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## Imaging Norway by using the past

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### ABSTRACT

The article analyses how history was used in efforts to portray Norway in the postwar period. The main narratives of Norwegian history played a dominating role in the construction of national images during this period. These narratives had been constructed as part of the nation-building processes of the 19th century. In several aspects, the historical narratives used in portrayals of Norway mirrored developments in Norwegian historiography in the period. In the 1960s, however, the use of these narratives to portray Norway became problematic, owing to the priority given to a new rationale of information and demands that Norway should be portrayed as a modern society. The article takes a use-of-history approach as a point of departure and argues that such an approach is fruitful in studies of how national images are constructed.

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## Introduction

In 2000, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a report on the role of culture in Norwegian foreign policy. The report deals with several issues related to how Norway is perceived around the world, including what are characterized as ‘traditional stereotypes’ of the country. In one of the report’s concluding passages, it is claimed that although Norwegian society changed profoundly in the late 20th century, a particular image of the country remains prevalent:

To the extent that a foreign public is aware of Norway at all, the dominating image is that of a traditional country of mountains and fjords, Vikings and trolls, the Northern Lights, rose-maling and blond people dressed in national costumes – with oil and industry as the only possible modern components.<sup>1</sup>

According to the report, such ‘widespread’ but ‘outdated’ images of the country result from earlier strategies to profile Norway as a tourist destination. The problem is that such images are not compatible with ‘the reality they were meant to reflect’. In fact, the report asserts, such images are a legacy from the Norwegian nation-building processes of the 19th century and do not fit with the national self-image of contemporary Norwegians.<sup>2</sup>

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The dilemmas addressed in the report echo some of the questions that have been raised in relation to the promotion of Norway since the postwar period: To what extent is Norway recognized in the outside world? What images do people have of the country? To what extent do such images reflect the self-images of the Norwegian people?<sup>3</sup>

In 1950, the Norwegian parliament established the Office for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (OCR) as a branch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The name of this institution reflected the centrality of *culture* for the image of Norway that was produced for the outside world. Culture covered a wide range of aspects. Besides educational exchange, it included presentations of Norwegian art, music and literature; cultural institutions; and general descriptions of Norwegian society.<sup>4</sup> In several representations, however, it is also obvious that presenting Norwegian culture to the outside world in the postwar period was equivalent to presenting historical narratives of the country. At the same time, it is clear that descriptions of Norway's landscape and natural conditions were decisive for the way in which the country was explained to the world through these historical narratives.<sup>5</sup>

The use of historical narratives in efforts to portray nations was not unique to Norway at the time. Nikolas Glover, for instance, has shown how, in the late 1940s, Sweden was portrayed as a country with a long tradition of law and freedom, with modern Swedish democracy being rooted in traditions dating back several centuries.<sup>6</sup> In the Norwegian context, the use of historical narratives for such purposes had certain implications, for they were inevitably interpreted in the light of the fact that both historical narratives and history as an academic discipline had served to legitimize national independence and political democracy during the 19th century. In the immediate postwar period – only a generation after the dissolution of the Swedish–Norwegian Union in 1905 – such a combination still set the stage for how historical narratives were used in constructing images of the country.<sup>7</sup>

This article deals with how history was used in representations of Norway in the postwar period. Several studies have elaborated on how images of Scandinavia and the individual Scandinavian countries have been constructed and transmitted to the surrounding world, and how these representations have involved institutions, texts and narratives.<sup>8</sup> Several studies also present examples of how *historical* narratives were used as important resources in various time periods.<sup>9</sup>

There are few studies, however, that take a use-of-history approach to the study of fabrications of national images in Scandinavia. I will argue that such an approach provides several possibilities that also represent an important contribution to the research field. As a concept, 'the use of history' refers to how the past is used for present purposes. For one thing, this implies that such an approach provides us with the opportunity to discuss *why* particular narratives were used in strategic imaginings of a country. The use of historical narratives in constructions of national images is related to the historical culture of a country, or its relationship to its own past. A nation's past is constructed through use of the discipline of history as well as narratives and artefacts.<sup>10</sup> The historical narratives used in strategic imaginings of a country can be produced by different types of social agents representing different types of interests. Seen in this way, the use-of-history approach provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how particular narratives relate to domestic interests and the circumstances that frame them, which is also a central perspective in research on fabrications of national images.<sup>11</sup>

As will be seen, the main narrative of Norwegian history, as it was constructed in Norwegian historiography during the 19th century, was an important reservoir for the fabrication of images of Norway in the postwar period. The significance of this narrative was due to the fact that Norwegian historians still maintained their status as popular disseminators.<sup>12</sup> To some extent, the narrative was also affected by the new development trend in Norwegian historiography in this period, which meant that history-writing adjusted both to the fact that Norway had developed as a modern industrial society and to efforts to consolidate history as an academic discipline.<sup>13</sup> At some points, images of the country were caught somewhere in between the main narratives and efforts to present the country as modern. Put differently, the country was captivated by, and held captive to, its own national images and established ways of portraying itself. In the late 1960s, such tensions became more obvious, as the focus in promoting Norway now became an issue of 'information' rather than 'cultural relations'. Within such a context, the use of the main historical narrative in fabricating Norway was challenged owing to demands that information should be 'correct' and should focus more on contemporary achievements and commercial interests than on culture.<sup>14</sup>

The use-of-history approach also facilitates reflections on how and to what extent the use of history in strategic imaginings of Norway was rooted in perceptions about its future development, and how the past, and which pasts, were seen as suitable for the way the country should be understood.<sup>15</sup> Such a perspective is relevant to another aspect that has been central in studies of national images, not least of the Scandinavian countries in the postwar period, namely, that such images were constructed through a combination of foreign perceptions and national 'imaginings'. The creation of national images was dependent on how the countries were understood by foreigners – or how they were supposedly understood – as well as on citizens' own perceptions.<sup>16</sup> The historical narratives in question could thus be said to address both a foreign and a domestic public simultaneously. In the light of this, the use-of-history approach opens the possibility to say something about whether there was a mismatch between external and internal representations of Norway's history and to what extent any such mismatch was reflected in the relationship between foreign perceptions and national 'imaginings' of the country.

The following questions will be discussed in this article: What kinds of pasts were produced in portrayals of Norway in the postwar period? To what extent were different pasts used in different strategic imaginings of the country? And to what extent did the use of historical narratives change during his period?

Before delving into these questions, however, it is useful to review the efforts to portray Norway during World War II, since this provides important background for the analysis. From there, the discussion focuses on the book *Norway*, published by the Norwegian Tourist Board in 1946. The analysis in the following sections is based largely on publications of the OCR in the 1950s and 1960s, in addition to governmental white papers and proceedings from the Norwegian parliament.

