

## **BORROWED AUTHENTICITY: AMERICA IN *MARKENS GRØDE***

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Knut Hamsun's negative opinion of America is a well-known staple of the author's production, spanning his oeuvre from *Fra det moderne Amerikas Aandsliv* (1889) to *Paa gjengrodde Stier* (1949) and, as Monika Zagar has noted, serving as an ongoing trope for the evils of modernization and modernity, against which he wrote throughout his career. Having spent several years in the 1880s working at a variety of jobs throughout much of the Upper Midwest, Zagar argues, Hamsun associates America with the evils of the New Woman and the women's rights movement, as well as with democratic government that raised the unworthy masses, including Negroes, to a par with the cultural elite, and with an elevation of the quest for money as the highest personal and social priority, eclipsing all other pursuits and goals (68–71, 118–122, 131–135, 169). Given this trend in his writing, it should not be surprising that the American Yankee, together with the Jew, stands as a figure for all that is wrong with the world beyond the idyllic farm of Sellanraa in Hamsun's 1917 novel *Markens grøde*.

This paper will examine the complex signification of America, which is triply present in *Markens grøde*. First, the Yankee is invoked directly as a negative, metonymic sign of the modernity of industrial capitalism and globalized trade. Second, the mining operations on the mountain overlooking Sellanraa amount to an Americanization of Nordland, inscribing the rural arctic landscape with echoes of the large-scale corporate agricultural enterprises and the rootless vagabonds of Hamsun's own experiences in the Upper Midwest, as well as of the colorful miners and boom-and-bust western landscapes of Mark Twain's

humorous memoir *Roughing It* (1871). Finally, America is present in Hamsun's novel in the very form of the settler narrative the text re-deploys to the imagined frontier of northern Norway. Thus America not only serves as the image of the global networks of industrial and financial capitalism that have incorporated Nordland within their grasp, it also manifests itself in the narrative structure and techniques used to criticize the modernity against which Sellanraa is contrasted. Indeed, Sellanraa itself is a translation of the American homestead, all citations of Old Testament patriarchs and *landnam* Vikings notwithstanding.

The abandoned mining settlement on the mountain overlooking Sellanraa is the setting for one of the most strikingly clear criticisms of industrial capitalism in *Markens grøde*. When Geissler, the enigmatic wanderer and long-term benefactor of the farm, and Sivert, the younger son and heir apparent to Sellanraa's sturdy patriarch Isak, survey the abandoned camp, Geissler launches into an extended monologue that articulates much of the text's ethos and critique of modernity. First Geissler praises Sellanraa's pre-modern harmony, telling Sivert:

Ta dere Sallanrå folk: dere ser hver dag på nogen blå fjæld, det er ikke opfundne tingester, det er gamle fjæld, de står dypt nedsunkne i fortid; men dere har dem til kamerater. Dere går der sammen med himlen og jorden og er ett med dem, er ett med dette vide og rotfæstede. ... Se, der ligger naturen, den er din og dines! Mennesket og naturen bombarderer ikke hverandre, de gir hverandre ret, de konkurrerer ikke, kapløper ikke efter noget, de følges ad. Midt i dette går dere Sallanråfolk og er til. ... Hør på mig, Sivert: Vær tilfreds! Dere har alt å leve av, alt å leve for, alt å tro på, dere fødes og frembringer, dere er de nødvendige på jorden. Det er ikke alle som er det, men dere er det: nødvendige på jorden. Dere opholder livet. (392, 393)

In this brief passage the harmonious patriarchal and agrarian ideal of Sellanraa is summed up, serving as the positive example against which the squalor and greed of boom-and-bust capitalism and its global markets can be contrasted. Geissler goes on:

Jeg tænker på din far, han er en av de 32 tusen. Hvad er mangen anden? Jeg er noget, jeg er tåken, jeg er her og der, jeg svømmer, stundom er jeg regn på et tørt sted. Men de andre? Min søn er lynet som intet er, han er det golde blink, han kan handle. Min søn han er vor tids type, han tror oprigtig på det tiden har lært ham, på det jøden og yankee'en har lært ham; jeg ryster på hodet til det. ...

