

KNUT HAMSUN

The Wanderer



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The *Wanderer*, which consists of two closely related novels, *Under the Autumn Star* and *On Muted Strings*, has been acclaimed as one of Knut Hamsun's finest works.

The narrator, Knut Pedersen (Hamsun's real name), is an unsimple character in search of the simple life, which he hopes to attain by wandering round the Norwegian countryside doing such work as he can find. His quest is continually frustrated, not least by his susceptibility to the wives and daughters of successive employers.

In *Under the Autumn Star* he joins forces first with Grindhusen, a man blessed with the faith that "something will turn up"; later with Lars Falkenberg, whose dubious talents include the tuning of pianos. Knut and Lars end up as workmen on the estate of a certain Captain Falkenberg (no relation), with whose wife each falls in love. In due course, Knut is laid off and, in futile pursuit of the woman with whom by now he is helplessly infatuated, eventually finds himself sucked back into the city he once fled.

"A wanderer plays on muted strings," explains Knut, now six years older, "when he reaches the age of two score years and ten." Among this sequel's qualities is the poignancy with which it conveys that sense of aging.

Both novels show Hamsun at the height of his powers: lyrical and passionate, ironic yet deeply humane, master of one of the most original prose styles in modern literature, brilliantly translated here by Oliver and Gunnvor Stallybrass.

The Wanderer Details

Date : Published April 1st 2001 by Condor Books (first published 1906)

ISBN : 9780285647879

Author : Knut Hamsun , Oliver Stallybrass (Translator) , Gunnvor Stallybrass (Translator)

Format : Paperback 164 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, European Literature, Scandinavian Literature, Novels

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From Reader Review The Wanderer for online ebook

Nathan says

This book includes two beautifully written novels about a man who travels through the Norwegian countryside picking up work at farms in various towns.

Teri says

Hamsun is so introspective...gets inside the mind and soul of his characters. very satisfying reading..not light

Lydia says

Two short novels chronicle Knut Pederson's travels in Denmark in 1906. Knut is smart and very resourceful. He has decided to take a break from the city and roam the countryside taking odd jobs. He plants and harvests crops, paints buildings, repairs ice houses, builds running water, and much more as he observes farming families. He writes with a calm introspection and love of the land that keeps you reading just to see how he fits his life together. Nothing shocking here.

Cwn_annwn_13 says

This is my least favorite out of the four by Hamsun I have read. As in most of what he wrote I think a lot of his personal screwiness comes through in the main character of the book. In this case its a man who spends his life roaming from town to town in Norway doing random labor for hire. He gets stalkerish obsessions with women who it is in inappropriate for him to have interest in, namely the wives of his employers. Mainly this book focuses on the main characters obsessions, manipulations and petty intrigues involving these women. The Wanderer isn't a bad book but its definitely not where you want to start if you want to read some of Hamsuns work.

Konserve Ruhlar says

Üç kitaptan olu?an romanda ana kahraman ayn?d?r. Knut Hamsun'un kendisi olarak yorumlanan kahraman 50'li ya?lar?nda üzünlü, hiçbir yerde uzun süre kalamayan, k?rlarda, do?al hayatı mutlu olarak içine kapanan, gitti?i çiftliklerde ve kentlerde çevresindeki insanlar? ilgiyle izleyen biridir. Kahraman?n gözlemledi?i kad?nlar genelde mutsuzdur. Evlilik kurumunun mutsuzluk getirdi?i görünür. Norveç'in müthi? do?as?n? Knut Hamsun'un gözünden okumak kitaptaki en doyurucu nokta. ?htiyarland?kça kendini sorgulayan karakter ?iirler yazmaya ba?lar. Kitapta yer yer bunlar? okuyucu ile de payla??r. Her bölümde farkl? ve üzgün kad?nlar var. Yazar onlara tan?mlayamad??? ilgi duyar.

Do?adan insan?n içine ilerleyen duygulu bir yolculuk bu kitap. Ya?l?l?k ve melankoli, do?a ve insan, kad?n

- erkek, ?ehir ve k?rsal kesim hayat? ince detaylarla yorumlan?r.

Alejandro Orradre says

Reseña *in progress...*

Madhuri says

The theme of a wandering man is central to many of Hamsun's characters, so it is perhaps only fitting that a book comprising of two of his writings be called *The Wanderers*. The cover contains two inter-twined Hamsun writings: *Under the Autumn Star* and *Wanderer* plays on muted strings, the latter a sequel to the first - and is a close but stale reflection of Hamsun's themes and moods, perhaps even a reflection of some of his own experiences

In the former, the wanderer Knut Pedersen leaves behind his city life with the romantic fantasy of leading a simple village life. He begins to do odd jobs on farms, but finds his heart often interfering with his idea of simplicity as he falls in love with the women of the house. His adopted simplicity is not able to lure him into settling down on a farm with one of the maids as his simpleton companion does. Like most of Hamsun's heroes, he hangs in abeyance in a feverish passion, that works to depress and exalt him alternatively, but also always keeps him on his feet. He is the confused man who does not know what he wants - whether it is the affections of one lady or the other, or merely a life in the woods. It is, in a way comical to read of his mild frustrations, because he seems to be oriented towards what he apparently escaped from while escaping the city. It is also comical because these are the confusions of a real person, whose element is inconsistency and not a singular approach to life which seems to be the characteristic of most other protagonists.

