

Past and Present Crimes in Sápmi: Lars Pettersson and Olivier Truc

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THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES REPRESENTATIONS OF SÁPMI IN LARS PETTERSSON'S *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife* (2012) and Olivier Truc's *Forty Days Without Shadow: An Arctic Thriller* (2014). The analysis focuses on how a distinct sense of place is created in these works through representations of Sápmi as an indigenous, transnational space that continues to be haunted by a colonial past. Simultaneously remote and transnational, Sápmi is a literary space in which (part) Sami detectives look for clues to the present crimes as well as to their own identity. Borders are significant in this transnational setting, and the analysis covers borders between nation states, cultures, and the temporal boundaries between past and present. I argue that crimes in the novels' present call up the ongoing legacy of crimes in the region's past, mobilizing the oppressive nature of the relationship between the central authorities and the Indigenous population. Finally, the novels challenge the national myth of Sweden as a society characterized by egalitarianism. By employing the setting of Lapland, the authors are able to address sensitive issues related to the treatment of Indigenous people that have until recently been erased from official discourse.

Place is significant in many crime novels, but it is often noted that in Swedish crime fiction there is an exceptionally strong focus on setting (Bergman, "Well-Adjusted Cops" 35; Arvas and Nestingen

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12–13; Hansson and Waade 17–18). Recently, we have seen close descriptions of the Swedish capital in works like Stieg Larsson's *Milennium* trilogy and Jens Lapidus's *Stockholm Noir* series, which expose the dark underbelly of the city. At the same time, Kerstin Bergman identifies a number of contemporary writers, such as Mari Jungstedt, Camilla Läckberg, and Anna Jansson ("The Well-Adjusted Cops," 35), who avoid the social critique that has become another hallmark of Swedish crime fiction. Their works "tend to avoid political critique and the mention of current national and international events, instead they promote bourgeois family values and conservative gender roles in novels set in environments isolated from the wider world" (Bergman, *Swedish Crime Fiction* 175–76),

This article, however, deals with two authors whose works are not concerned with the crimes of the big cities, nor do they adhere to the "neo-romantic trend" identified by Bergman: Lars Pettersson's *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife* (published in Swedish as *Kautokeino, en blodig kniv*, 2012) and Olivier Truc's *Forty Days Without Shadow: An Arctic Thriller* (2014, originally published in French with the title *Le Dernier Lapon*, 2012). These two texts combine a strong focus on a setting far removed from the southern capital with incisive social critique. Both novels are set in the region of Sápmi, or Lapland, an area that stretches across Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and into the small northwestern corner of Russia.¹ The region is home to the Indigenous Sami people, who feature significantly in the texts. In addition, both novels are the first in a series: Pettersson has written four books featuring the protagonist Anna Magnusson, all set in the same region: *Slaktmånad* (2014), *Mörkertid* (2016), and *Arctic Express* (2019); Truc has published two sequels to *Forty Days: Le Detroit du Loup* (2014) and *La Montagne Rouge* (2016). While the settings in Pettersson's and Truc's works are rural, they are no pastoral idylls. On the contrary, they indicate that one of the darkest sides of Scandinavian society can be found in its history of colonialism, which continues to resonate with the literary space of Sápmi.

Furthermore, Karsten Wind Meyhoff observes, "In the Scandinavian countries, writers of crime fiction, especially police procedurals, have also been engaged in rewriting and reinterpreting the national past" (62), seeking "to undermine homogeneous and idealized national myths" (63). By addressing Sweden's colonial past and (mis)treatment of its Sami population, *Kautokeino* and *Forty Days*, I argue,

challenge the typically Scandinavian belief in the state as “a good actor” (Arvas and Nestingen 8) and the national myth of Sweden as a society characterized by egalitarianism. By employing the setting of Lapland, the authors are able to address sensitive issues related to the treatment of Indigenous people that have until recently been erased from official discourse, showing a space still haunted by the past.

My analysis focuses on how these works create a distinct sense of place through representations of Sápmi as at once remote and transnational, a space in which (part) Sami detectives look for clues to the present crimes as well as to their own identity. The crimes of the novels’ present mobilize the ongoing legacy of crimes in the region’s past, calling up the oppressive nature of the relationship between the central authorities and the Indigenous population. Borders are significant in this transnational setting, and they allow for several types of boundary crossings, including boundaries between nation states and between cultures, and temporal borders between past and present. The following analysis is divided into three parts. The first section discusses how the representation of Sápmi as a transnational area challenges the significance of national borders. The second section suggests that the setting of Sápmi functions as a liminal space for the detectives, whose status between Sami and majority culture embodies the transnationalism of the setting. The final section probes the conflation of past and present crimes by focusing on how two characters—the reindeer herder Aslak and the French prospector André Racagnal—reproduce colonial relationships.

