in rural areas rests largely on the romantic view that nature fills arequirements for distance and a release from the viewer's other considerations, versus the farmer's association of landscape as a workplace, where he was both involved with and apart from nature.

Norway was an underpopulated and poor country on the fringes of Europe, and it had no rich military, cultural, or political history on which to draw. The only monumental building in Norway was the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, which could hardly be used as a national symbol after the Reformation. The boldest nation-builders invoked the heritage of the Viking Age, asserting that a direct line extended from the fearless Vikings to the latter-day Norwegians. But this was not enough to create a nation.

This is where nature and veneration of nature come into the picture. What Norway lacked in cultural riches, it made up for in its diverse, rugged, and majestic landscape. National poets took to writing poems celebrating the mountains and wide-open spaces, and painters portrayed wild and untamed Norwegian scenery:

(...) "primary environment was nature rather than other people. They lived on the margins of the possible, cocooned for generations in deep isolated valleys, fighting against the stinginess of the soil or the cruelty of the sea, against

snow and stone avalanches and the long, arctic darkness in the regions of permafrost. So profound was the isolation that, when discovered in the nineteenth century by scientists and ethnologists, Norway turned out to be an amazing mosaic of pocket-universes with their own idiosyncratic dialects, model of communication, sexual ethos, consumption patterns, architectural design, even sense of humour." (Witoszek, 1997, p- 220)

Nina Witoszek has identified a tradition of nature mythology that extend from *Edda* (the sagas or narratives that constitute the Norse mythology) to the modern writings. Hulderer, spirits, ghosts, and other supernatural beings were both a threat and a potential help for people. Tales of the supernatural were an attempt to deal with the powerful impact of natural forces that man had no control over. Beliefs gave the people social control mechanisms, and the rituals associated with those beliefs gave them the impression of having a certain degree of control. One example was knowledge of "reading the weather," and understanding how best to exploit natural resources was knowledge that was passed down by traders from generation to generation, through practice interacting with the landscape.

Even though her theories seem to grip the essential continuity of how Norwegians are perceiving and embrace the nature, some of the Witoszek's concepts cause controversies and evoke discussion among scholars. According to Sabine Brigitte Henlin-Strømme: '(Witoszek's) study risks the trap of cultural universals that do not allow room for various conceptions of nature as historical.' (Helin, Strømme, 2012, p. 27) therefore Henlin-Strømme proposes what she proposes instead is that thhas to be considered within historical contexts that open possibilities for change. Thus, since this dissertation focuses on a particular historical moment to show specifically how nature is informed by globalization, Witoszek's conception cannot be used. I will draw on some of Witoszek's insights on the nature myths that she identifies, as well as her take on Norwegian National Romanticism—but I offer a more radical and dynamic understanding of Norwegian nature. The concept of nature, I claim, is a cultural category that encompasses a wide range of everyday practices and ways in which art depicts nature. This means that I move the focus from the question of simply landscape representation to the more culturally oriented representation of nature.

5.4 Introducing the actors

Not everybody who lived or currently lives in the Ekeberg neighborhood was necessarily against building of the Ekeberg park. In fact, there were many that saw the Ekebergpark as an opportunity to build a major tourist attraction and eventually bring certain benefits for Oslo's economy and cultural value. The political environment was largely divided when it came to the opinions about the project. It was, however, speculated that the right wing would take the side of the sponsor, since Christian Ringnes is a member of an exclusive gentleman's club in Oslo—Norske Selskab—where the only political members are the members of the Høyre party (Blindheim, 2013)

The Arbeidspartiet was divided, as Anna Nyeggen mentioned in her article "Ok da, gratulerer" (Nyeggen, 2006). The parties that were entirely against the building of the park were the Norwegian Green Party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne) and the social party Rødt. In 2011, Rødt had in fact sought a legal appeal of the decision to create a sculpture park in the Ekeberg forest; however, the City Council decided to uphold its decision nevertheless. According to the deputy head of the Rødt, Bjørnar Moxnes, this was an expected turn of events. He called the contract between Oslo Komunne and C. Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse "an unlawful agreement" (Rundmo, 2011). Moxnes also emphasized that the park would be an irreparable, private intervention in a public, recreational area. He expressed his fear that the investment would destroy an old pine forest and thus would completely change the character of the place.

In the articles published in 2011 in *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten* and *Nordstrand Blad*, most of the voices coming from the private debate were against the park, while political figures (except those from the MPDG and Rødt) were more careful in expressing their opinions.

The group that was most active, both in the media and in terms of public demonstrations and other publications, in protests against building Ekeberg Park was the group Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekebergskogen, which was and still is a politically independent social campaign for the preservation of Ekeberg's forest in order to sustain its natural, biodiverse environment. The campaign was established in April 2010, which was about a month after the meeting that took place in Sjømannsskolen, where blueprints for the project of the sculpture and heritage park were for the first time presented to the public. This meeting was held under the auspices of

Christian Ringnes and representatives of the Cultural Affairs Office in Oslo (Byantikvaren). The plans for the future sculpture park, as presented in Sjomannsskolen, included (other than the sculptures) viewing platforms, new paths, lightning systems, and other facilities.

"Folkeaksjonen" emphasized in their statement that such construction would cause a comprehensive removal of deciduous trees in order to secure the view for the tourists. Additionally, they stated that roots and soil may suffer from the heavy impacts of the construction machines, the placement of power cables, installation of the lightning system, etc. Accordingly, the goal of their campaign was to make sure that the Ekeberg forest would not be transformed into a groomed city park, 66 acres in size, but that instead the natural environment would be protected and its historical heritage secured.

On the official website of the campaign[13], Folkeaksjonen is described as an intervention. The founders of the campaign were concerned about the democratic process of the negotiations between Oslo Kommune and Christian Ringnes' foundation. Their main reason for protesting, according to the campaign's information website, was the fact that the politicians and other actors involved in the negotiations with Ringnes were not entirely aware of how big the park would eventually become and what sort of consequences it would have for both the ecosystem and people living in the area. Therefore, "Folkeaksjonen" decided to focus on the legal aspects of the contract between Oslo Komunne and C Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse and use different media platforms (Facebook, the official website, online publications) as a tool for expressing their objections. In the same time, they were also organizing gatherings, pickets, and demonstrations.

The leader of "Folkeaksjonen" is charismatic freelance journalist Marianne Sunde. She has been the most active participant in the public opposition to the Ekeberg Sculpture Park project. As a result of her role in the public debate concerning the Ekebergpark, Sunde was granted 80,000 Norwegian krones in support from "Fritt Ord" in order to write her side of the story about fighting the implementation of Ringnes' sculpture park. The working title of her book is *Fra naturens perle til kvinneskulpturpark* (Grønneberg, 2013). Sunde participated in every public event connected to the launch of the Ekeberg Park, spoke regularly to the press, and published articles alongside of updating the website and Facebook page of the campaign. She

[13] https://folkeaksjonen.wordpress.com/

was fully invested in the democratic legitimacy of the negotiations between Oslo Komunne and CLRS. The last post on the Folkeaksjonen's website comes from 2012. A few months before the contract between CLRS and Oslo Kommune was about to be finalized, people gathered to protest against the park in an action organized by FBE. One of the organization's spokesmen, architect Atle Klungrehaug, expressed that people genuinely did not know how much the project would change the natural environment of Ekeberg:

"Folk flest vet ikke vet ikke hvor omfattende planene er, sier arkitekt Atle Klungrehaug fra FB. Han sier at om Ringnes får viljen sin vil Ekebergskogen bli en park og turistmaskin med brede veier, omfattende belysning og 600 000 besøkende I året" (Sundsbø, 2011, p.9)

5.5 Paradise lost: Fra folkepark til "vestkant-drøm"

The titles of the media articles describing the discussions around Ekebergparken also served as a platform for private opinions. Those articles often addressed Christian Ringnes as the project manager—accordingly, giving him the responsibility for the final shape and character of the park. As a result, the associations people had regarding the sponsor himself ended up influencing their evaluation of the park he was sponsoring:

"Friluftsområde. Byens største antall steinalderlokaliteter er nylig avdekket i Ekebergskogen. Har plukker barn blomster, men lar blåveisen stå. I dette paradiset planlegger Christian Ringnes å ta med inn gravemaskiner, lastebiler, kraner og motorsager for å hugge ned trær og sette opp tonnevis kvinneskulpturer på opptil" (Sunde, 31.02.2011)

Some emphasized that the area had been urbanized and motorized (Synnestvedt, 2009). There was a common tendency to describe the forest as an ideal, natural environment—charming, wild, and idyllic—while the park is depicted as a western intrusion, aiming to build up the status of a billionaire and "sell" the area to tourists.

"Ekeberg forest has been reduced to an exhibition" said Guri (Borch, Ellinsrud, 2014). By that, she meant that the place had become much worse than she had expected. She states that she was close to tears realizing that the place of her silent retreat, a raw forest just two minutes away from her old apartment, had been destroyed and dramatically transformed. She mentioned that, even though the artworks may be magnificent, they do not belong in a forest area, because they radically change the experience of the natural landscape of Ekeberg:

"Det er mange som priser seg lykkelig over trærnes sus og skogens ro så nær en larmende og stressende storby. Det er ikke alle byens borgere som kan reise til egen hytte på fjellet eller ved sjøen i helgene. Og Ekebergskogen er således særlig verdifull. Urørt naturen er den viktigste vi har for reakreasjon og sjelefred. Desto nærmere byen, desto verdifull." (Sunde March 31, 2013)

To study the landscape from a cultural perspective, it is important to see it as a process (Christiansen, 2002, p. 10). Accordingly, the landscape can be read like a historical book with all the proof of human activities. The natural landscape in Norway, especially in bigger cities such as Oslo, is a witness to constant cultural and social changes. Ekeberg hill has gone a long way from the first human settlements in the area, through farmed landscape, a publicly owned park, and a Nazi propaganda shelter, until finally an outdoor forested gallery. As a place, landscape exists as a cultural construction, in a dynamic state between man and the physical environment, shaped by context and interpretation. "Nature" has a complex meaning, but landscape belongs to the local perception. In connection with landscape and place, one can see that nature exists under the same premise. Landscapes like the one seen on and from Ekeberg represent the totality of the environment, and nature is part of this. To clarify this point, one of our deepest needs is for a sense of identity and belonging. A common denominator in this is the human attachment to landscape and how we find identity in landscape and place. Landscape, therefore, is not simply what we see, but what we expect it to be and what we want it to be. Landscape can thus be seen as a cultural construction, since our sense of place and memories belong to it.

