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# Escaping Modernity, Accessing the Past: The Transnational Construction of the Remote in Late-Nineteenth-Century Norway

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## Introduction

In his retrospective account of three decades of climbing in Norway, the British mountaineer William Cecil Slingsby reflected on his ignorance of the places he visited in the 1870s. This was something that he believed, by the first decade of the twentieth century, no mountaineer reaching Norway would experience again. Slingsby wrote that his lack of knowledge "cannot easily be appreciated by the tourists of to-day who find a comfortable hut wherever one is needed, guides who can at least lead them to the foot of any mountain which they may wish to climb, and last, but not least, improved maps and most excellent guide-books."[1] Slingsby was commenting on a striking change in the way that mountaineers were able to access the remote areas of Norway, and, moreover, this was a change he had influenced significantly. His writing made mountainous areas like Jotunheimen and others increasingly appealing for British visitors, and Slingsby himself offered advice to many in private and in print. He also worked closely with Norwegian organisations like *Den Norske Turistforening* (The Norwegian Trekking Association / DNT), writing for DNT's yearbook and climbing with significant members of the organisation, such as Emanuel Mohn. DNT built cabins, bridges and paths, and published guides and maps for an urban bourgeois Norwegian audience, newly engaged with the rural areas of the country. However, their work, while involving transnational networks of communication and cooperation with figures like Slingsby, also relied on the expertise of local people in rural areas. This chapter will argue that the construction of Jotunheimen as a tourist region was influenced–and co-produced–by travellers from outside the region and local people, whose lives were disrupted but who also found new livelihoods and roles in socially restructured areas. Far from the narrow "discovery" of Jotunheimen, the region was produced by local and transnational forces which are usually

1 William Cecil Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground. Sketches of Climbing and Mountain Exploration in Norway between 1872 and 1903* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904), 95.

overlooked. Using travel writing from British travellers, this chapter will investigate changing representations of Jotunheimen, as well as the influence of local people on travellers' texts.

Norway was an increasingly popular destination for tourists in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly from Britain, who were drawn by spectacular landscapes and imaginative connections. This scale of travel made a significant contribution to public discourse: around two hundred travelogues by British travellers about Norway were published between the late eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century.[2] Travel writing is a valuable source for historians interested in the travel and leisure cultures of the period, providing a rich range of representations of Norway. As well as revealing how British travellers thought about Norway and Norwegians, it also provides useful insight into the practical experiences and perceptions of travel.

Travel writing often reveals more about the infrastructure of accommodation and transport, for example, than the texts might initially suggest. In this chapter, a close reading of the accounts of British travellers to Jotunheimen, published in Britain and Norway, reveals the transnational construction of Jotunheimen as a region in which travellers sought to escape modernity. Yet they were also central in constructing modern networks of infrastructure, both physical and textual, promoting and enabling travel to the region. Jotunheimen held a significant place in the Norwegian national imaginary, influencing cultural work and increasingly being visited. However, the organisations which enabled travel to the region from outside were often transnational. Moreover, the texts of British travellers also reveal their dependence on and cooperation with Norwegians, both visitors to the region and local people, despite the discourses of escape and exploration which predominate in their texts. Local people helped to physically construct the infrastructure of the region, as well as acting as guides for mountaineers. As I will demonstrate, Jotunheimen as a region served as an important place for travellers to think about the rural and remote more generally, whilst also having its own specific history of change and development as it became a popular destination in the late nineteenth century.

2 Peter Fjågesund and Ruth A. Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Receptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 14.

## The Appeal of Jotunheimen

The appeal of Jotunheimen for travellers from outside the region in the nineteenth century lay mainly in two developments: increased tourism to Norway from the rest of Europe and beyond, and the Norwegian National Romantic movement. Individual British travellers visited Norway in the early nineteenth century, followed by increasing numbers of upper-class sportsmen, interested mainly in fishing and hunting, by the middle of the century.[3] Improved travel infrastructures, across the North Sea and within Norway, led to a further increase in travellers in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with Norway becoming an accessible destination for a wider social range of travellers, as well as increasing numbers of women.[4] Norway appealed as a place where British travellers could escape from the pressures of modernity, away from the urban and industrial, as well as connecting to a supposedly shared Old Norse past.[5]

Norway was not simply popular with British travellers; large numbers of particularly German and Austrian travellers also visited in the latter half of the nineteenth century, often motivated by similar reasons to travel.[6] Regions like Jotunheimen were key for this escape from the modern into rural and remote landscapes, where British travellers could imagine themselves travelling back in time into romanticised (and Romantic) landscapes. Norwegian nationalists of the nineteenth century also sought meaning in the country's rural and mountainous landscapes. Rural Norway was seen as home to the authentic version of the nation, away from the influences of unions with Sweden and Denmark in the urban areas of the country.[7] Norway's landscapes, and particularly its mountains and fjords, appeared in the work of National Romantic artists like Johan Christian Dahl, for whom they seemed to symbolise the essence of the nation, whilst also being in dialogue

3 Pia Sillanpää, "'Turning Their Steps to Some Fresh and Less-Frequented Field': Victorian and Edwardian Sporting Gentlemen in Mid-Scandinavia," *Studies in Travel Writing* 3, no. 1 (1999): 172.