In *On Muted strings*, Pedersen, six years later, returns to one of the farms where he had worked during his earlier wanderings. And if there is a word that can describe the emotion of this narrative, it is the well chosen word in the title - muted. This hero is certainly different from Hamsun's other heroes, he is a quietened, withdrawn soul in contrast to the earlier restless character. There is that lack of the characteristic fervor, although still retaining his element of estrangement and frivolity. He is more a narrator now than the protagonist - as he observes the life of the landowners, which are portrayed in shades of decadence. Though I think he tries to refrain from it, Hamsun does pass his negative reflections on alcoholism and infidelity in his commentary, something that trivializes him a bit in my opinion. Though I do not expect an author to be an unbiased observer, I think he could keep well above the station of passing moral judgements.

I recently chanced upon a more detailed commentary on these characters which I found quite appropriate:

Fictional heroes who are estranged from their environment seldom emerge lifelike. With most writers, such heroes are mere shadows, or, at best, symbols. But Hamsun is able to portray both the environment and the alienation, the soil and the extirpation. His heroes have roots even though they cannot be seen. The reader never knows precisely how they have become what they are, but their existence is real all the same.

Hamsun's favourite hero is a young man in his late twenties or early thirties, rash, good-natured, with no plans for the future, always anticipating some happy chance, yet at the same time resigned and melancholy. Hamsun's hero is frivolous in word and deed. He speaks to people as he would to a dog or to himself.

Perhaps this work does not quite compare to *Hunger* or *Mysteries*, and is only a slighted shadow of these, but it is a very good read, describing a real man and his romantic fantasies of a simple village life, and of a lot of other romantic notions. The translation by Oliver and Gunnvor Stallybrass is excellent.

Andrés Cabrera says

Hamsun es un artesano de la palabra: la calidez y precisión con la que hilvana sus ideas es preciosa. El noruego escribe como si alzase una cometa en los cielos: comprende que, más allá de lo dicho, hay un vuelo, una danza que se da entre las nubes y el objeto. En ese intervalo entre la idea y la expresión, Hamsun hace de la afección la protagonista de su relato. Comprende que, como bien explica al final de la novela, el vagabundo no es un sabio: no es alguien que reflexiona al borde de la muerte, ni en virtud de sus años vividos, no es ese que se erige como "más apto" que los demás por el hecho de su vejez; por el contrario, el vagabundo no es sabio; antes bien, comprende que la vida y sus enseñanzas sólo tienen sentido en cuanto han sido experimentadas por uno mismo, y que, más allá de hacerse extendibles a todo contexto y persona, el aprendizaje es personal. La melodía sólo tiene sentido para aquel que la ha vivido, que ha navegado entre sus acordes y se ha visto frente a sí mismo y la inmensidad del paisaje humano. Para aquel que ha temido y amado, la melodía es parte constitutiva de su relato. Para el resto, son acordes tapados, insonoros. Por eso, el vagabundo sabe que siempre toca con sordina: no importa que lo oigan, ni quien, sólo interesa su propia melodía: en su momento, en su vivencia. Luego de eso, sólo queda el camino: abierto y expectante...

He leído que, para muchos, esta segunda parte de la Trilogía del vagabundo está peor lograda que la primera. Sin embargo, considero que no es así: si bien la acción que transcurre no es siempre crucial, Hamsun logra incorporar aquí un ritmo, una cadencia que arrastra al personaje y que es indisociable del suceso pivote de la narración: (view spoiler). En este sentido, lo interesante de *A Wanderer Plays on Muted Strings* es que hace del afecto el partícipe principal del relato. Como novela de transición, catapulta al personaje de Pedersen un paso más allá de su mero deambular de la primera novela, lo hace consciente, lo reafirma como modo de ser digno...vida plena.

Aunque preferí esta segunda parte a la primera, considero que tampoco está muy por encima de su predecesora (de allí que haya matenido la puntuación de tres estrellas). Eso sí, intuyo que la última parte será magistral. Algo me lo dice.

Geoff says

Much like the tone of a book by Giono (I'm sure Giono was well aware of Hamsun), this is a lovely, simple story about a wanderer and his interactions with people and nature. The sometimes surreal, magical imagery that crops up, and Hamsun's almost mystical descriptions of solitude, working with the land, and the joy of immersing oneself in forests, rivers, and mountains, makes it a wonderful, contemplative book. The characters themselves were a little thin, but overall I greatly enjoyed this.

Steven says

"There are some who pick themselves up after a fall and continue on their way through life, with their blue and yellow bruises. And there are others who never rise again."