## **Narrating the free Norway**

As with several other countries, the first institutionalized efforts to promote Norway in the international community were made in the aftermath of World War I.<sup>17</sup> Such efforts mirrored a general desire among states to make themselves understood by other nations and to promote mutual understanding in order to prevent conflicts.<sup>18</sup>

When the German occupation of Norway during World War II forced the Norwegian government into exile in London in 1940, it was seen as crucial for maintaining the status of the country and Norway's reputation in the world. Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an information office in London.<sup>19</sup> The development of strong cultural relations with the UK was a priority. An information campaign launched by the press office of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to promote Norway by publishing a large number of books, pamphlets and other materials. A key measure in this respect was the periodical *The Norseman*.<sup>20</sup> *The Norseman* portrays Norway through representations of the country's history and by focusing strongly on personalities within the fields of writing, painting and music. Its articles largely give a patriotic portrayal, which is not surprising in the light of the war. In the first volume of the periodical from 1943, for instance, there is an article by A. H. Winsnes, professor of literature, entitled 'Norwegian Literature in the Years of Crisis', in which Norwegian poetry is described as a 'direct contribution to the people's fight for freedom'.<sup>21</sup>

The way in which Norway is portrayed in *The Norseman* in many respects establishes a blueprint for portrayals of the country in the postwar period. The third issue of the first volume of *The Norseman*, for instance, is dedicated mostly to the centenary of the birth of the composer Edvard Grieg (1843–1907). One article, written by the historian Wilhelm Keilhau, claims that, for Norwegians, Grieg has 'a deep national importance'. Grieg, Keilhau claims, is one of 'the strong spiritual forces in our decades of cultural revival', and his life and work constitute a 'chapter of Norwegian history'.<sup>22</sup>

Keilhau's narrative on Grieg could be said to reflect an intention to illustrate how the country's inherited traditions became a source of national revival, political democratization and national independence in Norway in the 19th century. The national revival was highlighted as a defining moment that gave perspectives for contemporary representations of Norway. As will be seen, such a focus on the role of the country's inherited traditions was frequently used in portrayals of Norway in the following decades, including in the use of the memory of Grieg. Another aspect of *The Norseman* that set the stage for how Norway's image was fabricated relates to the periodical's editors and contributing authors. Although it was published by the press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the actors involved were mostly academics representing the humanities.<sup>23</sup> When the OCR was established in 1950, it was closely related to the academic realm, both in terms of staff and in terms of the activities it conducted. This was in contrast to the situation with Sweden, for instance, where business and industrial interests had a stronger impact on the activity of the Swedish Institute.<sup>24</sup>

### The continuity of Norwegian history

In 1946, when the German occupation had come to an end, the National Travel Association published the book *Norway*, which in fact was a direct prolongation of *The Norseman*.<sup>25</sup> This book was intended for people who wanted to visit Norway, and it presents several aspects of the contemporary Norwegian society: the country's position and contributions during World War II, its legal system, medical services, industry, scientific research, educational system and sports.

The book's introductory chapter was written by Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvard Lange. According to Lange, the aim of the book was to try to describe some of the most striking characteristics of Norwegian history and culture

in their wider implications; and to show its readers that Norway is a country with traditions stretching far back into the past, and yet a country inspired with the idea of progress, eager to do its bit socially, economically and culturally.<sup>26</sup>

From Lange's perspective, it could be claimed, the task of giving a current description of Norwegian society and its prospects for the future required an outline of Norway's history and culture that stressed the continuity of the country's history. Accordingly, one of the introductory articles in the book is an outline of Norwegian history written by Johan Schreiner, a professor of history at the University of Oslo. Schreiner's article illustrates the significance given to historical narratives in efforts to represent Norway, which is underscored by the fact that the article is followed by three others presenting Norwegian culture in a historical perspective: one on Norwegian literature written by Francis Bull, a professor and historian of literature at the University of Oslo; one on Norwegian style and art written by Harry Fett, head of the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage; and one on Norwegian music written by Ole Mørk Sandvik, a researcher on Norwegian music and a university lecturer.<sup>27</sup>

In his article, Schreiner claims that, in the 13th century, Norway achieved the status of a great power.<sup>28</sup> In the same century, however, a process of gradual decline started, and in 1536 'Norway was simply incorporated into the Danish monarchy'.<sup>29</sup> In 1814, however, the country regained its national independence. A prerequisite for this was economic development in Norwegian society, which laid the foundations for the new state, both in terms of the emergence of a middle class and through the fact that Norwegian peasants regained their 'old independence' from the 17th century. According to Schreiner, since its signing on 17 May 1814, the Norwegian Constitution has 'been the foundation of Norway's political life', materializing in a 'general trend towards a democratic government'.<sup>30</sup>

Schreiner's narrative of Norwegian history is complemented by the articles by Bull, Fett and Sandvik, which present a trope similar to the one Schreiner presents in his outline: The Viking period and the Middle Ages comprised a golden age of Norwegian culture, while the late Middle Ages are said to have introduced a period of political dependency and cultural decline.<sup>31</sup> Central aspects of these articles seem to include an attempt to visualize the continuity of Norwegian art and culture and to claim that a distinctively Norwegian expression developed in the Middle Ages, one that in some respects related to and could be compared to European culture. However, the decline of high culture and the loss of national independence in the late Middle Ages introduced a period in which Norwegian art and culture as they had developed during the 'golden age' were preserved and even *refined* by the Norwegian people themselves rather than by institutions.<sup>32</sup> In these narratives, the remains of the old high culture were represented as a treasure slumbering in the minds and mouths of the Norwegian people during the years of national interdependence. In turn, such a treasure is said to have become one of the prerequisites for a cultural restoration following the dissolution of the union with Denmark and the signing of the Norwegian Constitution in 1814. Norwegian national culture is said to have been reawakened through the romantic movement that reached Norway in the 1840s. According to O. M. Sandvik, romanticism created in all cultural spheres an impulse 'to find the way towards something characteristically Norwegian'. The musical Norway was 'rediscovered', he claims.<sup>33</sup> In Sandvik's outline, Edvard Grieg

becomes a national romantic hero and the personification of the inherited tradition represented by Norwegian folk music. Grieg, claims Sandvik, made the Norwegian people aware of their own national heritage.<sup>34</sup>

These narratives are informed by a narrative of Norwegian history that had dominated the humanities in Norway since late 19th century. At the core of this narrative is the notion that there is a continuity in Norwegian history stretching back to the Middle Ages, when the country lost its independence and became part of the Danish–Norwegian Union. According to the narrative, during the years of foreign rule, the continuity was represented by the people, which in reality meant the peasants and their old inherited ‘folk’ culture. The signing of a Norwegian constitution in 1814 thus represented a restoration of continuity, which in turn laid the foundation for a national revival in the 19th century as well as the achievement of national independence through the dissolution of the Norwegian–Swedish Union in 1905.<sup>35</sup>

Within this tradition, teleological elements of a metaphysical character lay the basis for historical explanations. Historical developments are seen as predetermined, and explanations are formulated through reference to the future.<sup>36</sup> According to such a tradition, historical narratives have a defining societal role. The book *Norway* illustrates how such a role informed the way images of Norway were produced for the outside world. The historical narratives were intended to make Norway more visible and understandable as well as to describe in advance the further development of Norwegian society. Such an approach was also obvious in Foreign Minister Halvard Lange’s introductory chapter, as he claimed that Norway was a country with long historical traditions and at the same time progressive (see above).