4 Kathryn Walchester, "Beyond the Grand Tour: Norway and the Nineteenth-century British Traveller," in *Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture, 1814-1900*, ed. Benjamin Colbert and Lucy Morrison (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 205.

5 Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

6 See, for example, Ulrike Spring on German tourists in Tromsø: "Arctic and European In-Betweens: The Production of Tourist Spaces in Late Nineteenth-Century Northern Norway," in *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Texts, Images, Objects*, ed. Kate Hill (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016): 13-36.

7 Gro Ween and Simone Abram, "The Norwegian Trekking Association: Trekking as Constituting the Nation," *Landscape Research* 37, no. 2 (2012): 157-58.

with wider cultural developments across Europe.[8] Organisations like DNT were founded in part to allow Norwegians access to these national landscapes and to get in touch with supposedly authentically Norwegian people and places.[9] Together with travellers from abroad, these movements saw an influx of travellers to Norway's mountains, eager to walk and climb in symbolically rich landscapes.

Jotunheimen itself is a mountainous region of central Norway, home to the highest mountains of Northern Europe. The area is roughly 3500 square kilometres and the twenty-six highest mountains in Norway are found there, most notably Galdhøppigen, Glittertinden, and Store Skagastølstind or Storen, the three highest and best known to mountaineers.[10] The name was given by the poet and travel writer Aasmund Olavsson Vinje, a founding member of DNT, in 1862, updating the previous version, "Jotun-fjeldene" (the Jotun mountains), given by Baltazar Mathias Keilhau, a geologist and leading early mountaineer, in the 1820s.[11] Both names drew on Norse mythology, in which Jotunheim was the land of the giants–a further nod to a deep national past.[12] Jotunheimen was a key location for the founding of DNT and the rural turn in Norwegian national thinking. Moreover, the naming was part of a wider move to construct a recreational culture in Norway and Jotunheimen as a centre for early DNT activity.[13] DNT was formed in 1868 in Christiania (now Oslo) by a group of elite men, eager to spend more time in rural and mountainous spaces and also enable their fellow Norwegians to do so.[14]

Central to this was the construction of infrastructure. DNT constructed roads, paths, and bridges, as well as providing huts, maps, and guides.

8 Charlotte Ashby, *Modernism in Scandinavia: Art, Architecture and Design* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 17-21.

9 Finn Arne Jørgensen, "The Networked North: Thinking about the Past, Present, and Future of Environmental Histories of the North," in *Northscapes: History, Technology, and the Making of Northern Environments,* ed. Dolly Jørgensen and Sverker Sörlin (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 275.

10 Geir Thorsnæs and Svein Askheim, eds., "Jotunheimen," *Store Norske Leksikon*, https://snl.no/Jotunheimen, last accessed 11 October 2023.

11 Rune Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet* (Oslo: Dreyer Forlag, 2018), 108-11.

12 Ibid., 112.

13 Geir Grimeland, "Alpine Club i tekstene til A.O. Vinje," in *Tvisyn, Innsyn, Utsyn: Nærblikk på A.O. Vinje*, ed. Arnfinn Åslund, Fjågesund, Kristian Hanto, Sveinung Nordstoga, and Johan M. Staxrud (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2021), 357.

14 Ween and Abram, "The Norwegian Trekking Association," 157. Histories of DNT in Norwegian include Inger Johanne Lyngø and Aina Schiøtz, *Tarvelig, men gjestfritt: Den Norske Turistforening gjennom 125 år* (Oslo: Den Norske Turistforening, 1993); and Nils U. Hagen, *Fra Slingsby til Bregruppen: Den Norske Turistforening og fjellsport* (Oslo: Den Norske Turistforening, 1992).

Regions like Jotunheimen were not simply promoted, but made accessible through the development of these provisions for travellers. Made together with local people, although not without tensions, these changes show a shift in the societies, economies, and representations of Jotunheimen in particular. We can trace the creation of this recreational landscape through travel writing, particularly from mountaineers who were writing for their domestic audiences but also for the DNT yearbook. Slingsby in particular took an active role in Norwegian mountaineering communities. For historians, the shift can be observed through the writings of travellers, whilst their reflections also provide important insight into how they understood their own travel and leisure culture more generally.