This sequel to *Under the Autumn Star* follows the same character (Knut Pedersen, Hamsun's real name) on

his wanderings in the Norwegian countryside, six years later. He ends up meeting many of the same characters in correspondingly late(r) stages of their lives. The novel is not as compact and well-crafted as its predecessor; however, it has its fine moments, and the beautiful *epilogue* is some of Hamsun's most personal writing, in which he reflects on literature, truth-in-literature (or general lack therefore during his times), life, solitude, wandering, and getting old. He even takes a few jabs at Ibsen in the process.

Juniar says

Borrowed from my Danish exchange program student friend. I could feel when the wanderer in the story felt sleepy on a sunny day.

Oziel Bispo says

Um viajante volta a um sítio onde estivera há oitos anos atrás e encontra tudo em decadência , tanto as pessoas como as construções. As pessoas já não se entendem , as famílias estão destruídas, o adultério , os ciúmes e as brigas imperam..Ele vê tudo isso acontecer com seu antigo patrão que está envolvido até o pescoço em brigas , adultério e vícios numa disputa ferrenha com sua esposa Luisa.

O viajante tenta de todas as maneiras restaurar aquele lugar , com projetos de pinturas e técnicas de agricultura, mas no tocante as relações humanas ele nada consegue ,as coisas vão de mal a pior .Sua única alternativa é pensar no passado, mas o passado também lhe doi pois no passado ele amou uma mulher naquele lugar e agora no presente percebe que a continua amando . .

Knut é um especialista em penetrar no mais íntimo do ser humano. .Não é à toa que ele de um simples sapateiro se tornou um nobel de literatura.

Steven says

The Wanderer is composed of two related novels: *Under the Autumn Star* and *On Muted Strings*. The first was definitely better than its sequel, which follows the same character (Knut Pedersen, Hamsun's real name) later on in his wanderings - but I thoroughly enjoyed them both. Hamsun has a unique talent for elevating the lives of ordinary people to a high level of general and artistic interest; and his propensity for leaving unexplained some of the reasons, motivations, or background of his main characters serves to add depth to what might otherwise be more straightforward tales. The beautiful epilogue to *On Muted Strings* is probably the most personal I have encountered Hamsun in his writings.

Steven Monrad says

Two sequential novels in one cover.

Under the Autumn Star

A Wanderer Plays on Muted Strings

autobiographical fiction
the famous Hamsun style spare and evocative

Åñbü Çhélvåñ says

THE BOOK SPEAKS OF THE FEELINGS OF AN OLD MAN AND HIS WANDERING BUSINESS;

the lines i liked in this book are:

maybe grindhusen is right, maybe it's a universal truth that something will turn up tomorrow as surely as it has today.

"I WAS FREE AND UNKNOWN"

"i thought to myself: no,its not exactly roses,roses all the way when you go wandering"

one man marvel at my walking and walking without apparent purpose

Six years gone, ay, so long it
is ago; would she be greatly changed? Time has had its wear on me; I am
grown dull and faded and indifferent; I look upon a woman now as
literature, no more. It has come to the end. Well, and what then?
Everything comes to an end. When first I entered on this stage I had a
feeling as if I had lost something; as if I had been favoured by the
caresses of a pickpocket. Then I set to and felt myself about, to see if I could bear myself after this; if I could
endure myself as I was now. Oh well, yes, why not? Not the same as before, of course, but it all passed off so
noiselessly, but peacefully, but surely.*Everything comes to an end.*

"in old age we no longer live our lives;we merely keep on our feet with the aid of memories.we are like a batch of letters that someone has sent;we no longer in the post,we have arrived.the same is true whether our contents have stirred up joys and sorrows,or whether they have made no impression at all.than you for life,it was fun to live! [121]

"evasive and vacillating--that is what life makes us all,year by year."

" There are some people who pick themselves up after a fall and continue their way through life,with their blue and bruises.and there are others who never rise again there are indeed some who never get over it;it shakes them to their foundations,like a revolution.it all depends on how coarse fibred they are!"[229]

"A wanderer plays on muted strings when he reaches the age of two score years and ten.thats when he plays on muted strings."

*"there was a scent of jasmine in a grove, and a tremor of joy ran through one i know,not for the jasmine but for everything--a lit-up window,a memory,the whole life.but when he was called away from the grove,he had already been paid in advance for this annoyance.
and there it is;the very favor of receiving life at all is handsome advance payment for all life's miseries,each single one."*

AGE CONFERS NO MATURITY;
AGE CONFERS NOTHING BEYOND OLD AGE;

"there were pages and pages about
everything coming right in the end"

"Oh, but I have been showing off nicely all to myself: pretending I was going far, and needed to equip myself with care, had occasion for all my presence of mind and endurance. A man can show off like that when he is going far; but I am not. I have no errand anywhere, and nothing calls me; I am only a wanderer setting forth from a hut, and coming back to it again; it does not matter where I am."

WHY SHOULD I HURRY?IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHERE I AM :)
