Utopia of the North
Scandinavia's Presence at the Educational Exhibition in London, July 1854

Merethe Roos
University of South-Eastern Norway

Abstract
This article sheds light upon the Norwegian and Swedish contributions at the Educational Exhibition in London in 1854 and how the exhibits from these countries were covered in the British contemporary press. The article suggests that the strongly positive reaction in the British press should be viewed in the light of a rising interest in Scandinavia as a tourist destination which emerged in the British Society from the mid-nineteenth century. This interest in Scandinavia as a tourist destination replaced a fascination for the North as a wild, remote and untouched location.

Keywords
educational exhibition, schools, Scandinavia, press, tourism

In this article, I will analyse the press reports in British newspapers covering the Norwegian and Swedish contributions at the educational exhibition in London in 1854. I will argue that these reports can be seen in the light of a rising interest in the Scandinavian countries as a tourist destination, characteristic for Great Britain at that time. This interest pertained particularly to Norway and Sweden; Denmark was more densely populated and less characterised by a wild and untouched nature. Thus Denmark did not meet the main preconditions for this recently awakened interest in the North.

During the summer months of 1854, the British Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce arranged an international educational exhibition at St. Martin's Hall in London. The exhibit followed a long tradition of hosting and arranging exhibitions designed to stimulate innovation and design while directing attention to important societal issues. This was a practice that had recently reached a milestone with the internationally acclaimed Great International Exhibition of 1851 (Auerbach 1999). This exhibition, lasting from 1 May to 15 October that year, attracted six million visitors in total, and aimed to demonstrate Britain's role as an industrial leader (Kishlansky, Geary and O'Brien 2007).

The purpose of the educational exhibition was to increase public interest in education and to showcase pedagogical approaches from around the world. The exhibition attracted throngs of international attendees along with the many British visitors from London and beyond. Participants in the exhibition included lecturers of international renown such as the American educationalist Henry Barnard (1811–1900) and the German pedagogue Heinrich Hoffmann (1809–1894). Barnard was known as an important leader in improving the US educational system. Heinrich Hoffmann, on the other hand, counted among Friedrich Fröbel's (1782–1852) acquaintances and was crucial in promoting the kindergarten as a new ideal of education.

The intense interest in education in mid-nineteenth-century Britain developed out of efforts at improving education during the reign of Queen Victoria (West 1975). The need for a well-educated and well-trained population resulted from Britain's economic expansion during a time of intense growth in industry and trade (Kashti 1998: 50). While

throughout the century British politicians, religious leaders and writers praised the expansion of educational opportunities to include the lower social classes and women (Cordner 2016: 1), others cast a critical light upon the shortcomings of schooling in England (e.g. Charles Dickens in *Hard Times*, published in serial form in 1854). Charles Dickens' critics addressed a real problem: elementary schooling in England was not compulsory before 1870. Earlier reforms related to different kinds of schools, and provisions were made either by voluntary societies or by private initiatives. Thus, 1850s England saw an educational proto-system, which came to be developed into a fully-fledged educational system only several decades later (Stephens 1999). In this regard, England differed remarkably from Scotland, which had had an organised school system ever since the late seventeenth century.

Throughout the century, educational societies all over Britain worked eagerly to improve education for future generations. The British Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (hereafter: The Society of the Arts), which held the exhibition at St. Martin's Hall, saw its role as promoting education, a mission it had embarked upon, as it boasted in the opening section of the exhibition catalogue, even before the existence of educational societies. The Society of the Arts was founded in 1754, and aimed to enrich social progress through the exchange of ideas. Besides being committed to education, they sought innovation in agriculture, manufacture, chemistry, mechanics, polite arts, colonies, and trade. In celebration of its one hundredth session, the Society of the Arts launched the exhibition, which would last from the beginning of July to the end of August 1854, to call attention to the need for improvements and progressive approaches in education and the arts in the light of changes in manufacturing and commerce. The exhibits were conceived as providing a complete and practical guide to educational reform, with contributors including the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other countries. Weekly editions of the *Journal of the Society of the Arts* presented the Society's preparations for the exhibition and offered weekly updates on the events, including summaries of the lectures held by the invited speakers.