Du skulde ha sett ingeniøren: ... han visste ikke bedre end at han gjorde det rette. Jo mere sten han kan omdanne til penger des bedre er det, han mener han gjør noget fortjenstfuldt dermed, han skaffer bygden penger, landet penger, det raser nærmere og nærmere undergangen med ham og han skjønner ikke stillingen, det er ikke penger landet trenger, landet har penger mer end nok; det er slike karer som din far det ikke er nok av. (393)

Having been abandoned in the midst of a global economic downturn when the Swedish-financed operation was undersold in South American markets by North American mining in Montana, the ruins of the hastily thrown up mining camp abound with unused machines rusting between abandoned buildings. This negative utopia sets Sellanrå in sharp relief (Rumbke 145). It is not the progress of mining, global trade or industrial capitalism that points the way to the future in Hamsun's text. Instead it is a return to a simple life lived in harmony with nature that the novel advocates, the return to the golden age of an imagined, ahistorical past. The peasant settlers are presented as the salt of the earth, the "nødvendige på jorden." They point the way towards salvation, a re-appropriation of the stern values of the Golden Age, and a

Rousseauian return to basics. This is the text's critique of industrial progress and the modernity it ushers in.

Yet, although it attacks this type of progress, *Markens grøde* proclaims its own, alternative progress narrative, praising agrarian conversion of forest and bog into productive farmland. This is the heroic settler role that Isak fills, and it is important to remember that the novel remains committed to an alternate idea of progress, despite its negative portrayal of modernity, creating a field of ambivalent tension. In this text the ideologies of progress appear neither univocal nor immune to subversion and contestation, while also manifesting themselves as powerful contagions infecting their oppositions in ways that are difficult to resist. In part the settler version of these ideologies is a necessary strategy for appropriating and clearing the space of the northern interior of its indigenous significations.

Having begun some four hundred years previously, the Norwegian colonial claims to substantial portions of Sápmi were reaching their zenith in the early twentieth century. As the newly independent state engaged in a discourse of national identity building, the excess, non-Norwegian signification of the Sámi presence in the hinterlands of the far north invited efforts at containment by colonial and nationalist discourse. *Markens grøde* participates in a larger process of containing that excess through its stark narrative of agrarian progress, even as it challenges and critiques the industrial and financial capitalism that, in representing itself as modernity, claims a privileged place at the end of historical progress.

*Markens grøde* portrays capitalism as ruinous, non-productive speculation, associating it with emasculated figurative eunuchs like Eleseus, and with the anti-Semitic trope of Jewish usury and rootless wandering, while the agrarian life of simple hard work and honest production is represented as the necessary antidote to moneyed industrialization. The novel tells the story of the hard-working Isak and the farm of Sellanraa that he carves out

of the virgin wilderness of rural Nordland, and in this story money is repeatedly revealed as a useless distraction that cannot measure up to life's real necessities. "Det var ikke så meget med penger, nei," the novel tells of the hardy settlers who have made the wilderness theirs, "men det var med alle livets nødvendigheter, med absolut alle."

Markboen gjorde sig ikke ondt av de herligheter han ikke fik: kunst, aviser, luksus, politik var værd nøiagtig det som menneskene vilde betale for det, ikke mere; markens grøde derimot den matte skaffes til hvilkensomhelst pris, den var altings ophav, den eneste kilde. (361, 362)

Contrasting sharply with these steadfast settlers, the restless wanderers that feature so prominently throughout Hamsun's literary oeuvre are a noticeable trace of America, bearing a striking resemblance to the vagabonds of the Great Plains of which he writes in his American memoirs, including such texts as "Vagabonds Dage" (1897) and "Paa Prærien" (1904–1905). These figures, in turn, bear traces of the writing of Mark Twain, a widely acknowledged influence on the Norwegian author (Nettum 138, Næss 124, Zagar 121), and are generally portrayed with a fair amount of humor and sympathy, even as they are revealed as anything other than an ideal to be emulated. At best, they are rootless victims of modernity's alienation and dislocation, surviving by wits, pluck and the vagaries of fortune.

Beyond these figures, though, Hamsun's understanding of encroaching rural industrialization and capitalization appears heavily informed by his year of working as an agricultural laborer on the hundred and fifteen square mile Dalrymple farm in the Dakota Territory. Hamsun describes experience working at Dalrymple as an agricultural laborer on a large-scale, industrial farm, as a relationship to production that is anything other than the organic connectedness to the land that he champions in *Markens*

*grøde*. The short story memoir tells of sixteen-hour work days, low pay, harsh foremen, a workers' barracks and dining hall, and of daily being driven out to far-off portions of the vast bonanza farm to assist in the highly mechanized process of large-scale wheat farming. Rather than connectedness or a sense of belonging, Hamsun's depictions of his time there evoke alienation and rootlessness. Dalrymple is part and parcel of the dehumanizing trajectory of modernity.