## History as a tool kit

In order to elaborate the impact and contextualize the significance of the use of historical narratives in portrayals of Norway in the immediate postwar period, some comparative reflections are useful. Emphasis on historical continuity in portrayals of the country was not unique to Norway. In his study of the Swedish Institute that was established in 1944, Nikolas Glover elaborates on how historical continuity was also a central theme in how Sweden was narrated to the surrounding world. In the book *Introduction to Sweden*, published in 1949, for instance, one of the main messages is that Sweden has a long tradition of law and freedom. The 18th century, it says, was a high point in this regard, since a particular Swedish heritage of freedom was established during that time. In comparison with Europe in general, and France in particular, Swedish history in the 18th century is asserted to have been peaceful but at the same time in harmony with the old legal heritage of the country.<sup>37</sup>

A key message in *Introduction to Sweden*, claims Glover, is that the country was in a unique position to restore to Europe something of the heritage that had been lost during World War II. According to such a narrative, the ideals represented by the US and Western allies characterize Sweden’s long, unbroken history. Swedish democracy is seen as rooted in traditions several centuries long. In fact, this means that such Western ideals are narrated as *Swedish* history and as something to which Europe could return.<sup>38</sup>



The historical connectedness to Western democratic values is also prominent in portrayals of Norway. In his text on Norwegian literature from 1946, Francis Bull maintains that the Norwegian Constitution of 1814 combines modern European–American ideas with the notion of freedom, ‘which the Norwegian peasantry had kept alive right from the Saga period’.<sup>39</sup> Bull’s statement serves to underscore a Norwegian self-image frequently found in portrayals of the country in the postwar period: Norway is inherently a democratic society, it is claimed, and the democratic values represented by the Norwegian people are particularly compatible with Western liberal standards.<sup>40</sup>

At this point, however, there are characteristic contrasts in the contextual background for portrayals of Norway and Sweden. These contrasts also point to differences in the way history could be used in imaging the two countries. One of the reasons behind the establishment of the Swedish Institute was that Sweden was eager to maintain a positive image among the Western powers despite having claimed neutrality during World War II. To make up for not participating in the war, it could orient itself towards the future by building a modern welfare state at home and contributing to the international postwar reconstruction.<sup>41</sup>

Whereas, in the Swedish case, the main point was to look forward and leave the war behind, in Norway the fight for freedom during the German occupation was narrated along lines similar to those used in relation to the historical periods of national dependency – or, more precisely, it was integrated into the main narrative of Norwegian history.<sup>42</sup> In the editorial in the first issue of *The Norseman*, published in 1943, it is claimed that the aim of the journal is to ‘maintain the continuity of our best traditions so that the threads may be picked up again in Norway when the day of liberation arrives’.<sup>43</sup> Such an understanding also informs the image of the country as a democratic society that it was sought to convey in the immediate postwar period. In Francis Bull’s words in 1946, tones from *Heimskringla* (*The Sagas of the Old Norwegian Kings* recorded by Snorri Sturluson in the 1200s) can be heard in the political milestones represented by the years 1814 and 1905 and the period of the 1940s.<sup>44</sup> On the one hand, Bull’s statement could be said to reflect Norway’s self-image as a country that still needs to legitimize its historical continuity and cultural autonomy. At the same time, however, it reflects a comprehension that such a legitimation is a resource in the portrayal of the country to the surrounding world. Louis Clerc and Nikolas Glover claim that ‘total’ consensual national images are a central ‘tool kit’ in portrayals of small nations.<sup>45</sup> If this is true, in the Norwegian case the quest to legitimize historical continuity in the postwar years formed the essence of a main historical narrative on Norwegian history and, at the same time, was probably thought to serve as a uniform narrative with mobilizing power.

Although historical continuity was also emphasized in fabrications of Sweden in this period, it was not a *resource* in the same manner as it was in the Norwegian case.<sup>46</sup> The development of Sweden’s central state institutions had not been interrupted since the Middle Ages, and the country was one of the very few in Europe never to have been occupied by foreigners.<sup>47</sup> Steady progress lay at the heart of the Swedish self-image, and other countries also largely saw the country as *progressive*. In 1936, the book *Sweden: The Middle Way* was published by the American journalist Marquis Childs. Here, Sweden is portrayed as a country that manages to combine



socialism, capitalism, democracy and social well-being for the entire population in a particularly successful way.<sup>48</sup> By 1948, the book had been published in 16 editions, and its message represented 'an omniscient xenostereotype and autorstereotype' in the work of the Swedish Institute.<sup>49</sup>

At certain points, then, it could be argued that there were differences between the contextual backgrounds for the use of history in portrayals of Sweden and Norway. Such differences were reflected in differences in the countries' national self-images. There were also contrasts in the ways in which Sweden and Norway were perceived in the surrounding world in the postwar period. These contrasts probably also influenced the construction of self-images, as well as how history was used in portrayals of the two countries. 'The Swedes are sophisticated, objective, efficient, sure of themselves', writes an American journalist in connection with the exhibition 'Design in Scandinavia' in the USA in 1954. In the same article, it is claimed that Norway is 'still digging out from the effects of war'. Norway's vitality, on the other hand, is said to be due to it being a 'country of isolated towns and valleys'.<sup>50</sup>

### **'The democratic spirit has permeated every sphere of social life'**

In 1954, the reference to Norway's natural conditions was probably no coincidence. A dominant theme in several publications issued by the OCR in the 1950s and 1960s is Norway's harsh living conditions: nature and the climate are claimed to determine several key aspects of Norwegian life.<sup>51</sup>

In the 1951 pamphlet 'Riksteateret' (about the Norwegian State Travelling Theatre), which is the first publication issued by the OCR that deals with Norwegian culture, the demanding natural environment is presented as a backdrop for a discussion of the aims of the travelling theatre: 'Distances are great and the population scattered'. Covering an area twice the size of England, the theatre serves a nation of small, scattered towns: 'Living conditions such as these create a cleft between town and country and raise serious problems for a modern democracy with its principle of equal opportunity for all'. The travelling theatre, the pamphlet suggests, is an important measure for making life 'more attractive in the remoter districts'.<sup>52</sup> A main point in this pamphlet is that Norway has established modern institutions to ensure the distribution of culture both geographically and socially. A similar message is conveyed in 'Norsk Bygdekino', a pamphlet from 1957 dealing with the Norwegian Rural Cinema. The rural cinema was established because the government considered it a 'prime task to make cultural opportunities equally available throughout the country'.<sup>53</sup>

Descriptions of Norway's natural conditions as a basic feature characterizing the country were also to be seen in descriptions of the country by foreign authors. In 1955, the OCR issued the volume *The Organization and Administration of the Educational System of Norway*, written by the American scholar George M. Wiley. The opening chapter in this volume is simply entitled 'The Land and the People'. Wiley in fact described the Norwegian educational system as a social response to demands imposed by the natural environment, a perspective similar to that seen in the pamphlets on the cultural institutions the State Travelling Theatre and the Rural Cinema, as well as in other fabrications in which history was used to describe contemporary features of the country from the same period.<sup>54</sup>