Ekeberg Park is situated on the eastern part of the city. The settlement between Oslo Kommune and CLRS was therefore seen as an intrusion of “the west side”—i.e., the richer and more powerful side. One of the protesters filmed his opinions and posted them on YouTube under the nickname “FarmannTVNorway.” In one of his movies he emphasized the social differences connected with the park project: “They are not here, they won’t even visit this place; however, they still get to decide what to do with the landscape that belongs to us” (FarmannTVNorway 2011).

Christian Ringnes often emphasized that he chose the Ekeberg escarpment for a reason. First of all, Eidomsspar, the company of which he is CEO, owns the Ekeberg restaurant building. Second, he imagined the park to be an eastern answer for the westerly located Vigelands Park:

"Vigelandsparken ligger på vestkanten, Ekeberg ligger på østkanten. Selv om det er mange skulpturer av kvinner i Vigelandsparken er det en maskulin og brutalistisk park. Naturen har også en dimensjon. Terrengenet i Vigelandsparken er helt flatt, mens her er det organisk og feminint. Siden vi har en maskulin park på vestkanten lagde vi en feminin park på østkanten, forteller Ringnes." (Fyen, Bones 2013)

This discussion around the idea of creating something on the east side to serve as a contrast to the well-established park on the west side of a city collided with the assumption that Christian Ringnes is a sort of representative of the rich, western, city elite. Accordingly, the fact that he wanted to create something that could possibly express his taste and sense of aesthetics was seen as an attempt to create a tribute to himself. Conversely, Ringnes often emphasized that he considered the park to be a gift to Oslo and all its citizens, arguing that even though he was providing the money, Oslo Kommune would decide the final shape of the investment. In Norway, there has never been a particular culture of patronage, which is the one of the reasons that Ringnes' plans were viewed with suspicion. A Norwegian comic artist, in his open debate article in *Dagbladet*, described the park as a no gift to Oslo, but rather "Minnesmerke for Rex Ringnes" (Nielsen 2013). Nilsen argued that Ringnes knew already in 2001, even before the plans for the park were officially announced, that the "female" park could serve as a memorial to him. Building the park was, according to Nielsen, another attempt to "westernize" the eastern part of the town, together with investments in "Barcode" in Bjørvika, the demolition of Borgen, and the location of the new Munch Museum. He expressed the opinion that it had been the wealthy west making decisions over the character of the eastern part, which was not democratic, since the decisions about those "investments" were taken "far over the heads of us who live here. It is alleged that this is a generous gift to Oslo, but the way I see it, this is a generous gift from Oslo city to Christian Ringnes," said Nielsen (2013).

That this assumption was taken to cause further fear of the changes to the natural surroundings is a matter of attachments to certain standards. While facing change, many will want to go back to a pure state of nature that carries certain associations and memories, as well as the sense of freedom, stability, harmony and peace.

A couple of days after Monday, May 19, 2011, when Oslo Kommune accepted the Ekeberg Sculpture Park project, Bård Folke Fredriksen from the Høyre party described the investment as a positive way to preserve the green aspect of the area. He claimed that it would make the area more approachable for more people (Braaten, 23. 05.2011, p. 4). The same article included some comments published in an online debate previously available at dittoslo.no. One of the comments was: "Det er vel relativt sannsynlig at Bård Folke Fredriksen aldri har vært I

Ekebergskogen før denne saken. Han bor vel på den andre siden av byen. Fint at han vet best hva som vill gjøre skogen finere."

5.6 The forest as “terra sacra”

“What is deep ecology? Put simply and broadly, it is the belief that today's environmental problems are symptomatic of deeper problems in our society, and that this belief requires an effort to solve these fundamental problems, not just retrofitting our current practices to be in line with environmentally correct mores.” (Reed, Rothenberg 1993 P.1)

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, protests against building the sculpture park were at the same time protests against a certain agenda that Christian Ringnes was assumed to represent. This agenda was in conflict of how certain groups in society look at solution for constantly growing problem of world’s ecology.

The summer before the official opening of Ekebergparken, the foundation began cutting trees in order to reveal more of the view over the city from the western side of the escarpment. The goal was to reveal more of the landscape that inspired Edvard Munch to paint his famous “Scream.” The plans for building the park included the sketch of the plateau that would serve as a viewpoint, the so-called “Munchpunktet.” According to his journals, Munch used his memories of the natural scenery Ekeberg while in Berlin, and he used his memories specifically from the Ekeberg hill as an inspiration for his most famous work. The management of the project saw this as an opportunity to establish a point in the park named in Munch’s honor. The trees cuttes in the process of establishing The Munch point became a datum point for the further discussion and activism undertaken in order to protect the forest. On April 18, 2012, a few activists set up camp in the Ekeberg forest, where they stayed day and night, informing visitors about the dangers of the venture of building a sculpture park in this place (Furuly, 2013). This form of protest was also aimed to discourage any form of mechanical intervention, from cutting of the trees to archaeological excavations—in other words, anything that could in any way harm the natural surroundings. The ecological thinking that includes protecting the nature and thinking about environmental solutions could be seen as an important aspect of Norwegian identities. Kari Jaquesson saw felling of trees just as the beginning of the further damage:

> Det er fire trær i dag, og kanskje tre til om noen dager og slik utvides hugsten steg for steg. Det er "foten-innenfor-døren"-prinsippet som råder. Stiftelsen har allerede bedt om å få utvide inngrepsområdene. Edvard Munch er en helt fantastisk verdifull merkevare som det nå ser ut som Ringnes vil bruke for alt den er verdt. Første steg er altså å bygge en betongplattform og hugge ned trær så vi kan se utover trafikken (Furuly 2013)

The process of cutting the trees met with the protests that engaged also Norwegian Green party (De Grønne); "I Norge snakker vi om å redde verden, men vi klarer jo ikke engang å redde vårt eget," said Camilla Williams from Miljøpartiet De Grønne Nordstrand (Svedsen, 2012). This was her way of explaining that, even though Norway seems to be engaged in foreign affairs regarding protecting nature, similar actions are not respected enough in the local areas.

Few years before the preparation for Much point took place Furuset group that runs Ekebergrestaurant, was punished with penalty of 360 000 Norwegian krones for cutting the trees around the restaurant without the permission from the local authorities. The law surrounding the protection and regulations regarding protecting the natural environment are quite strict. On the other hand a nation with only over 5 million citizens and over 385.000 square meters of land can afford a luxury to protect the natural environment against fast growing population

The significant figure who engaged in environmental questions in Norway was Arne Næss, a Norwegian philosopher who died in 2009 and was mainly known for coining the term “deep ecology.” The basic thesis of Næss’ work was that environmental problems are only to be solved by people—people who will be required to make value judgements in conflicts that go beyond narrowly conceived human concerns. Thus, people require not only an ethical system, but also a way of conceiving the world and themselves such that the intrinsic value of life and nature is obvious—a system based on “deep ecological principles.” His book encourages readers to identify their own series of such parameters, their own ecosophies. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle* will appeal to philosophers, specialists working on environmental issues, and the more general reader who is interested in learning some of the foundational ideas in the rapidly expanding field of environmental philosophy.

Through his books and lectures in many countries, Næss taught that ecology should not be concerned with man's place in nature but with every part of nature on an equal basis, because the natural order has an intrinsic value that transcends human values. Indeed, humans could only attain "realization of the Self" as part of an entire ecosphere. He urged the green movement to not only protect the planet for the sake of human activities and pleasure, but also, for the sake of the planet itself, to keep ecosystems healthy for their own sake. Deep ecology teaches that belief in an objective comprehension of nature is belief in a flat world as seen from above, without

depth, and that such a cool, disembodied detachment is both an illusion and a primary cause of our destructive relationship with the land.

Næss was also an activist. He was the first chairman of Greenpeace in Norway and Green party candidate. He took a part in several demonstrations. Together with a large number of demonstrators in 1970 he chained himself to rocks in front of Mardalsfossen, a waterfall in a Norwegian fjord, and refused to descend until plans to build a dam were dropped. The demonstrators were stopped and carried away by police but the action turned out to be a success and dam building plans were dropped. (Schwarz, 2009).

Using Næss' philosophy, therefore, one can reflect that protecting nature represents the protection of higher moral and cultural values and, consequently, taking care of the well-being of the natural surroundings equals direct care for the Norwegian heritage. In April 1984 George Sessions and Arne Næss put together their years of study in order to collect principles of deep ecology while camping in Death Valley, California. In thisc particular plase both scholars articulated these principles in most approachable way, so they could be understood and practiced, they articulated these principles in a literal, somewhat neutral way, hoping that they would be understood and accepted by persons coming from different philosophical and religious positions. Readers are encouraged to elaborate their own versions of deep ecology. The most important of basic principles of deep ecology are that the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes. (Næss, Sessions, 1984)

Næss figure, his philosophy, writings and activism could be seen as a representative notion for certain tendencies in Norwegian society like in the case of protecting the Ekeberg forest against the bulding plans of CLRS and Oslo Kommune. According to Næss deep ecology should be practiced with the thought that nature in itself constitutes a value and so it was often emphasized in the debate around Ekeberpark even though in involved locals that had for certain personal attachment and usage for the park area. Among tourists and art connoisseurs, according to my observation, the biggest group of the visitors to the Ekeberg Sculpture Park are joggers and families on walking tours with their characteristic sports outerwear, Nordic walking sticks, brodder (which may actually be a Norwegian phenomenon that is difficult to translate), and eccentric sporty strollers. I have been actively present in the park in the last year since its

opening and, to my surprise, the main ‘‘audience’’ is not particularly interested in art, but rather the area itself. The art is certainly appreciated by some, but it creates more of the background and additional value than the main attraction. This shows an interesting contract to Vigelandsparken; even though there is no lack of jogging people and yoga enthusiasts and simply locals, Frogner Park is a definitely a tourist attraction and tourists are most certainly the main audience.