The prime bearers of the mark of rootlessness in Hamsun's writing on his time in America, though, are his wandering vagabonds, and here one can easily see his debt to Mark Twain, whose narrative technique and ear for language Hamsun had praised in an essay for Christiania's *Ny Illustreret Tidende* in 1885, noting in particular the American author's ability to "bruse op med Latter og Larm—og slaa" (quoted in Næss 124). Hamsun is especially positive in his evaluation of *Roughing It*, Twain's autobiographical account of his years in the American West, which began in 1861 when he journeyed to Nevada, where his brother had been appointed Secretary of the Territory. Twain's humorous representation of the American West at this time is largely one of shifty ne'er-do-wells and their get-rich-quick schemes, and bears a striking resemblance in tone to several of Hamsun's later reminiscences of his time in America, especially "Vagabonds Dage," which the Norwegian author wrote in 1904.

The parallels between *Markens grøde* and *Roughing It* are also remarkable. Although the two texts differ substantially in form, plot, and setting, there are many strikingly similar passages in which the echo of Twain seems clear in Hamsun. Among these are the similarities in Hamsun's description of the Sámi and Twain's of American Indians, and similarities between the praise of orderly, hard working production that Twain directs to the Mormons of Salt Lake City, despite his ridicule of their religion, and Hamsun's ongoing praise of Sellanraa as the site of hard working production par excellence. Hamsun's farcical presen-

tation of Barbro's trial for infanticide is perhaps the most Twain-like passage in the novel, calling to mind not only Twain's narration of a joke trial in Carson City, staged to embarrass the newly arrived and self-important United States Attorney (Ch. XXXIV), but also employing a very similar tone, pacing, and style of humor. Both texts serve to portray the courtroom administration of justice as an elaborate practical joke. Both are laced with irony, and both delight in presenting ostensibly facetious legal arguments over-decorated with courtroom decorum and sophistry.

Twain is very derogatory in his representation of American Indians, presenting them as untrustworthy savages who ungratefully survive by begging from settlers, and who are always observing the white folk's activities. Again the parallels with Hamsun are striking, for the Sámi in *Marken's grøde* are portrayed as a lazy and dishonest people slinking through the shadows of the periphery, subjecting the fledgling settlement to their inscrutable observation. They flatter, beg and steal. Henchmen to the sterile old crone Oline, they not only keep her in coffee-drinking company, but also do her evil bidding, sabotaging the offspring of Isak and Inger. They do not produce; they do not subdue either nature or woman. Instead they wander aimlessly, scrounging along the footpaths made by "Manden, mennesket, den første som var her" (145).

Twain is particularly harsh in his treatment of the American natives, describing the Indians as cousins of the coyote and the carrion bird, as dirty, treacherous, and, above all, lazy. He writes of the fictitious Goshoot Indians,

Such of the Goshoots as we saw, along the road and hanging about the stations, were small, lean, "scrawny" creatures; in complexion a dull black like the ordinary American negro; their faces and hands bearing dirt which they had been hoarding and accumulating for months, years, and even generations, according to the age of the

proprietor; a silent, sneaking, treacherous-looking race; taking note of everything, covertly, like all other “Noble Red Men” that we (do not) read about, and betraying no sign in their countenances; indolent, everlastingly patient and tireless, like all other Indians; prideless beggars—for if the beggar instinct were left out of an Indian he would not “go” any more than a clock without a pendulum” (131, 132).