Other periodicals and newspapers, including the daily and weekly British press, covered the exhibition at St. Martin's Hall extensively. Notably, some contemporary British newspapers singled out the Norwegian and Swedish presence at the exhibition as outstanding compared to contributions by other countries. While it is possible that some journalists found the Scandinavian delegation's contributions remarkable, this in itself may not offer sufficient proof of the superiority of Scandinavian ideas on education at the time. As the catalogue and reports from newspapers and weekly journals attest, other countries – including Britain – gave presentations that must have been equally comprehensive, if not more so, and in addition more impressive. In this article, I will argue that the interest in Scandinavia in general and Norway and Sweden in particular was coloured by renewed interest in the North in the mid-1800s. Scandinavia had been attracting travellers from Great Britain since the turn of the eighteenth century, and travel reports and fictional narratives portrayed Scandinavia – and particularly Norway and Sweden – as an exotic place. The notion of Ultima Thule, the northernmost boundary of the world, sparked the imaginations of privileged Britons who had the spending power to go to the North (Kassis 2015: 13–14). As previous research has shown, interest in the Scandinavian peninsula gained a new impetus around 1850, caused to some extent by the growth of the British tourist industry (Fjågesund and Symes 2003: 67; Fjågesund 2014: 383). The North, i.e. the Scandinavian countries, began to be seen as a tourist destination rather than as a wild, remote and untouched location. Ultima Thule came to take on a new role: it embodied the dreams and visions of a new generation

The following three parts of this article will address the interest and appeal associated with the Scandinavian presentations at the London international educational exhibition. By relating this interest to the recent attention directed towards the Scandinavian countries, and particularly Norway and Sweden, as tourist destinations, the article clearly demonstrates how aspects of culture are dependent upon one another: An increased focus on Norway and Sweden in travel magazines created a general enthusiasm for Norwegian and Swedish culture.

After summarizing in the first section of my article how the Norwegian and Swedish exhibits were covered in the contemporary British press, and discussing how the reports in the British press compare with the situation of education in Scandinavia, I will focus in the second part on the efforts by Norwegian and Swedish exhibitors to prepare for the event. In the third part, I offer an explanation for the strongly positive reactions of visitors to Scandinavia's contributions to the exhibition. I will also argue that the relatively weak attention paid to the Danish contributions at the exhibition reflects a general lack of interest in Denmark as a tourist destination, related to the geopolitical position of Denmark as well as Denmark's participation in the Napoleonic wars.

The Norwegian and Swedish Exhibitions in London: Press Reactions

On 12 August 1854 the London-based *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* devoted a column to the Norwegian and Swedish exhibitions in the British capital. The column opens with the following striking remarks:

> Why it is that a region so far north and out of the world as Scandinavia, should be better represented at this exhibition than any other Country, we cannot say; but such certainly seems to be the case, and Norway and Sweden are well worth attention at this reunion of Nations (*Chambers's Journal* 12/08/1854)

The contributions from Norway and Sweden, the piece points out, include, for example, drawings of schoolhouses and schoolrooms, ground plans for school buildings, curricula, lists of subjects being taught, reports and records of various schools and collections of apparatuses used for teaching natural history. The author concludes his opening section on Sweden and Norway's presence at the exhibit with these words:

> … it takes us at once into boyhood and girlhood of these Nordic countries; it shews us what Young Scandinavia is about, and

> how it learns, and how it is taught. A detailed examination is in many ways curious, and worth the time it takes, even if it were merely to ascertain whether school children fill up their books in Sweden as they do in England (*Chambers's Journal* 12/08/1854).

After a lesson in Scandinavian pronunciation aimed at the journal's British audience, accompanied by examples from the Norwegian and the Swedish languages and their English translations, the author turns to the priorities of Norwegian and Swedish schools:

> Without professing to have a taste in needle-works, we may yet like to look at specimens of 'plain work' from the 'Trondhjems Realskole', especially the shirt wristband done in the 'Pigeskolens Begynderklasse' (the beginners' class in the girls' school; *Chambers's Journal* 12/08/1854).