Another aspect portrayed in several publications is what is narrated as an inherited quest for democracy among the Norwegian people. According to Wiley, the Norwegian landscape has determined a 'love for freedom and a keen sense of the worth of the

individual' among the nation's inhabitants, along with a 'corresponding realization of the significance of cooperation in vital matters of general welfare'.<sup>55</sup> Such a perspective was also highlighted in the foreword of this publication, which was written by Einar Boyesen, a civil servant from the Ministry of Church and Education, who claimed that life 'in this hard, mountainous land of ours has turned us into stubborn, self-willed persons. We must have freedom'.<sup>56</sup>

These portrayals could be seen as a reflection of the main narrative of the historical development of the country as this was maintained in Norwegian historiography in the postwar period. The leading 'historical narrator' in Norway in the 1950s and 1960s was Sverre Steen, a professor at the University of Oslo.<sup>57</sup> Steen's narratives on Norwegian history have been characterized as a 'naturalization' of the nation: Norwegian history is narrated as a historical conquest of the geographical landscape. In fact, according to Jan Thomas Kobberød's analysis, a basic component in Steen's writing is the idea that the culture that is constructed in the struggle with Norway's natural conditions is in fact the genuine Norwegian culture.<sup>58</sup>

Another aspect of Steen's conceptualization of Norwegian history is the notion of the 19th century as a turning point in the sense that it represented a transition phase between a traditional and a new social formation, pointing forward towards a modern form of national integration.<sup>59</sup> In 1958, Steen was the author of one of the articles in the joint Scandinavian volume *Scandinavian Democracy*, which was published with financial support from the OCR, the Swedish Institute and the Danish Institute. In this volume, a particular Scandinavian version of democracy, representing a middle way between the capitalist West and the communist East, is constructed.<sup>60</sup> Sverre Steen's task was to provide a historical outline of Norwegian democracy. According to Steen, 'hundreds of associations were founded' in the years following the signing of the Norwegian Constitution in 1814. These associations gave their members 'training in cooperation under organizational responsibility', which taught each individual to 'modify his views in the light of the objections of others'.<sup>61</sup>

Steen describes this development as a 'continuous process of interaction'.<sup>62</sup> In his narrative, such interaction was a prerequisite for the democratization process that had been taking place in Norwegian society since the late 19th century, as well as for full national independence through the dissolution of the Swedish–Norwegian Union in 1905. Steen also addresses the development of the Labour movement, which in the early 1920s was inspired by developments in the Soviet Union. In recent decades, however, says Steen, the old class antagonism has decreased and 'social solidarity in the nation as a whole has been strengthened . . . . The democratic spirit has permeated every sphere of social life'.<sup>63</sup>

Steen in fact describes a new form of national integration, one that includes the working class, which provides a historical argument for placing Norway within the conception that 'Scandinavian socialists are also democrats', as claimed in the foreword of another joint Scandinavian volume addressing an international audience in the 1950s.<sup>64</sup>

### **'The romantic's enthusiasm for nature wild and unspoilt'**

The joint Scandinavian volume from the 1950s was issued in a period of social-democratic hegemony, and Sverre Steen has been called the 'the historian of social democracy'.<sup>65</sup> According to Francis Sejersted, Steen added a social-democratic

component to the old main narrative of Norwegian history that was established during the 19th century. As Jan Thomas Koberrød has pointed out, Steen also added the concept of industrial modernity in his narrative of Norwegian history.<sup>66</sup>

Did such a framing of Norwegian history imply that Norway was considered 'modern' in the surroundings, by foreigners? As we have seen, in Wiley's description of the country's educational system, Norway is described as a society with modern institutions, which took shape from its historical heritage and inherited landscape. Another example of such an understanding of the country is a volume written by James A. Storing, also an American scholar. The volume *Norwegian Democracy* was published with financial support from the OCR in 1963, in the series Scandia Books, which presented several aspects of the Scandinavian countries. According to Storing, Norway was a highly developed welfare state, with a certain degree of 'socialized and cooperative enterprise' and rather 'high degree of governmental regulation'.<sup>67</sup> In this volume, however, the starting point is yet another description of the landscape and natural conditions of the country, which have fostered an 'intense type of individualism' that, however, has been tempered by 'well organized cooperative ventures'.<sup>68</sup>

As noted above, such descriptions of Norway worked in a mutual relationship with how the modern institutions of the country were represented by Norwegian authorities. The portrayals of the country reflected domestic understandings of how Norway was seen internationally. Accordingly it is striking that, in the self-presentations of Norwegian cultural institutions, urban institutions – for instance, the National Theatre in Oslo – were not showcased to a foreign audience in this period. Nor was contemporary urban architecture. This was also a field in which Norway had indeed become 'modern' in the interwar period.<sup>69</sup> Such omissions could be said to point to a certain reluctance to represent Norway as 'modern' in relation to other cultural manifestations such as art and music. In a survey of Norwegian painting that was published in several issues from the 1950s, it is claimed that also contemporary – and modernistic – Norwegian art was characterized by 'the romantic's enthusiasm for nature wild and unspoilt'. According to the author Jan Askeland – curator at the Norwegian National Gallery – such an enthusiasm had been the '*leit-motif* in all Norwegian artistic creation'.<sup>70</sup> This enthusiasm originated from Johan Christian Dahl – 'the Father of Norwegian Painting' – and also embraced Edvard Munch, according to Askeland. It is open to debate, however, whether Norway's most famous painter should be categorized exclusively along such lines. Munch also definitely dealt with urban motives and experimented with modernistic forms in his painting.<sup>71</sup>

Another aspect of the impact ascribed to Johan Christian Dahl was that it pointed at national romanticism as the defining moment of Norwegian art. This was also obvious in portrayals of Edvard Grieg. In 1957, the OCR published a book about the composer written by Øystein Gaukstad, head of the music department at the Royal University Library in Oslo. Like Sandvik's article published in 1946, as well as Keilhau's article published in 1943, Gaukstad stresses that Grieg's work is a personification of the historical heritage that was a prerequisite for the national revival that took place in the 19th century. Gaukstad's text is also a refinement of this narrative, as he portrays Grieg's music as a democratizing power in its own right. Grieg's music is 'an important

and enduring contribution to the emancipation of harmony in the 19th century'.<sup>72</sup> Gaukstad even claims that Grieg's music expresses a continuity in how Norway is represented to the world:

Grieg made it his aim to present Norwegian folk music, the Norwegian countryside and the Norwegian national characteristics in a musical language that would be understood throughout Europe.<sup>73</sup>