Law and Justice in the North

Truc’s *Forty Days* is a police procedural featuring two police inspectors: the Sami man Klemet Nango and his colleague, Nina Nansen, a recent graduate of the Oslo Police Academy and a newcomer to the region. Pettersson’s protagonist, Anna Magnusson, is a Stockholm-based lawyer with Sami roots who is called back to Kautokeino to help the family sort out some legal problems. Upon her arrival, Anna describes Kautokeino, the largest town in Sápmi, in the following terms: “I had no idea how many police officers might be working here. But it had to be one of the world’s largest police districts, in terms of square miles. An enormous mountain range and tundra

around a small central town with less than 3000 inhabitants” (23).² At the same time, the town is small enough for almost everyone “to have known everyone else for ever” (*Forty Days* 81), and the novel demonstrates that its position at the northern end of the Earth attracts people from all over the world: Sami, tourists, and geologists seeking to get rich. A great number of people pass through the area, and the surrounding *Finnmarksvidda*, the mountain plateau and tundra, offers easy escape for anyone not wishing to be seen.

Transnational engagement is necessary in this location, and characters traverse borders almost daily, challenging not only geographical but also legal norms and boundaries. The isolation and sheer vastness of this geographical area as well its expansion over several national borders make surveillance and control difficult. Common crimes in these borderlands are disputes related to reindeer, for example, concerning grazing rights and slaughter before the permitted time. Relationships between reindeer herders at times become violent as indicated by the mountain plateau being referred to locally as the “Golan Heights” because it serves as the setting for violent battles over grazing areas (Pettersson 70).

The enduring significance of the reindeer to this region is reflected in the fact that there is a special reindeer police force devoted to reindeer-related disputes. *Reinpolitiet*, the Norwegian reindeer police for which the police officers Klemet Nango and Nina Nansen in *Forty Days* work, is in Truc’s narrative a cross-border police force with headquarters in Swedish Kiruna. Pettersson does not bring in the reindeer police until later in his series, but there is a good deal of—not always smooth—cooperation between police and lawyers in Sweden and Norway in *Kautokeino*.

Other typical crimes taking place here are “small-time trafficking, [of drugs and stolen goods] using the big trucks that drive right across Sápmi, moving between Norway, Sweden and Finland all the time” (*Forty Days* 339). The borders are thus quite permeable and evoke the previous boundlessness of the territory that needs to be considered in relation to the geopolitical position of the actual region of Sápmi. This region, which extends over several national borders, covers an area that provides a natural habitat for reindeer. The reindeer in these novels are important signifiers of transnational movement, and reindeer herding is depicted as a lifestyle that is now threatened—this idea is evident already in the French title of Truc’s

narrative, which means “the last Lapp” (*le dernier Lapon*).³ In Truc’s Sápmi, history continues to resonate with present-day relationships. When the theft of a valuable Sami drum is discovered in *Forty Days*, the Sheriff asks Klemet and Nina to find out whether any other drums have also been stolen. Klemet replies, “Apart from by Swedish and Norwegian pastors, who’ve been at it for three centuries” (*Forty Days* 61). His response, which refers to the Christian missionaries who collected and often destroyed the drum of the Sami shamans, establishes the context of historical transgressions that linger in the present. The stolen drum is later found to be connected to the murder of the reindeer herder Mattis.

Echoes of the past are seen in depictions of the land as well. The geographical territory of Sápmi includes several ecological regions; for example, coastal areas, mountainous tundra and taiga, and natural borders, such as water systems and the tree line, set limits for reindeer grazing and Sami villages (Fur 41–42). The territory, which was populated by the Sami from “at least Scandinavian Viking Age (800–1000 AD)” (Fur 41), was thus based on the natural limits of the region rather than politically constructed national borders. When the northern borders between the Scandinavian countries were put in place—a difficult process that began in the mid-eighteenth century⁴—they disturbed the lifestyle of the nomadic Sami, which involved moving with the seasons to find pasture for the reindeer (Andersson 26). This meant that reindeer herding Sami were used to traversing large tracts of land that ended up being divided into national territories in a way that did not recognize their lifestyle and means of subsistence (“Closed Borders”).