When it comes to the defenders and proponents of the Ekeberg project, the project leader of Kulturetaten, Jorleif Jørgenvåg, expressed his opinion that the park would not be a danger to the local environment. He claimed that the sculpture would be attraction, yet not a disturbance. None of the sculptures would be greater than 4 m in height, and most would in fact be lower than 2.5 m. Accordingly, the allegations that the park will take down the forest were wrong, Jørgenvår claimed (Brynildsen 2013). Both Ringnes and Jorgenvåg argued that the project was no one man’s project, but rather a very strict cooperation between the sponsor and Oslo Kommune, the latter of which held authority over the choice of artwork, protection of the cultural heritage; "Kulturetaten mener at skulptur – og kulturminneparken er et ypperlig eksampel på utvikling av et grønt attraktivt sambruksområde med høy kvalitet, der skulpturene tilpasses et flott skogsområde som vil bli tilgjenlig og til glede for enda flere" (Brynildsen, 2013 p.9):

While the development of nature-based tourism and outdoor adventure obviously gives local communities a new basis for the economic growth, it simultaneously puts a strain on the local culture and natural environment. Oslo, among other cities in Norway, has an impressive collection of outdoor sculptures. Besides the most well-known sculpture park in Norway, Vigelands Park, there are plenty of other works of art placed throughout the city. At the same time local authorities in different Norwegian districts are investing in art in the public space. One of the most distinctive sculpture projects in Norway is *Skulptur Landskap Norland,* an initiative to place contemporary artworks in the natural surroundings of the northern areas of Norway. No one has protested against this project—or at least, if anyone has, there was no distinctive media coverage of the debate as was the case with the Ekeberg park. Still, there is a distinct difference between open spaces of the northern landscapes where artworks are meant just as a gentle bonus to the space, and an actual sculpture-filled park in a woodland area of Oslo. The city is therefore an important aspect in the context of this debate. Nature is available in Oslo, but it is not as

readily available as in the countryside. Accordingly, the green spaces in Oslo are more valuable than in other places in Norway. As Stuart Hall describes, the way we identify with each other is "constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal" (Hall, 1996, p.2). Accordingly, the sense of identity is expressed in the strongest form when it is confronted with other, contrary factors which are undermining the attachment to certain values

Chapter 6: Hva vill Ringnes fortelle oss med kvinneparken sin? Discussing body's symbolism and patronage in context of protests against the Ekebergpark.

"For vet du hva, Ringnes, en park til ekte kvinners pris, det hadde vært en park med noen nakne menn også. En trist tanke er at hvis vi ser en naken mann i Ekebergskogen, er det vel en blotter" (Flugstad-Eriksen, 17.11.2013)

The previous chapter investigated the relationship between society and nature as a source of controversy around the Ekeberg park project. Undoubtly the relation between the society and nature has a special place in creating Norwegian identities. Nature has a deep, symbolic meaning for Norwegians what derives from both historical background and everyday activities.

This chapter is dedicated to an analysis of those articles that expressed concerns regarding the suggested main artistic theme of the park. Since 2003, Christian Ringnes has been promoting the concept of the sculpture park as a "tribute to women." He described his vision of the artworks as "organic and feminine," in contrast to the "masculine and coarse" selection in Vigelandsparken. Afterwards, his words were often quoted and commented upon in the media debate, as in the *Aftenposten*'s article from 2013 when Ringnes was interviewed:

"Vigelandsparken ligger på vestkanten, Ekeberg ligger på østkanten. Selv om det er mange skulpturer av kvinner i Vigelandsparken er det en maskulin og brutalistisk park. Naturen har også en dimensjon. Terrengenet i Vigelandsparken er helt flatt, mens her er det organisk og feminint. Siden vi har en maskulin park på vestkanten lagde vi en feminin park på østkanten, forteller Ringnes." (Fyen, Bones, 2013)

It is hard to point out exactly when the discussion around the Ekebergpark became a protest against the "Ringnes kvinnepark." The "kvinnepark" as such has never existed as an official name of the project, but it was nevertheless used by *Aftenposten* and other media. It was, without a doubt, caused by the description Christian Ringnes was using when launching the park. In *Aftenposten*'s archive alone, the search term "kvinneparken" gives 18 results of full-format articles related to the park (over the years 2003-2013). As a matter of fact, the term "kvinneparken" is still being used, even though today it is used less by media and more by private visitors. While working in the park I would often hear people who would refer to

sculptures as “damene til Ringnes” or, if asking for directions, “Hvor er den kvinneparken til han, Ringnes?” Those are examples showing that the term “Ringnes kvinnepark” became a sort of signature, a mark almost impossible to remove, even though the sponsor in cooperation with the art committee has been trying to “soothe” down the idea.

The art committee (“kunstfaglig utvalg”) was selected by Oslo Kommune in order to create a consistent concept for the future sculpture park. The same committee is also responsible for the general selection of artworks. It has been decided that, instead of the obviously problematic “tribute” to women that caused so much controversy and speculation, the park would instead consist of “feminine”-inspired artworks. It was assumed that this description would give much more room for the interpretation. The people sitting in art committee include art historian Lise Mjøs; Jarle Power Odden; the art historian and director of Vigeland Museum, Viel Bjerkset Andersen and Marit Wiklund; and artists proposed by the Sculptor Association and appointed by cultural departments. Also on the committee are Christian Ringnes and Christian Bjelland, representatives of C. Ludens Ringnes Foundation (Bratten, 2011)

Even though the concept of the park has changed, the first idea was controversial enough to stir up public opinion and create assumptions that were retold and reinterpreted during a time when the debate around the park was escalating the most (from 2011). Together with his vision, Ringnes presented the concept of what was, in his opinion, included in the term “feminine”; he described such art as organic and naturally more adaptable to the forest surroundings. His interest in the female body as a main theme caused a massive response from different groups and actors who would disagree with Ringnes’ concept of the “feminine,” while questioning at the same time the reasoning behind the sponsor’s stated intentions. The accusations that arose were reactions to the suspicion that Ringnes was possibly objectifying women (Sunde, Pahle, Nielsen) and using his resources to promote his “bad taste” in a public space.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the first common assumption of those who protested against Ringnes’ idea was that promoting the Ekeberg park as “feminine” would do no justice to women, since the sculptures would be collected according to one man’s taste. The second common assumption was that the private selection chosen by the sponsor would jeopardize the quality of art, consequently transforming the public space into a private gallery with a questionable selection of works. The primary concerns regarding the actual quality and

taste in art were expressed by art historians like Mona Pahle or Ina Blom, as well as art academics like Professor in Sculpture at Kunsthøgskolen Stein Ronning, who described his scepticism as a consequence of his major lack of faith in the taste of the sponsor:

"Jeg merker at jeg mister interessen med en gang. Dette føyer seg inn i et mønster. Det virker lit tilfeldig det som er plasert rundt i den offentlige rom. Et litt aparate initiativ, men som kanskje kan bli rktig morsomt og interessant eller bare en ralende demonstrasjon‘ jeg er interessert in i kvinner og kropp jeg’. Det høres litt crazy ut.” (Aashaim, Audestad)

Rønning noted that the concept of female-related art in a public space was not entirely wrong in itself, as it could be translated and adapted nicely to the environment. However, the problem was who was responsible for selecting the representations. Accordingly, from the available critical material regarding the debate around the feminine aspect of the park, it may be concluded that those who protested against the representations of women in the Ekebergparken did not consider Christian Ringnes to be a trustworthy representative of the cultural capital. In other words, Christian Ringnes’ proposition did not seem to coincide with the representations of “the feminine” that would be more acceptable to other groups in Norwegian society. Ekebergpark therefore became the focus for a discussion about the image of the female body in terms of equality, art history, patronage, and aesthetic responsibility for the public space in Norway.

This chapter will analyze what groups in Norwegian society protested against the parks “feminine” artistic concept and, accordingly, what is problematic about presenting the female body in the public space in Norway. What was it expected that the park would become, and what did opponents base their prognosis and fear on? First, it is necessary to briefly sketch the profiles of those most involved in the debate and their background. Subsequently there will be an elaboration on the problematic concept of the “tribute to females”. I propose to discuss Ringnes’ concept of the park in the context of Bourdieu’s elaboration about taste, gender, and habitus. The critique of this aspect of the project was partly aimed towards the park, but even more so towards the figure of the sponsor, Christian Ringnes, and the role he plays in Oslo, both in terms of economy and culture.

6.1 Who protested?

Before going deeper in the arguments of protesters, it is useful to present the profiles of the actors for a better understanding of their actions. It would be impossible for this chapter to cover

even half of the critical material available on the case of Ekebergpark. It also would not be right to assume that it describes the view of all people who felt offended by Ringnes' idea. However, there is a certain pattern of concepts behind that protests that is worth closer examination. Therefore, the articles chosen are meant to be representative. The issues discussed the most were as follows:

- Representations of the female body;
- Problematic patronage;
- Christian Ringnes' private taste and its impact on the public space.

The theme of the park was promoted by a "flamboyant" and known to be "very fond of women" male sponsor in terms that may not exactly be part of the accepted dialogue for Norwegian political and gender awareness. One person that was a constantly active spokesman against Ringnes' initiative was Bjørnar Moxeness, the leader of Rødt. Rødt is a socialist party supporting values and politics of which Ringnes has no part. Quite the opposite, in fact, since Ringnes is connected to the right-wing party Høyre and has been one of the main private sponsors of their campaign, as will be further discussed in the "patronage" section of this thesis.

Setting aside the political discussion, the protests against the park project would sometimes take a more entertaining form. The Norwegian humor metal band Black Debbath wrote and recorded a protest song called "Nei til runkesti på Ekeberg." The song's video was published on YouTube on February 2012 and so far has over 138,000 plays, which can be considered quite a success. The band used a humorous form of quasi prayer to Ringnes who should protect them from the sexual temptation:

"Kjære Ringnes, bevar oss fra det onde;
Ikke led oss inn i fristelse!
Ikke gjør oss turgåerne horny!
Slik pornografi ute i det fri;
Det blir jo en runkesti!" (Black Debbath)

A similar tone was used by Nielsen, a Norwegian conceptualist who, in his articles for *Dagbladet,* emphasizes Ringnes' sexual obsession with female forms (Nielsen, 2013).

