

# Cabins in Norwegian Crime Fiction

## More Than a Cliché

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ABSTRACT: Focusing on Monica Kristensen's *Hollendergraven* [*The Dutchman's Grave*] from 2007 and Jørn Lier Horst's Booksellers' Prize-winning *Vinterstengt* [*Closed for Winter*] from 2011, this article explores how cabins function, at times, as more than a cliché in recent Norwegian crime fiction. While cabins are employed as a convenient literary device in these two works, more importantly they also serve as a metaphor for the impact of globalization on contemporary Norway. The attitudes of Norwegian characters towards these places illuminate complex issues surrounding mobility and national identity and mirror nationalistic and, at times, xenophobic attitudes.

RÉSUMÉ: Mettant l'accent sur *Hollendergraven* [La tombe du Néerlandais] de Monica Kristensen (2007) et sur le lauréat du prix des Booksellers, *Vinterstengt* [Fermé pour l'hiver] de Jørn Lier Horst (2011), cet article explore comment les chalets font office de parfois bien plus qu'un cliché dans la récente fiction criminelle norvégienne. Alors que les chalets sont utilisés comme un dispositif littéraire fort pratique dans ces deux œuvres, de façon plus importante encore, ils servent également de métaphore à l'impact de la mondialisation sur la Norvège contemporaine. L'attitude des personnages norvégiens envers ces lieux met en lumière des questions complexes entourant la mobilité et de l'identité nationale et reflète des comportements nationalistes, voire parfois, xénophobes.

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# The Cabin in Norwegian Culture<sup>1</sup>

**I**t is widely recognized that, in addition to their entertainment value, works of crime fiction can be useful as cultural mirrors since they generally reflect the tensions and dominant interests of the societies in which they are anchored. Gleaning knowledge of space and place is another bonus of reading this genre, and crime fiction can also be used as an introduction to the physical geography, architecture, and even history of a specific city, country, or region. As the Norwegian crime fiction writer Anne Holt has pointed out “if you are visiting a country which you have never visited, you should read a crime novel ... from that country before you leave on your trip. You will learn more than any travel guide can tell you” (Forshaw 115). One such element encountered in both older and more recent works of Norwegian crime fiction is the iconic cabin, and its frequent presence mirrors the prominence of cabins in contemporary Norwegian society and rural landscape: a wealthy society in which approximately 22% of households own and over 40% of the population has access to rural cabins located by the sea, in the mountains, or in the forest (Rye). Though Norway is affluent and increasingly urban today, the cabin tradition is closely linked to a time when society was predominantly rural and poor, and according to the editors of *Norske hytter i endring: om bærekraft og behag* [Norwegian Cabins in Transition: On Sustainability and Comfort], a collection of cabin-related essays published in 2011, the cabin is, for many, inseparable from Norwegianness. “For mange er hytta en uatskillelig del av den norske folkesjela” [For many the cabin is an inseparable part of the Norwegian folk soul] (Berker, Gansmo, and Jørgensen 9).<sup>2</sup>

The development of cabin culture in Norwegian society and its central position in contemporary Norway has not only been explored in *Norske hytter i endring* and other scholarly papers and publications, but also in light-hearted popular works including Jenny K. Blake’s *The Norwegian Hytte: The Essential Guide to the Great Norwegian Hytte* (2013). Blake, an Australian who lived in Norway for several years, looks at the Norwegian cabin phenomenon from an outsider’s perspective, and one of the areas she addresses is unwritten cultural codes surrounding the use of cabins, an area which is relevant to this discussion. The popularity of magazines such as *Hytteliv* [Cabin Life] and other cabin-themed sites and organizations, including Hytte.no, “Norway’s largest cabin portal,” and Norges Hytteforbund [Norway’s Cabin Association], reveal a strong, popular interest in cabin matters.<sup>3</sup> The presence of an extensive network of tourist cabins managed by Den Norske Turistforening [The Norwegian Trekking Association] is yet another part of the *hytte* phenomenon. While an examination and summary of Norwegian cabin culture is far beyond the scope of this paper, an overview of these scholarly

and popular sources, sites, and organizations reveals links between cabins and notions of comfort, relaxation, family, and nationality.