*Markens grøde*'s repeated narration of Sámi begging at Sellanraa echoes Twain's disdain for the native people of the desert, as does this passage towards the end of Hamsun' novel:

Lapperne kommer ikke længer forbi og gjør sig til herrer på nybygget, det er for længe siden ophørt. Lapperne de kommer ikke ofte forbi, de gjør helst en stor bue utenom gården, men de kommer ialfald ikke ind i stuen mere, de stanser ute, hvis de i det hele tat stanser. Lapperne de vanker i utkanterne, i det skumle, sæt lys og luft på dem, og de vantrives som utøi og makk. Nu og da blir en kalv eller et lam tvært borte i Sellanrås utmark, langt borti en utkant. Det er intet å gjøre ved. Naturligvis kan Sellanrå tåle det. Og om Sivert kunde skyte så hadde han ikke borse, men han kan ikke skyte, han er ukrigersk og munter, en stor skøier: Desuten så er vel lapperne fredet! sier han. (312, 313)

Much of Twain's text is given to descriptions of mining towns that document the frantic wastefulness of gold and silver fever, portraying most of what happens in connection with these enterprises as fruitless speculation, blatant usury, and the exact opposite of useful, needful work. The humorous anecdotes of mining misadventures were particularly admired by Hamsun, and it is easy to read his own narrative of the on-again, off-again circus of speculation and dash for short-term gain that is the mining concern in the mountains above Sellanraa as notably informed by Twain's text. Although he invokes the boom-and-bust chaos of Twain's

mining towns, and the rollicking, good-natured but generally untrustworthy miners that are both comically and lovingly portrayed by Twain, Hamsun does so only to create a negative utopia against which to contrast his nostalgic agrarian idyll. In doing this, he brings America to Nordland, for the Swedish-run mining venture is a local reincarnation of the splendid squalor of Twain's American West. Of course, America is further invoked in this sub-plot in more explicit ways, for the iron ore is being shipped to South America, and, in the end, the project is put out of business by more productive mining ventures in Montana. This presence of America, in the figure of the miner as well as in the role of a stand-in for both the global market and the competition in the iron ore trade, serves as a globally informed worlding<sup>1</sup> of the northern Norwegian landscape, describing how life in modern Nordland is hostage to decisions made elsewhere in the world at large. Indeed, it is this global, marginalizing system of speculative capital that the text argues Norway should detach itself from, turning to agrarian self-sustaining isolation and rejecting the ways of the Jew and the Yankee.

It is in opposition to this creeping, global capitalist threat that *Markens grøde* deploys another narrative deriving from the author's American experience: that of the settler. In making use of this narrative, the text invokes a number of settler tropes, as defined by Alan Lawson, including those of the dying race, indigenization of the settler, and incorporation of the settler with the land. Ultimately the settler narrative itself is perhaps the most profound, if unacknowledged, American presence in the text.

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<sup>1</sup> Postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak coined the term worlding to describe how colonized space is inscribed as peripheral to a distant metropolitan center, and as belonging to a world system of colonialism, neo-colonialism, or imperialism. In other words, worlding brings a place into the Euro-centric world, alienating it to itself (128-151; see also Ashcroft et al. 241).

In his work on the settler as a particular figure in colonial narratives and on the specific modalities of settler space, Lawson notes: “For the settler, too, the land had to be empty. Empty land can be settled, but occupied land can only be invaded. So the land must be emptied so that it can be filled, in turn, with both discourse and cattle” (27). Among the tropes settler narratives rely on for this work of emptying is the dying race, which casts the natives as already doomed to disappear. This inevitability relieves the colonizer of any complicity in bringing that disappearance about, casting it as fated by the trajectories of progress and the teleologies of evolution. In a related trope, the settler is indigenized, coming to occupy the vacated discursive space of the indigene, who the settler mimics while distancing himself<sup>1</sup> from the metropolitan center. Lawson argues that the settler narrative “has a double teleology: the suppression or effacement of the Indigene, and the concomitant indigenization of the settler, who, in becoming more like the Indigene whom he mimics, becomes less like the atavistic inhabitant of the cultural homeland whom he is also reduced to mimicking” (29). Mimicking the indigene, then, is an attempt to usurp the native, authentic claim to presence, which brings us to the third trope Lawson details: the incorporation of the settler with the land, in which the original inhabitants and signification are—nearly—effaced, lingering in the peripheries of the periphery only enough to function as the other that confirms the self of the settler, while that settler attempts to identify with and fully possess the land (29, 30).