The discussion also took on a more formal character around the subjects of art history and aesthetics. Art historians such as Ina Blom and Mona Pahle Bjerke emphasized that the idea of a "feminine park" was archaic and unnecessary. Ina Blom, in an interview with NRK, claimed that the idea for the park seemed "pedestalling":

> "Det virker litt pidestallaktig. Det hele er tuftet på en veldig tradisjonell forestilling om hva skulptur er og hva det skal vise. Kvinnekroppen er et overoppbrukt tema. Dette bør være gjenstand for større felleskapsdiskusjon, sier Blom til Aftenposten" (Stensland, 2007)

Mona Pahle Bjerke, on the other hand, described the park as a symbolic demonstration of power:

> Parken er en symbolsk maktdemonstrasjon, der kvinnen blir kategorisert som det hun har vært betraktet som gjennom århundrer; en vakker, gåtefull skapning som kan hvile sine myke former mot mannens evigsultne blikk (Pahle, Bjerke, 2013)

In an article from 2013 published in *Aftenposten*'s opinion section, Marianne Sunde concluded that the change in theme would not transform the character of the place, which would still serve as Ringnes' "old-fashioned" tribute to women:

> Hva har skjedd mellom 2006 og 2011? Vi er blitt beroliget med at et kunstutvalg styrer det kunstfaglige. Bystyrerepresentantene Marianne Borgen (SV) og Knut Even Lindsjørn (SV) skrev i Aftenposten: «Mange er glade for at det ikke er Ringnes' personlige smak som skal avgjøre hvilke skulpturer som skal utplasseres.»Men hva er realiteten? Temaet «til kvinnens pris», som Mjøs og Balas vraket i 2006, er forandret til «det feminine i alt sitt mangfold». (...) Gjennomlesning av Temaet er bare en overfladisk bearbeidelse av Ringnes' gammelmodige «hyllest til kvinnen». Hva er endret? At det også skal være nonfigurative arbeider? Er det problematisk at verker som ikke har noe kjønnstematikk nå skal leses innenfor rammen av «det feminine»?Tydeligvis ikke, for Christian Ringnes: «Det feminine skal være skulpturparkens grunnidé, og dette fører med seg enkelte misforståelser, forklarer Ringnes overfor Nordstrands Blad. – Mange tror at skulpturparken bare skal bestå av skulpturer av nakne kvinnekropper i alderen 15 til 25 år. Men det blir flere mer abstrakte tolkninger. *Open book* er en skulptur som er foreslått utplassert. Dette er en skulptur av en åpen bok, og hva kan være kvinnelig med det? Jo, kvinnen kan lese mannen som en åpen bok." Og han forklarer videre på et møte på Ekeberg: "Blant annet har vi valgt ut en skulptur som heter *Ace of Diamonds*. Og det er jo feminint, for Diamonds are a girl's best friend." (Sunde, 2011)

Marianne Sunde, the leader of FBE, has been one of the most consistent, persuasive, and active persons protesting against the Ekeberg Park project. Since she has been present through different stages of the park's progress, her articles are always very extensive and descriptive, containing details of the meetings and the people involved in the process. Her concerns have focused primarily on the possible damage to the natural environment, but also on what was, in her opinion, the undemocratic character of the agreement between CLRS and Oslo Kommune. In her opinion article, she quotes Christian Ringnes in order to depict his "trivial" approach towards the "feminine" topic, thus making the sculpture park seem as a meaningless and harmful initiative—not only does it take over a valuable natural environment for Oslo, but in terms of art it does not represent anything worth making such a sacrifice for.

As with the discussion about the Nazi stairs, the debate regarding the female theme of the park took place only in publications, without the active actual physical interventions that took place in the name of protecting the environment. It is also significant that this topic of debate involved more female actors.

6.2 *Habitus,* taste, and cultural capital

"Skulpturene til Ekebergskogen er plukket ut av noe kalt et kunstfaglig utvalg. Ringnes sitter i utvalget, og det synes. Av den schizofrene samlingen på 25 skulpturer presentert denne uken, mellom abstrakte installasjoner og lyskunst, er det seks nakne damer pluss Marilyn Monroe uten hode. Kanskje det er dette som er milliardærporno" (Flugstad-Eriksen, November 17, 2013)

The other important aspect that was discussed during the process of building the Ekebergpark centered on the concept of taste. This can be discussed in the context of Bourdieu's understanding of term *habitus*. It is often emphasized that taste is a matter of personal preferences. Therefore, the park was perceived as a collection based on Ringnes' taste—and that made it problematic, because the art was about to be placed in a public space that belongs to people who would have a different concept of both taste and acceptable images of the female body.

Bourdieu explores the ways in which people conduct their lives in relation to one another, including social institutions of values, taste and power. He claims that a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable transposable dispositions, predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations "that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 53). According to Bourdieu, *habitus* comprises a set of dispositions deriving from one's milieu. Thus, it marks space that defines a person's sense of place in the world: his values, views, and social identity. Our habitus is strongly shaped by our experiences while growing up, the time when we acquire not only language, but also a sense of our particular and potential value. *Habitus*, though, is a product of the history that collects the experience of our ancestors and the social status that we inherited. Social position is important in every field; it determines the nature of the experience of learning and finally our social identity. The basic idea behind the theory of habitus and social fields is that there is a relationship

between social structures and mental structures that is created during our long life experience; it can be shaped and even broken, but that can only be caused by major changes in the social environment that would challenge and change our inherited values and views of importance. It could therefore be concluded that the protests against the Ekebergparken were actions based on *habitus*— not only because protestors regarded their identity and values as being threatened, but because their protests were also aimed against Ringnes' taste deriving from his own habitus. Mona Pahle Bjerke writes, for example, about the sculpture "Marilyn" by Richard Hudson. She describes that the "Two-and-a-half-meter tall semi abstract mirror sculpture made of steel is a monument to the legend and sex symbol embracing her beautiful female shapes with the narrow waist, big bottom and enormous breasts that take over the place of the head—a female representation that women did not fight for" (Pahle, Bjerke, 2013).

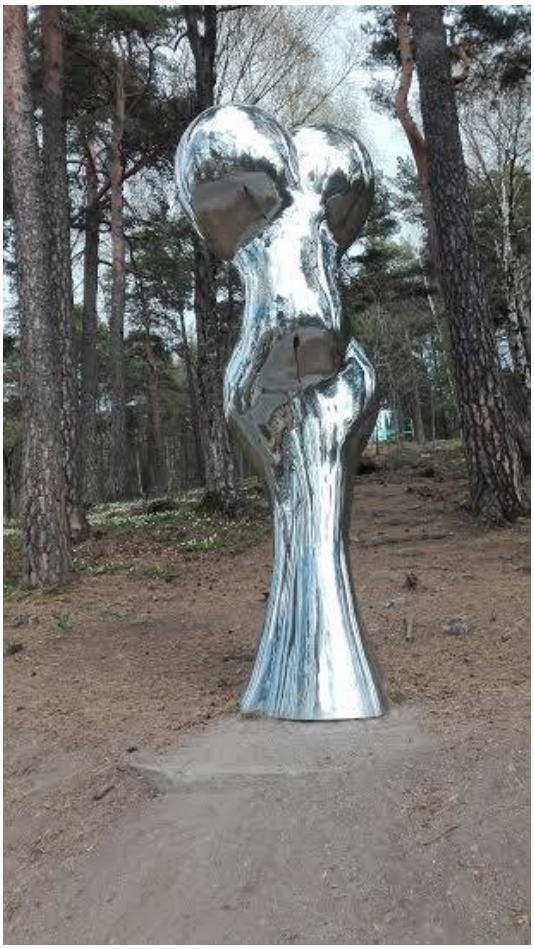

Figure 5 Marilyn by Richard Hudson, Ekebergparken (Joanna Pacula, 2015)

Bourdieu's analysis of social groups and objective social structure recognizes the dominance of men, which domination is the result of an educated social identity. For Bourdieu, social identity is also based on sexual identity, which develops from observing the bodies of others in our social milieu. The experience of the body is inextricably linked with the division of labor based on gender, along with the possibility that specifically biological determinations of sexual identity may help to determine social position (e.g., by favoring dispositions more or less close to the established definition of excellence which, in a class society, is more or less favorable to social mobility) (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 293).

Christian Ringnes represents a rich, powerful figure who considers woman maybe in not exactly the same way as woman wish to be seen right now. He

advertised the park as a tribute to women according to the cultural capital he represents. According to Bourdieu, capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private (i.e., exclusive) basis by agents or groups of agents, offers them appropriate social energy in the form of refined or living labor (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 46). According to Bourdieu, we can distinguish three general types of capital:

- Economic;
- Social; and
- Cultural.

In the discussion around Ekebergparken, cultural capital seems to be the most relevant, since it involves investing in art. Bourdieu claims that the relation between the world of economic, social, and cultural capital is not strictly defined, and that all capitals can cooperate with each other in the same manner that people working in different fields exchange their experience. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, material goods, etc., that one would normally acquire through being a part of a particular social class. Therefore, Bourdieu points out that cultural capital is a major source of social inequality. Certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others and can help or hinder one's social mobility just as much as income or wealth. Cultural capital is therefore crucial for social-power relations, since it provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy:

"Det er ikke vanskelig å forstå at det har vært en stor fristelse for Oslo kommune å si ja til en slik opprustning av et fantastisk område, og ikke minst til en rekke kunstverk i verdensklasse. Men når vi går med på å ta en slik tematikk på kjøpet, da har vi som en nasjon og en by med likestilling høyt på dagsorden, rett og slett solgt sjela vår." (Phale, Bjerke, 2013)

In "Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste," Bourdieu claims that cultural potential and cultural needs are rooted in our upbringing, i.e., the way a child is schooled and the sort of cultural practices it attends (Bourdieu, 1986, p.1). Social position is also crucial. Bourdieu claims that art and cultural consumption are predisposed to fulfill social functions and to legitimize social differences. Taste can be served as an element of power of the higher social structures over lower ones. The fact that those who are better schooled with many cultural opportunities and a better social background tend to believe in the purity of certain art and doubt

the validity of others is thanks to the fact that "art and cultural consumption are predisposed consciously and deliberately or not to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.7)

The shift from material to cultural and symbolic forms of capital is to a large extent what hides the causes of inequality and controversy. There are some similarities between the forms of capital, but also significant differences, especially those regarding transmission of the capital; while economic capital can be transferred more or less instantaneously in the forms of gifts or bank transfer, the transmission of cultural capital takes place over a relatively lengthy period, through socialization and education.