Mountains were undoubtedly part of the appeal of Norway. Writing in 1928, in English for a British audience, the Norwegian historian S.C. Hammer noted the appeal of Norwegian mountain regions such as Jotunheimen for British travellers keen to visit Norway, "a tourist country."[15] While Hammer wrote, "access to the Jotunheim has been made considerably easier than it used to be [...] [the area] still retains all its wild, picturesque grandeur of former days."[16] Hammer regarded the shift to the mountains as apparent in Norwegian culture in the nineteenth century. He wrote that:

> readers of Ibsen will find reminiscences of the Jotunheim both in *Brand* and in *Peer Gynt*; in both dramas the poet reveals himself fascinated by the grandeur of Nature and shows the youth of Norway the road to the mountain peaks whence the vision may range unhampered. It was not by chance that the appearance of these works in 1866 and 1867 respectively was followed in 1868 by the foundation of the Norwegian Tourists' Association [DNT]. Thus the Jotunheim has contributed not only to making mountaineering a sport in Norway, but to turning men's minds towards the heights.[17]

Hammer made the connection between DNT and Norwegian culture explicit, making clear the interplay of Norwegian national identity, literature and theatre, and outdoor recreation, referencing texts familiar to British audiences. This entanglement remains,[18] but Hammer made clear the role DNT was seen as playing in constructing tourist landscapes.

15 S.C. Hammer, *Norway* (London: A. & C. Black, 1928), 10.
16 Ibid., 54.
17 Ibid., 55.
18 Ween and Abram, "The Norwegian Trekking Association."

## British Mountaineers in Jotunheimen

The transition of Jotunheimen into a recreational landscape can also be seen in other writings, as can the developing Norwegian national interest in mountain spaces. The work of Slingsby, for example, is clear on these developments, as well as complicating the idea of these changes as simply national histories. Slingsby was a well-known figure–Hammer mentions his "energetic efforts"[19]–and wrote extensively of his trips to Jotunheimen from the 1870s onwards. He was unusual amongst British mountaineers of his generation in beginning his mountaineering career in Norway, rather than the Alps, making his first visit in 1872.[20] In 1876, he made the first ascent of Storen, a climb that secured him fame and renown in Norwegian mountaineering communities. In his obituary in the *Alpine Journal*, he was referred to as the "father of Norwegian mountaineering."[21] His most notable work was *Norway: The Northern Playground*, published in 1904 as a retrospective account of his three decades of mountaineering in Norway. Slingsby's long perspective makes changes in places like Jotunheimen visible in his text. Moreover, Slingsby was keen to reflect on these changes himself. He regarded Jotunheimen as "quite unknown to, and unheard of by, civilisation" until Keilhau's mountaineering in 1820, and also praised the work of members of DNT like Thomas Heftye, DNT's founder, and Emanuel Mohn, who was to become a close friend of Slingsby's, to make the region more accessible from the 1860s.[22] Slingsby also made it clear that this work was far from complete in the 1870s, when he first visited. This was a "wild free life," but also "real sport."[23] At times, Slingsby's tone is elegiac, writing that "now is the time of prose and plenty. We had the poetry and hunger."[24]

As the quotation at the start of this chapter shows, Slingsby was aware of the changing conditions of Jotunheimen. On his 1874 visit, he and other mountaineers had a "strange ignorance" of the location of Storen; by the beginning of the twentieth century, there were guidebooks and maps, as well as the physical infrastructure to support travel.[25] At times, control over Jotunheimen could seem provisional: caught in a storm in 1889, Slingsby wrote that "Jotunheimen seemed to have been reconquered by the Jotuns,"

19 Hammer, *Norway*, 54.
20 Paul Readman, "William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914," *English Historical Review* 79, no. 540 (2014): 1101-2.
21 Ibidem.
22 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 38-39.
23 Ibid., 39.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 95.

the giants of Norse mythology.[26] Yet he also noted that the tourists of the 1900s had little sense of the "difficulties with which we, in the early seventies, had to contend."[27] Slingsby was clear: Jotunheimen was far easier to travel in, but something of its Romantic appeal had been lost.

Slingsby was not a mountaineer who was keen to keep other mountaineers away from the regions he enjoyed climbing in. As Paul Readman has put it, "Slingsby wanted to see more people on the fells, not fewer."[28] He was a useful source of information for other mountaineers who were eager to climb in Norway–he wrote that there were "mountaineers who have applied to me for suggestions," and seemed happy to oblige.[29] Slingsby was also closely involved with DNT, who were responsible for many of the infrastructural improvements that had changed the approach of mountaineers to Jotunheimen. He climbed together with Mohn, his "fjell kammerat" ["mountain comrade"],[30] and other Norwegian mountaineers like Therese Bertheau, a pioneering female climber.[31] Slingsby's writing for the DNT yearbook was mostly published in English, with his first article appearing in the 1875 edition.[32] Between 1875 and 1895, he wrote ten pieces for the publication, as well as being a life member of the organisation from the mid-1870s.[33] However, he was far from the only British mountaineer to be published in the DNT yearbook, with its international readership of mountaineers and travellers interested in the mountain regions of Norway. Most editions from 1875 onwards featured multiple articles in English, and trips to Jotunheimen were a frequent subject. A notable article on Jotunheimen was published in 1889, written by a British female mountaineer, Margaret Sophia Green.[34] In 1888, Green was the first woman to ascend Store Styggedalstind, which she recounts in the yearbook, along with her impressions of her guide Torgeir Sulheim–"a capital guide and a very pleasant compan-

