

Translating a Nordic Journey: Léonie d'Aunet in Norway

Janicke S. Kaasa

University of Oslo / Oslo Metropolitan University

In the spring and summer of 1839, the young Frenchwoman Léonie d'Aunet (1820–79) made her way from Paris through the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, before finally joining the corvette of the *La Recherche* expedition on its route from Hammerfest in northern Norway to the wild, remote island of Spitsbergen in the High Arctic.

The fact that a young, unmarried woman went along on this expedition, and at a time when women were not allowed on ships owned by the French government, is quite remarkable.

D'Aunet herself was well aware of the exceptionality of her endeavour. In her later account of this journey, entitled *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg* (1854), she writes: “L'intérêt de mon récit croitra à mesure que je m'avancerai sous les latitudes élevées de notre vieille Europe; arrivée là, j'aurai, à défaut d'autre, le mérite de l'originalité, étant la seule femme qui ait jamais entrepris un semblable voyage”.¹ Indeed, d'Aunet's account is considered among the very first descriptions of northern Scandinavia and Spitsbergen written by a woman, and d'Aunet's exceptionality is echoed in both the French and Norwegian reception of the text.

The Norwegian translation of d'Aunet's text, which will be the point of interest in this chapter, was done by Geneviève Jul-Larsen and published in 1968 under the title *En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen anno 1838* (A Parisienne's journey through Norway to Spitzbergen in the year 1838). Nils M. Knutsen observes that d'Aunet's account received little attention in Norway, both when it was first published in book form in French in 1854 and when it appeared in Norwegian more than a century later.² One of the reasons for

this lack of interest, Knutsen argues, is the *La Recherche* expedition's focus on the *northern* parts of Norway, which differed from the emphasis on the capital Oslo (formerly Christiania) and its surrounding areas in the southeast in Norwegian public debate throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³ Thus, the expedition's northern destination, which is precisely what makes d'Aunet's journey and text so exceptional, may partly explain why both the expedition and d'Aunet have gone relatively unnoticed in Norway.⁴

The fact that d'Aunet's text travelled from France to Norway and from French to Norwegian, however, *does* testify to a certain, albeit late, impact on Norwegian public debate. The present chapter explores this impact, focusing on the Norwegian translation and reception of d'Aunet's text in order to demonstrate how her account of her Nordic journey changes when it is made available to a Norwegian audience. By examining significant differences between the original and the translation, I draw attention to how d'Aunet's rendering of her Nordic journey is slightly altered in the Norwegian (con)text. My main argument is that these changes in the Norwegian translation have an impact on how the Nordic region is presented and illustrate some of the ways in which translation influences the depiction of the traveller, the travel experience as well as the travelled regions.

In what follows, I present some important aspects of *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg* before I go on to discuss the circumstances of, and changes in, the Norwegian translation of d'Aunet's text and their effects on the portrayal of the Nordic region.

Nordic letters from a female traveller

The *La Recherche* expedition (1838–40) was a French Admiralty expedition whose destination was the North Atlantic and Nordic islands, including the Faroe Islands, Spitsbergen and Iceland. Part of a series of three scientific expeditions, it was led by French

scientist Paul Gaimard (1796–1858) and involved scientists and artists from France, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. As Peter Fjågesund notes, the expedition was – and still is – rare in its “cross-disciplinary approach” and its concern “with the historical, anthropological and aesthetic dimensions of life in the Far North”,⁵ which resulted in an extensive number of publications within varied fields and genres.

D’Aunet joined the expedition on its second attempt to reach Spitsbergen together with her fiancé François-Auguste Biard (1798–1882), who went as one of the painters of the expedition.⁶ From Paris they travelled by land via Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Copenhagen, and then along the Swedish coast before arriving in Christiania. From there, they went through Østerdalen and reached Trondheim, where they boarded the steamer *Prinds Gustav* on its route via Tromsø to Hammerfest. D’Aunet then boarded the French corvette in Hammerfest on 15 July 1839, briefly after her nineteenth birthday. More than a decade later, and shortly before her marriage to Biard was annulled in 1855 due to her extramarital relationship with author Victor Hugo, d’Aunet’s account was first published in the literary magazine *Revue de Paris* in August 1852 as a feuilleton entitled “Voyage d’une femme au pôle arctique, Suède et Norvège”.⁷ Two years later, it appeared in book form as *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg*.⁸ The book became a huge success: It was reissued seven times,⁹ and parts were translated and published in the British magazine *Bentley’s Miscellany* (September 1858) and in the New York-based *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (December 1858).