The writer of this column also describes some of the exhibited articles as interesting without stating why they are particularly worthy of attention. One example is a Swedish writing frame for the blind that is part of the exhibit. The author describes its appearance and function in detail even though, as he admits, it is nearly identical to the kind of frame used for the education of the blind in England:

> There is, in the Machine, a sheet of paper, which purports to have been written by some poor little Swedish blind boy or girl, and although the copy or sentence, that 'Europa är den mest bildade verldsdal,' simply corresponds with our own home-copies respecting the superior civilised condition of Europe, it is yet interesting as coming from the pen of a Swedish *aveugle* (*Chambers's Journal* 12/08/1854).

The question of why the author finds it interesting that a Swedish child wrote this is never answered.

In addition to the report in *Chambers's Journal*, which was published in a shortened version in *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*

a couple of months later, other British periodicals and newspapers covering the exhibition in London also shed a favourable light on Sweden and Norway. *The Ragged School Union Magazine* singled out the artworks sent by the Swedish delegation as 'a few, but of the right sort' (*The Ragged School Union Magazine*, January 1855). Underlining the middle school in Stockholm as an example of architectural elevation, these press responses to the exhibition are filled with expressions of regret that more was not included in the Swedish collections. Interestingly, they comment on the physical placement of the Norwegian exhibition of what they mention as 'the philosophical apparatus'; these so-called philosophical apparatuses are similar to those used in Britain, and their position in close proximity to the British exhibition and that of the foreign school society will make it easy to compare. This may in turn shed a negative light on the British exhibition. It is not, however, explained what is meant with the expression 'the philosophical apparatus'. According to the contemporary weekly journal *The Athenaeum*, Norway's exhibit presenting insects, reptiles and fishes was decidedly the best one in the exhibition. Other papers, like the *Morning Post* and *Liverpool Mercury*, mention the Scandinavian countries as principal exhibitors without going into detail as regards the concrete content of their contributions. Nevertheless, the reader is given an impression of Norway and Sweden as outstanding exhibitors representing exemplary countries with well-developed educational systems and good schools, well worthy of closer attention.

It is remarkable that the writers in the British press linked the Swedish and Norwegian contributions so closely together. Norway and Sweden had been a dual monarchy since 1814, and the relation between the countries varied in tension. Even if the mid-nineteenth century was a period characterised by less tension than arose later, it seemed to be important for Norwegian newspapers and periodicals to underline the fact that the Norwegian and Swedish contributions were physically separate at the exhibition. In the third edition of the periodical *Den Norske Folkeskole* (*The Norwegian Folk School*), the writer underlined that fact. According to the writer, this emphasised Norway's independence:

> Foreløpig bemærkes, at de Mænd, der i den Anledning sendtes til London, baade fik en heldig Plads for de norske Sager (omtrent midt i den store Sal), og fik ordnet disse saaledes, at det maatte vise sig, de ikke hørte under Sverrig – Noget Udlændingen ialmindelighed tror om os. Vi har også med Glæde erfaret, at en af hine Mænd fik anledning til for selve Prinds Albert at fremhæve, at endel norske Sager, der vagte Opsigt, ikke var svenske men ene og alene norske. (*Den norske Folkeskole*, 3rd ed. 1853–1854: 157)
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> So far it can be noted that those men, who were sent to London on this occation, both were given a favourable place for the Norwegian objects (around the middle of the great hall), and these were arranged in such a way that it could be proved that they did not belong among the Swedish contributions – something the foreigner normally thinks about us. We have also learnt to our satisfaction that one of these men was given the opportunity to underline the fact that some Norwegian objects which drew attention were not Swedish but solely Norwegian (my translation).