Choosing this setting for a crime novel evokes questions of historical agency and victimization. Indigenous police officer Klemet in *Forty Days* explains to his non-Sami colleague Nina: “The national boundaries really screwed things up for the breeders, put it that way” (*Forty Days* 358). What Klemet is referring to is that the borders cut through the region so that the Sami breeders could no longer follow their herds in search of new grazing areas. He continues:

Before, Sápmi was one territory and the Sami lived here alone. But with the borders in place, the Finnish breeders found themselves marooned, unable to cross to the summer pastures on the Norwegian coast, or the winter pastures in what is now northern Sweden.

They had no choice but to start feeding their reindeer themselves. Which is how the Finns came to set up reindeer-breeding farms. Stockbreeding there is completely different to how we know it in Norway and Sweden. Their traditional, nomadic way of life was destroyed. And that's why they've always been so hard on Swedish or Norwegian herders who allow their reindeer to stray to the wrong side of the border. (358)

In this passage, Klemet articulates how the historical process of drawing national boundaries has made these borders sites that generate crimes in the present. His explanation of how the transnational area of Sápmi, where reindeer and their herders could move freely over a large territory, was cut up between the three nation states and disrupted the nomadic lifestyle of the Sami shows the respective governments' insensitivity to the needs of the Indigenous people. Through the depiction of national borders as a form of state imposition, causing fights between various groups of Sami, *Forty Days* demonstrates that past grievances provoke present misdemeanors in the region.

Still, there are echoes of past nomadism in the characters' constant movement across vast distances. Klemet reflects, "Distance counted for nothing up here in the north. People would drive a hundred kilometres to buy cigarettes. Like a trip to the corner shop" (*Forty Days* 230). Many people in the region have seasonal jobs that involve moving from place to place throughout the area (*Forty Days* 287). Noting that "passports and frontiers don't count for a whole lot up here. . . . People roam free" (*Forty Days* 81), Klemet describes a region in which people refuse to be limited by national borders. Instead, there appears to be other boundaries that are of greater significance, such as the division between city and country, reflected in the lack of trust between the local inhabitants and the state governments.

This question is most forcefully addressed in *Kautokeino*, and once more, it is historical mistreatment that serves as the foundation. Shortly after arriving in Kautokeino, Anna learns from a police officer: "Things are different here. The people who write the laws don't know what it's like up here" (Pettersson 30).⁵ The Norwegian government is thus to blame for creating laws that do not apply in this territory. Conflicts concerning reindeer pasture are common, and when Anna visits the Norwegian coast, she learns of a colleague's case that relates to land:

There was a collision between customary rights and property rights. The farmers called upon Norwegian law and claimed that the Sami had too many reindeer and were unable to control their herds. The Sami referred to their traditional routes and argued that their grazing areas kept being diminished. Roads, power lines and vacation homes were now being constructed on land that used to be reindeer pasture.

(Pettersson 99)⁶

Norwegian laws here serve the needs of the permanent settlers, the farmers, rather than those of the migratory Sami. The question of access to land recurs in the history of Sami relations with state authorities (Lundmark 35, 72), and for the people dependent on the movement of their reindeer herd, private ownership of land continues to create problems. The clash between different legal principles represented in the passage further substantiates the idea that history resonates with present-day matters. As modern societies develop and there is increased need for transportation, electricity, and ownership of more than one house, there is even less room for movement for the Indigenous population, and the law is not on their side.

The conflict between the rule of law and what actually constitutes justice is a driving force in Pettersson's *Kautokeino*, in which the lack of trust between the authorities and the local people is pronounced. During her stay in Kautokeino, Anna comes to know the difficulties of the Sami population in relation to the central authorities, and she wavers between loyalty to her family and following the letter of the law. Later on, when she has become more familiar with the place and its particular problems, she ponders:

What role could our modern legal system play in a society that presumes that law and order are dependent on social context and historical experiences? The serious questions about right and wrong, guilt and morals, law or justice are determined in different ways Interpreted through the filter of history.