Clearly *Markens grøde* makes use of all three tropes, though the trope of the dying race may be less transparently articulated than the other two. The indigenization of the settler is, in many respects, the project of the entire novel, beginning with its opening

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<sup>1</sup> Lawson is deliberately gender-specific here, noting that negotiation of subjectivity for settler women is notably more problematic than for men (28).

lines that declare Isak to be “den første som var her,” moving through his organic understanding of the land, his use of the indigenous turf *gamme*, and his single-minded focus on his farm, which he understands perfectly, in contrast to the outside world, for which he really has no sense whatsoever. By the novel’s end it has also clearly done its utmost to incorporate the settler Isak and his family with the land through a discourse of patriarchal penetration, domination, and insemination that establishes Isak and Sivert as rightful masters of Sellanraa, firmly rooted in a place they have quite thoroughly appropriated and transformed into fecund production.

The novel stops short of declaring that the Sámi are predestined to die out, yet it nevertheless deploys the trope of the dying race in interesting and complex ways. To begin with, Sámi presence is denied by the opening paragraph that proclaims Isak the first man on the scene, creating a path that would subsequently come to be used by “et og andet dyr,” followed in turn by animalistic Sámi: “siden igjen begyndte en og anden lap å snuse stien op og gå den når han skulde fra fjæld til fjæld og se til sin ren” (146). This initial denial of Sámi aboriginal land tenure, though, is fairly quickly undermined when Isak’s homestead is visited by two Sámi who inquire whether the newcomer intends to stay, and who Isak quickly employs to spread the word that he is in need of “kvindfolk hjælp” (147). As Kikki Jernsletten has argued, this is the beginning of the novel’s polyvocal inclusion of a Sámi counter-discourse that subversively counters the text’s colonial nation-building agenda, as the Sámi who greet Isak and ask about his plans for himself in the region are tacitly positioned as always-already present in the landscape, and thus anterior to Isak’s penetration of it (83, 84). Compare this admission of Sámi indigeneity, however subtle, to the text’s later dismissal of the Sámi as vermin who no longer trouble Sellanraa, which amounts to the only mention of Sámi in the second part of the novel whatsoever. Over the course of *Markens grøde*’s narrative the

Sámi (all but) disappear, dying out in much the same way as Oline, whose metonymic association with them is clearly established early in the text.

The absence of the Sámi within the imaginary space of the second part of the novel <sup>1</sup> allows the settler Isak to usurp their position, indigenizing himself to the degree that he becomes distinctly non-identical with urban, metropolitan Norwegians and Swedes, and, together with the other settlers who establish farms near Sellanraa, to possess and identify with the land. In representing this process the text rehearses the standard settler narrative, including the frontier myth that overwrites Sápmi as virgin land, or *terra nullius*. This myth derives from America, where it was fully formulated by Fredrick Jackson Turner in 1893, building on a long discursive tradition of dealing with Euro-American colonization of the North American continent (Niemi 62, Turner). Recent investigations of Norwegian and other Nordic settlers in the Upper Midwest and Great Plains regions of what is now the United States have highlighted similar processes of inscription and effacement by settlers from Hamsun's homeland (cf. Bergland, Øverland), and it has been noted that Hamsun's concept of frontier and homestead are likely to have been heavily informed by his years in Scandinavian America, which had been colonized by immigrant settlers only a few decades earlier (Zagar 170).

An important component of the American settler narrative is the imaginary space of the homestead, which functions as an isolated outpost of an advancing civilization, surrounded by empty, available land that nevertheless includes the threat of savage human inhabitants. These savage humans, however, are displaced through a variety of rhetorical and tropic moves,

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<sup>1</sup> And not, obviously, in the historical space of Nordland, where there remains a pronounced Sámi presence to this day.

including the trope of the dying race,<sup>1</sup> to enable the land they occupy to nevertheless be read as empty by the settler-colonizer, and allowing for a re-inscription through the act of homesteading. The homestead, as constructed in this discourse, is developed with an often fierce sense of ownership and identification (what Lawson refers to as incorporation) on the part of the settler, and comes to signify independence and self-sufficiency in the face of both hostile savage and decadent metropolitan easterner. Its hero is the hardworking, patriarchal homesteader, supported by a strong but domesticated wife, who will pass his legacy on to his deserving progeny in a nearly Biblical claim to land-tenure.