D’Aunet’s text is composed as nine letters addressed to “M. Léon Edouard de Boynest, à New York”, whom she addresses as “mon cher frère” in the beginning of the first letter.¹⁰ Léon de Boynest was d’Aunet’s half-brother, who was twelve years old at the time she undertook her Nordic journey, and who had been dead for three years when the book was published in 1854.¹¹ As several scholars have pointed out, these letters are predominantly a

stylistic device, in tune with genre conventions at the time. The brother as a (male) addressee serves primarily as a pretext, providing more lightness to the descriptive and informative passages, and, more importantly, enabling d'Aunet to disarm the readers of the fact that she is a young and still unmarried woman at the time she embarks on her journey.¹² Indeed, the argument that the letters are a stylistic device is strengthened by the fact that there are very few references to the brother in the letters, and that he gradually disappears altogether.¹³

Letters have of course been central to the genre of travel writing from early on, influenced by the epistolary form of the eighteenth-century novel. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) is an earlier and well-known example of this influence.¹⁴ In common with Wollstonecraft's text, the epistolary form helps d'Aunet establish a personal and subjective outlook that surely forms a contrast to the scientific writings published in the wake of the expedition.¹⁵ The letters create the impression of a certain immediacy and intimacy between the author-narrator and the brother and, by implication, the reader. Moreover, they underline d'Aunet not merely as a traveller, but as a traveller who *writes*: besides referring to her letter writing, she reflects upon writing more generally and on her ability, or rather inability, to render her experiences in writing.

In her discussion of genre and gender in nineteenth-century travel writing, Wendy Mercer links the formal aspects of d'Aunet's text to her role on the expedition, and argues that the fact that the account is made up of letters to her brother underlines d'Aunet's role as a tourist.¹⁶ Vincent Fournier, too, considers d'Aunet a kind of tourist and places her as one of the first in the lineage of this new type of traveller emerging in the 1850s, namely that of the tourist or "le voyageur dilettante" (the amateur traveller) who becomes key to the circulation of certain stereotypes of the North.¹⁷ Nonetheless, as Fournier also points out, d'Aunet is not yet a proper tourist.¹⁸ Although she is a leisure traveller and does not have any tasks on the ship, she participates in a scientific expedition. As a result, she travels to places that are far

from touristy, such as when she visits the mines in Kåfjord, Norway, and later in Falun, Sweden, where she reflects upon how it is for the men, these “martyrs de la pauvreté”, working down there in the darkness.¹⁹ Moreover, she makes several references to earlier explorations in the Nordic region and often mentions the expedition’s scientific research, while she admits that she does not fully comprehend each and every detail of it. She is also a keen observer and commentator, making comparisons between her own culture and the Nordic region, as well as between the different people she sees and the places she visits. As such, d’Aunet often assumes an authority that exceeds that of the “mere” tourist, even though her observations are grounded in the personal, subjective outlook facilitated by the epistolary form.

As much as d’Aunet’s assumed status as a tourist might have influenced the epistolary form of *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg*, she could probably not have written about her experiences in any other way, except for perhaps as a diary. As Clare B. Saunders argues, it is indeed through “the manipulation and negotiation of personal narrative forms” such as letters and diaries that women gradually gained access to public debate, including the discourse of travel and the travel writing genre.²⁰ It should be noted that Xavier Marmier, who was the official reporter of the *La Recherche* expedition, also published his account from the journey in epistolary form, entitled *Lettres sur le Nord: Danemark, Suède, Norvège, Laponie et Spitzberg* in 1840.²¹ Marmier’s letters are, on the other hand, addressed to the author Antoine de Latour and of a far less domestic and personal character. Evidently, as the expedition’s official reporter, Marmier had certain obligations to keep his writings in a scientific, objective discourse. Even so, the difference between the two travellers’ letters corresponds also to the various and gendered ways in which “truth” is asserted in travel writing and to what Saunders refers to as a “‘masculine’, objective rhetoric” and “‘feminine’, subjective, private forms of writing”.²² The objective and scientific discourse was at the time when d’Aunet wrote about

her journey simply not available for female travellers in the same way that it was for male travellers.

“Women’s travel writing is [...] a complex, varied and fluid area”, Saunders reminds us, cautioning against pigeonholing female travellers and their experiences and texts.²³ Yet what characterizes many of these accounts, at least in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is precisely their emphasis on the experience of being a female traveller. Evidently, in *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg*, this experience is enforced by the fact that d’Aunet is the only woman on the expedition and one of the very first women to venture so far north. As I pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, she highlights these circumstances repeatedly. Visiting Magdalenefjorden in Spitsbergen, for example, she dwells on the fact that her name, a woman’s name, is engraved on a stone together with the names of the male expedition members, and later, upon her return to Hammerfest, she declares: “Si vous aviez pu me voir alors, vous m’eussiez trouvée bien pâle et bien maigrie, mais vous auriez eu, j’espère, quelque considération pour une femme ayant fait un voyage que nulle n’avait entrepris encore, at que nulle autre ne fera après, j’ose le prévoir”.²⁴ Thus, d’Aunet calls attention to her extraordinary feat as a woman throughout her descriptions of her arduous Nordic journey.