Cultural consumption in Bourdieu's language is described as a process of decoding, such as for example, in the case of a work of art: "A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence that is the code in which it is encoded" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 3). Consequently, someone who has not gained a specific knowledge about music or art or literature or cultural processes in which his parents did not direct him would be lost in attempting to engage with such processes. The assumption is that an uneducated person cannot simply understand the complex meaning of a work of art without being prepared for it intellectually; he lacks the social and cultural potential to access its message. Ringnes has been accused of promoting 'bad taste' through the choice of artworks he himself admire and was planning to place in the sculpture park. The education, knowledge, social status and economy seemed to not be a guarantee for the quality here Nielsen mentioned that quite the opposite – the fact that you are good at making money does possibly not mean you have a clue about art. (Nielsen, 2011). While looking through different opinions towards the park's theme it is challenging to expose the ideal concept for the sculpture park that it would include artworks relevant for the society in Norway. Art in itself is not aimed towards a group, but rather the perception of it depends on one's experience and background. Accordingly, we are responsible partly for the image of the artwork and its interpretation. Problems with perception of Ringnes collection were mostly caused by how people perceive Ringnes not his actual artworks' proposals.

The problem of taste, Bourdieu claims, is that art—outside of being "love at the first sight" "often requires a decoding operation which is possible through cultural capital brought

with one's upbringing" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 3). In *Distinction* (1986) Bourdieu demonstrates how the aesthetic disposition is inseparable from a specific cultural competence. Cultural competence can be identified by the tastes held by people, especially their relationship to, and knowledge of, objects and practices. Central to the development of "high" culture was the Kantian aesthetic based on the judgement of pure taste, which distinguished that which pleases from that which gratifies, "to distinguish disinterestedness, the sole guarantor of the specific aesthetic quality of contemplation, from the interest of reason" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 5). The purifying, refining, and sublimating of primary needs and impulses defines taste. The different ways of relating to objects and practices marks out the systems of dispositions and, as Bourdieu's classic comment notes: "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (Bourdieu 1986, p. 6). In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, any determination is negation; and tastes are no doubt first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ("sick-making") of the taste of others (Bourdieu 1986, 56).

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital comes in three forms—embodied, objectified, and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 47). One's accent or dialect is an example of embodied cultural capital, while an art collection or a rare, luxurious car is capital in its objectified state. In its institutionalized form, cultural capital refers to any sort of qualifications such as degrees or titles that symbolize cultural competence and authority. Between societies rooted in different cultural upbringings, some things are compatible and some are not, but the preferences of the class create a coherent system—or at least, this is what Bourdieu suggests. However, if we take as an example the Norwegian society, we would see that class distinctions do not determine the understanding of cultural capital in the same way it did before, or perhaps as it still takes place in other societies. Bourdieu suggested that, in order to isolate the position of the artist and eliminate the notion of cultural recognition reserved only for higher classes, we ought to look at the single artist as a master of art which is an open work in his own terms despite the cultural code, hierarchy, and external references—an experiment that breaks with the tradition. It is happening now and all codes can be broken with the help of the information flow that surrounds us. Our upbringing can specify our choices and sense of taste, but it no longer determines our position in society.

The feminine concept proposed by the sponsor who evokes strong reactions would be marked what could be seen in the commentaries like the comparison to Troyan horse in the article, by known art critique, Line Ulekleiv

"Å kalle Ekebergparken for en trojansk hest, er ikke nødvendigvis en overdrivelse. Under dekke av gavens prakt og giverens sjenerøsitet, ble trojanerne bondefanget. At gaven innebærer en forventning om takknemlighet, slik at åpen kritikk og friksjon dempes, er en velkjent sak. Debatten rundt Christian Ringnes' skulpturpark synes nå å ha stilnet av, til tross for forhandlingen med demokratiske prinsipper. Folk bukker og neier, behagelig overrasket over resultatet. Svette joggere på området omfavner sin velgjører. Samtidig kan man gjenta spørsmålet om hva denne kunsten i skogen skal signalisere. Sammenlagt er det heldigvis mer enn vrælene fra den mye omtalte performancen til Marina Abramovic i august, som med sin ulykksalige kobling til Munchs Skrik truet med å kryste ut siste rest av intensitet fra det en gang så banebrytende maleriet. Ekebergparken har blitt et slags opplevelsessenter med natur, utsikt og kunst. Vi finner et knippe tunge navn fra samtidskunsten. Det opprinnelige konseptet om å hylle kvinnen som "den vakreste gjenstanden vi har" ble underveis endret til å handle om "det feminine", hva nå det er for noe. Også dette konseptet fremstår som meget utvannet, dysset ned av en kunstfaglig komité som har rodd i land en mer standardisert ansamling kunst. Samtidig skinner det aparte utgangspunket gjennom. En diger asiatisk kvinne av Sean Henry, Walking Woman (2010) synes å ville legitimere den handlekraftige og sterke moderne kvinnen. Den kvinnen Ringnes ved flere anledninger så forblommet legger ut om, med sin ynde, sin livgivende natur og mystikk, dyrkes som kunsthistorisk etterlevning. I Ekebergparken står hun som et objekt klar for å betraktes og nytes, særlig i kvinneakter av Maillol, Rodin og Renoir. Richard Hudsons Marilynfigur blir helt bestemt av dette rammeverket, og de oppsvulmede metallformene kropper seg. Både James Turrell og Dan Graham tilhører "the usual suspects" når det gjelder å befeste en korrekt smak og penger ikke er et problem. De brer seg utover hele verden, og har her laget stedsspesifikke arbeider. Turrells Skyspace — The Color Beneath er spektakulær i sin innramming av himmelen og sine oppløste lyslandskaper. Grahams elegante glasspaviljong Ekeberg Pavillion leker med betrakterens persepsjon av trestammene utenfor. Her er det feminine langt unna som kategori. Louise Bourgeois? The Couple (2003), svever høyt oppe blant trekronene og er tiltrekkende ved sin fjernhet, blant tettheten av skulpturer. Blanke overflater går igjen blant mange verk — man kan speile seg i kunsten. Denne speilingen forteller oss mye om både kunst, økonomi og ønsket om et ettermæle, mekanismer som kastes tilbake på oss som tar imot gave" (Ulekleiv, 2013)

Despite that the park met with majorly good response, Ulekleiv described it as a Troyan horse – a park filled with famous names and top quality art however lacking a democratical proceedings and objectyfing women. At the end Ulekleiv gives the mirrorizing effect of Luis Bourgouis sculpture ‘the couple’ a new dimension. She sees is as a methaphor of the park who is a polished mirror of the sponsor who among the choice of artworks could see himself

6.3 Rex Ringnes and the problematic case of the patronage in Norway

At du er flink til å tjene penger betyr muligens ikke at du har peiling på kunst (Nielsen, 2011)

Freia-reklamen lyser som et diadem over hovedkontoret til Eiendomsspar og Victoria Eiendom på Egertorget. Fra sitt hjørnekontor i nest øverste etasje, med utsikt til Slottet, troner Christian Ringnes (59) over sitt eiendomsrike. (Lee, 2014)

Using this royal comparison, Irina Lee opens her article based on an interview with Christian Ringnes. The billionaire is portrayed in this article as a flamboyant yet hardworking businessman deriving from a well-situated and historically significant Norwegian family.

Ringnes has often been presented in the media in the context of his social position, wealth, power, and role in the city in terms of collecting, promoting, and sponsoring art.

The idea of patronage as such may seem archaic in today's society; however, it still exists, although the character of the relationship between patron and artist has significantly changed. Stuart Dearing, in an article published in *The Brown Daily Herald,* described Marjorie Garber's lecture about her forthcoming book *Patronizing the Arts*, as a lecture that "examines the historical evolution of the visual, performance, and literary art patronage systems" (Dearing, 2006). In her lecture, Garber discussed the commercial character of art sponsorship in the present time. In doing so, she stated that art patronage is a sector dominated by private investors and corporations, which threatens production that is more creative. This new art-patron relationship leads to art institutes named after its donors, and cultural production as a result is less about art itself and more about the social status it brings to the donors. Garber then examined how government patronage tends to result in propaganda or art appreciation rather than support for experimental artwork. This is the reason that the arts have become an increasingly commercial enterprise that threaten to leave more experimental art production underfunded in a modern patronage system has more to do with advertising and creating cultural nationalism than supporting experimental creativity. Dearing's solution for this situation would be to encourage creative diversity in the arts involving more neutral patrons, like universities, because "Art is too important to be left in the hands of governments and venture capitalists" (Dearing, 2006).

The park is a particular example of patronage, since it is not based on the relation between artist and sponsor. Even though the art is funded by a private foundation and the artistic concept originally derives from Ringnes, it has been transformed due to the work of the art commission. Yet despite the work of the art committee Ekebergpark has been presented by the media as a Ringnes investment. What Gerber was discussing is that the patron often sees the process of investing in art as an investment in the patron's own status. This is in many ways how Ringnes' actions were perceived—not as an act aimed towards the common good, but rather focused on the prestige of his investment. This is what Vilde Horvei mentioned in her article, when she claimed that an invitation of Marina Ambramovic for her performance was an act "legitimizing" Ringnes' position as a patron and the status of the project he sponsored (Horvei, 2013). Nielsen would argue the case using more profound accusations and calling Christian

Ringnes "Rex Ringnes" to sarcastically embrace the character of the situation when Ringnes uses his power over the public space in the form of patronage (Nielsen 2013).

Patronage, even partial patronage as in the case of the park, has been a problematic issue in Norway. The problem with it may derive from the fact that Norway has never developed a culture of patronage comparable with those of other European countries like France or Germany, which have much stronger cultural identity. Norway is not only a significantly smaller state, but also relatively younger; it has existed as an independent nation only since 1905, when it peacefully seceded from Sweden. Before 1814. Before Norway became independent it existed in a union with Denmark for four hundred years. Currently Norway has only around million citizens, which constitutes a small potential audience for any work of art, and the country's inhabitants are scattered over a vast area (Mulcahy, 1998, p. 251). Norway's social-democratic governments after 1945 have been committed to an extensive support of the arts and, in particular, have supported a policy of fostering the decentralization and democratization of culture and cultural goods (Bakke, 2001, p.18) This includes support for the National Art Gallery, the Norwegian Opera, and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation as national cultural institutions, as well as making concerts, theater, films, and art exhibitions available to people outside of Oslo and to peripheral social groups through public touring institutions. Since 1991, Norway has had a separate Department of Culture, which replaced the Department of Culture and Science and an earlier division of culture within the Department of Church and Education. Accordingly, we see that Norwegian government has served the function of a "manager" state, with its well-articulated policy of cultural democratization and its emphasis on promoting the maximum feasible accessibility to the national cultural heritage.