(Pettersson 183)⁷

In Pettersson's Lapland, history does not equal the past. It is a living presence that continues to determine social relationships. The offenders in Pettersson's novel may be Sami, but in passages like this it is clear that there are historical reasons for the motives and

consequences of their misdemeanors. He does not hesitate to depict the negative aspects of Sami society, in which everyone knows their place and one protects family members even if it means disrespecting the law. The space that Anna's family in *Kautokeino* inhabits is a parallel society with a clan-like structure that is compared to the Sicilian mafia (Petterson 246). Yet, it is clear that her family, as well as other reindeer herders, are in a vulnerable position, fighting to survive under difficult circumstances.

Detectives in a Liminal Space

The characters' crossing of geographical borders in the Arctic region generates a transnational, hybrid space, which is also embodied by the investigators Anna Magnusson in *Kautokeino* and Klemet Nango in *Forty Days*. Both these characters are of Sami origin and were born in Sweden, but live and/or have family in Norway. Throughout the novels, they struggle with their position in-between Sami culture and the dominant national cultures, which also affects their professional roles. This section will suggest that for the detectives who set out to solve the crimes committed here, the location functions as a liminal space reflecting their own status in between Sami and majority culture. Andrea Hynynen compares Anna and Klemet to "ethnic detectives" and points out that this type of detective may be understood both as a cultural mediator who facilitates intercultural contact and as a figure who represents resistance to cultural hegemony and assimilation ("Deckare" 739; "Across National" 236–37). She also suggests that Petterson's *Kautokeino* may be seen as the first ethnic detective story published in Sweden ("Deckare" 740). While both Anna and Klemet possess the double vision that comes with straddling two cultures, neither of them finds it easy to embrace their Sami heritage.

Having grown up in Stockholm, Petterson's protagonist, the public prosecutor Anna, is an outsider to the region. Her mother let the family down by moving south instead of continuing as a reindeer herder, an act that amounts to a break with tradition that is a source of guilt for both mother and daughter. As the novel begins, Anna's grandmother asks her to come back to Kautokeino to provide legal advice for her cousin, Nils Mattis, who is accused of rape. It soon becomes clear that he is guilty, but his position in the family is too

important for them to afford to be without him. Returning to Kautokeino means that Anna is torn between loyalty to her family and her duty to uphold the law. At first, she is reluctant to defending a family member who has committed a crime, and she is not convinced by his claim that it was an accident: "Let them take care of their own shit. I wasn't going to do any more for the family" (Pettersson 79). Family expectations are a burden to Anna, and her loyalty is initially to her profession rather than to her estranged family. Gradually, Anna gets drawn into the case and also into life in Kautokeino. She understands the vulnerable position of her family, which is dependent on the accused Nils Mattis. The reindeer herd needs round-the-clock surveillance, and each member of the family has a designated role to play. She begins to waver, feeling uncertain about what role she should play in the family enterprise of reindeer herding, as well as in the legal process concerning her cousin (Pettersson 102).

For Anna, Sápmi functions as a liminal space, a location "where one's sense of place and self can be destabilized or reformulated" (Kinsley 48). The stay in Kautokeino marks her transition into Sami community and a reconnection with the Sami side of her family and identity. Anna's sense of being in-between cultures is not only related to her personal past but to her profession. Her role as prosecutor, and thus a representative of the Swedish state, puts her in a difficult position. She is met with suspicion and hostility by the local people, evident, for example, in the sabotage of her car. Her anger at such encounters eventually turns into a sense of regret as she asks herself: "Were we, the grandchildren, the ones who let the family down? We, who grew up only thinking about ourselves, our education and career. The grandchildren who didn't understand the simple relationship between family demands and our own effort? Who didn't bother to learn the social codes of this society?" (Pettersson 146).⁸ These reflections illustrate Anna's awareness of the gap between the reindeer herding life and her own life in Stockholm, between modern and traditional life. No longer sure that her past choices were right, she tentatively recognizes the validity of the family's claims on her. While she is still estranged from a society in which the codes are different, she no longer denies the need to understand these codes. Instead, she begins to understand the significance of family relationships and accept the informal set of laws her relatives observe.

In the end, Anna decides to take her family's side and pursues neither the conviction of her rape-accused cousin Nils Mattis, nor that of her aunt who turns out to be involved in a murder. Her decision may be understood both as a demonstration of her growing understanding of this society's social codes, namely, loyalty to one's family and the custom of dealing with misdeeds outside of court. A local reindeer herder explains why offenses such as reindeer theft and unpermitted slaughter are never brought to trial: "We usually sort these matters out by ourselves. The police don't help. They have friends and family too. They eat and drink when they are invited to parties" (Pettersson 138). The situation he describes here calls up the image of a small society where kinship and friendship bonds override legal rules. He goes on to clarify, "The police don't investigate when they belong to the family who is doing the slaughtering" to which Anna responds, "Are you talking about Eliassen? The Chief of Police?" (139).⁹ The exchange illustrates how corruption suffuses the police force and goes all the way up to the top. The police, just like most people in the area, are loyal to their families, and do not hesitate to close investigations that are likely to cause problems for them. Again, we see an example of a society with its own rules.