Despite d’Aunet’s exceptionality, her account still draws on familiar motifs and topoi from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writing (by both male and female authors) on the Nordic region.²⁵ Her portrayal of the Sami population, for example, is mainly unfavourable and condescending, and comparable to the colonialist rhetoric that dominates such a large part of nineteenth-century travel writing.²⁶ Moreover, and reminiscent of passages from Wollstonecraft’s *Letters*, d’Aunet often invokes a romantic imagery in her renderings of the Nordic landscape. She compares the scenery at Spitsbergen to ruins and cities of ice made up by spires, pyramids and arcades cast in prehistoric times.²⁷ In a similar vein, she refers to Magdalenefjorden as a magical and beautiful but also apocalyptic and

frightening place, “remplit d’un indicible sentiment, mélange d’épouvante et d’admiration!”.²⁸

In this way, *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg* shares many similarities with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writing’s discourse on the Nordic region, even though the traveller herself stands out.

Translating the Nordic journey

The Norwegian translation of d’Aunet’s text appeared in 1968 – 114 years after the French book publication – and its background and initial circumstances seem somewhat incidental. The translation itself was initiated by the chartered translator Geneviève Jul-Larsen. On 31 March 1967, she sent a letter with a copy of d’Aunet’s book in French to publishing editor Jakob Brinchmann at the Aschehoug publishing house in Oslo, referring to their informal meeting the previous summer.²⁹ In his response, Brinchmann writes that although it is rare for Aschehoug to publish old books suggested by others, they are grateful for the initiative and plan to publish an abridged translation of d’Aunet’s text in 1968. Moreover, he invites Jul-Larsen to send a translation sample if she is interested in the assignment.³⁰ Jul-Larsen, who had no previous (or later) experience with literary translation, accepted the offer and submitted her final manuscript to the publisher on 16 November 1967, and *En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen anno 1838* was published in September 1968. The ways in which this text makes it into Norwegian and is made available for a Norwegian audience, then, are rather haphazard: The changes made in the translation, however, seem less so.

In her discussion of translation and travel writing, Susan Bassnett points out how they both “involve a conscious manipulation of material, whether that material exists as a written text in another language or whether it consists of an account of an individual’s journey”.³¹ This observation surely underlines how we may approach the issues of translation and travel

writing with many of the same questions. These questions are no less relevant when it comes to travel writing that has been translated into new languages for new readerships in new historical and cultural contexts. They become even more specific in this case because Jul-Larsen translates d'Aunet's Nordic journey for a Nordic, and more specifically Norwegian, audience.

Following Bassnett's discussion of translation and travel writing as manipulation, it makes sense to study the *manipulations in the translation of travel writing* and consider the possible effects of these manipulations on the presentation of the traveller's experience and the regions where he or she travels. Moreover, we should consider these manipulations in relation to Bassnett's point that "both travel writing and translation are target-oriented, since both are aimed at a domestic readership".³² In the translation of d'Aunet's text, the possible manipulations of the depiction of the Nordic region will be of particular interest, since it addresses a Norwegian and thus partly a Nordic readership. As Loredana Polezzi observes in her study of Italian travel writing in English translation, both travel writing and translation are written for a home readership, influenced "by the norms and expectations operating in the target culture".³³ As we shall see, the fact that d'Aunet's text in translation is aimed at a new domestic readership and target culture, namely the Norwegian one, has indeed an effect on how the translator presents d'Aunet's travel experience and the Nordic region.

Several differences reveal themselves in the comparison of the French original and Norwegian translation.³⁴ Some are plain errors, the most striking example being the publisher's mention of the year 1838 rather than 1839 in the title (the year itself is not mentioned by d'Aunet, so the publisher would have had to rely on extratextual information). More conspicuous, however, are the alterations that seem to be more deliberate. This too, we find in the title, in the change from the French *femme* to the Norwegian *pariserinne* (a Parisienne) as well as in the inclusion of "reise gjennom Norge" (journey through Norway).

The explicit mention of Norway in the title is most likely to make the book more relevant and attractive to the new target audience, namely Norwegian readers. Like the title of the French original, however, the Norwegian title mentions “Spitsbergen”, the northernmost – and most extraordinary – destination of d’Aunet’s journey.