### The problem of modernism

An implication of such a use of the main historical narrative was that Norway was at some points portrayed as a society with a strong attachment to tradition and an ambivalence towards modernism. During World War II, such an ambivalence was presented as a reason for why Norwegian writers made such important contributions in the fight against Nazism. In Winsnes's outline of Norwegian literature published in 1943, for instance, it is claimed that Norwegian writers during the interwar period had 'reacted against a fastidious literary æstheticism' and 'strange literary movements'. All of the outstanding Norwegian writers of that period were 'deeply rooted in the national idea', which also stimulated the will to resist the Nazis.<sup>74</sup>

The use of the memory of Grieg is in fact of particular interest at this point. In a study of Grieg's position in Norwegian memory culture, it is claimed that Grieg's significance goes far beyond the impact of his music. He has been considered a hero of Norway's struggle for independence and a 'committed fighter for democracy'.<sup>75</sup> Such a position was due to the fact that Grieg personified the rebirth of the Norwegian folk culture during the 19th century. As we have seen, one of the issues of *The Norseman*, published in London during the war, was dedicated to the centenary of Edvard Grieg in 1943. At this point, such a use of Grieg's memory was also a counterweight to the efforts of the Nazi regime in Norway to use Grieg for their own purposes.<sup>76</sup>

In the postwar period, Grieg was – without comparison – the most famous Norwegian composer and probably one of the most famous Norwegians abroad.<sup>77</sup> By the early 1960s, however, it was obvious that the narrative of Grieg and the narrative of Norway that he represented had become problematic. In 1961, the OCR issued the pamphlet 'Music and Musicians in Norway Today', written by Arne Østvedt, editor of the Norwegian daily *Verdens Gang* (VG). As well as discussing the music of living Norwegians, Østvedt's text deals with national romanticism in Norwegian music in the 19th century, with a focus on Grieg. According to Østvedt, Grieg made his appearance in the wake of 'the first clear signs of dawning nationalism'. The protagonists of a Norwegian national culture 'were quick to realize that in the old folk songs they possessed a treasure-house just waiting to be exploited'.<sup>78</sup>

Østvedt stresses that Norwegian artists in the 19th century *used* the old heritage deliberately and for tactical purposes. From his perspective, the old heritage is not a treasure slumbering in the country's natural environment that is revived once conditions are right, which was the message conveyed in the publications dealing with Norwegian culture in the 19th century that were published in 1946. Rather, according to Østvedt, the heritage used by 19th-century artists was just one of *several possible* traditions that could have been used.

In contrast to Gaukstad, who claims that Grieg's music communicates with a foreign audience, Østvedt portrays Grieg as basically communicating with Norwegians: 'His countrymen heard in [Grieg's music] the very quintessence of Norwegian musical expression'. And despite the importance of the national feeling suffusing Norwegian society, as represented by Grieg's music, Østvedt claims these feelings also had negative effects. A main problem was that Norwegian composers were unable to draw inspiration from new trends that started to make themselves felt internationally in the early 20th century. Norwegian music was isolated, Østvedt says, and 'the isolation continued for a long time'. In the 1920s, some of the new composers tried to 'break new ground', but their efforts were met with no sympathy. Instead, a 'new wave of Grieg-Romanticism ... engulfed Norwegian music'.<sup>79</sup> This new wave of 'Grieg-Romanticism', he says, was fronted by the composer David Monrad Johansen.

It is striking to observe that Østvedt uses the term 'nationalism' to characterize the process that took place within Norwegian art in the second half of the 19th century. This does not occur in the other publications discussed thus far, so, clearly, Østvedt's text in several respects stands as a counter-narrative to the other representations of Norwegian 19th-century culture published in the 1940s and 1950s. Østvedt in fact portrays nationalism as a negative force pushing Norwegian composers into a state of 'isolation' that 'continued for a long time'.<sup>80</sup>

Østvedt's article could be viewed against several interrelated contextual backgrounds. First, it could be due to an effort to distance Norwegian music from nationalism – World War II had demonstrated the catastrophic consequences of aggressive nationalism.<sup>81</sup> Second, in this period, it gradually became a general opinion that, in terms of music, modernism arrived comparatively late in Norway. The impact of the national movement up to World War II was seen as one of the key reasons for this. Actually, within musicology, in the postwar reception of modernism, the concepts 'national' and 'modern' became dichotomies and opposing ideologies.<sup>82</sup>

Although modernism was applied in particular to music in Østvedt's text, it is worth reflecting on the wider implications related to his perspectives. Since the 1950s, modernism had been used deliberately to underscore the notion of the Western bloc – and the USA in particular – as the free world, as opposed to the Eastern bloc. Modernism as an art movement was highlighted as representing universal values like individuality and freedom.<sup>83</sup> In such a context, modernism had implications far beyond the realms of art and music, and this also affected the way in which Norwegian society could be represented to the world. A presentation of Norwegian literature published by the OCR in 1966 could be seen against such a background. In the book *Norwegian Literature Anno 1965*, modernism is introduced as an integrated part of Norwegian art – or the peculiarities of Norwegian modernity are explained to the international community. In the introduction, the author, Inger Heiberg, directly addresses the issue of modernism in Norwegian literature: 'Some critics contend that Norwegian literature [has] become provincial, or too conventional, or that it is just experimenting with modernistic forms that no ordinary human can understand'.<sup>84</sup> Heiberg then tries to nuance the contradiction between 'provincialism' and 'modernism'. The charge of provincialism is, she claims, related to the circumstance that 'practically all Norwegian writers of fiction deal with Norwegian subjects and put their characters into – frequently rural, and often rather isolated – Norwegian settings'. Of itself, however, this does not lead to provincialism, she insists.<sup>85</sup>

Heiberg underlines the universality of Norwegian literature, although this is a universality on Norwegian terms: 'The variety, the sparse population, the wilderness, and the dramatic natural settings of Norway, have always lent a special character to its literature'. Such a heritage, she argues, implies that Norwegian writers deal with modernism in a genuine manner: 'Norwegian writers often succeed in incorporating a valid human story of general interest into more difficult styles of modernistic writing; they are seldom trapped by abstract experiments or pure imitation'.<sup>86</sup>

Taken together, it is worth reflecting on how Østvedt's and Heiberg's narratives corresponded to some basic aspects of the development of Norwegian history culture as this was reflected in Norwegian historiography in the postwar period. One is a reaction against the old historicism. The main task of the historian was seen as to search for the truth about the past, rather than to reproduce traditional national narratives.<sup>87</sup> Viewed from this perspective, late 19th-century national romanticism did not represent a restoration of an 'old' continuity in Norwegian history but was one of several weapons used for strategic purposes.<sup>88</sup> Østvedt's text on Grieg must be said to be in accordance with such a programme. The demands for 'objectivity', however, did not mean that the 'old' main narrative on Norwegian history was eradicated. What could be labelled the 'Whiggish' interpretation of Norwegian history lived on in the period and influenced also historians of a new generation.<sup>89</sup> The new historiographic trends were incorporated into Norwegian historiography.<sup>90</sup> Viewed in this light, Heiberg's text on Norwegian literature can be seen as a refinement of the narratives on Norwegian culture in which the country's inherited traditions and landscape are used to explain Norway to the outside world. Heiberg's text can thus be read as an effort to adapt the Norwegian past to new circumstances in order to construct a Norwegian version of modernism.