The welfare state's task is to make sure that the goods are present, that is, that they are created or made, and that the goods are distributed equally among the population. To further that redistributionist end, the Norwegian government gives the counties and municipalities general block grants, leaving it to the regional and local councils to decide how to spend the money. Accordingly, the cultural welfare in Norway has been a matter of state, not private investors. Thus, Ringnes actions were considered as somehow political, since he is involved in the political process surrounding the park. Words that suggest corruption have been used to describe Ringnes' involvement in the case, as was mentioned by both Sunde and Moxeness, who argued that

Ringnes paid for the municipal assessment and concretization of the proposal. In addition, the investor himself was a member of the Council of Urban Architecture until after the zoning plan for the park was adopted. Sunde additionally emphasized that Ringnes' flamboyant personality and wealth made it easier for him to influence the political figures in the Oslo Kommune:

> "Penger er makt og Ringnes sjarmerer det han er god for. Han er karismatisk, vekker begeistring, latter og applaus. Han er ikke beskjeden på egne vegne og han får med seg kommunale politikere med ordfører og byråder i spissen." (Sunde, 2013).

Accordingly, Ringnes was also perceived as a representative of values that are not compatible with Norway's political construction and social values that the welfare state is based on. This issue received further investigation from the journalist Anne Marte Blindheim, who presented Ringnes as a member of an exclusive gentleman's club, Norges Selskab. This club was described by Blindheim as a sort of sexist, capitalist relic—an exclusive "men only" closed club with 110 members drawn from shipping, real estate, and legal sectors (Blindheim 2013). According to Blindheim, no politicians could be a members of Norges Selskab apart from Conservative politicians ("Høyre"), a party for which Christian Ringnes is both a sponsor and a supporter. In the same article, it was claimed that *Dagbladet* was in the possession of documentation covering several Oslo lawsuits against the club. It was also pointed out as problematic that Christian Ringnes held a presentation at the club's meeting on October 3, 2011—after the contract between his foundation and Oslo Kommune was sealed, but long before the park was actually built. The presentation was called "Skulpturlandskap på Ekeberg—en drøm til begeistring og besvær." Blindheim found this disturbing since, according to her, a lot of people with influence over or interest in the Ekeberg park were members of Norges Selskab. The club's membership included the director of the Cultural Heritage Office, Jørn Holme, who academically approved the park; Oslo Mayor Fabian Stang, who had politically approved park; and sculptor Per Ung, who contributed to the park with the statue "Mor og barn." Other members of the club include men who are directly related with Ringnes' real estate company, Eiendomsspar (Blindheim, 2013).

The picture of Christian Ringnes that arises from the debate around patronage is one of an actor who does not represent the community. Instead, he is seen to represent values that are archaic and difficult to accept. For some, he is a relic of past times and a symbol of social inequality and division, and thus so is the park that he stands behind. Ringnes certainly does not

step back. He gladly promotes himself in the media using his charm, charisma, and influence. He is present as the face of the Park and its promoter. Therefore, the park will be always seen as a part of his persona. Even if the park does not necessarily present an objectified image of women, it will still be seen as Ringnes' vision of what is feminine. Christian Ringnes as an art collector will never be freed from his enthusiasm about women, his miniature bottle collection, and his episode with a porn movie.

Does the body cease to be a victim of manipulation? Just a short glance on the street, on billboards, television, or novel covers will answer this question for us. However, the arising consciousness of gender equality does not make the body a form on which to demonstrate masculine power. The protests against the Ekebergparken were partly based on the assumption that we, as a society, do not want to have a man openly decide the representations of female body standards to be presented in the public space. Christian Ringnes in that context is not only a man, but an institution, a representative of a social imbalance. Of course, the great element of controversy was that this particular man, despite his possession of the economic capital, has no culturally institutionalized capital to give legitimize his authority to decide the sort of art to be situated in the public space. Yet even if he had such authority, it would not be any better, because he endangered aspects of identity based on the complex relation between nature, society, and gender. The problem of presenting a "feminine" park was in presenting the woman as the other.

Bourdieu claims that habitus generates all the reasonable and common-sense behaviors (Bourdieu, 2011, p.55), which seem to be the reaction to any acts that may put one's values in danger. Accordingly, it is impossible for anyone to have a monopoly on what is "feminine." The female ideals continue to change; encouraged and venerated in certain fields, notions of culturally valuable forms of femininity are constantly evolving and differing from each other. The female body form for centuries was one of the most important topics in the culture; human body, human sexuality, and eroticism fascinated, intrigued, and aroused admiration and condemnation. Over the centuries, therefore, in many ways the body underwent changes in the valuation and perception of it from the perspective of ethics and aesthetics. Body image has become an important component of European culture, with all references that are associated with physicality. If we look into the art lexicons, we would find hundreds of examples of the human

body in painting, sculpture and literature. At a certain point, we could see that fetish was partly a socialization process, but it was also a way to gain control over someone's life. There is no overstatement in saying that female bodies were for centuries in the power of man. Therefore, presenting the project as a tribute to the representations of women evoked the worst associations. It can be seen as especially problematic for social structures in today's Norway, a society of high emancipation that is strong in defending human rights, including gender equality as well.

6.4 Hyllest til kvinner: Female body as a situation and the female body as a conflict

The female body has been an extensively used concept in art, from fertility symbols like Venus of Willendrof to goddesses, odalisques, nymphs, with the profoundly religious exception of Virgin Mary. Representations of the feminine nowadays, other than art, are strongly connected to all types of promotion and advertising, including billboards, magazines, and social media. This trend of using the female body as a tool of promotion is, however, accompanied by an expanding gender awareness and female emancipation. Nonetheless, we are surrounded by different representations of the body, just as we have always been. The female body has been present in poetry, mythology, doctrine, medical and psychoanalytic treatises, prose narratives, and religious scripts. It has been an inspiration, warning, and decoration. It has been religious, erotic, and sensual. It can be deeply symbolic or decoratively enhancing. It is given functions by both creators and receivers. This is how Susan Rubin Suleiman, Professor of the Civilization of France and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard starts her elaboration about the female body as an art concept in Western culture:

> "The fascination that the female body has exerted on our individual and collective consciousness. And simultaneously with its attraction we find testimony to the fear and loathing that the body has inspired: beautiful but unclean, alluring but dangerous, woman's body has appeared mysterious, duplicitous – a source of pleasure and nurturance, but also of destruction and evil. Mary and Pandora in sum (…) it's clear that the questions we ask about it (female body) and the places we accord it in our own discourse can only be temporary: bound to the present, determined by our own, specific, historical situation." (Suleiman, 1986, p.1)

What Suleiman points out is that questions about the female body and what it represents derive from the current discourse—the historically evolved social context. Accordingly, the debate around female representations derived from current discourses of the "feminine" in Norwegian

society. And what this discussion has proven is that apparently there is no right way to picture women without making a statement about it. Accordingly, the right question to ask would be what does the female theme suggested by Christian Ringnes in modern Norway exactly represent? Using the female body as the main concept for the public sculpture park was a problematic theme, especially if the idea derives from one private person. In that case, possible controversies around the topic will automatically be associated with the person that brings about the idea. The intention of Ringnes is one thing, and its interpretation is quite another. Something that Christian Ringnes finds aesthetic and pleasant, organic and natural may seem offensive to others—because of the reasoning they use can be based on different assumptions. It is therefore important to elaborate on Simone de Beauvoir's famous claim that the body is a situation. In her iconic book, *The second sex,* de Beauvoir claimed that the body is not an object but "our grasp on the world and our sketch of our project" (de Beauvoir, 1953, p. 65). This quote has been used extensively as a starting point in discussions about gender awareness. One of the Norwegian scholars that worked with the gender principles launched by de Beauvoir was Toril Moi. In her book *Hva er en kvinne: Kjønn og kropp I feministisk teori*, Moi stated that that to claim that the body is not just a body, but a situation, is to recognize that the importance of a woman's body is associated with the way she uses her freedom. Consequently, the way to see the body is to see it in relation to the surrounding world. Therefore, it is necessary to draw the conclusion that, instead of dealing with the representation of body, we are dealing with the related spectrum of cultural and political meanings.

In 2006 the first hearing in Oslo Kommune's culture department (Kulturetaten) was held, wherein Christian Ringnes had a chance to introduce his idea via a five-page exposure draft. Folkeaksjonen for Bevaring av Ekeberskogen demanded that this document be made available to the public (Krogvik, 2011). This draft from the hearing showed that the "feminine" concept of the park was not fully accepted by Kulturetaten. Municipal art historians Gro Balas and Lise Mjøs noted that not only did they find the concept disturbing in terms of the choice of artworks, but they also dismissed the idea on ideological grounds. It was argued that the idea of women's and men's equality was a fundamental principle in Norwegian society, and that "A sculpture park located on public land should (...) reflect contemporary society and be a product of the time and the mindset it was created in (…) and can be also perceived as disparaging and also directly offensive" (Krogvik, 2011).

Bjørnar Moxenes, leader of the social party Rødt, argued that problem with Ringnes' assumption was that the idea to make a tribute to women was archaic:

"Vi har hele veien stusset over konseptet om å lage en park til kvinnenes pris. Vi har også reagearte på Ringnes' uttalelse om at kvinnen er den flottestegjenstanden vi har i verden. De siste ukene har det i tilleg kommet frem at kommunes egen fagetat mente i 2006 at kvinnekenseptet kunne oppfattes som både støtende og nedvurderende. Når vi nå ser at bare den femtedel av skulpturer er laget av kvinner inngår det i en slags mønster synes jeg. Det er vel ikke tilfeldig at det i all hovedsak er menn som står bak disse skulpturene (...) Man kan tenke seg at det er i tråd med det kvinnesynet som vår egen kultuetat anså som svart konservativt. Det vill gjerne være menn som lager skulpturer som passer til et slikt konsept. Dette er helt i tråd med Ringnes kvinnesyn og konseptet til parket" (Vedeler, 2011, p. 4)

The problem Moxenes identified was that Ringnes' view of women was conservative, as was his taste in art; therefore, the art would be dominated by both male creation and male conducted taste—indeed, this argument was empowered by the fact that the first 25 sculptures for the park were made by men. Accordingly, not only the idea was discriminatory but also the sculptures situated in the public space are. The conflict here derives from perception that Ringnes speaks from a position of power that gives money and social status, while Moxenes representing the far-left party represents the people and ideals of social equality.