The change from *femme* to *pariserinne* has a somewhat different effect but also accentuates certain characteristics of Norway, although more indirectly. It keeps the emphasis on the author’s gender but also accentuates d’Aunet’s urbanity and her origins in the French metropolis. We find the same emphasis in the publisher’s press release, where the contrast between d’Aunet and the Nordic landscape and climate in which she travels is insisted upon again and again: “Det er nesten utrolig at den vevre lille *pariserinnen* tålte en slik påkjenning og enda kunne fortelle levende og morsomt om det hun opplevde”.³⁵ In this way, the change to *pariserinne* in the title, echoed in the press release, serves to highlight the contrast between the urban traveller and the rural, exotic region she visits.

There are further variations in the translation of the main text, one of them being the additional fading of d’Aunet’s brother as the addressee of the letters. For example, the reference to “Léon de Boynest” and the address to “mon cher frère” have both been cut from the beginning of the Norwegian translation. As mentioned earlier, the brother plays an increasingly smaller role in the French original: In the third letter describing the journey from Christiania to Trondheim, for example, he is mentioned only in the very first sentence, while he in the fifth letter on Lapland is not mentioned at all, and from then only rarely.³⁶ While the brother gradually fades out in the French original, he is even less present in the Norwegian translation. Indeed, the short preface concludes with a reference to the fact that the book is written as letters to d’Aunet’s brother, but he is hardly ever addressed in the Norwegian translation.³⁷ His almost complete nonappearance contributes to undermine an important aspect of d’Aunet’s original text, which adds to the domestic and familiar framework of her

writing. Even so, the Norwegian translation keeps the many references to the second person, addressing the “du” (you) throughout. As such, the translation strengthens perhaps the focus on the (Norwegian) reader and thus on the new target audience.

Such a catering to a Norwegian readership is further noticeable in the Norwegian reception of the translation, which often and not surprisingly emphasizes d’Aunet’s descriptions of Norway and Norwegians. This is, for example, evident in several of the reviews of the Norwegian version, whose titles – “Gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen for vel 100 år siden”; “Eksotisk dame gjennom Norge i 1838”; “Pariserinne i Norge og på Spitsbergen” – signal their focus on the Norwegian parts of d’Aunet’s journey.³⁸ In particular, the reviewers paraphrase or quote from her observations of the Norwegian landscape and not least her reflections on Norwegians themselves.

A more radical difference is that the Norwegian translation has been significantly shortened, as Brinchmann also predicted in his correspondence to Jul-Larsen. For one, the number of letters has been reduced from nine in the French original to eight in the Norwegian translation. Furthermore, the first letter on the journey from Paris to Hamburg has been chopped by approximately three quarters, meaning that twenty-two of twenty-eight pages have been cut. Like the original, the first letter of the Norwegian translation begins on board the ship *Willem de Eerste* on its way to Hamburg, but it leaves out d’Aunet’s account of the journey through France, the Netherlands and Germany, omitting large parts of her stay in Rotterdam and of her journey to Hamburg.³⁹ Like the original, the beginning of the second letter places d’Aunet in Christiania, but it omits the eight pages describing her journey from Hamburg to Kiel, and from Kiel to Copenhagen, jumping instead rather abruptly to her contemplations on Copenhagen as a capital.⁴⁰ Moreover, the original’s ninth and final letter on her travels in eastern Sweden before returning home through Prussia has been significantly

reduced, passing over her travels through Greifswald to Berlin, whereas the original's eighth letter on Finland has been excised altogether from the Norwegian translation.

The shortening of the original text and the wholesale omission of the letter on Finland serve a similar purpose as the translation's Norway-centric title, namely a more coherent focus on Norway and Norwegians. (We recognize a similar mechanism in the Finnish translation of d'Aunet's text, published in 1977, which renders only the parts of the overland journey from Hammerfest towards the Finnish port of Tornio, thus almost exclusively focusing on d'Aunet's travels and experiences in northern Finland.⁴¹) The strengthened focus on the Norwegian parts of d'Aunet's Nordic journey in Jul-Larsen's translation surely has an impact on d'Aunet's descriptions of the Nordic region, playing down the Nordic and Northern European context in favour of her journey to, and experiences in, Norway. Another consequence is that most of d'Aunet's arrivals and departures throughout her text have simply been cut, such as her arrival in Rotterdam or her departure from Tornio.⁴² Indeed, d'Aunet herself left out several of her arrivals and departures in the French original, too: As she writes in the beginning of her second letter, her journey from Hamburg towards Copenhagen has been hurried and so parts of her account cannot be but superficial.⁴³ Yet these arrivals and departures are even further reduced in the Norwegian translation, and many of her movements to, between and within the Nordic countries are played down, except for those that are extraordinarily fatiguing such as her journey over the Finnmarksvidda plateau and, of course, the sailing to Spitsbergen.