26 Ibid., 242.
27 Ibid., 135.
28 Readman, "William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914," 1124.
29 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 108.
30 Ibid., 124.
31 Readman, "William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914," 1108. See also Anne-Mette Vibe, *Therese Bertheau—Tindestigerske og Lærerinde* (Oslo: Universitetsbiblioteket i Oslo, 2012).
32 Slingsby, "An English Lady in Jotunheimen, with an Ascent of Glitretind," in *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1875* (Christiania: A.W. Brøgger, 1875), 102-18.
33 Slingsby is listed as a life member from 1875. *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1875*, 194.
34 [Margaret S. Green], "A Visit to the Hurrungtinder in 1888," *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1888* (Christiania: Albert Cammermeyer, 1889), 77-79.

ion"–and her wishes for more infrastructure to be built by DNT.[35] In the same volume, a British mountaineer called Richard F. Ball gave an account of a journey to Jotunheim, inspired by Slingsby and also praising the work of DNT to "render this region accessible to the tourist."[36] These contributions, alongside those of Slingsby and others, were significant in their provision of a textual infrastructure which British travellers could use to guide their travels to Norway. The DNT yearbooks became multilingual texts, with articles in Norwegian, English, German and other Scandinavian languages, and formed part of broader networks of infrastructure that were constructed, used and advertised by both Norwegians and travellers.

British publications also formed part of the transnational network of textual guidance for travellers to and in Norway. The *Alpine Journal*, the foremost publication of British mountaineering, featured accounts of and advice for travel in Norway. Slingsby, for example, reviewed the 1894 edition of the DNT handbook in the 1894-95 edition of the *Journal*, noting the "admirable work" of DNT and how it "provide[d] most excellently for the wants of travellers."[37] He also wrote accounts of his travels in Norway, as well as providing information for would-be travellers, listing, for example, guides who were available in certain locations and their particular skills.[38] An early account of an ascent of Glittertinden was reported in the *Journal* by T.L. Murray Browne in 1871, who detailed his travel through Jotunheimen before Slingsby's first visit.[39] Browne had some help from guides, but relatively little accommodation. By 1886, Claude Wilson, another British mountaineer, was positioning himself as one of Slingsby's "followers"–he wrote that "Slingsby's name stands alone; he is at the head of mountaineering in Norway."[40] Wilson praised DNT at length, writing that "mountaineers visiting Norway should certainly enrol themselves as members of this club," where they could receive priority access to huts, as well as copies of the yearbook.[41] For Wilson, DNT was "an institution which is not so well known in

35 Ibid., 79. Green later married a Norwegian hotelier, Knut Kvikne, who built Kviknes Hotel in Balestrand, a popular destination for tourists on the Sognefjord, which was completed in 1913. She died of tuberculosis in 1894 and Kvikne built an Anglican church, in the style of a Norwegian stave church, in her memory. Vibe, *Therese Bertheau*, 26-28.

36 Richard F. Ball, "A Week in Jotunheim," *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1888*, 68-76.

37 "Reviews and Notices," *The Alpine Journal* 17, no. 127 (1895): 370-71.

38 Slingsby, "Brief Notes on a Campaign in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 12, no. 88 (1885): 267-68. See also Slingsby, "Stray Jottings on Mountaineering in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 11, no. 79 (1883): 142-58.

39 T.L. Murray Browne, "The Glittertind and Uledalstind in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 5, no. 32 (1871): 154-70.

40 Claude Wilson, "Climbing in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 13, No. 95 (1887), 144.

41 Ibid., 148.

England as it ought to be" but that "exists for the purpose of opening up beautiful tracts of country, and facilitating travel in every way."[42] Wilson, like Slingsby, supported the development of transnational connections, as well as noting the work which DNT had done to support access to the regions of Norway.

Other British mountaineering publications also included accounts of trips to Jotunheimen. The first edition of the *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* (*YRCJ*), published in 1899, contained a long article by Slingsby on the appeal of Norway and especially Jotunheimen.[43] The *YRCJ* also featured an article by J.A. Green on a trip to Jotunheimen where he climbed with Therese Bertheau and the well-known Norwegian guide Ola Berge.[44] Travelogues also included accounts of travel in Jotunheimen. John R. Campbell's *How to See Norway* was published in 1871 and included sections on Jotunheimen, as well as noting that "here is a society in Christiania called Den Norske Turistforening, which deserves the thanks of English travellers–especially of those who are mountaineers."[45] Perhaps the best-known travelogue from Jotunheimen was *Three in Norway, by Two of Them*, published anonymously by James A. Lees and Walter J. Clutterbuck in 1872.[46] *Three in Norway* was republished several times in both Britain and Norway and recounts a comic fishing and hunting trip to Jotunheimen by three upper-class British gentlemen. It hints at the increased tourist interest in the region, part of a consistent pattern of British travellers acknowledging the development of tourism infrastructure.[47] Lees and Clutterbuck are particularly notable for their statement of travel to Norway as temporal escape. For them, Norway offered "Freedom–freedom from care, freedom from resistance, and from the struggle for life. What a country! where civilised man can relapse as

42 Ibid., 147-48.

43 Slingsby, "The Northern Playground of Europe," *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* 1, no. 1 (1899): 13-28. Slingsby's particular local identity as a Yorkshireman, and his identification with the North of England more generally, in light of his interest in Norway is explored by Readman, "William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914," 1117-19.