This imaginary space is what Hamsun has translated to Nordland in *Markens grøde*. Sellanraa exhibits a strong relationship to the American homestead, with which Hamsun would have been intimately familiar from his time working on farms in Elroy, Wisconsin, from 1882 to 1884. The translation has obviously overwritten this space with Norwegian and twentieth century significance, but the traces of the American homestead and settler narrative remain profoundly visible. It is highly ironic, of course, that this space is deployed to counter another imagined American space, the mechanized, post-boom landscape of rural modernity that Hamsun had experience in the Dakota Territory in 1887, and against which he remained on guard throughout his career. To forestall the coming of a Yankee-style industrial and capitalist agrarian order, *Markens grøde* performs a translated American settler narrative, complete with a Norwegianized version of the homestead. A genre of colonial discourse has been imported, and is used in the service of national self-sufficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere I have elaborated on another trope deployed in *Markens grøde* to efface Sámi aboriginal land-tenure rights, which is what Anne McClintock has termed the trope of “anachronistic space” (145). In this trope the space of the natives is framed as existing at an earlier moment in time, rendering their territory empty in the present and thus allowing the settler to claim it as his own. See Storfjell 106, 107.

As has already been noted, this novel exhibits the genre's usual textual instability, allowing for multiple openings from which to subvert its project, as for instance, the textual incorporation of a Sámi counter-discourse and its tacit acknowledgement of Sámi indigeneity discussed above. Another elliptic opening emerges even before this one, however, at the novel's very outset, in which Isak's past is explicitly absented from the story.

Manden kommer gående mot nord. Han bærer en sæk, den første sæk, den indeholder niste og nogen redskaper. Manden er sterk og grov, han har rødt jærnskjæg og små ar i ansigtet og på hænderne—disse sårtomter, har han fått dem i arbeide eller i strid? Han er kanskje kommet fra straf og vil skjule sig, han er kanskje filosof og søker fred, men ialfald så kommer han der, et menneske midt i denne uhyre ensomhet. (145)

If the negation of his past can be read as a play to indigenize Isak by obscuring any past he might have prior to his presence here (which must make him native to this spot), though, then this same passage can also be read as an incomplete effacement of the past that marks not only that past's unknown status, but also the (impossible) presence of its absence. In other words, there must be some past prior to this place for Isak, since he comes walking north to it from somewhere. The text simply refuses to clarify what that might be, a refusal that is highlighted and dwelt upon here, giving the reader opportunity to question why, and to begin unraveling the narrative's tropic moves to indigenize Isak and incorporate him with the land.

Another moment of textual instability occurs when Isak purchases a mechanical reaper, and, with the help of his bookish son Eleseus, sets it up to enable larger harvests and increased production. Precisely Isak's difficulty with the written instructions calls attention to the suturing of the organic, archetypal peasant Isak to the industrial modernity that not only enables the

establishment of his farmstead (as evidenced by the various devices he purchases, over time, and hauls up from the quay to Sellanraa), but that also envelops and incorporates his settlement within global networks of capital. Isak is a mechanized farmer, and he participates in the global, cash economy. Even in the fictional world of *Markens grøde* these material traces remain.

Yet another instability is centered on Geissler, who mysteriously appears in the narrative from time to time to do more than comment on the futility of mining and speculation: he also helps Isak to get rich from precisely these things; staking claim to potential mining sites in order to sell them to others who will actually do the work of extracting ore. Twain devotes several chapters of *Roughing It* to the folly of this sort of activity in his recollection of his own prospecting days in Nevada and California, and it is impossible to read the two texts without noticing clear connections and parallels. That Isak nevertheless is enabled in his anti-modern project of independent homesteading by just this sort of financial speculation is also ironic, and forms another sight of slippage from which to critique Hamsun's rhetoric.

It should come as no surprise that *Markens grøde* treats America in a complicated and ironic way; anything less would not be typical of Hamsun's prose. What is interesting, though, is how attention to these complexities opens up contradictions and ellipses within the text, revealing the extent to which a novel that many have read as an attack on modernity as embodied by America and a call for Norwegian self-sufficiency and a return to patriarchal agrarian values not only depends on the colonizing expropriation of the Sámi (who the text displaces and ultimately effaces), but also on a polyvalent invocation of American settler narratives, the imaginary space of the (American) homestead, and a strong stylistic and thematic intertextual connection with the American writer Mark Twain. That a novel is an imaginary construct is, of course, a given. But in light of the degree to which this novel espouses a distance from such things as artifice,

cosmopolitanism and even writing, and the high rhetorical premium it places on a rooted, organic authenticity and national autonomy, though, it is revealing to acknowledge how elaborately borrowed and incongruously constructed this novel's rhetoric is.

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