These omissions certainly illustrate the manipulation Bassnett refers to in her discussion of travel writing and translation, changing the very structure of d'Aunet's journey and narrative. Jul-Larsen's translation plays down the getting around and the liminal spaces in between, highlighting instead the leaving and having arrived. As a result, there are far more ruptures and less continuity in how the Norwegian translation portrays d'Aunet's journey.

Moreover, the exclusions in the translation narrow down the geographical scope of d'Aunet's journey and text. Evidently, the lapses in how the translation presents d'Aunet's travels through the European continent and Finland, strengthen the focus on Norway. It also downplays the geographical continuities between the continent and Norway, between the continent and the Nordic region, as well as within this region, consolidating the idea of the remote and isolated North. To be sure, the North – and Spitsbergen especially – that d'Aunet travelled to was *not* easily accessible. Yet the many additional gaps in d'Aunet's travelling towards and from the North in the translation undermine the continuity of her movements and of the regions through which she is moving.

Several of the semantic changes in the translation also moderate the geographical continuities between d'Aunet's Paris and the Nordic region. One example is the passage, quoted in the introduction to this chapter, in which d'Aunet refers to her journey and account as becoming more interesting as she moves to the higher latitudes of “notre vieille Europe” (our old Europe).⁴⁴ The Norwegian translation of this passage keeps the reference to d'Aunet's travelling north, as well as her exceptionality, but leaves out the mention of old Europe: “Jo lenger nord vi kommer, desto mer spennende blir historien, og da jeg er den første kvinne til å dra på en slik ferd blir skildringen, om ikke annet, enestående i sitt slag”.⁴⁵ In common with the omissions discussed above, such changes serve to downplay Norway's (and the Nordic region's) continuities with and affiliation to “our old Europe”, both geographically and culturally.

Travelling ideas of the Nordic

My ambition in this chapter has been to explore the ways in which translation of travel writing has an impact on the depiction of the traveller, the travel experience, and the travelled

regions, through the example of the Norwegian translation of *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg*. Among the most significant changes in Jul-Larsen's translation, I have argued, are the increased emphasis on the Norwegian parts of her journey, resulting in a narrowed geographical focus, as well as the downplaying of the continuousness of her movements north. These manipulations are not surprising: Evidently, the translation caters to a Norwegian audience, as does the publisher's press release when it highlights how readers recognize the Norwegian roads in what is presented as a "sjarmerende, fornøylig bok, full av en ung verdensdames treffende betraktninger om Ola Nordmann og U-landet Norge anno 1838".⁴⁶

Both travel writing and translation, Polezzi remarks, are "dictated by the demands of the target readership".⁴⁷ In the case of *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg*, the original and the translation address and cater to different readerships within different historical, cultural, and geographical contexts, namely French readers in the second half of the nineteenth century and Norwegian readers in the second half of the twentieth century. As a result, the original and the translation give somewhat different accounts of d'Aunet's Nordic journey and of the Nordic region, due to the choices of *what* is translated and *how*. Indeed, the variations we find in Jul-Larsen's translation testify to the fact that the idea of the Nordic region is fluid and adaptable and that it changes with new target readerships and new target cultures.

The variations between d'Aunet's original text and Jul-Larsen's translation are certainly understandable. Nevertheless, they raise important questions regarding the effect of such variations and the possible ideological implications of both deliberate and undeliberate manipulations that drastically change the narrative structure and semantics of the text. In the case of this specific translation, these questions have become even more urgent with the recent release of *En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen anno 1838* as an audiobook, issued by the Norwegian publisher Cappelen Damm in 2021.⁴⁸ The audiobook, the publisher informs us, is a reading of Jul-Larsen's translation. Moreover, d'Aunet's travelogue

is presented by the publisher as a testimony and as a document of historical and ethnographical value.⁴⁹ Indeed, these characteristics are appropriate. Yet, the audiobook presents a testimony and document that has been altered quite heavily by translation, a fact that is not commented upon by the publisher. In this way, d'Aunet's account continues to circulate in the Norwegian context and is made available to Norwegian readers in abridged form.

The Norwegian translation of *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg*, then, has an impact on not only the portrayal of d'Aunet and her journey but also on the Nordic region to and through which she travels. In my view, Jul-Larsen's translation demonstrates the importance of studying travel writing in translation in order to understand how depictions of places circulate and change when they are translated into new languages, cultures and periods. Not least is this the case when the translations target the readership and culture that are the subject of the original text: Jul-Larsen translates – and, in Bassnett's terms, manipulates – d'Aunet's account on the Nordic region “back” to a Nordic, and more specifically Norwegian, audience. In this way, translation plays a vital part not least because new target audiences contribute to shaping and altering travel writing's rendering of place: D'Aunet's Nordic journey and the Nordic region she visits are simply not the same in the Norwegian translation as they are in the French original.