In comparison, the Danish exhibit is given less attention. Most of the journals do not mention it at all. In *Chambers's Journal*, which presented the most extensive report on Norway and Sweden, it merits only a short paragraph. The anonymous writer comments that it consists of a 'few written specimens', apparently intended as examples of school penmanship that reflect sound pedagogical practices. These are followed by a few verses written by what they mention as giants of the arts and sciences such as Ørsted, Schwanthaler and Öehlenschläger. The writer praised the spirit of the Danish collection, but other journals, such as the *Ragged School Magazine*, contented themselves with merely mentioning it.

The interest directed towards the Norwegian and Swedish contributions as well as the attention reflected in the British newspapers, do not reflect the actual situation with regard to education in these countries. In Norway, schooling had been compulsory for children in the

provinces aged between 7 and 12 since 1739, but the school subjects were limited to Christian education only, and the pupils were expected to learn Erik Pontoppidan's explanation of Martin Luther's catechism by heart. Moreover, teaching took place in ambulatory schools, and ambulatory teachers travelled around between farms in their district. The Norwegian school system became regulated with the school act in 1860. This law included an extended period of education as well as the establishment of permanent schoolhouses instead of ambulatory schools. With this law, secular subjects, such as history, geography and natural science became compulsory for all students. Sweden, on the other hand, adopted a new school act in 1842 (Folkskolestadgan). This law defined a decentralised school system based on the 2300 school districts in the country. However, even if this school act resulted in a remarkable increase in the number of teachers, and even if the law implied an obligation to establish schools within each church parish, the school law created very dissimilar conditions. By giving each parish the economic responsibility for the schools in its district, the law caused massive differences in the possibilities for schooling in Sweden; students living in rich areas were given better provision than those living in poor areas. Neither did the law make it compulsory for children to attend school.

In this regard, it is worth noticing that Denmark had a well-developed educational system at the time of the exhibition in London. As the first country in the world, Denmark instituted compulsory schooling for all children as early as 1814. Two different laws regulated the schools in the provinces and in the cities. The capital, Copenhagen, had separate regulations. The laws gave detailed instructions for how schools should be organised and operated. Education in religion, writing, reading, and arithmetic became mandatory, and the schoolbooks included readers aimed at strengthening national identity, as well as translations of contemporary German readers. The 1814 law reflected the philanthropic ideas of the early nineteenth century: children should be raised to become good and honourable citizens, in order to contribute to society. Thus, if the attention demonstrated in the British papers was related to the development of the school systems in

the Scandinavian countries, the Danish contribution should have been singled out rather than the Norwegian and Swedish contributions.

The Norwegian and Swedish Delegates, Their Preparations and Their Exhibitions

Prior to the exhibition in London, the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested that the national councils of education should encourage other countries to participate. Norway and Sweden decided to send two prominent delegates to London, both of them well known in their own countries. Hartvig Nissen (1815–1874) represented Norway. Nissen had worked as an educational councillor for the Norwegian Council of Church and Education since 1852 and was a founder of successful private schools in the capital, Christiania. In the early 1850s he also founded a Society for Public Enlightenment in Christiania, through which he actively worked to better the level of education in the population at large. Per Adam Siljeström (1815–1892), representing Sweden, worked as a teacher at the New Elementary School in Stockholm, which was established in 1828 as a public school designed to put into practice new educational ideas. Siljeström also taught physics at Uppsala University and was the editor of several periodicals as well as a frequent guest in various societies for the advancement of knowledge in Stockholm.

Nissen and Siljeström had similar backgrounds: both were educational reformers, both were frequent contributors in the public sphere in their homelands and both of them had travelled abroad to study educational methods used in other countries. Reports of Siljeström's travels to the US (1849–1850) and Nissen's visit to Scotland (1852) were published once they returned to their home countries. According to a letter from Nissen to his wife, Lena, written during his stay in the British capital, Nissen and Siljeström met personally for the first time during the exhibition in London, but it is known that they were in contact with each other before that (Roos 2019). In addition to Nissen and Siljeström, Norway and Sweden sent unofficial representatives to the exhibition as well. Norway was represented by the theologian Thomas Krag and Michael Schmidt, the director of a well-known private

school in Bergen. Carl Heinemann, rector of the mercantile academy in Gothenburg, represented Sweden.

