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Editors:	Anna Lydia Svalastog and Gunlög Fur
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Review:

To approach Sápmi is not an easy task. To try to grasp a part of Sápmi and make it into a comprehensible text in a relatively short book is even more challenging. Svalastog and Fur have gathered six articles in this volume, with six quite different perspectives. The purpose of the book is somewhat vague: ‘to generate further interest on the Sami presence, both in the past and in the present.’ So that will be my perspective for this review, as a historian of religion, a senior lecturer at Mid Sweden University in the Study of Religion. One of my focuses when teaching about Sami religion and culture is to generate further interest in this in my students, especially the students aiming to become Middle School teachers. In the latest curriculum for Swedish 10 to 12 year olds, Sami religion is one of the subjects to teach. Could Svalastog and Fur’s collection possibly be something to use? To be honest, I’m thrown between hope and despair. The book has its origin in academic discussion at Umeå University, but the contributions that surface in it are not always academic, and sometimes over-academic, if there is such a thing. This creates differences between texts, but it also makes it obvious that each writer seems to have had different groups of audiences in mind when writing. Two general approaches can be seen and may be characterized as descriptive and analytic. But for my purposes, maybe both can be of use.

The first contribution is Anna Lydia Svalastog’s article on maps and the mapping of Sápmi. After what seems to be a very long presentation of Sápmi maps through the ages, her article ends with an analysis. I have a childish fascination with maps, and the article is most enjoyable, but the results Svalastog presents should have had a more thorough discussion. The two perspectives and ideas presented in the article take their stand in the latest indigenous theory and colonialism debate, which is a great place to start. The maps as colonial tools,

making the indigenous perspective invisible, and the map as an instrument to marginalize the Sami, is a most interesting discussion that should have been expressed earlier in the text and not been saved to the last section, since it creates an unlucky division of the article. If the discussion of the material had been integrated with the material, Svalastog's points would have been even better. The article is a valuable contribution to the discussion on colonial legacy of the nations of Northern Europe and sheds light on structures invisible to most of us. As an introduction to Sami literature, Mikael Svonni's descriptive but informative text on the author Johan Turi could be most valuable in raising interest in Sápmi and the expression of indigenous culture. The honesty in Turi's writings, and his self-taught writing style and expression, comes alive in Svonni's comments in both text and illustrations, together with the caption of Turi's collaboration with his translator. Svonni presents only a limited analysis of Turi's writings, the presentation of them being apparently the main purpose.

Runar Enberg's text is the least academic in the book. Enberg is a film maker and the text is written very much in that style. From my academic perspective, I really don't know what to make of it. It has a strange feel to it and I have a hard time to find the author's purpose with it. Somehow it may be an artistic glimpse, a snapshot, from the life of reindeer herders of today, but I have trouble evaluating it. I cannot really see why the editors have chosen to include it.

The next contribution, by Lars-Erik Lundström, is well-written, but maybe over-academic in this context. Lundström's vocabulary and references are pitched too high for this kind of publication. His text stands out among the others in style and method. Not being an art person myself, I had to re-read it a few times to be able to take it in. The artists presented (Katarina Pirak-Sikku, Joar Nango and Kristin Tårnesvik) are very interesting, debating the issues of racial science from the first half of 20th century Sweden, the Sami perspective and Sami identity. The voice of the artists, however, is overshadowed by the ambitious writing style of Lundström himself.

Ingrid Dokka's contribution about Samis and film, on the other hand, is more on the same level as the other articles. Giving a survey of Samis in front of and behind the camera in Norwegian film, the article is very informative and shows how film has become a part of Sami art expression, in the same way as other art expressions such as literature have emerged earlier. Dokka's article shows how the Sami population has risen up and gained control over their own image, and in showing that it connects with Lundström's article.

Gunnlög Fur adds an interesting historical perspective with an analytical conclusion, pointing into the future. This is a well-structured, well written discussion about international comparisons, balanced with theory. Fur's article deals with several aspects about the Sami relationship to the national states over which Sápmi stretches, showing how history matters and how history is perceived in the different groups.

Harald Gaski's piece connects with several of the others, with reflections about the Sami heritage and how artists and writers contribute to it. The pan-Sami idea is interesting because it shows how the idea of a nation and its constitution has become a tool to preserve culture and acquire political rights. Through the pan-Sami idea, the Sami authorities get into the same arena as other nations, using an idea of one-ness that so often has threatened their own ways of living, but is now a weapon of defense. It also reveals the danger of all nationalism, the overuse and over-interpretation of history: does anyone really believe that a language can be preserved for thousands of years?

Having read the book from front to back with great interest, the effect is like that of coming home from a long journey with all the impressions: some of them alter who you are, some remain puzzling, and some will grow with you through time. Some of these articles can definitely raise more interest in Sápmi, and encourage more people to dive into Sami culture. Would I use it for my students? Definitely.

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