Notes

¹ Léonie d'Aunet, *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg* (Paris: Hachette, 1854), p. 5: “The interest of my account will increase as I advance to the higher latitudes of our old Europe: there, I will, in the lack of others, have the merit of originality in being the only woman who has ever undertaken a similar voyage”. Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are mine.

² Nils M. Knutsen, “La Recherche (1838–1840). Den store ekspedisjonen som Norge glemte”, *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, ed. by Johan Schimanski, Cathrine Theodorsen and Henning Howlid Wærp (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), p. 52. My search for the original title (“Voyage d'une femme”) in the digital newspaper archives of the National Library of Norway generates only 15 results in Norwegian newspapers between 1856 and 2011, whereas my search for the translated title (“En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge”) generates 321 results between 1968 and 2013. Both the original text and the translation are mentioned in

several of these results. As such, and although the digital archives are not complete, the results for the translated title modify Knutsen's claim that it has been overlooked in Norway.

³ Knutsen 2011, p. 52. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons for this lack of interest, but it is worth mentioning that Spitsbergen was not a part of Norway at the time of d'Aunet's travelling and writing.

⁴ The expedition has gone relatively unnoticed in France, too. See for example Knutsen 2011, pp. 51–52.

⁵ Peter Fjågesund, *The Dream of the North: A Cultural History to 1920* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 354. For more information about the expedition, see for example Nils M. Knutsen and Per Posti, *La Recherche. En ekspedisjon mot nord* (Tromsø: Angelica, 2002); Knutsen 2011, pp. 31–54; Fjågesund 2014.

⁶ The circumstances of d'Aunet joining the expedition are rendered in her text, where she in a conversation with Gaimard in Paris expresses a desire to travel north. Gaimard replies that if she manages to persuade her fiancé Biard to come along as one of the landscape painters, he will make sure that she can join too. This scene diverges from the more general understanding that it was either King Louis Philippe I, who had visited Scandinavia and Finland in 1795, who wanted Biard on the expedition, or that it was Gaimard who approached d'Aunet. In d'Aunet's account, however, *she* plays the active part in her own and her fiancé's participation. Although it is obvious that her possibility of joining the expedition is as Biard's future wife, she underplays this fact throughout, and Biard is very rarely referred to (I have found only four direct references to "mon mari").

⁷ When d'Aunet and Hugo's relationship was exposed in 1845 (it began in 1843; d'Aunet had married Biard in 1840), it caused a great scandal: D'Aunet was arrested for adultery and served two months in the Prison Saint-Lazare, while Hugo was let go after invoking his immunity as a recently appointed member of the Chamber of Peers. According to Dunlaith Bird, *Voyage d'une femme au Spitzberg* was partly published to "support d'Aunet and her children after her imprisonment for adultery", see Dunlaith Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women's Oriental Travelogues, 1850–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 5.

⁸ Apart from her travel account and her pieces for the periodical press, d'Aunet's publications include the plays *Une place à la cour* (1854) and *Jane Osborn* (1855), the novels *Un mariage en province* (1856), *Une vengeance* (1857), *L'Héritage du marquis d'Elvigny* (1863) and *Les Deux Légendes d'Hardenstein* (1863), as well as the collection of short stories entitled *Étiennette, Silvère, Le secret* (1859); see Daniel Claustre, "Voyager, aimer, écrire: La vie d'une femme du XIX^{ème} siècle (Léonie d'Aunet, 1820–1879)", *La littérature des voyages*, ed. by Roger Martin du Gard (Lleida: Editions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2007), p. 110.

⁹ The book was reissued in 1855, 1867, 1872, 1874, 1879, 1883 and 1885. Of these editions, at least the third edition of 1867 (Hachette) is illustrated with thirty-four engravings of Lapland, the Northern lights, the fjords, etc. Moreover, two modern editions appeared in 1992 (Éditions du Félin) and 1995 (Actes Sud) (Claustre 2007, p. 110), and a facsimile of the 1854 edition was published in 2014.

¹⁰ D'Aunet 1854, p. 1.

¹¹ His first name was in reality Edouard, not Léon; see Christian Mériot, "Entre voyage et ethnographie: L'Image du Same chez Léonie d'Aunet", *L'Image du Sápmi*, ed. by Kajsa Andersson (Örebro: Humanistic Studies at Örebro University, 2009), p. 208. This, perhaps, strengthens the argument that the brother is primarily a stylistic device, rather than an actual addressee. Like the book, the feuilleton addresses the brother, albeit in a more indirect manner ("À M. L. de B., à New York").

¹² Bird 2012; Claustre 2007, p. 113; Mériot 2009, p. 189.

¹³ Claustre 2007.