As in Great Britain, in Scandinavia educational methods and reform were subjects of considerable debate in the mid-nineteenth century. Politicians and private groups alike sought means of improving schools, and as a result, all of the Scandinavian countries passed new school acts and tried to adapt to the needs of changing, increasingly literate societies. As previously mentioned, Sweden ratified a new school act for elementary schools in 1842; six years later Norway adopted new regulations for elementary schools in cities. In Norway, school conditions had been remarkably poorer in the cities than in the provinces, but the 1848 regulation brought greater equality of provision. In both countries, teachers increasingly organized for better conditions for themselves and for schools and education overall (Hovland 1997; Bertilsson 2015; Hagemann 1992). In both countries private initiatives, such as societies for public enlightenment, worked with the aim of securing education for generations to come and increasing the level of literacy among the lower social classes. But despite these efforts, politicians and the public sphere throughout Scandinavia saw considerable room for improvement and perceived a need to catch up with other countries in the area of school reform. Both Nissen and Siljeström underlined this in the books mentioned above and in public remarks. For instance, at a meeting of the Norwegian Society for Public Enlightenment, held in Christiania in April 1855, the economist Torkel Aschehoug complained that even the Sandwich Islands, which only 40 years ago had an exclusively pagan population, could boast of having better schools than the Norwegian capital (Roos 2016: 74). Aschehoug obviously saw schools and education as a distinguishing mark of a Christian society, and given the strong Lutheran character of Norway, a well-developed school system could accordingly be expected.

We know a great deal about the efforts that Norway put into the exhibition. We can follow the preparations in articles printed in Norwegian newspapers in May and June 1854, all of them signed by Hartvig Nissen. These articles confirm that Nissen reached out to readers for materials to take along to London. The first of these articles is a call

for contributions from Norwegian schools, printed in the Christiania-based *Morgenbladet* on 11 May 1854. This article informs readers about the approaching event and encourages teachers, principals, school commissions and publishing companies to send items for the Norwegian stand. Nissen was aware of possible objections related to the shortcomings of Norwegian schools and the opinion that Norway had nothing to contribute, but these were positions he rejected: he was convinced that other countries could learn from Norway's educational system.

In an article printed in *Morgenbladet* a few weeks later, on 23 May, Nissen encouraged his readers to send in additional contributions. While he had received a number of items, the organizers in London required additional educational books and maps. In the same article, he referred to a letter received from his Swedish colleague P. A. Siljeström with additional information about the exhibition. This letter, originally printed in the Swedish newspaper *Stockholmsposten*, includes a programme for the exhibition. Quoting the program from the Swedish paper verbatim, Nissen exhorts his readers to send in 'boxes and packages' marked with 'School Exhibition in London' to the 'Ministry for the Church' in Christiania. Clearly his audience answered the call because an article in another Norwegian newspaper, published in Trondheim, on 23 May, announced that the schools in Trondheim had responded to Nissen's requests, sending

> […] Stilebøger, Tegnebøger, Skrivebøger, Perspektivistiske Tegninger og Grundris af Classeværelser, Prøver af Haandarbeider, samt en Daguerrotypi af hver af de to Skolebygninger, dessuden Timetabeller, Oversigt over Fagfordelingen og andre Efterretninger om Skolens Indretning (*Throndhjems borgerlige Realskoles alene priviligerede Adressecontoirs-Efterretninger* 23 May 1854).
>
> ([…] exercise books, drawing books, writing books, perspective drawings and drawings of classrooms, samples of handicraft as well as a daguerreotype of each of the two school buildings, in addition to timetables, an overview of different school subjects

> as well as other reports regarding how the school was organized (my translation).

Commoners in Norway could read about the exhibition in the newspapers as well as in the periodical *Den norske Folkeskole*, in articles referring to the educational catalogue from London (*Den norske Folkeskole*, 3 ed. 1854/1855).