Anna's initial confusion about the social codes and the position in the family gives way to an increasing sense of belonging, which represent her passage through a liminal space. Her own decision to embrace her Sami heritage is clearly indicated at the end of the narrative, where she decides to don her mother's traditional Sami clothing (Pettersson 340). This symbolic transition to her Sami roots is further realized by her move north to become a reindeer herder in the subsequent books in Pettersson's series.

In contrast to Anna, Truc's protagonist, Klemet Nango, is no outsider to the region but lives in Kautokeino and is familiar with the surroundings. Still, he feels uncertain about his identity, as the historical treatment of the Sami echoes in his personal past. Klemet turns out to have been the victim of the forced assimilation policies that aimed at making the Sami more Swedish. The seven-year-old Klemet and his friend Aslak were separated from their parents and sent to boarding school where they would learn Swedish and were punished for speaking their native Sami language, even during breaks. As Klemet sadly observes, "In my day it was all about assimilation. Complete assimilation into Scandinavian society. Grinding us

down" (*Forty Days* 196).¹⁰ As a result, Klemet was estranged from his native culture while Aslak managed to resist assimilation by running away. Klemet's failure to follow his friend in the past is coupled to a conformism to non-Sami life that continues to haunt him in the present. A striking example is his inability to interpret the signs on an ancient Sami drum:

He was lost. He wasn't prepared to admit it, yet, but the indecipherable drum forced him to acknowledge the chasm separating him from traditional Sami culture, setting him apart, as it always had He had grown up isolated from Sami culture, and this drum—the very heart of that culture, the key to his whole case—was as strange to him as it was to Nina. (*Forty Days* 344)

Klemet's alienation from his Sami origins here prevents him from acting as a cultural mediator—and from finding the solution to the crime. His lack of cultural knowledge is thus a professional as well as a personal burden.

His position in-between Sami and Norwegian culture is intensified by his role as a policeman, which means he is charged with upholding the national laws even when it goes against the Sami tradition and lifestyle. We see this when his uncle Nils Ante, who is very knowledgeable about Sami culture, explains the myth about the gold seam that holds the clue to the crime, and that relates to the oppression of the Sami. As Nils Ante realizes that Klemet is unaware of this colonial history, he asks his nephew with irritation: "Try to keep up, Klemet! Has your uniform corrupted you to that extent? White men, the Swedes, the Scandinavians, the colonists, the invaders, call them what you will, but know that they brought with them a strange evil for us Sami" (*Forty Days* 228). While his uncle obviously identifies himself as Sami, Klemet is doubtful. He lacks knowledge of Sami history and traditions, and his questions about whether he is "a true Sami" (287) or not, are here echoed by his uncle's suspicion that as a policeman, Klemet is tainted by the norms of majority society. His situation is thus not dissimilar to that of Anna Magnusson: Klemet, too, is in a liminal space between cultures, questioning and reformulating his identity. At the same time, his knowledge of certain local customs, such as the significance of border crossing discussed in the previous section, suggest his role as a cultural mediator.

Nils Ante's accusation is reiterated by Klemet's childhood friend, Aslak, who sees him as a traitor, not only because Klemet failed to join him in escaping from the boarding school of their past, but because he is a police officer. Turning to the law enforcement officers, Klemet and Nina, Aslak accuses them of being complicit with the murderer of another reindeer herder, Mattis: "You killed him. All of you. Your rules, your lines on the map. We cannot live by reindeer breeding, as we did before" (*Forty Days* 112). In Aslak's view, the real perpetrators are the authorities and those who try to implement laws that are unjust, failing to take the living conditions of the native population into account. As we will see in the next section, Aslak does not hesitate to take the law into his own hands.

"The Justice of the Mountains": Nature as the Ultimate Authority?