Other than Ellen Rees' analysis of André Bjerke's classic 1942 *De dødes tjern* [Lake of the Dead] and Knut Nærum's 2002 comedic parody of Bjerke's work *Døde menn går på ski* [Dead Men Ski] in *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature: Negotiating Place and Identity* (2014), little appears to have been written about the cabin in Norwegian crime fiction. In her 2011 essay "'Det egentlige Norge' - hytter i norsk litteratur, ca. 1814-2005" [The Real Norway - Cabins in Norwegian Literature, ca. 1814-2005] in *Norske hytter i endring*, an essay which provides a preview of her extensive 2014 study, Rees discusses works from Asbjørnsen and Moe's frame stories and Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* (1867) to Per Petterson's International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award-winning 2003 *Ut og stjele hester* [Out Stealing Horses]. Rees convincingly argues that in these texts "blir hytta eller setra brukt eksplisitt som et produktivt sted for identitetskonstruksjon, enten den er nasjonal eller individuell. Hytta har både en estetisk og en metaforisk funksjon i norsk litteratur, og disse funksjonene forander seg over tid i tråd med samfunnsutviklingen" [the cabin or setra is used explicitly as a productive place for the construction of identity, whether that is national or individual. The cabin has both an esthetic and metaphorical function in Norwegian literature, and these functions change over time in line with societal developments] (2011, 35).

Rees places Bjerke's four crime novels, published between 1941 and 1950, in the context of literature written during the interwar period by Johan Borgen, Sigurd Hoel, and Gunnar Larsen since all four employ the motif of the leisure cabin, often as a place for characters to work through psychological issues, pointing out that Bjerke did something new in *De dødes tjern* (1942) by introducing "det kriminelle elementet" [the criminal element] (2011, 32). According to Rees, "etter *De dødes tjern* bryter hyttemotivet sammen og blir til en sjangerklisjé" [after *Lake of the Dead* the cabin motif breaks down and becomes a genre cliché] (2011, 33). In her article Rees outlines how Petterson's *Out Stealing Horses* signalled the reemergence of the "productive" use of the cabin as motif (32-33), and she looks at this and other novels from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature*. Rees does not specifically address the cabin motif in post-2002 detective fiction, though she comments on film narratives including Pål Øie's 2003 film *Dark Woods* and its link to Bjerke's *Lake of the Dead* in her book-length study.<sup>4</sup> Cabins in more recent Norwegian crime fiction is an area that provides fertile ground for study.

## The Cabin as Cliché

Rees points out that cabins became a mainstay of Norwegian crime fiction after *Lake of the Dead* while virtually disappearing from mainstream literature for

decades (2014, 142), and she remarks that “isolation and the constant threat of the unknown” make the cabin motif appealing to authors working within the genres of horror and crime fiction (2014, 164). Though the urban landscapes are considered to be both traditional and preferred as locations in detective fiction (Schmid 14), and indeed the popularity of the urban setting of Oslo is evident in Jo Nesbø’s internationally best selling Harry Hole series, non-urban settings, and cabins placed within them, continue to be fairly common in contemporary Norwegian crime fiction. In these works cabins do not generally function, to use Rees’ phrase, as “a safe sanctuary” (2014, 165), and this is incongruent with the dominant view of cabins in the Norwegian popular imagination. The isolation of cabins in the narratives, however, facilitates the violation of the sanctuary. It does this by reducing the chance in the perpetrators’ minds that they will be caught in the act and allowing them space and time to hide evidence and flee the scene.

Recently published short stories such as Birger Baug’s “Skikkelsen” (2012) [The Figure], Anne B. Ragde’s “Et trivielt feilgrep” (2012) [A Trivial Mistake], Kjersti Scheen’s “Det kommer jo aldri noen hit” (2010) [No One Ever Comes Here after All], and Jorun Thørring’s “Kunstelskerne” (2012) [The Art Lovers]<sup>5</sup> are but a few examples of cabins and their surrounding forests and bodies of water being used as predictable and convenient sites for crime. Interestingly, the unlawful acts in these narratives are planned and carried out by family members for the sake of financial gain, and they point to a theme that potentially deserves attention. These and other works raise the question as to whether cabins are more than a cliché in contemporary Norwegian crime fiction.

Focusing on two works, namely Monica Kristensen’s *Hollendergraven* [The Dutchman’s Grave] from 2007 and Jørn Lier Horst’s Booksellers’ Prize-winning *Vinterstengt* [Closed for Winter] from 2011, I argue that the cabin does, at times, function as more than a cliché in recent Norwegian crime fiction. Cabins, some more remote and isolated than others, are employed as a convenient literary device in these two works, but they also serve as a metaphor for the impact of globalization on contemporary Norway. The attitudes of Norwegian characters towards these places illuminate complex issues surrounding mobility and national identity and mirror nationalistic and, at times, xenophobic attitudes.