### **Information policy: The past reframed**

In a parliamentary debate in 1967, it was claimed that Norway was still not sufficiently visible on the international stage. One of the main problems formulated was that the country was overshadowed by Sweden and Denmark. Norway needed to expand the range of information the country was producing, particularly information related to its economic activities.<sup>91</sup>

It was within this context that the institutional setup for portraying Norway to the international community was reformed in the late 1960s. Commercial interests now became more decisive and, institutionally, the OCR merged with the press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A new institutional body, the Norwegian Information Council, was established, which was intended to function as a coordinating body for information activities conducted by other actors in this field. Several ministries and organizations were represented in the new council, including the Norwegian Press Association, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and a number of trade organizations.<sup>92</sup>

These reforms meant that 'information policy' rather than 'cultural relations' would become the framework for portrayals of Norway in the surrounding world.<sup>93</sup> Playing an important role in the background to this development was the fact that the international community from the early 1960s was increasingly characterized by free trade and new institutions like the European Free Trade Area, of which Norway had become a member in 1960.<sup>94</sup> Another, and closely related, trend was the gradual rise of a new focus on

information and what was referred to as *public relations*. One implication of this was that commercial interests would now be taken more into account. In fact, in the promotion of Norway, dissemination of business publications and information became a higher priority than the distribution of books and pamphlets on Norwegian culture and history.<sup>95</sup>

From a strictly commercial vantage point, within the discourse on information and public relations, in order to be successful it was crucial to 'sell' the business behind a product.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, it seems that the past was in some ways assigned a new role in the fabrications of Norway's external image. In fact, the use of the past in the construction of national images became for the first time an issue in the Norwegian parliament.<sup>97</sup> In a 1973 parliamentary debate over the efforts to promote Norway abroad, the aspects of the country's history that were emphasized were quite different from those seen in the narratives promoted by the OCR in the 1950s and 1960s. Tor Oftedal, a member of the Norwegian parliament and leader of its Committee for Foreign Affairs, claimed that the main task of the information policy, both at that time and historically, was to assist Norwegian commercial interests abroad:

When Norway was establishing its own foreign service after the dissolution of the Norwegian–Swedish Union in 1905 ... it was generally acknowledged ... that the foreign policy must have practical aims ... What we needed was a service that could accommodate our export and shipping interests and – later on – tourism.<sup>98</sup>

It is striking to observe how disconnected this historical interpretation was from the historical narratives that had been so dominating in representations of Norway only a few years earlier. It is also striking that the establishment of an autonomous Norwegian foreign service in 1905 was the historical point of reference, and that the focus was on the opportunities that this offered for Norwegian business and industry rather than on the continuity of Norwegian history.

There were no references to how Norway's inherited landscape and natural conditions had been used in efforts to portray Norway to the surrounding world during the debate. In fact, the only reference to the country's natural conditions was made by the former prime minister Lars Korvald, who claimed that Norway was deeply misunderstood abroad. Many people, he said, still thought of Norway primarily as 'a country with skiers, Sámi, high mountains, folk dancing, and reindeer'. The aim of activities related to the dissemination of information abroad should therefore be to create 'a more nuanced and comprehensive' understanding of Norway.<sup>99</sup>

Korvald's statement could be seen as another expression of how the conditions for using the past in portrayals of Norway had changed owing to the shift towards the new rationale of information. In such a context, the old historical narratives were no longer perceived as a resource but more like straightjackets, as they were seen to entrench the international community's misleading pre-existing notions of the country.<sup>100</sup>

A challenge related to any strategic portrayal of Norway was that, as a small state, the country had been captivated by, and was still held captive to, its own national images and established ways of portraying itself. In order to be intelligible and meaningful to the surrounding world, efforts to promote Norway had to rely on these established images and historical narratives.<sup>101</sup> In the light of the new rationale of information, along with the increased focus on promoting commercial interests rather than cultural relations, the main historical narratives of Norway were not



necessarily seen as compatible with the image of the country that was desired to be conveyed. As shown in the introduction of this article, a similar dilemma appears to have characterized the debates over the strategies for promoting Norway also three decades later.

## Conclusion

The main narrative of Norwegian history that was constructed as part of the nation-building processes of the second half of the 19th century had a huge impact on portrayals of Norway to the surrounding world in the postwar period. The aim was to portray Norway as a society with a particular attachment to democratic values. At the same time, it was important to showcase the continuity of Norwegian history, which in several ways served as a resource in portrayals of the country. The main narrative of Norwegian history also formed much of the background for the way in which Norway was presented to the surrounding world after the establishment of the Office for Cultural Relations in 1950, albeit in a refined version that included descriptions of the country's natural conditions as elements determining contemporary Norwegian society.

At some points, it became problematic to use the main historical narrative in portrayals of the country, as it was not felt to be compatible with the image of Norway as a modern society. This became obvious in the late 1960s, when the construction of images of Norway for the surrounding world now became an issue of 'information' rather than 'cultural relations'. Owing to this new development, the traditional narratives of Norwegian history were felt to be caught in between entrenched external images of the country and how Norwegian society wished to be regarded abroad. According to the report published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000 that was referred to in the introduction of this article, this situation in some ways continued to be a problem in constructions of images of Norwegian society throughout the 20th century.

As this article shows, the concept 'use of history' is fruitful for studying how national images are constructed. It addresses the extent to which historical narratives are used as resources in the construction of such images, and in what ways they may or may not function as tool kits for small states in the construction of national images. The use-of-history approach also makes it possible to identify the interests and actors producing national images and the contexts in which these are embedded. Related to this, the use-of-history concept also points to the relationship between national images and historical culture, and thus also to the relationship between national images and the construction of national identity. Finally, it enables a deeper understanding of the dynamics between national images and external comprehensions of a country.