Nature plays an important part in both *Kautokeino* and *Forty Days*. They are set in the wintertime, so in these texts snow and cold are representative of Lapland. Depictions of nature and weather conditions serve several functions, such as inhibiting or prompting action and offering clues to the case for investigators who know how to "read" the signs. The physical geography is thus of great importance to the plots, but there is also another sense in which nature figures in the novels. Historically, the concept of "nature" has been enlisted in a colonial discourse meant to deny Indigenous people subjectivity, often coupled to ideas of primitivism and simplicity. Mission work and education were significant parts of the cultural colonization that accompanied Swedish settlements in Sápmi (Fur 51; Andersson 28), and in this way the taming of the land was connected to the taming of the "uncivilized" native inhabitants (Andersson 29).

In *Forty Days*, colonial relationships echo in characters' interactions with the land, particularly in the representations of Aslak and André Racagnal. Klemet's childhood friend, the reindeer herder Aslak, clings to a traditional lifestyle, herding his reindeer on skis instead of using a snowmobile. This man, who is not "a victim of consumer society" (231), possesses knowledge of reindeer herding that has been handed down through generations, and he knows that "after him, it would all be lost" (218). This awe-inspiring, fiercely independent character

chooses not to live by society's laws, but is "ruled by the law of the pasture" (218). Truc's Aslak remains an exotic, mythical construction representing both historical injustice and the ecological benefits of a simpler lifestyle. At the same time, the old-fashioned reindeer herder is portrayed as a pre-modern savage, "half man, half beast" (68). Aslak may be compared to "the Ecological Indian," which serves as "an inversion of older ideas of primitive Indian 'naturals' that recast 'living close to nature' as something good, and positioned Indians as the original environmentalists—as exemplars of ecological awareness and sustainable lifeways" (Rice 746). Even though this myth has been debunked and there is evidence that ecosystems were affected by the practices of Native Americans, the idea apparently continues to provoke the imagination, and it figures importantly *Forty Days*.

The novel's climax is the confrontation between Aslak and the French prospector André Racagnal who, as an embodiment of the colonial exploiter, not only ravages Sami land but also its women. Through the character Racagnal, Truc seemingly displaces Swedish domestic colonialist practices projecting them onto the foreigner, but his presence also challenges readers to see the parallels. In recent years, it has become common to compare Swedish colonialism in the north with overseas European colonization (Andersson 22; Fur and Hennessey 377), and *Forty Days* here echoes the critical gaze on and revision of the national past that is now taking place. For example, Åsa Össbo observes that "with settlement policies aimed at Sami lands, prohibition of Sami religious practices, division of the Sami into groups with different rights and special authorities administrating Sami livelihoods on its agenda, the Swedish state is no different from any other age-old colonial actor" ("Recurring colonial ignorance" 66). Truc's depictions of skirmishes over land, Klemet's confusion about his position in Sami society, and the theft of the Sami drum, which was used for religious purposes, address similar issues.

The encounter between the Frenchman and the Sami symbolizes that of the colonizer and the colonized. By making the villain of his story a prospector, Truc calls up the early Swedish settlement of the region after the discovery of silver and copper. Mining led to harsh treatment of the Sami population, including forced labor (Fur 61). The fictional confrontation between Racagnal and Aslak inverts this history. Aslak forces a piece of radioactive mineral into Racagnal's mouth and leaves him to perish in a mine. Aslak, who proclaims that

he believes only in “the justice of the mountains” (*Forty Days* 444), thereby lets nature exact its revenge on the prospector while he himself disappears into the highlands. This outcome suggests that nature is the ultimate authority, meting out punishment and causing death. Aslak thus emerges as the novel’s hero, but the character also shows the conflicted nature of Truc’s colonial critique. While condemning the Swedish and Norwegian treatment of the Sami, Truc’s stereotypical depiction of Aslak locks him outside of history. His final disappearance indicates not only that he refutes the rules of modern society but also that he has no place in it.

The power of “nature” is thus manifest both in the literal and figurative sense in *Forty Days*. Furthermore, the text mobilizes the colonial context as part of a revision of the narrative of the past, placing focus on events that have until recently been left out of public discourse. The historical revisions offered by *Kautokeino* and *Forty Days* not only address colonialism but, like many Scandinavian crime novels, include a “renewed focus on activities before, during and after World War II” (Meyhoff 62). In *Forty Days*, the present-day murder can only be solved by going back to events that took place before and during the war. A crucial role is played by a pre-World War II Arctic expedition featuring two anthropologists from the State Institute for Racial Biology at Uppsala University in Sweden. Their task was to measure the skulls of the Sami and to demonstrate that they “were an inferior race, doomed to extinction” (*Forty Days* 177). The activities of the real-world State Institute for Racial Biology, which was formed in 1922, indicate that even if Sweden remained neutral during the war there was support for the kind of scientific racism advocated by German Nazis. Additionally, it is revealed that Nazi weapons were made by iron ore from the mine in Swedish Kiruna (*Forty Days* 184), an act that compromised the country’s alleged neutrality. Pettersson also brings up these historical circumstances (181, 207), which suggests that they are significant to an understanding of Lapland and that these works attempt to revise the prevailing post-war image of Sweden as a neutral state in which equality is an important social value, and racism does not exist.