The assumption that Ina Blom, an art historian from the University of Oslo, pointed out was that the theme of the park was archaic and problematic and that the area where Ringnes situated his park was too important to be dedicated to the taste of one:

(...) "Ringnes selv har lenge omtalt planen som 'Parken i kvinnenes ånd'. Det høres redselsfylt ut med en park med statuer av bare kvinner. Temmelig arkaisk og problematisk(...) Det er altfor stort og viktig område i byen til at slik park skal være bundet til hans synser, lyster og smak. Kommune bør tenke seg kraftig om. Hva vill egentlig Ringnes med den kolossale hyllesten til kvinnen? Det virker litt pidestallaktig. Det hele er tufftet på en veldi tradisjonell forestilling på om hva skulptur er og hva skal den vise. Kvinnekropp er overbrukttema. Dette bør være gjenstand for en større felleskapsdiskusjonen, sier hun." (Assheim, 2007, p.7)

In fact, the assumption that Ringnes was speaking from a position of power and offering representations of women that were both sexist and simplified was pointed by many actors. Ringnes' intentions towards his new project were questioned extensively, wrote Christopher Nielsen in his article in *Dagbladet* which summarized it simply—"Det handler om penis." In this way he described another Ringnes project—the museum with the collection of small bottles (Nielsen, March 8, 2013)—but it also served as a metaphor of the general attitude of the sponsor toward art, female representations, and the public space. Nielsen writes later that Ringnes considered his access to Ekeberg hill as his God-given right to realize his "symbolic harem." Nielsen attacked Ringnes' selection of sculptures as the act of a sleazy mind, calling Botero's

“Reclining Woman” a typical BBW fascination (in porn language, Big Beautiful Woman). Sean Henry’s "Walking Woman" Nielsen interpreted as a tribute to China's economic miracle and the women who earned it, as well as evidence of a fetish for Asian women. Meanwhile "Ace of diamonds" by Lynn Chadwick is, according to Nielsen, simply “a dick in a pussy." To justify his judgments, in another article he published for *Dagbladet*, Nielsen mentions an interview with the billionaire published in *Kapital* in 2001:

"I mellomtida har jeg nemlig blitt tipset om et intervju med Ringnes i Kapital fra helt tilbake i 2001, der han redegjør for småflaskemuseet. På spørsmål fra intervjuer, sitat: «Bygger du dette museet for å lage en bauta over deg selv?», svarer Ringnes: «Nei, det ville ha vært harry. Hvis jeg skulle ha bygget en bauta over meg selv, måtte det ha vært noe annet. Jeg planlegger å få i stand en park med skulpturer av kvinner - den kan kanskje bli en passende minnesmerke»" (Nielsen, April 23, 2013)

Nielsen’s hypothesis was taken further by Kari Jaquesson, the well-known Norwegian fitness instructor,television personality, and journalist. She claimed that Nielsen was the first one to ask the question that no one seemed to ask before: What does the park symbolize with the art concept proposed by Ringnes? She elaborates on Ringnes’ particular interest in bordellos, giving examples of his small bordello collection in his other project—småflaskemuseet. According to Jaquesson, Ringnes has a particular fascination for bordellos:

"I ettertid har Ringnes utvidet bordellhylla til et helt rom i museet, komplett med naturtro og anvendelig dukke liggende i senga. Dette er selvsagt helt lovlig, men er det ikke litt rart? Er det virkelig ingen journalister (eller politikere) som lurer på hvorfor en av Norges rikeste menn er så besatt av prostitusjon og bordeller at han innreder et helt rom til dette i museet sitt? Lurer de ikke litt på kvinnesynet til en som velger dette? Han kunne ha viet et rom til nasjonalsporten eller mange andre ting, men prioriterte altså et bordellrom (...) Har ingen kommet på å spørre «Hva vil du fortelle med dette?», «Hvorfor er du så begeistret for bordeller?», «Hvilke bordeller har du selv besøkt?», «Hva har inspirert deg i innredningen av ditt eget bordellrom?», «Hvorfor er det gitter foran vinduet?», «Hva synes du om at dokkene får så hard medfart at du har måttet kjøpe nye?» Disse og mange andre spørsmål ville da vært veldig relevante. Hvor har det blitt av dem? Jeg er redd Christopher Nielsen ikke vil få svar fra Ringnes om hva han vil med kvinneskulpturparken. Vi får nok heller aldri vite hvorfor Ringnes er så begeistret for prostitusjon, eller hvorfor Oslos politikere mener hans bragder i museet gjør ham skikket til å sette sin private samling inn i et av Oslos vakreste fellesområder. Taushet er åpenbart gull." (Jaquesson, 2013)

Kari Jaquesson, who is also an active member of Folkeaksjonen mot Bevaring av Ekebergskogen, describes Ringnes sexual fascination as a problematic background relating to the theme of Ekebergpark. From the critical opinions like the article of Jaquesson, Blom, Nielsen and others Christian Ringnes embodies a perception of females that would jeopardize the character of the publicly situated sculpture park.

"I høringsnotatet fastslår man at ideen om kvinner og menns likeverd er et grunnleggende prinsipp i det norske samfunnet, og fremholder at: «En skulpturpark plassert på offentlig grunn bør (…) speile dagens samfunn, og være et produkt av den tiden og det tenkesett den blir skapt i.» Kulturetatens argumentasjon ligger her nært opp til det Ina Blom, og senere Charlotte Myrbråten og Synnøve Vik, la for dagen i hhv. Aftenposten og Dagsavisen. Tonen i notatet er overraskende skarp, og man slår for eksempel fast at mange vil oppfatte kvinnesynet bak parken som «svært konservativt» samt at det kan «oppleves som nedvurderende og også direkte støtende»." (Krogvik 2011)

This comment concerned the female theme of the park and presented it as an archaic and inequitable concept. Even though the final result of the hearing was positive towards the idea of a sculpture park situated in Ekeberg forest, the aspect of the female theme remained difficult to resolve. It is therefore interesting to reflect upon which entity within society has the power and authority to proclaim what sort of art would actually represent the modern society mindset. It can be seen that most of the negative responses towards the idea for the park were actually derived from women; therefore, we can see that female actors are most involved in the debate over their representations. However, the concept of the feminine is more flexible than just the representations of women in art. Therefore, different ideas and mindsets can be represented by different groups in society. Obviously in this case female art historians had strong opinions and ideas of how a "female-related" sculpture park should look, or at least how it should not look. The female body is over-sexualized and the sexualization of the body was also the main concern regarding the feminine theme of the park what did not seem to include sculptures exclusively, but rather the figure of the sponsor, his economic situation and the power that comes with it,

Chapter 7. Conclusion: Real protests and imagined communities.

In this final section, rather than presenting a consistent closing argument summing up the analysis undertaken herein, I propose to reflect on the most important points of my thesis in the light of theoretical background concerning *identities*.

It would be probably legitimate to start the conclusion where it all began. Therefore, I propose to take a second glimpse at this thesis's title: "Nei til Ringnes Kvinnepark! Looking for Norwegian identities in the protests against building the Ekeberg Sculpture Park in Oslo." As the title suggests, the goal of this paper was to look into critical opinions towards building the Ekebergpark in Oslo. The critical material gathered covered different publications from Norwegian newspapers between the years 2007 and 2013 (although there were few exceptions for especially interesting opinions that were published a bit earlier or later).

Naturally, the Norwegian media was most interested in the controversial side of the project, fuelling public debate with aspects that would evoke most of the interest. At the same time, the media coverage offered the easiest and most approachable way to exchange and express both opinions and information. Nevertheless, this does not mean that negative reactions were the only reactions. Of course there were also voices defending the park that could be seen as a force of equal strength. However, they did not get an equal amount of media attention. The attempt of this study was, therefore, to give an overview of the negative response to Ekebergpark—first, because the articles were approachable and relatively reliable sources; and second, because they provided relevant material for the study of identity. The assumption was that, once someone expresses their opinion, that opinion stands for some common reasoning and value system. This is a hypothesis confirmed by scholars such as Bauman, Hal, and Mercer; i.e., that identity is a notion empowered by conflict. Accordingly, the conflict around the Ekebergpark could be seen as a starting point for discussion concerning the importance and relevance of certain problems for modern Norwegian society.

When it comes to the first assumption of this thesis, the analyses presenting the actual controversies were examined in the analysis chapters. During closer examination, it become clear that the articles about the park illustrated that Ringnes' venture in the current social and political circumstances in Norway represented a danger to the values of some Norwegian people. With

this starting point, the main assumptions driving controversy were framed in separate chapters, each concerning a specific topic. This structure was meant to aid in establishing the character of the protests, to specify the actors involved, and to reflect on what kind of notions seemed most crucial for whom.

7.1 What can be concluded from the debate around the Ekebergpark?

> En skulpturpark plassert på offentlig grunn bør (…) speile dagens samfunn, og være et produkt av den tiden og det tenkesett den blir skapt i (Krogvik, 2011)

I would like to come back to this quote and use it as a starting point in summing up the analysis conducted in the previous chapters. The quotation above comes from the meeting of the Kulturetaten, when the members of the board were introduced to the plans for Ekebergpark for the first time. In a document written at the end of the meeting, it was mentioned that the sculpture park should be somehow a form of reflection about the society and its modern mindset.