P. A. Siljeström, for his part, delivered a report to the Swedish government after returning from London to Stockholm. This report was also printed in the *Journal of the Society of the Arts* (11 November 1854). Here he boasted of having 'succeeded in bringing together a quantity of exhibitional articles, sufficient to fill up eleven large packing cases, exclusive of three separate articles of greater dimension'. He admits that the Swedish exhibit was 'somewhat desultory', given the very short time allotted to its preparation, but he nevertheless claims that the Swedish collection provided enough material to throw light upon the nature of Swedish educational institutions. The number of different items was impressive, as was their variety. Among other things, the exhibition included some school maps of Scandinavia as well as a celestial globe ('an astronomic globe by Chaplain Janzon') which had been awarded a medal by the Swedish government. Other items were major points of interest as well: a model of Swedish school gymnastics; a psalmodicon, believed to have been the invention of the Swedish pastor Johan Dillner (1785–1762); some maps printed on wood used in the New Elementary School; a couple of 'contrivances employed in the education of the deaf and dumb and the blind'; and equipment used in Stockholm's schools 'for suspending diagrams at lectures'. Siljeström also took the work of schoolchildren with him to the exhibit:

> I must particularly mention a portfolio containing the schoolwork for a year of a pupil of the New Elementary School, being well suited to give an insight into the state and extent of linguistic studies at our elementary establishments for education. The same school has also sent over an herbarium, comprising the quantity of plants ordinarily gathered by a pupil during his school

> years, proving, in a conspicuous manner, the comparatively important part which botany plays among the several branches of natural science at the Swedish elementary school (*Journal of the Society of the Arts*, 11 November 1854).

Siljeström ended his article by informing his audience that many of the books that were sent to London would remain there in the library of the local Swedish congregation, thus providing a good resource for sailors, seamen and others visiting the British capital and in search of leisure activities.

Utopia of the North – A Renewed Interest in the Scandinavian Peninsula

Even though the abovementioned reports single out the exhibitions from Sweden and Norway as noteworthy contributions to the London exhibition, there is nothing to indicate that Scandinavia stood out relative to the other countries represented at the exposition. According to the key lecturer Henry Barnard, the exhibit drew contributors from all over the world, including France, Belgium, Holland, Bavaria, Saxony, Russia, Hanover, Austria, and the United States (*The Connecticut Common School Journal and Annals of Education*, November 1854). In an article in the same journal, Barnard noted that the items displayed on the walls and tables occupied nearly the entire space of St. Martin's Hall, which was one of the largest public buildings in London. According to the catalogue, the US was a large contributor, and the American exhibits take up ten pages of directory listings. The section on Norway is comparatively small (three pages); Sweden has no directory listings at all. The American contribution is also noted in the press, and the *London Chronicle* mentions the American contribution as one of the largest (*The Connecticut Common School Journal and Annals of Education*, November 1854). The Americans had arranged a well-organized show, with items categorized under the rubrics of algebra, analysers, arithmetic, astronomy, atlases, book-keeping, composition, definers, dictionaries, drawings, elocution, expositors, etymology, gazetteers, geography, geometry, globes, grammars,

histories, music, readers and miscellaneous. They had brought a huge collection of samples from elementary schoolchildren's work as well.

Why, then, did the public demonstrate such a strong interest in the exhibits from the Scandinavian Peninsula? As I mentioned in the introduction, this obvious curiosity about Scandinavia can probably be seen in line with the mid-nineteenth-century European fascination with the North as a tourist destination (see also Carbone's contribution in this issue). It can be claimed that the increased attention directed towards Scandinavia and the shift of focus in Scandinavian tourism created interest transferable to other fields. In their studies on travel literature from the nineteenth century, Peter Fjågesund and Ruth Symes have shown that British interest in the North underwent a considerable development during this time span, particularly after the establishment of British travel agencies such as Bennett's agency in Norway around 1850. This growth in the area's tourist industry is reflected, according to Fjågesund and Symes, in a marked increase in Scandinavian travelogues written by British authors towards the end of the nineteenth century (Fjågesund and Symes 2003: 18). This interest coincides with a shift in focus among those who travelled to Scandinavian countries, as well as a shift in the understanding of the value of travel in general. Travel literature from the late eighteenth century represents the North as a place where one can go to explore and acquire knowledge of otherness, in accordance with a contemporary view of Scandinavia as a territory untouched by the rationalism and utilitarism of the Enlightenment. Some decades later, in contrast, the North was seen as an intriguing alternative to the well-beaten paths of the usual tourist destinations (Davies 2000; Fjågesund and Symes 2003; Fjågesund 2014). Thus, the value of travelling in the late eighteenth century lay in the acquisition of knowledge and culture; one hundred years later, the traveller was expected to be able to enjoy untouched landscapes.