44 J.A. Green, "A Holiday Among the Horungtinder," *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* 2, no. 6 (1904-5): 123-33.

45 John R. Campbell, *How to See Norway* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1871), 31. Campbell's travelogue was based on two pieces in the *Alpine Journal*: Campbell, "Travelling in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 4, no. 21 (1868): 1-38 and Campbell, "Excursions in Norway," *The Alpine Journal* 5, no. 30 (1870): 48-62. The latter was reproduced in a Norwegian translation in the DNT yearbook of 1870. I.R. [sic] Campbell, "Skisser fra Norge," *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1870* (Christiania: Albert Cammermeyer, 1870): 68-83.

46 [James A. Lees and Walter J. Clutterbuck], *Three in Norway, by Two of Them* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882).

47 Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 276.

much as seems good for him into his natural state, and retrograde a hundred generations to his primeval condition."[48] This was a striking expression of the British desire to escape to Norway and how, for many, travel through space was also travel through time.

Norwegian publications also supported travel to Jotunheimen. The DNT yearbook featured both practical advice and travel accounts and could be used on the hill. Slingsby wrote of using the "most useful map" in the 1871 yearbook to get to Vettisfoss waterfall in Jotunheimen.[49] Mohn, Slingsby's climbing partner and close friend, wrote numerous articles for the yearbook and also included illustrations, especially lithographs which illustrate particular mountain landscapes.[50] A schoolteacher from Bergen, Mohn published collections of his lithographs, as well as a guidebook to Jotunheimen in 1879.[51] Mohn's lithographs were a crucial visual component in constructing the tourist landscape of Jotunheimen, making it comprehensible and knowable to potential climbers.[52] Mohn's guidebook also shows the attraction of Jotunheimen: by the late 1870s, there was a market for a specific guide to the region. 1879 also saw the first publication of Yngvar Nielsen's *Reisehaandbog over Norge* ["Travel Handbook for Norway"], an extremely popular guidebook to Norway, usually known simply as "Yngvar." Published in twelve editions until Nielsen's death in 1915, the guide included specific volumes for local areas, such as the mountains of eastern Norway, including Jotunheimen.[53] Nielsen also published guides in collaboration with Thomas Bennett, the well-known travel agent who particularly catered for British travellers. Nielsen was chairman of DNT between 1890 and 1908, and the publications of guides follow the pattern of developing infrastructure, be it textual or physical, to further contribute to the project of making Jotunheimen known and accessible.[54]

48 Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 175.

49 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 58.

50 Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet*, 141. See also Christian Drury, "Norwegian Mountain Lithographs: Mapping the Nation and Guiding the Tourist," *NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment*, February 2023 https://niche-canada.org/2023/02/09/norwegian-mountain-lithographs-mapping-the-nation-and-guiding-the-tourist/.

51 Emanuel Mohn, *Jotunheimen* (Christiania: Chr. Tønsbergs Forlag, 1879).

52 Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet*, 158.

53 Ibid., 179.

54 Nielsen was also the head of the University of Oslo's Ethnographic Museum and his work on knowing the nation extended to population statistics. His work was also part of a project of excluding Sámi from the Norwegian nation and he was known for his views on Sámi inferiority and rejections of Sámi claims to land. See Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet*, 191 and Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race: Physical Anthropology in Norway, 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2014), 77.

## Local Involvement in the Construction of Jotunheimen

Yet, the construction of Jotunheimen as a tourist region would not have been possible without the contributions of local people in the region, particularly when it came to constructing infrastructure and guiding visitors. Slingsby was notable for climbing with local guides, mainly local men who were familiar with the region, if not with all the techniques required for high-level mountaineering. These guides, such as Torgeir Sulheim, Ola Berge and Knut Lykken, were central to constructing infrastructure in the region, as well as helping with making ascents. Several cabins were built by Sulheim, a local farmer, or adapted from existing huts used by local herders when grazing livestock.[55] This was part of the general shift to Jotunheimen becoming part of a wider tourist economy. DNT opened a number of cabins in the region, with Gjendebu being the first official DNT cabin in Jotunheimen in 1872.[56] This was followed by others such as Spiterstulen, which gave access to Galdhøpiggen and Glittertinden. Opened in 1881, Slingsby wrote that Spiterstulen was "a great boon for mountaineers."[57] A cabin, Skagastølsbu or "Hytta på Bandet" ("the cabin on the band"), was also opened below Storen in 1890 by Sulheim.[58] New hotels were also founded, such as Turtagrø, which opened in 1888 and was run by Berge, another mountain guide.