It is hard to decide what was most controversial about Ekebergpark: its female theme, the problematic Nazi monument, or the possible damage to nature. Any one of these problems could exist on its own and constitute an obstacle even without the help of others. The combination of all these controversial areas, which involved so many actors, was a rare opportunity to capture a very complex exchange of opinions, where some of the arguments can speak for different groups in the society what Hall frames in his elaboration about identities:

> "for those theorists who believe that modern identities are breaking up, the argument runs something like this. A distinctive type of structural change is transforming modern societies in the late twentieth century. This is fragmenting the cultural landscape of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality which gave us firm location as social individual" (Hall, 1995, p. 596)

As was established, the female aspect was most relevant for females, art historians, and people concerned with social values (parties like Rødt and Miljøpartiet det Grønne). Many of these voices found Ringnes' ideas to be archaic and sexist. Most likely this is not how Christian Ringnes imagines his perception of the female, but due his social and economic status (and most likely due to his flamboyant behavior), he was deemed to hold a position that did not make him an acceptable representative for female-related topics, even if only concerning the art.

Gender equality is an aspect of the present time and a sincere hope for the future.

Nature, more than any other concept, is more attached to the origins of Norway and something timeless. The title of the chapter “We are the nature and the forest is ours” emphasizes the relationship between nature and society, which is an important part of everyday life in Norway—and one that is even more precious in Oslo. Norwegians have a strong, deeply rooted sense of unity with their natural surroundings, which has been a big part of creating their sense of the nation. The natural environment that once separated communities is now the spoiling element for society, but in the discussion around the park there was a lot of emphasis on how the future of the natural surroundings in the cities might look and how to protect it from unwanted interventions. Protecting the forest was the most important aspect of the protests. No other problematic area sparked an opposing organization, demonstrations, and attempts at occupation. Nature seems to be important for everyone in Norway, despite their gender, education, age, or social status. It is a universal value that needs to be protected.

As with the discussion about the Nazi stairs, the debate regarding the female theme of the park took place only in the publications, without active actual physical interventions such as those that took place in the name of protecting the environment. It is also significant that this debate involved more female actors.

Timing, progress, and individual experience are crucial for understanding history and collective memory as aspects of national identity. These are expressed in the monuments and history lessons, and they can shape a nation long after all living memory has passed. The conclusion reached from this analysis could suggest that the Nazi cemetery debate concerns the past—how we use the historical findings and monuments today and how we may intend to use it in the future. The debate around the reconstruction of the historical monument was to a large extent a debate occurring in the legal, political, and academic arena. The aspects of history and monument politics are therefore not as controversial and important for the majority of people as, for example, the environment. People involved in the debate regarding the reconstruction of Nazi cemetery were people that in some extend represent the living memory of the past.

The notion of identities has been central for this thesis. Mercer claimed that "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (Mercer, 1990, p. 43). This assumption seems correct; looking at the written testimony of protests against the Ekebergpark, one can see a

manifestation of the uncertain vision of the female body, the uncertain future of the local forest, and the uncertain result of the Nazi monument renovation. This uncertainty is an important aspect of the protests. The experience of doubt was most definitely present in the critical opinions expressed in relation to the project. However, I also established that using the term "identity" is problematic because it suggests something solid and bonded, like a national identity. What has been proven in my thesis is that neither nation nor identity are concepts that can be considered as fixed.

7.2 Nation as a community not as a concept

As it was emphasized at the very beginning of this thesis, the goal of this paper was not to study an identity of the nation, but rather the complex nature of identities that shape the society in its modern form. However, we still have a pattern of values, beliefs, and standards that shape the core of these identities through different discourses, practices, and representations.

In consequence, the debate around the Ekebergpark proved to be a good example for studying aspects of the identities in Norwegian society in the present time. This debate could be compared with other protests, not only against the certain architectural projects, urban changes, or environmental challenges, but also protests based on morals, ethics, and politics. Values are not assigned to one and only one topic; every protest can basically be a platform for expression of different concerns. Many groups in society relate to different values, which they evaluate and organize in different hierarchies. Relations to nature, gender equality, and the occupation are relevant for constructing a Norwegian identity, but they are, of course, not the only aspect of such identities.

Identity will be often presented as a spoiling concept. Identity determines who we are as individuals and it determines who we are as a group. What my study had shown is that the question of identity can give rise to conflicts, because what constitutes identity relies on certain ideas of the community. We take care of the nature and this is who we are, but this assumption can be challenged. Representing the nation as a notion is not what this thesis was meant to provide. Instead, it is a reflection upon how many of the aspects of identity can be present in the expression of protests against the Ekebergpark. In all three analysis chapters, there was enough evidence to conclude that the expressions were a chance to see the components of identities and

how exactly they influence the character of the community we describe as a nation. Hereby, I would like to emphasize that, through the conflict about the Ekebergpark, we can distinguish the characteristics of the nation described in Bent Anderson "Imagined communities"—this does not mean that the national community as such is fake, but rather it refers to Anderson's belief that any community so large that its members do not know each another on a face-to-face basis must be imagined to some degree:

> "In the anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined*, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (Anderson, 2006, loc 199)

Accordingly, in the light of the previous chapters. I would like to propose the approach towards studying the history of conflicts. Not only as a study of imagined community, but imagined communities inside imagined community. Ekebergpark represented a major conflict of interests of the different groups. Each of those groups represent values, that could be seen as representative to national interests, but in fact they represent the interests of groups that build their value hierarchy based on the different discourse. Together it can constitute tendencies and laws, but in the first place in is shaped by *habitus* and social context

7.3 And the story continues

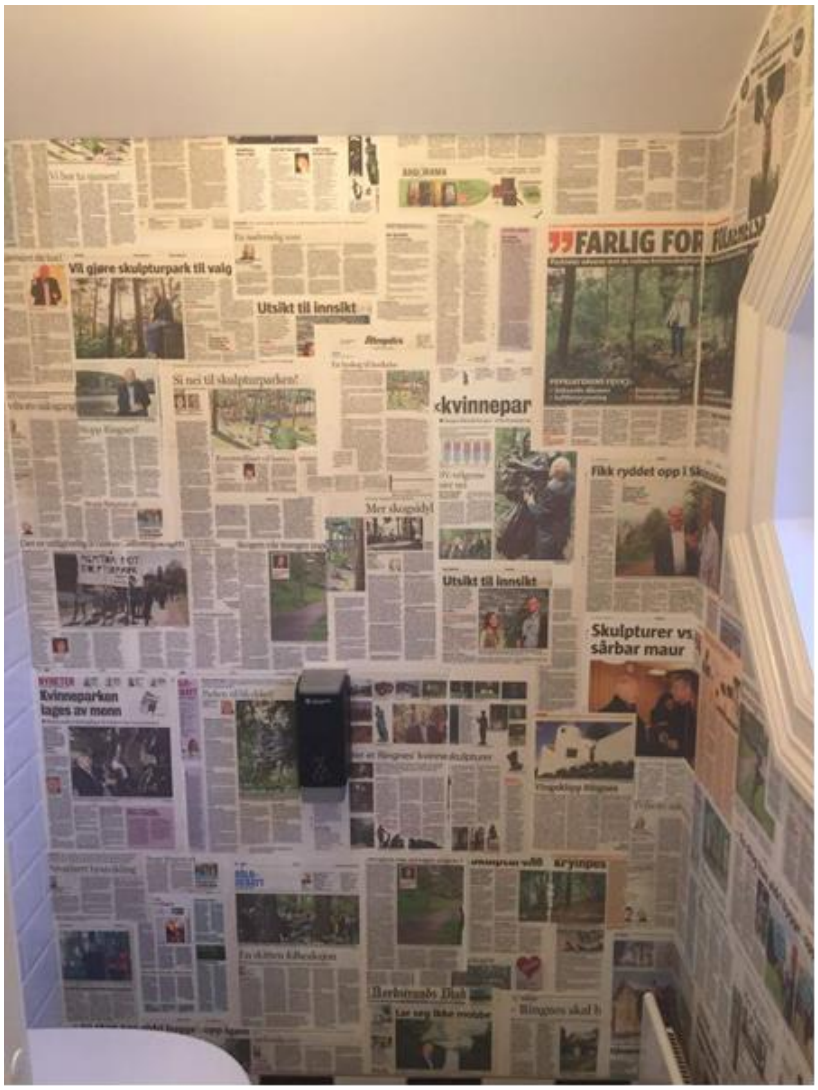

Figure 6 Toilet, Karlsborg Spiseforetning (Joanna Pacula, 2015)

The picture above illustrates the toilet on the second floor of the Karlsborg Spiseforretning–Furuset group restaurant, housed in the historical villa on Kongsveien 21. The restaurant was opened together with Ekebergpark on September 26, 2013. The building is owned by Oslo Kommune; however, C. Ludens Ringnes Stiftelse was obliged to carry out a major renovation on this building as a part of the cultural heritage preservation included in the contract between CRLS and Oslo Kommune. There are two toilets situated on the second floor of Karlsborg Spiseforretning. Beside the distinctive gender symbols on the doors, the toilets also carry names: Marianne and Lotte. In the context of what we can see in the picture, namely, that the entire interior of the toilets was decorated with wallpapers illustrating the conflicts, the

assumption could be that the foundation of Christian Ringnes paid a particular tribute to two of the most significant critics of the park, Marianne Sunde and Lotte Sandberg.

On the 26th of September, 2015, Ekebergpark officially reached two years of existence on the map of Oslo. After *Aftenposten* changed the character of its articles (judging from titles like "Ok da, gratulerer" or "Parken som parkerte kritikken"), the publications concerning Ekebergpark seemed to become less critical and less frequent. That does not mean, however, that the project has been entirely accepted. Marianne Sunde's book is about to be published next year, and there are concerns regarding financing the park in the future, but right now the park is open and full of visitors—tourists, locals, families, friends. During the weekends, the park is full of life. Possibly one day someone will summarize the conflict from a different perspective and this thesis too will have a chance to become part of the bigger story of conflicts and interests.

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Attachments:

FIGURE 1 Author and date unknown, Photograph of German commentary on Ekeberg, Oslo digital image, available at: http://www.atlantikwall-research-norway.de/Originalbilder_Oslo.html#Anchor-58791 Viewed on 28.4.2016
FIGURE 2 (2015) Pacula, Joanna "Ekeberg stairs, Ekebergparken", digital image
FIGURE 3 (2015) Pacula, Joanna "Reichsadler", Ekebergparken, digital image
FIGURE 4 (2015) Pacula, Joanna "Information board", Ekebergparken", digital image
FIGURE 5 (2016) Pacula, Joanna "Marilyn by Richard Hudson", Ekebergparken, digital image
FIGURE 6 (2015) Pacula, Joanna "Toilet", Karlsborg Spiseforetning, digital image