The turn towards a more commercial tourist industry, caused not least by the establishment of British travel agencies in Scandinavia, can be noticed in the periodical press. In contemporary travel magazines, Norway and Sweden were portrayed as tempting destinations. An example can be found in a travelogue in the 1852 edition of *Traveller.*

A New Sporting Magazine. Under the heading 'Sporting in Norway and Sweden', a writer who had obviously visited both countries wrote to the editor offering a piece on salmon-fishing and nature experiences in Scandinavia and giving glowing depictions of salmon rivers such as Namsen in Norway and the river outside Falkenberg in Sweden, the latter not mentioned by name. The writer's remarks also made reference to the excellent opportunities for duck-hunting at Sweden's Lake Vänern and bear-hunting on sledding expeditions from Carlstad (Karlstad) in early February. Reindeer hunting in Norway was excellent and inexpensive: an inn in Steinsier (Steinkjer) charged only half a specie-dollar for bed and board. Sweden, where room and board could be had anywhere outside of large cities for £32 a year or less, proved to be quite affordable. Moreover, geographic proximity and infrastructural improvements had made Scandinavia easily accessible for British travellers: 'A first rate steamer leaves Hull once a fortnight … and goes directly to Christiania', and from there it was not far to the salmon rivers and hunting districts. The writer concludes his remarks with an injunction to the journal's readers: 'What more can be said? *Piscator* [Fisherman], go and try it!' (*Traveller* 1852: 69–70).

The same excitement over Norway and Sweden as tourist destinations informs the writing in the catalogue of the London exhibition. The writer in *Chambers's Journal* singles out Sweden and Norway as worthy of attention despite their remote location. The column's comparisons of Norway and Sweden to England and its close attention to the exhibited material from Scandinavia suggest that even though the exhibits from Scandinavia do not appear to have outdone those of other countries, acute interest in the North sparked a strongly positive reaction to their presence.

The lack of interest in the Danish exhibit may be explained in the context of this recently awakened interest in the North. In his 2015 monography on the representations of the North in Victorian travel literature, Dimitrios Kassis pointed out that Denmark could not be included in an image of the North as a savage world where the inhabitants were forced to take part in an everyday struggle against the forces of nature (Kassis 2015: 236). As Kassis emphasises, with reference to T. K. Derry, Denmark was 'less handicapped by nature

and from early times more fully inhabited than her Scandinavian neighbours' (Kassis 2015: 236). Moreover, Denmark had participated in the Napoleonic wars on the French side and was culturally attached to Germany. Therefore Kassis concludes, 'Denmark was often treated as a "tyrannical" power which did not accord with the overall depiction of the North as a peaceful and quite static zone, alien to the war-like character of the other Western nations, Britain included' (Kassis 2015: 236).

Conclusion

The findings in this article clearly demonstrate that aspects of culture cannot be viewed in isolation. Norway and Sweden assume a particular position in British travel literature in the mid-nineteenth century, related to the new role ascribed to Ultima Thule. This recently awakened interest in Norway and Sweden as tourist destinations creates a general interest in the Norwegian and Swedish contribution at the exhibition in London in the summer months of 1854. This interest does not correspond to the status of the educational systems in Norway and Sweden. Denmark had a much more well-developed school system, but received only limited attention in the British press in 1854. This reflects a contemporary British view of Denmark. Denmark was more densely populated, the country was regarded as having different climate from Norway and Sweden and had a geopolitical connection to the European continent. Consequently, this may have caused a lack of British interest in the Danish contribution to the exhibition.

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