Turtagrø was soon recognised as a centre of mountaineering in the area, giving access to the Hurrungane area of Jotunheimen, which includes Storen. Slingsby noted its busyness, seeing this as a sign of the development of mountaineering in Norway by 1900. It had become a "famous resort for mountaineers" by then, with a rich culture of evening entertainment and an international clientele.[59] Berge also climbed as a guide with mountaineers, including Green and Slingsby. Another climbing centre was the Røisheim hotel, from which the guide Ole Røisheim led ascents of Galdhøppigen.[60] The development of accommodation for mountaineers–both hotels in the valleys and cabins higher up–was part of a wider shift in the development of tourist infrastructure in Norway. Before the 1860s, private homes and vicarages were often used by travellers.[61] However, with increasing numbers

55 Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet*, 134-35.
56 Ibid.
57 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 68.
58 Slagstad, *Da Fjellet Ble Dannet*, 134.
59 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 203.
60 Ibid., 64.
61 Bjarne Rogan, "From a Haven for Travellers to a Boarding House for Tourists: The Vicarage in the History of Travelling and Hospitality in Norway," in *The Discovery of Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia*, ed. Marie Wells (London: Norvik Press, 2008): 83-96.

of tourists arriving, new hotels were built to accommodate and meet the expectations of visitors.

This infrastructure combined with the networks of publication and recommendation that developed. Publications like the *Alpine Journal* recommended locations to stay, as well as guides–Røisheim and Sulheim are specifically mentioned by Slingsby, for example.[62] Wilson chose to seek out Sulheim, Johannes Vigdal and Lars Jensen as well-known guides when he visited Jotunheimen, at least partly on Slingsby's recommendation. He then reviewed the guides himself, writing: "therefore, I say, take Vigdal by all means; he will be invaluable unless you can speak Norsk, and he will be able to tell you what has been done and what has not, and still you will get your practice in climbing without guides."[63] Well-known guides featured beyond specialist publications for mountaineers. The eighth edition of *Cook's Handbook to Norway* (1911), for example, mentioned Røisheim and Knut Vole, who established Juvasshytta below Galdhøppigen in 1884, by name.[64]

The cabins built by DNT were also frequently praised by climbers. Slingsby was glowing in his praise for them, if not for some of the mountaineers who followed him. In the *YRCJ*, he wrote:

> within a stone's-throw of some of the most uninviting sæters where, years ago, we were glad enough to crave the boon of a night's hospitality, luxurious log-built and boarded-floored Tourist Club [DNT] huts, to all intents and purposes small inns, have been erected, and the climber of to-day who–this is between ourselves–does not show any startling originality in making his very numerous ascents, can climb every peak and cross every fine glacier-pass in Jotunheim without either sleeping in a sæter, a tent, or at a bivouac.[65]

The benefits of the new cabins for accessing the mountains were clear, as was the improved comfort compared to the more Spartan conditions mountaineers experienced in the 1870s and earlier.

Slingsby continued to promote Jotunheimen into the twentieth century. In 1920, writing on Norway in an anthology of mountaineering advice edited by his son-in-law, Geoffrey Winthrop Young, he noted that "comfort-

62 Slingsby, "Brief Notes on a Campaign in Norway," 268.
63 Claude Wilson, "Climbing in Norway," 150.
64 *Cook's Handbook to Norway and Denmark with Iceland and Spitsbergen with Maps, Plans and Vocabulary. Eighth Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (London: Thos. Cook and Son, 1911), 197.
65 Slingsby, "The Northern Playground of Europe," 19-20.

able inns and mountain huts are to be found here, there and everywhere" in the region.[66] Other British travellers also praised DNT's infrastructure. A.F. Mockler-Ferryman wrote that "this excellent institution every traveller in Norway who leaves the beaten track must at one time or another be indebted, and it is not too much to say that without the Norske Turistforening more than half Norway would be a sealed book."[67] He added that "in every inaccessible place where anyone is ever likely to travel it has erected snug little huts" and recommended membership of DNT to his readers.[68] Mockler-Ferryman also noted that mountaineering was "one of the most popular forms of recreation" amongst Norwegians.[69] DNT had made life "smoother for the adventurer" with its huts and paths, for Norwegians and foreigners.[70] Another British mountaineer, E.C. Oppenheim, regarded DNT membership as "very important" and himself took advantage of the "very useful privileges" for access and accommodation.[71] The British artist Alfred Heaton Cooper noted in his guide to Norway that Jotunheimen had "been considerably opened out to travellers in recent years by the efforts of the Norwegian Tourist Club," praising the accommodation, paths, bridges and guides provided by DNT.[72] He also recommended membership, which "ensures them certain privileges, and preference of accommodation over all other travellers who are not members."[73] British travellers recognised the extent to which DNT infrastructure made travel to Jotunheimen possible. They were clear in their praise for the accessibility of the region, as well as the increased comfort of their accommodation. While many travellers were seeking to escape from the modern in Norway, searching for forms of the past, the development of Jotunheimen as a region suited them, even if something was lost in the process. Moreover, the publication of this praise, in Britain and in Norway, reinforced the popularity and development of the region, encouraging travel and directing like-minded mountaineers towards certain locations and people.