## Cabins as Protected Communities

While cabins are the scenes of gruesome murders and other crimes such as theft and trespassing in both *Hollendergraven* (2007) and *Vinterstengt* (2011), the initial description of cabins invokes positive images linked to warmth, nostalgia, security, and belonging to a wider group, whether that be family or another select community with which one shares a past. As *Vinterstengt* opens, Ove Bakkerud is

driving to his family's cabin in Stavern, a popular and exclusive location for cabins on the southeast coast of Norway, to spend the fall weekend preparing and closing it up for the winter. He is filled with a feeling of calm and peace as he anticipates a few days alone in a place he considers to be a familial paradise.

Det hadde bare vært en enkel, rødmalt plankehytte da familien kjøpte den for snart 20 år siden, uisolert og med råteskader. Så snart de hadde fått råd, hadde han revet hele hytta og satt den opp igjen på den gamle grunnmuren. Litt etter litt hadde han og kona skapt sitt eget paradys. Fra de første årene da han brukte all ledig tid til byggearbeidet, var plassen blitt et sted der han kunne senke skuldrene, puste ut, koble av. Et sted der klokka ikke gjaldt, hvor tiden tok sine egne veier, etter vær og vind og forgodtbefinnende.  
(6)

[It had just been a simple cabin, painted red and built of planks, when his family bought it almost twenty years ago, uninsulated and damaged by rot. As soon as they had the means, he had torn down the whole cabin and put it up again on the old foundation. Little by little he and his wife had created their own paradise. From the early years when he used all of his spare time on building, the space had become a place where he could let down his hair, exhale, and relax. A place where the clock didn't matter, where time went its own way according to the weather and wind and one's own desire.]<sup>6</sup>

Note how the cabin is associated with both a shared past with family, which is Bakkerud's select and protected community, and a sense of exclusiveness and earned entitlement; Bakkerud and his wife had worked hard for this over an extended period of time. Bakkerud thinks of the cabin as a positive place where he can unwind and get away from things, a place where the clock is irrelevant and time is gauged differently than in the world outside.

The image of the cabin as a private space and refuge from the hectic tempo of everyday life is further underscored and developed in the novel in the plot line surrounding Line Wisting, the lead detective's daughter and a reporter for the major Norwegian tabloid newspaper *Verdens Gang*. Line retreats from Oslo to her family's cabin, also in the Stavern area, to regroup and recoup emotionally after separating from her partner. Line Wisting uses the cabin as a base to ponder, gain new perspectives, and dream about the future, and she seeks a temporary escape from her problems and stress by not only reading some works by Agatha Christie—indulging in a typical Norwegian cabin activity often associated with the extended Easter holiday—but also by taking a stab at writing her own crime novel.<sup>7</sup>

Monica Kristensen's *Hollendergraven* is set on Svalbard, an isolated and remote location geographically far removed from Stavern. It is the first in a series of police procedurals set on this Arctic archipelago located about halfway between