## Endnotes

1. Lending, "Oppbrudd og fornyelse".
2. Ibid.
3. See Høyvik, "Fram fra skjoldets skygge," 70.

4. The main activity covered by the term 'cultural relations' was actually educational and scholarly exchange. Such exchange was one of several ways of substantiating the representation of Norwegian society in the surrounding world. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 88–89.
5. *Ibid.*, 93ff.
6. Glover, *National Relations*, 68ff. In a recent thesis, Anders Mørkved Hellenes expounds on how Sweden, in the 1990s, was narrated as a country with a particular attachment to European culture, and how this narrative served not only to underpin the country's new orientation towards Europe but also as a conservative counter-narrative to social-democratic fabrications of Sweden. See Hellenes, "Fabricating Sweden," 285ff. The establishment of an institution like the OCR was not unique to Norway. The OCR was inspired by the establishment of the Swedish Institute in 1944. Similar institutions were also set up in several other European states, as in the post-World War II period efforts to promote national images became more institutionalized than before. See Glover, *National Relations*, 8–9; Clerc, "Gaining Recognition and Understanding on Her Own Terms," 147–52.
7. See Fulsås, *Historie og nasjon*, 288.
8. See, for example, Glover, *National Relations*; Marklund, "The Social Laboratory, the Middle Way and the Swedish Model"; Marklund and Petersen, "Return to Sender"; Clerc, "Gaining Recognition and Understanding on Her Own Terms"; Ipatti, "At the Roots of the 'Finland Boom'".
9. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations"; Bergmare, "Diplomacy and Diasporas"; Glover, *National Relations*, 69ff.; Hellenes, "Fabricating Sweden"; Høyvik, "Fram fra skjoldets skygge"; Kjærsgaard, "A Public Diplomacy Entrepreneur".
10. 'Historical culture' refers to concrete manifestations of historical consciousness in different settings. As a concept, historical culture enables us to identify why particular historical artefacts with references to the past are used in concrete settings and to analyse the motives behind and implications of such use. Aronsson, *Historiebruk*, 17; Ryymin, "Innledning," 16; Bryld, "Fra historieskrivningens historie til historiekulturens historie?," 87.
11. See Glover, *National Relations*, 7–8.
12. Aronsson et al., "Nordic National Histories," 272ff.
13. See Kobberød, "Sverre Steen. Sosialdemokratiets historieforteller," 283ff.; Thue, "A Modernized Historical Consciousness?," 338–39.
14. A similar development could be observed in Sweden in the same period. Hellenes, "Fabricating Sweden," 8–9.
15. This is related to the concept of historical consciousness, which is also a central aspect in the use-of-history approach. According to Jörn Rüsen, historical consciousness 'ties the past to the present in a manner that bestows on present actuality a future perspective'. Rüsen, "Historical Consciousness," 67.
16. Glover, *National Relations*, 16–19; Clerc and Glover, "Representing the Small States of Northern Europe," 3–6. In promoting the Nordic countries, the image of them as modern welfare states – representing a 'middle way' or 'third way' manoeuvring between capitalism and totalitarianism – was frequently used. The image of Scandinavia as following a middle way – Sweden in particular – had been displayed from the interwar period onwards. In fact, the image of Sweden as a third way was constructed by American intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s. During this process, the journalist Marquis W. Childs' book *Sweden: The Middle Way* (1938) was a particularly important contribution. Marklund, "The Social Laboratory, the Middle Way and the Swedish Model," 268ff. See also Marklund and Petersen, "Return to Sender," 246.
17. In the aftermath of World War I, the Norwegian government established press attachés and cultural attachés at some of the country's embassies. The aim of these positions was to make Norway known and understood in the international community. Sverdrup, *Inn i storpolitikken. 1940–1949*, 239–40. Although the positions were soon withdrawn for financial reasons, there were, in the interwar years, contributions made by Norwegian institutions, private organizations and individuals to promote the country's

- international cultural relations. For instance, Foreningen Norden (The Nordic Association) financed an exchange programme between Norway, Sweden and Denmark for students, teachers and other academics. Hansen, *Drømmen om Norden*, 86–87.
18. During this period, institutions like the Goethe Institute and the British Council were established. In 1940, the Danish Institute was established. See Åkerlund, “Ambassadors of the Swedish Nation,” 595.
  19. Sverdrup, *Inn i storpolitikken. 1940–1949*, 239–40.
  20. Foreign Office, *Survey of Anglo-Norwegian Cultural Relations*, 9.
  21. Winsnes, “Norwegian Literature in the Years of Crisis,” 272.
  22. Keilhau, “Grieg: A Chapter of Norwegian History,” 171.
  23. Among the members of the editorial board were, in addition to A. H. Winsnes, Alf Sommerfeldt, a professor of linguistics and specialist in Norwegian language, and the historians Arne Ording and Wilhelm Keilhau. *The Norseman*, no. 1.
  24. Angell, “The Office for Cultural Relations,” 84ff.
  25. One of the articles – Harry Fett’s – was first published in *The Norseman*.
  26. Lange, “Introduction,” 3.
  27. Articles presenting ‘modern’ life in Norway – industry, education, scientific research, etc. – are placed towards the end, which gives an impression of the priorities for the volume.
  28. Schreiner, “The History of Norway,” 14.
  29. The first sign of the decline was the economic dependence on the Hanseatic merchants. In the mid-14th century, the country suffered the Black Death, which ‘appears to have hit Norway far harder than the neighbouring countries’. The power of the aristocracy was ‘undermined’, and the nobility ceased to be ‘a political factor of importance’, Schreiner claims. The position of the church was also affected, and in 1310 the ‘royal line became extinct’. Schreiner, “The History of Norway,” 15.
  30. Schreiner describes the breakthrough of parliamentarism in 1884, the dissolution of the union with Sweden in 1905, and the extension of franchise. Schreiner, “The History of Norway,” 16–18.
  31. In this period, Norwegian culture had strong connections to Europe and at the same time developed cultural traditions of its own. Francis Bull, for instance, claims that medieval writings in Norway ‘bear witness to the fact that Norway was in lively mercantile and cultural contact with England and France during the 13th century’. Bull, “Norwegian Literature During 1000 Years,” 30–31. A similar narrative is found in Fett’s article. Fett, “Norwegian Style and Art,” 43. In Fett’s narrative, the Viking period introduced a golden age of Norwegian art that continued through the Middle Ages. It was, he says, characterized by a dramatic tension most clearly expressed in the stave churches. These buildings signify a very special contribution, thinks Fett. There is, on one hand, what he labels as a functionalism, a ‘specific style in wood’ fully equal to ‘other great mediaeval systems of construction’ on the other hand, ‘the most dramatic decorative style’. Fett, “Norwegian Style and Art,” 43. According to Fett, the Norwegian state collapsed and ‘the national constitution became an empty shell’. Fett, “Norwegian Style and Art,” 44. Francis Bull claims that after the ‘terrible ravages of the Black Death’, cultural activity almost came to a complete standstill, as the plague ‘struck hardest at the chief culture-bearers of the time – the clergy’. Bull, “Norwegian Literature During 1000 Years,” 31.
  32. According to Bull, the late medieval period was a fruitful time for the poetry that lived ‘only in the mouths of the people.’ Fett, for his part, says a ‘new peripheral art grew up again in our towns, as well as in various parts of the country.’ Fett, “Norwegian Style and Art,” 44. O. M. Sandvik, in his article on Norwegian music, points to the fact that Norwegian country churches were without organs, which implied that the official choral music was ‘adapted to the native musical material. Many of these adaptations have become splendid imaginative poetic creations.’ Sandvik, “Norwegian Music,” 61.