66 Slingsby, "The Mountains of Norway," in Geoffrey Winthrop Young, *Mountain Craft* (New York, NY: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1920), 540.
67 A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman's Land: Travel, Sport, and Folk-lore in the Hardanger Fjord and Fjeld* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1896), 64.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 278.
70 Ibid., 217.
71 E.C. Oppenheim, *New Climbs in Norway: An Account of Some Ascents in the Sondmore District* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 11-12.
72 Alfred Heaton Cooper, *The Norwegian Fjords, Painted and Described* (London: A. & C. Black, 1907), 111.
73 Ibid., 112.

Alongside cabins, paths were also an important development that DNT supported and constructed. Slingsby, after climbing in the Hurrungane, noted in the DNT yearbook how a "new path constructed by Sulheim for the Turist-Forening [...] will prove a boon for all who tread these wilds."[74] Recent historiography, however, has called for scholars to rethink histories of travel, and DNT specifically, in a way that pays attention to what came before the organisation. Karen Lykke Syse has noted that travel writing, while a useful source, has a tendency to present Norwegian rural landscapes simply as wilderness, overlooking local patterns of life, as well as what DNT constructed.[75] By reading against the grain, historians can instead focus on the lives of local people and the non-human actors also present. Syse emphasises how many of the paths used and shelters built were based on the existing networks of movement and shelter used in transhumance. For her, DNT was able to "expand, label, formalise and take ownership of a material movement heritage that habit had already created."[76] This is vital to consider when thinking about the work of DNT to make Jotunheimen accessible: how the perspectives of the outsider, both Norwegian and foreign, are prioritised and how the existing practices of local people are overlooked or reduced to precursors of development. Re-emphasising the involvement of local people is vital, particularly the role of figures like Sulheim in making the leisure landscape, but also examining the role of those further outside of the tourist economy and society.

Ellen Rees has noted that in the nineteenth century, the Norwegian nation was found not in nature itself but in the cabin.[77] Cabins, for Rees, are an example of what Michel Foucault called a heterotopia, a space where cultural identities and meanings are particularly visible and open to formation.[78] Rees sees *hytter* as "in step with a nationally-inflected mythos" and part of a nostalgic imagination of the past, particularly apparent in literature.[79] Moreover, their place in the national imaginary has shifted through

74 Slingsby, "Round the Horungtinder in Winter," in *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1880* (Christiania: Albert Cammermeyer, 1880), 89.

75 Karen Lykke Syse, "Hefting the Land: A Locative Heritage of Hooves and Feet," in *Pathways: Exploring the Routes of a Movement Heritage*, eds. Daniel Svensson, Katarina Saltzman, and Sverker Sörlin (Winwick: White Horse Press, 2022), 99-101.

76 Ibid., 106.

77 Ellen Rees, "Cabins and National Identity in Norwegian Literature," in *Imagining Spaces and Places*, ed. Saija Isomaa, Pirjo Lyytikäinen, Kirsi Saarikangas, and Renja Suominen-Kokkonen (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 127.

78 Ibid., 125-26. The term was developed by Foucault in Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-27.

79 Ibid, 127.

changes in use and type.[80] This change was particularly notable in the shift from the agricultural uses of the more rudimentary *seter* to the tourist cabin or *hytte*.[81] Many of the cabins built by Sulheim and others, supported by DNT, were originally shelters used in agricultural life, particularly by the dairymaids who often stayed in them. Known as *seter jenter* (*seter* girls), these women played an important part in the romanticisation of the place and lifestyle. The change from *seter* to *hytter* was observed by Slingsby and others. Slingsby romanticised *seter* life as part of the appeal of Norway on his early trips, where the sense of adventure and wilderness was connected to material hardship. Slingsby's relationship to Norway, where he supported DNT and the development of tourist infrastructure while also romanticising his past visits, is summed up in his celebration of *seter* life, as well as his praise for the new cabins of DNT. The *seter jente* was a key figure in the transition from the *seter* to the *hytte*. Slingsby wrote that "in spite of the very hard rough life which the 'saeter jenter' necessarily have to lead, their huts are cleaner and more inviting than their equivalents, presided over by the men in the Alps."[82]