¹⁴ Cf. Jennifer Speake, *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2014), vol. 3, pp. 1283–54. Wollstonecraft's publication was immensely popular, but it is difficult to assess to what extent d'Aunet was influenced by this text, although there are certain similarities between the two accounts. A French translation did not appear until 2013 as *Lettres de Scandinavie: Lettres écrites durant un court séjour en Suède, en Norvège, et au Danemark*, translated and commented by Nathalie Bernard and Stéphanie Gourdon (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2013), but d'Aunet mentions that she on some occasions speaks English with the people she encounters. It is therefore likely that d'Aunet could read English and thus could have read Wollstonecraft in the original. At the very least, she probably had some knowledge of Wollstonecraft and her Scandinavian journey.

¹⁵ Indeed, as Fjågesund (2014) remarks, the expedition's "non-scientific observations were in fact perhaps just as important as the twenty volumes of text and plates that were produced to account for the scientific investigation into the region" (p. 354).

¹⁶ Wendy Mercer, "Gender and Genre in Nineteenth-century Travel Writing: Léonie d'Aunet and Xavier Marmier", *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. by Steve Clark (London: Zed Books, 1999), p. 158.

¹⁷ Vincent Fournier, *L'Utopie ambiguë: La Suède et la Norvège chez les voyageurs et essayistes français (1882–1914)* (Clermont-Ferrand: Adosa, 1989), p. 32.

¹⁸ Fournier 1989, p. 32.

¹⁹ D'Aunet 1854, p. 336. In this example, d'Aunet displays a social awareness that is similar to the one we find in Wollstonecraft's text, for example in her discussion of the Norwegian bailiffs and the conditions of the farmers; Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (Fontwell: Centaur Press, 1970 [1796]), pp. 158–59.

²⁰ *Women, Travel Writing, and Truth*, ed. by Clare Broome Saunders (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 5.

²¹ For a comparative study of d'Aunet's and Marmier's texts, see Mercer 1999. Marmier's account was translated into Norwegian by Magnhild Svenheim and published as *Brev nordfrå* (Tromsø: Universitetsbiblioteket, 1997).

²² Saunders 2014, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁴ D'Aunet 1854: "If you could have seen me, you would perhaps have found me quite pale and meagre, but you would, I hope, have some esteem for a woman who has completed a journey which no other woman has made and which no other women, I dare say, will ever make again" (p. 204).

²⁵ Mériot 2009, p. 189.

²⁶ For a study of the representation of the Sami in d'Aunet's text, see Mériot 2009.

²⁷ "Je voyais se heurter autour de moi des morceaux d'architecture de tous les styles et de tous les temps: clochers, colonnes, minarets, ogives, pyramides, tourelles, coupoles, créneaux, volutes, arcades, frontons, assises colossales, sculptures délicates comme celles qui courent sur les menus piliers de nos cathédrales, tout était là confondu, mélangé dans un commun désastre" (D'Aunet 1854, pp. 173–74): "I saw jostling around me bits and pieces of architecture from all styles and all time periods: church towers, pillars, minarets, ogives, pyramids, turrets, cupolas, pinnacles, volutes, arcades, pediments, huge foundations, delicate sculptures like those on the pillars of our cathedrals; everything was blended together, mixed in a joint disaster." I here draw on the excerpts from this quotation in the English translations, cf. *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (New York: W. H. Bidwell, December 1858), p. 188.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 166–67, 175: "filled by an unspeakable sentiment, a mix of shivers and admiration!"

²⁹ Letter from Geneviève Jul-Larsen to Jacob Brinchmann (National Archives of Norway, H. Aschehoug & Co, L0097 – Korrespondanse h-1, 31 March 1967). Jul-Larsen and Brinchmann locate this meeting to Borøy in the south of Norway, where they both seem to have their summerhouses.

³⁰ Letter from Jacob Brinchmann, H. Aschehoug & Co, to Geneviève Jul-Larsen (National Archives of Norway, H. Aschehoug & Co, L0097 – Korrespondanse h-1, 22 May 1967).

³¹ Susan Bassnett, "Translation in Travel Writing", *The Cambridge History of Travel Writing*, ed. by Nandini Das and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 556.

³² Bassnett 2019, p. 563.

³³ Loredana Polezzi, *Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 82.

³⁴ There are also semantic changes in the Norwegian translation that affect the meaning of certain passages. When d'Aunet visits the mines in Falun, Sweden, for example, she writes the following about mining more generally: "Et cela se fait sous nos yeux, en pleine Europe, en France même, et des populations entières languissent, souffrent et meurent sous ce travail accablant et, hélas ! nécessaire, jusqu'à ce que les machines, ces bienfaitrices de l'ouvrier, aient remplacé les mineurs" (d'Aunet 1854, p. 335). In the Norwegian translation (d'Aunet 1968, p. 158), "mineurs" (miners) is translated into "treller" (thralls), which is a more loaded word with stronger political connotations.

