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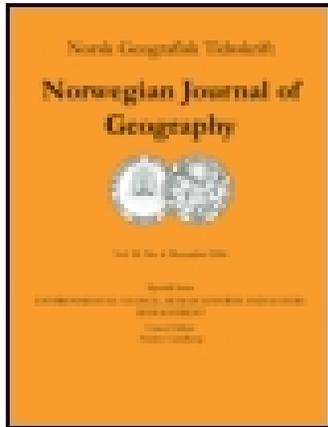
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Daugstad, Karoline. 2000. *Mellom romantikk og realisme. Om seterlands-kapet som ideal og realitet*. Summary: Between romanticism and realism. The summer farm landscape as ideal and reality. Dr.polit. avhandling, Geografisk institutt, Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap og teknologiledelse, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, NTNU, Trondheim. 494 s. ISBN 82-471-5010-7

The past decade has seen increasing interest in the concept of cultural landscapes in the Scandinavian countries. From being a term used by a narrow group of specialists, the term *kulturlandskap* has now become a broadly used word with positive, although only vaguely defined, connotations. It is used by the broad public, by farmers and conservationists, and even by those government administrations that only recently concentrated their efforts on increasing agricultural or forestry production while showing little interest in landscape values. This change has come about as an effect of new food policies and, for Denmark and Sweden, membership of the European Union. A number of economic incentives have been introduced with the aim of preserving relict features in 'traditional' farming landscapes. Stone walls, clearance cairns, small and unproductive arable fields, natural hay meadows and other landscape elements now have monetary value for the individual farmer and generate work for officials in the agricultural administration.

This development has created a demand for methods for valuing landscapes. In this context one has had to struggle with a problematic inheritance from inventories of fauna, flora and geology and valuations of landscapes undertaken in the name of scientific nature management, where it has been assumed that conservation values can be measured objectively and quantitatively. Now that cultural landscapes have come into focus, it has been more or less explicitly assumed that it is similarly possible to quantify the values of historical man-made landscapes or at least subject them to objective judgement.

Karoline Daugstad's work should be seen within this context. She raises questions concerning: 'How landscape values are created, how ideals change and persist and what effect these ideals have on various actors' (p.v). She focuses on the most Norwegian of all Norwegian landscape types, the *seters* (summer farms), usually located in sparsely settled mountainous areas above the tree line, but also present in forests closer to the permanent settlement. Daugstad discusses how the *seter* and especially life on the mountain *seter* are intrinsically interwoven with Norwegian national identity. In her thesis she shows that most outsiders who today visit *seters*, or who as members of government bodies decide about the future of *seter* farming, do so with the images, views and values of *seter* life based on representations created by artists, authors and scientists from the 18th century onwards. An effect of these powerful representations is that present-day *seter* farming is assessed and appreciated primarily as aesthetics, as image and scenery rather than as social environment and lived space.

It is thus the visual side of *seter* landscapes rather than the historical, functional and social role of *seter* farming that has been subsidised by recent financial support for *seters*. As an example of this, the less picturesque woodland *seters*, as well as modern *seters* operated by several owners in common (*fellessetre*), were until 1996 not covered by these agricultural subsidies, which were limited to the more picturesque mountain *seters*. Daugstad's view is that landscape ideals have, through the subsidies, played an important part in the forming of the physical *seter* landscapes of today.

The work explicitly aims to provide a synthesis of image and reality, of the mental and the material aspects of *seter* landscapes. Daugstad thus situates her work between two ways of looking at landscapes within present-day geography (p. 8): on the one hand, a landscape concept associated with 'the wealthy classes of Europe who commissioned paintings' and, on the other, concerned with 'how rural peasants encoded their cultural values on the land' (Duncan 1995, 414). Daugstad wants to show how 'the *seter* landscape is both a physical reality and an element in the "production" of ideals and identities' (p. 19, reviewer's translation).

Daugstad's introduction clearly places the thesis in the context of research on Norwegian cultural landscape policies. At the same time it is situated close to the research frontier of humanistic landscape studies in geography. The author introduces her standpoint through three introductory chapters, which give a good introduction to recent trends in (the 'new') cultural geography,

the role of art and landscape in creating national identity, and the concepts of nature and culture. The argument is sustained through a broad-reaching, and well-illustrated, investigation of different kinds of *seter* representation through time – in artistic, literary and scientific work. The reproduction of landscape values as viewed by government bodies and other actors is studied, and exemplified with empirical studies in three *seter* areas. This provides an impressive collection of different kinds of representation of *seters*. However, in her treatment of the representations, Daugstad keeps close either to the original works or to previous academic work on them. One is thus left with the art historian's view of the paintings and the literary historian's view of the literary works. The social context of the paintings and their distribution is dealt with only in passing. We learn that Dsseldorf was a commercially attractive place for the Norwegian painters (p. 42), but it is left for the reader to figure out how images and values communicated in expensive paintings later reached a broader Norwegian audience and were finally integrated in the tourist information. Nonetheless, with her broad empirical coverage, Daugstad facilitates the reader's own explorations of such possible connections. We find, for example, a reproduction of a tourist brochure with a drawing depicting a glacier approaching a small cottage (p. 399), mimicking closely the famous painting *Under Nigårdsbreen* by J. C. Dahl (p. 144). We also learn that Dahl's oil paintings were copied in drawings printed in books already in the 1840s (p. 240). The paintings from mid 19th century were still used in academic books in the 1950s and 1960s to illustrate *seter* farming (p. 307). Concepts for the analysis of visual communication, such as semiotics and iconography, are introduced in the thesis, but not developed. The analysis would have benefited from a more thorough treatment of these concepts and approaches.

Daugstad shows that even academic and scientific work played an important part in the production of a romantic view of *seter* life. The chapter on academic representations could have led to a broader discussion of the historical and ideological contexts of academic production in different periods and perhaps a clearer link to previous studies in the history of ideas and science.

The interviews carried out at three different *seters* show clearly the role of the scenic in the expectations and the values expressed by especially tourists and owners of second homes. When tourists describe the *seter* landscape, paintings (sometimes even the frames!) clearly set the standard for what is perceived and liked. The appreciations of *seter* landscapes among tourists and second home owners range from those who prefer the milkmaids to be dressed in national costume (!) to those who realise that a living *seter* landscape also implies milkmaids in overalls.

The thesis is sustained by an original and creative idea. The broad empirical coverage serves to convince how landscape ideals, created and reproduced through literature and science, have come to dominate public administration and the different systems of subsidies. The process is captured in a heading in the final chapter: 'The landscape becomes the painting – and the painting becomes the landscape'. The work provides a comprehensive coverage of how the Norwegian *seter* has been represented during the last three centuries. This is set in the context of a well-written overview of recent international research on landscape, national identity and art. The balance might be questioned between, on the one hand, the voluminous descriptions of different representations and, on the other, the less frequent analyses of these representations and of the processes that create and reproduce landscape values. The work would have benefited from more of the latter. However, this does not overshadow the fact that Daugstad has published a strong and well-documented argument, which will influence our thinking about landscape values and conservation efforts in the years to come.

Reference

Duncan, James. 1995. Landscape geography, 1993–94. *Progress in Human Geography* 19:3, 414–422.

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