As Kathryn Walchester has noted, the *seter* had an important place in romanticised images of Norway, which focused on the sense of difference from modern Britain.[83] While some travellers did focus on the poverty and basic conditions of *seter* life, they still formed an important part of a British imaginary which saw Norway as prelapsarian and appealingly pre-industrial, particularly in the middle of the nineteenth century.[84] The construction of the *hytter* by DNT, however, changed this understanding of cabin space. As Rees notes, DNT also drew on the masculine heroism of Norwegian national figures like the polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen at the end of the nineteenth century to create mountain spaces coded as masculine, unlike the previously feminine connotations of the *seter* with its *jente*.[85] While the focus was still on being in nature, the *hytte* was now a place of survival, even if increasingly comfortable, and a space that allowed the traveller to be in the region. Local people were increasingly sidelined, even as they worked

80 Ellen Rees, *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature: Negotiating Place and Identity* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014).
81 Rees suggests "shieling" as the closest English translation of *seter*, with "cabin" the usual English translation of *hytte*.
82 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 48.
83 Kathryn Walchester, *Gamle Norge and Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Norway* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 42-43.
84 Ibid.
85 Rees, *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature*, 15.

to construct these cabins, and the traditional places of travel and shelter provided the framework for the development of tourist infrastructure. The British traveller or bourgeois urban Norwegian could now experience the 'authentic' Norwegian landscape in increased comfort and with apparently less mediation from the local people, even as their work to build up and guide was occluded.

While guides were still praised and recommended, Slingsby also hinted that not all relationships with local people in Jotunheimen were as wholesome as his texts otherwise suggest. When staying at the cabin Tvindehougen (now Torfinnsbu), next to Tyin lake, he noted that the man in charge, named only as Gulbrand, had sold a powder horn to a British traveller, which Gulbrand had forged to appear significantly older than it was.[86] Locals could use their knowledge–or travellers' lack of it–for their own ends. As Gro Ween and Simone Abram have written, there was a tension between outsiders' views of Jotunheimen and other Norwegian mountain regions as untouched wilderness and the reality of land use by local people.[87] A view of rural Norway that saw it as the authentic version of the nation tended to overlook local people or see them as simply part of the scenery.[88] Even the naming of Jotunheimen was part of this process: for Ween and Abram, "Vinje willingly ignored what he knew was rural people's use and shaping of the nature that the urban elite defined as high mountain wilderness."[89] Jotunheimen as a national space did not, therefore, belong to local people, even as their lives and labour played important roles in the construction of the recreational landscape.

## Conclusion

Emphasising two perspectives–the local and the transnational–provides alternative perspectives on Jotunheimen as a tourist landscape at the end of the nineteenth century. Considering the local recentres the efforts of guides like Sulheim, who constructed cabins and led mountaineering trips, and questions who belonged in national landscapes. Moreover, the transnational perspective is important in emphasising that national landscapes received visitors from outside the nation. Moreover, these visitors, particularly mountaineers like Slingsby, were active in the construction of travel infrastructure and forming textual networks which informed and guided

86 Slingsby, *Norway: The Northern Playground*, 135-36.
87 Ween and Abram, "The Norwegian Trekking Association," 160-61.
88 Ibid., 159.
89 Ibid., 160.

travel to the region. The nation-building work of DNT would not have been possible without these transnational connections. Jotunheimen has kept its symbolic importance, with mountains like Galdhøppigen featuring in the placards and campaigns run by DNT, and the late-nineteenth-century construction of a tourist landscape has a legacy into the present. DNT is still a prominent organisation in Norway, with around 300,000 members. It still maintains huts, roads, and other infrastructure which Norwegians and foreign tourists use to access rural areas of Norway. In many ways, it also continues to be a project of nation-building.[90] Jotunheimen is therefore a multiple region: a national symbol, developed transnationally and locally. It retains specific national meanings as a paradigmatic area of Norwegian wilderness, but its construction on a local level complicates its simple role of meaning-rich national space. Jotunheimen has been contested. Moreover, its place is not simply national; not only has it long attracted visitors from outside Norway, but, through the work of organisations like DNT and the dissemination of writing about the region, foreign travellers have made significant contributions to the idea of Jotunheimen as a wild but networked space.

Crucial to understanding the appeal of Jotunheimen in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as well as the change in the nature of the region, is the tension around accessibility. For visitors, the draw of the region was escape from the urban and industrial, in search of an authentic past, either closer to ideas of the Norwegian nation or to an imagined British past. Yet to do so meant the construction of modern infrastructure, and networks of information and transport that allowed for travel to be smooth and comfortable. Seeing wilderness required existing ways of being in mountain space to be overwritten and proclaimed anew. This transnational co-creation of a region also offers an insight into alternative ways of thinking about national histories, from Norwegian nationalism to British mountaineering. Moreover, we can think about how the construction of place as something produced by the co-operation of different groups and organisations. Organisations and journeys that look simply national were also often constructed through transnational networks, cooperation, and imaginings. Jotunheimen's place in different imaginaries remains intriguing.

90 Ibid., 168. See also, Hege Westskog, Tor H. Aase and Iris Leikanger, "The Norwegian Trekking Association: Conditions for Its Continued Existence with New Tourism Patterns," *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 21, no. 3 (2021): 341-59.

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