To conclude, my analyses of these texts suggest that the setting of Sápmi evokes a larger context of transgression: the colonial past with its vexed relationship between the national governments of the Nordic countries and their Indigenous people echo through the

contemporary representations of crime in this area. The texts construct Sápmi as a transnational space with porous national borders, which evokes historical nomadism in the area. It is a space with its own set of rules formed in large part by the central authorities' inattentiveness to local needs and circumstances. Place also allows both authors to address sensitive issues that have until recently been erased from official discourse, showing us "the other face of Scandinavia" (*Forty Days* 18). Remote and forbidding as their setting may be, *Kautokeino* and *Forty Days* show that the Arctic provides fertile ground for exploring crime and history, and that the present is always complicated by the past.

Notes

1. Pettersson's novel has been translated into several languages, such as German, French, Italian, Finnish and Norwegian, but not English. All translations of Pettersson's text in this article are mine. Pettersson's novel will hereafter be referred to only as *Kautokeino* and Truc's as *Forty Days*.
2. "Jag hade ingen aning om hur många poliser som arbetade här. Men det måste vara ett av världens, till ytan, största polisdistrikt. Ett enormt fjäll och tundraområde runt en liten centralort med knappt 3000 invånare" (Pettersson 23).
3. While the reindeer in these novels represent the traditional Sami lifestyle and territory, it is important to note that the Sami had various means of subsistence and not all were reindeer herders. Some were, for example, hunters or fishermen (Fur 44).
4. The borders between Sweden and Norway in Lapland were first established in 1751 and there has been ongoing debate about grazing rights for reindeer in the area ever since then. For more information about border regulations, see Lundmark, *Stulet land*; Össbo, "Från Lappmarksplakat," 426–30, and "Closed borders and unknown land."
5. "Det är lite annorlunda här. De som skriver lagarna vet inte hur det är här uppe" (Pettersson 30)
6. "Det blev en kollision mellan sedvanerätten och egendomsrätten. Bönderna åberopade norsk lag och menade att samerna hade för många renar och inte skötte kontrollen av renhjorden. Samerna i sin tur hänvisade till sina traditionella flyttvägar och menade att man med tiden fick mindre och mindre betesmark. Det byggdes vägar, kraftledningar och fritidshus på områden som tidigare varit betesland" (Pettersson 99).
7. "Vad kunde vårt moderna rättssystem spela för roll i ett samhälle som utgår från att lag och rätt är beroende av sociala sammanhang och historiska erfarenheter? De allvarliga frågorna om rätt och fel, skuld och moral, lag eller rätt avgörs på andra sätt . . . Tolkas genom historiens filter" (Pettersson 183).
8. "Var det vi, barnbarnen, som svek? Vi som växte upp utan andra krav än att tänka på oss själva, vår egen utbildning och karriär. Barnbarnen som inte förstod det enkla förhållandet mellan familjens krav och sin egen insats? Som inte brydde sig om att lära sig de sociala koderna i det här samhället?" (Pettersson 146)
9. "Vi brukar klara sånt själva. Polisen är inte till nån hjälp. Dom har också vänner och familj. Dom både äter och dricker när dom blir bjudna på kalas." (138). . . "Polisen utreder inte när dom själva tillhör familjen som tjuvlaktar. –Talar du om Eliassen? Polischefen?" (Pettersson 139).

10. Separating young Sami children from their families for the purpose of acquiring an education based on the worldview of the non-Sami society was part of the colonial enterprise and dates back to the early seventeenth century (Fur 77). Lundmark, however, notes that in the nineteenth century, assimilation was Norway's prime strategy in dealing with the Sami, while Sweden chose a different approach, the so-called "lapp-skall-vara-lapp-politiken, or "Lapp-shall-remain-Lapp policy" (Lundmark 194).

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