northern Norway and the North Pole. Like Lier Horst, who has drawn on his experience as a Norwegian police officer in writing his series of police procedurals featuring detective William Wisting, Kristensen has drawn on her personal experiences, working first as a researcher and later as an administrator on Svalbard, in her detective fiction series. Many of the cabins we encounter in her works were originally built by Norwegian, Russian, and British nationals to be used as hunting bases and for resource extraction ventures, and some have been reappropriated for collective use by researchers and officials. Others have been preserved as cultural artifacts. Generally these relics from various phases of Svalbard's past do not function as family cabins as on the mainland, though the old hunting cabin central to the plot is privately owned by Svalbard's governor, Hans Berg, and used as a place for personal retreat. There are also references to recent cabin development in the Longyearbyen area in *Hollendergraven*, and it is clear some of these spots are highly desirable and difficult to obtain. The notions of insider, outsider, and nationality are taken up by Kristensen in her works as she describes subtle and not so subtle tensions and sense of ownership between long- and short-term Svalbard residents, as well as tourists and residents and Russians and Norwegians.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their disparate geographical locations and past functions, the cabins in *Hollendergraven*, like in *Vinterstengt*, are linked to memories of a perceived simpler time, and they foster reminiscing within a select community. These recollections create a positive atmosphere and a sense of belonging, while allowing the characters a respite from their everyday routines. In one of the extended cabin scenes, a group of police officers investigating the recent death of a man whose head has been found in a centuries-old Dutchman's grave, takes shelter in a cabin to wait out a storm. While drinking some coffee and eating a simple meal, the men share personal stories from the past that help lighten the mood after a tough day of work. Even Governor Hans Berg, who as *sysselmann*<sup>9</sup> is Svalbard's highest ranking official, loosens up and describes some of his grandfather's hunting experiences with polar bears. This cozy and intimate atmosphere is tempered, however, by the group's unspoken skepticism of Berg's stories—indeed none of them have previously heard of Rafael Berg, the grandfather whom Berg presents as a legend—and the traumatic cabin memories of two members of the group, Knut Fjeld and Thorbjørn Storlien. As the storytelling evening draws to a close, they reticently recount how they found Knut's step-father dead in a cabin on the mainland when they were boys. Though the police investigation determined that the death was non-criminal and due to starvation, the event was traumatic, and the childhood friends have generally avoided speaking about this horrific experience.

As mentioned, Berg's nearby leisure cabin which he calls Camp Rafael, inherited from and named after his grandfather, is the cabin central to the plot and the murder in *Hollendergraven*. Not only is this where Berg goes to find solitude

and to escape Longyearbyen's "lite og lukket samfunn" [small and closed society] (48), he also uses it to validate and promote his claim as a type of insider through this familial link with Svalbard's Norwegian hunting past, though many in the community view him otherwise as evidenced by the scepticism with which his stories are received.

The origins of such intimate relationships between individuals, families, and select groups of people and Norwegian cabins are described by environmental historian Finn Arne Jørgensen in the following way:

For mange ble hytta... en måte å bokstavelig talt bygge en tett og nær forbindelse mellom familien og et bestemt landskap. For mange var dette landskapet knyttet til familiehistorien, der hytta ble plassert i nærheten av familiens opprinnelige hjemsted på landsbygda. For andre var det spesielle landskap som var attraksjonen, og over tid ble familien og stedet spikret sammen i en felles historie.  
(40)

[For many the cabin became... a way to literally build a tight and close connection between the family and a specific landscape. For many this landscape was tied to family history, where the cabin was placed in the vicinity of the family's original rural homeplace. For others it was the unique landscape that was the attraction, and over time the family and place were tied together by a common history.]

Clearly cabins, in Norwegian society and in the two works under consideration, are structures which often function as homes away from home; part of the fabric of Norwegian society. According to Erik Anker, some families invest more money, work, and thought into their cabins than their regular houses (Jørgensen 40). Much attention has also been given to how, in Norway's increasingly affluent society, cabins have for many become a status symbol. This is also mirrored in *Vinterstengt* where the murder has taken place in a luxury cabin belonging to a well-known Norwegian television personality whose cabin has been featured in a national magazine.

In his classic *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes, "if I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace" (6). In the previous section I have outlined how the cabin also provides a protective space and a place for the characters to both reminisce and dream about a simpler, at times collective, past as well as a place to daydream and disengage from the hectic pace of modern life. In the following section I argue that while the characters view the cabin as such, it does not actually offer an escape from the social pressures and one's place in society or contemporary societal developments, though that may be their wish. This is in line with Rees' conclusion that "at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it appears that cabins, rather than

representing a viable escape from urban life, have become an extension of it” (2014, 176).

## Invasion of Home Space—A Catalyst for Crime

What happens when one’s home is invaded and one’s privacy, space, and boundaries aren’t respected? When one’s constructed and perceived idyll is disrupted by outsiders entering an inner sanctum? In these works reactions include rage, panic, and violence, culminating in murder of the perceived outsider by the insider, and the potential for violence is seen in everyone.