³⁵ My emphasis. "It is almost unbelievable that the slender little *parisienne* could bear such a strain and even narrate so vividly and amusingly about it" ("Fornøyelig reisebeskrivelse fra Norge for over 100 år siden", 1968, National Archives of Norway, H. Aschehoug & Co., Xc – Pressesirkulærer 0074).

³⁶ Claustre 2007, pp. 113–14.

³⁷ "Boken er formet som brev til hennes bror, Léon de Boynest i New York" (D'Aunet 1968, n.p.).

³⁸ R.M., "Gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen for vel 100 år siden" (Through Norway to Spitsbergen over a hundred years ago), *Rogalands Avis*, 26 September 1968; Jo Ørjasæter, "Eksotisk dame gjennom Norge i 1838" (Exotic woman through Norway in 1838), *Nationen*, 10 October 1968, p. 8; S.W., "Pariserinne i Norge og på Spitsbergen" (Parisienne in Norway and on Spitsbergen), *Sandeffjords Blad*, 10 January 1969, p. 9.

³⁹ D'Aunet pays little attention to her movements in France, stating that "le vrai voyage n'a commencé pour moi qu'au moment où j'ai mis le pied sur le pont du bateau à vapeur de Rotterdam" (d'Aunet 1854, pp. 5–6, not included in the Norwegian translation).

⁴⁰ D'Aunet 1854, pp. 29–38.

⁴¹ Léonie d'Aunet, "Matka Hammerfestista Tornioon v. 1839", *Tornionlaakson vuosikirja*, trans. by Marja Itkonen-Kaila (Tornio: Tornionlaakson kotiseututoimikunta, 1977).

⁴² D'Aunet 1954, p. 7.

⁴³ “J’ai traversé tout cela si rapidement, que j’ai été contrainte de négliger beaucoup de choses intéressantes dont j’aurais aimé à vous parler. Contenez-vous donc, pour cette fois, d’un aperçu très-superficiel” (d’Aunet 1854, p. 29).

⁴⁴ D’Aunet does not specify what she means by this term, but it is possible that she draws on the German historian and geographer Johann Christoph Gatterer’s (1727–99) division between the two chronological levels of old Europe (“Alt-Europa”) and modern Europe (“Neu-Europa”), which he based on natural borders. Drawing on the distinction between “the Roman South and the non-Roman North”, Gatterer “divided the northern parts of Europe into the regions that were known and the ones that were unknown to the Romans”, the unknown here referring to “north of the line Thule, Shetland, Stockholm, Reval and Moscow”; see Hendriette Kliemann-Geisinger, “Mapping the North: Spatial Dimensions and Geographical Concepts of Northern Europe”, *Northbound: Travels, Encounters and Constructions 1700–1830*, 2007, ed. by Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2007), p. 77.

⁴⁵ D’Aunet 1968 “The further north we come, the more exiting the story becomes, and as I am the first woman to go on such a journey the account will be, if nothing else, unique of its kind” (p. 9).

⁴⁶ “A charming, enjoyable book, full of the pertinent remarks by a young woman of the world on Ola Nordmann [the average Joe] and the third-world country Norway in the year 1838” (“Fornøylelig reisebeskrivelse fra Norge for over 100 år siden” 1968, National Archives of Norway, H. Aschehoug & Co., Xc – Pressesirkulærer 0074). Like several of the reviews, the press release also highlights d’Aunet’s much quoted and merciless description of the women of Christiania, which she finds to be rather graceful at first sight, despite their rotten teeth and very big ears (“au premier coup d’œil, les femmes de Christiania m’ont paru assez jolies, – mieux, assez gracieuses, – malgré deux défauts de beauté qui importent aux connaisseurs : les dents gâtées et les oreilles très-grandes ; mais on voit de beaux teints, de beaux cheveux et des tailles élégantes pour des tailles du Nord” (d’Aunet 1854, p. 64).

⁴⁶ Claustre 2007, pp. 113–14.

⁴⁷ Polezzi 2001, p. 82.

⁴⁸ The audiobook is the fifth release in the series “Cappelens klassiske reiseskildringer” (Cappelen’s classic travelogues), which includes publications by William Cecil Slingsby, J.A. Lees, and Thomas Robert Malthus.

⁴⁹ “Hennes (*sic*) vitnesbyrd, som også avslører skribentens temperament, utgjør et fantastisk historisk og etnografisk dokument” (En pariserinnes reise gjennom Norge til Spitsbergen anno 1838, <https://www.cappelendam.no/en-pariserinnes-reise-gjennom-norge-til-spitsbergen-anno-1838-leonie-d-aunet-9788202727680>, accessed 5 October 2021).