33. The composer Ludvig M. Lindeman became one of the pioneers of what Sandvik characterizes as a 'national revival.' Lindeman's collected melodies from the rural districts, which 'proved that a treasure of native tunes had survived through the Danish period', had 'followed the peasant in his daily life in work and play.' This renaissance had 'deep roots in the centuries when politically we slept.' Sandvik, "Norwegian Music," 59–60.
34. Sandvik, "Norwegian Music," 63.
35. This perspective first emerged in a debate in the Norwegian public sphere in the 1830s, and in the 1850s developed into a fractious debate between conservative and radical-liberal historians that culminated in the 1880s. The debate centred on two questions: How should the period when Norway was subordinated to the Danish throne be incorporated into the Norwegian historical narrative? Who represented the continuity of Norwegian history – the peasants or the civil-servant class that had developed as the societal elite during the Danish period? The answers that were given to these questions reflected two opposing positions on what the further development of the national culture should be based on: either the imported high culture from the period of the Danish–Norwegian Union or the old, historically inherited 'folk' culture. Fulsås, *Historie og nasjon*, 133ff.
36. Sejersted, "Approaches to Modern Norwegian History," 156.
37. Glover, *National Relations*, 62.
38. *Ibid.*, 62–69.
39. The 'Saga period' indicates the period of time covered in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* (*Sagas of the Old Norwegian Kings*). Bull, "Norwegian Literature During 1000 Years," 33.
40. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 89; Thue, *In Quest of a Democratic Social Order*, 164.
41. Glover, *National Relations*, 61; Östling, "Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget," 34.
42. See Kobberrød, "Sverre Steen. Sosialdemokratiets historieforteller," 235ff.
43. "The Editor, 'The Norseman'," 5.
44. Bull, "Norwegian Literature During 1000 Years," 30–31.
45. Louis Clerc and Nikolas Glover claim that 'total' consensual national images constitute a central 'tool kit' in portrayals of small nations. Clerc and Glover, "Representing the Small States of Northern Europe," 10.
46. For a comparative outline of historiography in the Nordic countries in this period, see Aronsson et al., "Nordic National Histories," 272ff.
47. Angell, *Den svenske modellen og det norske systemet*, 27ff. See also Aronsson et al., "Nordic National Histories, 257.
48. Marklund, "The Social Laboratory, the Middle Way and the Swedish Model," 269.
49. Glover, *National Relations*, 65.
50. Halén, "Introduction," 7–8.
51. Angell, "Norges omdømme som kulturland er høyt," 101–02.
52. Office for Cultural Relations, "Riksteateret". Environmental conditions were also presented as key determining factors for Norwegian manufacturing and design. See Aars, *Norwegian Arts and Crafts*.
53. Office for Cultural Relations, "Norsk Bygdekino," 5.
54. In the book *Norway: An Introduction to the Main Branches of the Norwegian Economy*, published by the OCR in 1957, it is for instance claimed that a combination of individualism and cooperation in 'nearly every important field of economic and social endeavour' accounts for Norway's advantageous economic conditions and its egalitarian society. Knudsen, *Norway*, 8. See also Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 95.
55. Wiley, *The Organization and Administration of the Educational System of Norway*, 14.
56. Boyesen, "Foreword," 15.
57. Thue, "A Modernized Historical Consciousness?," 347.
58. Kobberrød, "Sverre Steen. Sosialdemokratiets historieforteller," 207ff.
59. *Ibid.*, 235ff.
60. Kurunmäki and Strang, "Introduction," 18–19.
61. Steen, "The Democratic Spirit in Norway," 142–43.
62. *Ibid.*, 144.

63. *Ibid.*, 149.
64. Kurunmäki and Strang, "Introduction," 19.
65. Sejersted, "Approaches to Modern Norwegian History," 159.
66. Kobberrød, "Sverre Steen. Sosialdemokratiets historieforteller," 239ff.
67. Storing, *Norwegian Democracy*, 11.
68. *Ibid.*, viii; See also 1ff.
69. During the 1920s and 1930s, several buildings inspired by functionalism were erected in Norway. Brekke, Nordhagen and Lexau, *Norsk arkitekturhistorie*, 308ff. Norwegian functionalism was also portrayed in *The Norseman* during World War II. Kavli, "Functionalism and Norwegian Architecture," 337ff.
70. Askeland, *A Survey of Norwegian Painting*, 79.
71. Danbolt, *Norsk kunsthistorie*, 231.
72. Gaukstad, *Edvard Grieg*, 7.
73. *Ibid.*, 4.
74. Winsnes, "Norwegian Literature in the Years of Crisis," 272–73.
75. Mattes, "No Escape from Politics?," 115.
76. *Ibid.*, 120.
77. The international position of Grieg was, for instance, discussed in the report on the activities of the OCR in the period 1950–1955. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 96.
78. Østvedt, *Music and Musicians in Norway Today*, 5.
79. *Ibid.*, 6.
80. *Ibid.*, 9.
81. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 97–98. This is also a subtext in Østvedt's narrative: He does not divulge outright that Monrad Johansen – who fronted the new wave of 'Grieg-Romanticism' in the interwar period – had joined the Norwegian Nazi party during World War II. What he does write, however, is that Monrad Johansen's best work is the symphonic poem *Pan*, 'in honour of Knut Hamsun's eightieth birthday' in 1939. Landmark, "Ideas of National Music in Interwar Norway," 53–54. Hamsun was probably Norway's best-known Nazi, which was generally acknowledged in Norway as well as internationally in the early 1960s. Rem, *Knut Hamsun*, 327ff.
82. Landmark, "Ideas of National Music in Interwar Norway," 53.
83. Barnishel, *Cold War Modernists*, 27.
84. Heiberg, *Norwegian Literature Anno 1965*, 11.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, 12.
87. Thue, "Å bemektige seg fortiden," 103.
88. In 1963, Jens Arup Seip – the chief protagonist for these views among Norwegian historians – published the essay "Nasjonalisme som vikarierende motiv" [Nationalism as a Substitute Motif]. See Sejersted, "Approaches to Modern Norwegian History," 156ff.
89. Thue, "A Modernized Historical Consciousness?," 324ff.
90. In several analyses of Norwegian historiography, it is claimed that the main narrative on Norwegian history is elastic, in the sense that it has gradually incorporated new elements. Heiret og Ryymin, "Kapittel 13. Konklusjon," 345.
91. Norway had recently applied for membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Against such a background, it was claimed that it was seen as crucial that Norway was able to inform the international community about its economy. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 99.
92. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 99; Stortinget, "St. meld. nr. 74, 1972–73: 6–10".
93. Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 99; see also Glover, *National Relations*, 138ff.
94. Eriksen and Pharo, *Kald krig og internasjonalisering*, 112–14.
95. Stortinget, "St. meld. nr. 74, 1972–73: 6–10.»
96. Sataøen, "Frå folkeopplysning til omdømmehandtering?," 126.

97. The activity of the OCR had been reported on to the Norwegian parliament every fifth year since 1950. The historical narratives in use in portrayals of Norway had never been an issue in these reports or in the parliamentary debates on them. See Stortinget, "St. meld. nr. 78, 1956; "St. meld. nr. 63, 1960–61; "St. meld. nr. 77, 1966–67.
98. Stortingsforhandling, 1974, 2281.
99. Stortingsforhandling 7B 1973–74, 2289; see also Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations," 100.
100. Clerc and Glover, "Representing the Small States of Northern Europe," 11.
101. Ibid.

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