The idyllic image in *Vinterstengt* is shattered early on when Ove Bakkerud arrives on that fall evening to find his cabin door ajar, the cabin ransacked and burglarized, and a body at the luxury cabin next door. Bakkerud’s thoughts turn to gangs—gangs of boys who were known to vandalize cabins as well as more professional organized theft rings—and he feels “en krenkelse av stedet. Deres sted” [a violation of the place—their place] (6), and in his distress he focuses on a damaged item with a family link, namely a ship in a bottle he had seen his grandfather make with his own hands. Numerous area cabins have been broken into, and another theft victim, Jostein Hammersnes, comments that he cannot tolerate the thought of someone having been in his space. Though the physical damages are not so great, the shadow that has been cast over his pleasant family memories is oppressive, and Hammersnes is particularly distraught over the theft of a handcrafted glass ornament made by and given to him by his father. Hammersnes emotionally compares the disappearance of this family treasure to the loss of hopes and dreams. The dead man is later discovered to be a Scandinavian drug runner rather than one of the members of the Lithuanian theft ring responsible for the break-ins, and the murderer turns out to be Bakkerud’s cabin neighbour Hammersnes, who is part of an unofficial collective of insiders, the area cabin owners. Checking on a neighbour’s cabin he encounters an injured, masked intruder, and in a moment of panic, which seemingly morphs into rage, Hammersnes kills the perceived thief with a poker.

The investigation into these burglaries and murder illuminates other types of reactions to this invasion of space as well. Some characters are more critical and willing to analyze the root causes of these crimes, while others are less reflective and more categorical in their responses. As part of the investigation, Detective Wisting and a colleague travel to Lithuania and while there visit the gigantic Gariunai market, which is described by Wisting’s partner Ahlberg as the largest black market for stolen goods in the world. While Whisting feels uneasy about his own privileged socio-economic status as a result of his visit and starts to think of the people they are pursuing as “fortvilede unge mennesker uten håp for framtiden” [lost young people without hope for the future] (220), his colleague



Martin Ahlberg is less reflective and more categorical in his response, painting the thieves as hardened criminals and calling the trade in stolen goods a blot on the Lithuanian nation.

In *Hollendergraven* rage and irrationality are the reactions of the Norwegian insider, Governor Berg, when he discovers that Marten Joost, an ill-prepared and naive young man from the Netherlands who is lost in the Svalbard wilderness, has invaded his private space. This outsider has ransacked the cabin and emptied the antique canned goods in an attempt to find something to eat, throwing the contents into an old sealskin cap that Berg's grandfather had sewn. Even worse he has also ripped out the pages of Berg's grandfather's hunting journal and burned them for fuel. As Berg confesses under duress to Knut Fjeld, one of his subordinates, he justifies his actions in the following way:

Hele hytta så ut som et slagmark... Han bodde her. Tok seg til rette. Sølte overalt. Ingen respekt... Jeg innrømmer at jeg var ganske sint. Jeg skrek til ham og ba ham om å komme seg ut av hytta. At den var privat eiendom, og at han skulle få betalt for hærverket. Men selvsagt var det ikke mulig å betale verdien av det jeg nettopp hadde mistet. Dagboken. Ingen kunne erstatte den. Jeg hadde ikke engang tatt en kopi.  
(279-80)

[The whole cabin looked like a battlefield... He lived here. Made himself at home. Made a mess. No respect... I admit I was very angry. I screamed at him and asked him to get out of the cabin. That it was private property, and that he should pay for the vandalism. But of course it wasn't possible to pay for what I had just lost. The journal. No one can replace it. I hadn't even made a copy.]<sup>10</sup>

When it is pointed out that the young Netherlander couldn't understand Norwegian, Berg's irrational reply is: "Selvsagt snakket jeg norsk. Jeg er norsk. Denne hytta er norsk. Hvorfor var han her? Det kan du spørre om. Det viste seg at jeg hadde glemt å låse slåen foran døren. Men han hadde vel ingen rett" [Of course I spoke Norwegian. I am Norwegian. This cabin is Norwegian. Why was he here? You can ask that again. It turned out that I had forgotten to bolt the door. But still he didn't have any right] (280).

Berg is overcome with rage and panic and he ends up "accidentally" shooting the intruder who has picked up an axe in self-defense, encountering what must have appeared from his perspective to be a raving maniac with a pistol. Berg maintains, however, that he would never have been convicted in a court of law because he had the right to protect himself. Rather than acknowledging his rashness, he questions the mental stability of the young man: "Mannen var jo gal. Det må ha tablett for ham her oppe i ensomheten" [The man was certainly crazy. He must have lost his mind up here in the solitude] (280). Note once again

the person whose space has been entered is focusing on the past and a perceived lack of respect. There is a marked lack of willingness and/or ability to understand or engage in the other's cultural codes. For example, when Berg first approached the cabin he noted that the young man had transgressed an unwritten safety code by parking his snowmobile too close to the structure, and the code issue was exacerbated when Berg insisted on speaking Norwegian. One can speculate if Berg's struggle to be accepted and respected by the other Svalbard residents—he is aware that he is being spoken about uncharitably by a number of them behind his back—may have made him particularly sensitive and contributed to his irrational behavior in this horrific cabin scene.

It is important to note that Berg himself does not hesitate to use other people's cabins for rest and refuge when necessary, though he respects the unwritten code by tidying up before he leaves. He even, ironically, stops to rest in a cabin on his way to Camp Rafael the evening of his fateful confrontation with Joost. However, he emphasizes afterwards that the cabin was empty. There are numerous references to others borrowing cabins as well, though the importance of having permission to use the cabins—unless one is in a crisis situation—and of leaving things neat and undisturbed is emphasized. Locks are to be respected, and there is mention of keys being shared among residents. When it is discovered that a long-time Svalbard resident is responsible for a series of break-ins and acts of vandalism in cabins around Longyearbyen, the other cabin owners refuse to press charges when they discover his identity. They understand he is bitter because his own applications for a cabin lot have been unfairly refused. Though the perpetrator is fined by officials, the cabin owners only request that he repair the damages. Anger is tempered with compassion and understanding in this case in *Hollendergraven* due to the insiders' knowledge of the nuances surrounding the crimes. They recognize that the perpetrator likely committed the crimes since he was made to feel like an outsider.

In both novels, outsiders physically enter and invade the private, almost sacred, space of the cabin, and in doing so they shatter the illusion of being able to at least temporarily escape from everyday social pressures and realities. Indeed, Bakkerud and his wife had thought about the possibility of a break-in happening and had wondered if it wasn't only a matter of time before their private space was invaded. In addition, the outsiders or the invaders are described as damaging material links to the past, due either to ignorance, a lack of knowledge of cultural codes, or criminal activity.

## The Cabin as a Metaphor for the Impact of Globalization

I would argue that the cabins in *Vinterstengt* and *Hollendergraven* can be seen as metaphors for the impact of globalization on Norway. The cabin can be seen as the nation state, and the phenomenon of globalization has resulted in the opening of the cabin door, or national borders, in new ways and facilitated the rapid movement of images, information, people, and goods through that door. The reactions of the cabins' inhabitants, or long-time citizens of Norway, to outsiders mirror various responses to complex issues including disparity of wealth, the negotiation of cultural codes, and the notion of insiders, outsiders, and the other, which may be linked to discourses around entitlement and nationalism. At this point it is relevant to note that while little research has been done in the area of ethnicity and the Norwegian cabin tradition, statistics seem to indicate that few of Norway's newer residents and citizens appear to own or use cabins in their adopted country. Those who do have a secondary dwelling often maintain or buy those in the country of their origin (Rye). It is not surprising given this social reality, that the cabins in these works are viewed literally and metaphorically as the private space of those who have lived in Norway for many generations, rather than visitors and more recent arrivals.

For some Norwegians the reaction to the outsider entering one's perceived private space is uncontrolled rage, as seen in the figure of Governor Berg, a member of the establishment and an authority figure who unreasonably expects the young Netherlander to be well versed in Norwegian cabin etiquette and to speak Norwegian despite being in a crisis situation. While anger is a natural reaction to private space being violated, Berg's expectations and verbal and physical responses are highly inappropriate given his official position. His attempts to justify his actions to Knut Fjeld reveal xenophobic attitudes and may be seen as a desperate attempt to elicit similar attitudes in others.

Numerous Norwegian characters respond to the shooting of the young visitor and its aftermath with denials and cover-ups. First Berg tries to conceal the shooting and the body since he does not want to lose his prestigious administrative position. Upon the gruesome discovery of the victim's severed head, he leads the Svalbard investigation team and attempts to thwart both the internal and the external *Kripos* [Norway's National Criminal Investigation Service] investigations in various ways. During Berg and Fjeld's volatile confrontation in Berg's cabin, the scene of the original crime, Hugh Halvorsen arrives and facilitates Fjeld's escape from the armed and unstable governor. Halvorsen, a teenager who has grown up on Svalbard, is a true insider. The desperate Berg proceeds to shoot himself and Halvorsen then burns the cabin with Berg's body inside. Fjeld covers up the original crime and its aftermath, including Halvorsen's arson, and while

neither Fjeld nor Halvorsen explicitly state their motivations, they appear to be linked to keeping up appearances, protecting the reputations of the dead, and limiting outside intervention in Svalbard matters. Fjeld's traumatic childhood experience may also play a role in his actions. Berg, according to the official report, has died in a tragic cabin fire, and those members of the small community in Longyearbyen, who often belittled and excluded him in life, hypocritically speak highly of him in death. This troubling cover-up by Fjeld, troubling to both Fjeld and the reader, raises the question of authorial intent. What, if anything, is Kristensen trying to say about Norwegian society and/or the status of non-Norwegians on Svalbard? Is it defensible to cover-up a crime to maintain a façade or a reputation? What is the cost of cultural insensitivity and intolerance both within local societies and beyond? Does subtle exclusion and bullying make the target more prone to violence?

While panic and rage are also the initial reactions to the cabin space being invaded in *Vinterstengt*, another reaction to the chain of events resulting from this invasion is a crime of opportunity and greed, namely the theft of the dead man's drug money by the Norwegian who has killed the intruder. Questions are raised surrounding the links between prosperity, greed, opportunism, and materialism. How protective should one be of personal and national wealth? Would cabin break-ins and theft by foreigners be such a problem if the standard of living was more uniform in Europe and elsewhere? Some of the characters in *Vinterstengt*, as pointed out, think critically about these issues, while others condemn these actions without considering possible root causes and the complexities of poverty. Wisting registers that crime has increased in Norway as material conditions have improved, and these crimes are committed by insiders as well as outsiders. Wisting describes the Baltic gang of thieves in a rather sympathetic light as he recognizes their actions are at least partially rooted in material need, and he listens respectfully to a young Lithuanian woman who tells him:

Når folk fra fattige land som vårt kommer for å jobbe eller stjele hos dere, er det ikke for å bli rike, men for å få nok penger til å stå på sine egne bein. Det er galt, selvsagt, men fattige mennesker må alltid tenke på seg selv. En gang i tiden var også nordmenn fattige. Jeg tror dere har glemt det.  
(259)

[When people from poor countries like ours come to work for or steal from you, it isn't in order to get rich, but to get enough money to stand on their own two feet. Of course it is wrong, but poor people have to always think about themselves. At one time Norwegians were also poor. I think you have forgotten that.]

It should be noted that *Vinterstengt* as a whole provides a more nuanced and less stereotypical depiction of foreigners than *Hollendergraven*—where the descriptions of cruise ship tourists are at times arguably caricatures—and Lier Horst gives readers ample opportunities to explore these issues.

As pointed out, *Hollendergraven* raises other sorts of questions, including the potentially destructive role that subtle social isolation and marginalization and notions of being insiders and outsiders may play in smaller closed societies. How closely is Berg's unbalanced state of mind and criminal behavior in his cabin related to his insecurity of being an outsider in the small, closed society of Longyearbyen? What are the root causes of xenophobic attitudes and actions?

Finally it is significant in teasing out the cabin metaphor that the central murders in both novels are committed by Norwegians in response to others who have entered the cabins looking for sanctuary: one trespasser desperate after being shot and the other in danger of freezing in the wilderness. However, in the early stages of the investigation in *Hollendergraven*, Berg reports that “Alle jeg har snakket med i Longyearbyen, går ut ifra at dette ikke har noe med oss å gjøre. Altså oss på Svalbard. De tror at det må være noen utenfra. Både morderen og offeret” [Everyone I have spoken with in Longyearbyen assumes that this doesn't have anything to do with us on Svalbard. They believe that it must be someone from the outside. Both the murderer and the victim] (119). This highlights stereotyping as well as the propensity of many in societies—from the nation state to the local—to place blame on outside forces when dealing with crime and disorder as they struggle to come to grips with their own flaws. This attitude also temporarily benefits Berg when local investigators decide not to search his locked cabin as part of their extensive search of cabins in the criminal investigation since he is, in their minds, above suspicion. At the end of *Vinterstengt* Wisting's celebrity cabin neighbour Thomas Rønningen is planning a program about crime which will leave viewers “med en tanke om at vi alle kan bli forbrytere, som Hammersnes. Herregud, jeg kjenner ham jo. Vi er hyttenaboer” [with a thought that all of us can become perpetrators, like Hammersnes. My God, I know him after all. We are cabin neighbours] (327). Wisting declines the invitation to be a guest on the show, but Lier Horst's intent is clearly to encourage the reader to mull over this possibility.

In his study of space in crime fiction, from small locked rooms and small towns to the city and the globe, David Schmid points out the importance of being mindful of the interaction of various “spatial scales” in works, building on David Harvey's analysis in *Spaces of Hope* where Harvey writes: “Ways have to be found to connect the microspace of the body with the macrospace of what is now called ‘globalization’” (quoted in Schmid 10). Lier Horst and Kristensen both do this by moving their audiences' consciousness from crimes committed in locked and unlocked cabins to local, national, and global issues.

In this brief analysis, I have attempted to illustrate how the cabin is more than a cliché—more than a convenient place to commit and hide crimes—in *Hollendergraven* and *Vinterstengt*. Through their use of cabin imagery, both of these novels encourage and invite the readers to reflect upon some very complex and layered issues surrounding inclusivity and globalization, not least the individual's and the nation's response to mobility and wealth in the modern age. A critical reader may ask her/himself the following questions: How am I employing the notion of insider and outsider in my thinking? How are perceived outsiders being treated in my local community and beyond? How are Norwegians and other economically privileged peoples reacting to their prosperity in this age of transnationalism? Lier Horst and Kristensen do not provide us with pat answers, and critical readers are left with some troubling and profound questions. In her article "Meaningless Icelanders: Icelandic Crime Fiction and Nationality," Katrín Jakobsdóttir points out how "nationality has become a real topic in Icelandic crime fiction just as it has in other forms of fiction" (57). The use of cabin imagery is at least one way these questions related to nationality are being addressed in Norwegian crime fiction as well.<sup>11</sup>

#### NOTES

1. I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers and the journal editor for their constructive suggestions and comments which helped me to improve this article. An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada (AASSC) at the University of Victoria in June 2013.
2. All translations are mine.
3. On its homepage, *Hytteliv*, published by Egmont Publishing AS, promotes itself as "Norges største hytteblad" [Norway's largest cabin magazine]. Another monthly cabin magazine, *Hyttemagasinet*, is published by the major Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*.
4. For more detail see Chapters 4 and 5 in Rees' *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature*.
5. "Skikkelsen", written specifically for Aschehoug's anthology *Sommerkrim 2012* [Summer Crime 2012], contains a number of parallels to André Bjerke's *Lake of the Dead*. The other short stories mentioned here also appear in Norwegian anthologies of short crime stories—containing both original stories and reprints—published by Juritzen in conjunction with the Easter holiday as *Påskekrim* [Easter Crime].
6. All translations of passages from *Vinterstengt* are mine. Anne Bruce's English translation of the entire work was published under the title *Closed for Winter* by Sandstone Press (Dingwall, Scotland) in 2013.
7. For a discussion of the link between Easter and Norwegian crime fiction, see page 164 in *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature*.
8. Though Norway was granted sovereignty over Svalbard through the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, countries such as the Netherlands, Russia, England, and the USA have also been

active at various times since 1600, engaging in whaling, mining, hunting, and research. Today over forty countries have signed the treaty and have certain rights of access (Arlov 305). However, unlike on the mainland, *allemannsretten*—the right of people to freely pass through uncultivated, rural areas—is fairly restricted on Svalbard due to recent environmental concerns and legislation. Buildings, structures, monuments, and objects linked to human activity that took place before 1946 are also protected under The Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

9. Svalbard's *sysselmann* [governor] holds a unique and prestigious position and represents Norway's sovereign interests on Svalbard. One of the many duties the *sysselmann* has is heading Svalbard's police force, and the person in this position reports to the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security.
10. All translations of passages from *Hollendergraven* are mine. Murdoch Books (Sydney, Australia) published this work in English in 2010 as *The Dutchman's Grave*.
11. Jakobsdóttir notes how Arnaldur Indriðason addresses ethnicity by creating a main protagonist who has emigrated from Asia to Iceland (46). A notable example of such a character in Norwegian crime fiction is Eystein Hanssen's Elli, a Thai-Norwegian police investigator, who is featured in five novels thus far: *De ingen savner* (2010), *Giftstrøm* (2011), *Triangel* (2012), *Åtseldyr* (2013), and *Brennemerket* (2015).

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