1995

BREAKING THE SILENCE HYMNS AND FOLK SONGS IN O. E. RØLVAAG'S IMMIGRANT TRILOGY

Phillip R. Coleman-Hull

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly

Part of the Other International and Area Studies Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/1004

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
BREAKING THE SILENCE
HYMNS AND FOLK SONGS IN O. E. RØLVAAG’S IMMIGRANT TRILOGY

PHILIP R. COLEMAN-HULL

In an essay written in 1933 Einar Haugen briefly mentions that “Rølvaag’s most delicate observations take the form of music, and rhythmic sound becomes to him the highest form of beauty.” Haugen refers merely to the sonorous qualities of the prairie and never delves into the songs—both Norwegian folk songs and hymns—that surface through O. E. Rølvaag’s immigrant trilogy. Since 1933, critics have explored a multitude of themes related to Giants in the Earth, Peder Victorious, and Their Father’s God, and much attention

Philip R. Coleman-Hull is a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s department of English studying American and Great Plains literature. He has recently begun work on his dissertation, an exploration of music in Plains literature, of which this essay is a part.

FIG. 1. O. E. Rølvaag. Courtesy of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, St. Olaf College.
The prevalence of music within the trilogy should not seem incidental, for Rølvaag himself was surrounded by music. Paul Reigstad writes that one “of the forces contributing to Rølvaag’s intellectual development was the Lutheran state church,” a denomination that is known for its rich musical heritage. Perhaps more significantly, while he was a professor at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, Rølvaag’s career overlapped with that of F. Melius Christiansen, head of the music department for four decades. Under Christiansen’s direction, the St. Olaf choir “[sang] Bach chorales and reviv[ed] the fine old Lutheran hymns . . . travelling all through the nation, [bringing] the Old World tradition of a cappella music to a country that, when Christiansen first began his work, knew only the glee club.”

In resurrecting the old church hymns, Christiansen thus proceeded to secularize them, in a sense, by removing the context of the worship service and presenting the hymns as cultural artifacts to a general public.

Many of the church hymns also boast secular roots, and for Norwegians in particular “Christian church music . . . became a part of the musical consciousness of the people” and filtered into their folk music tradition. Gra- cia Grindal reminds us that “To study the hymnody of the Reformation in Scandinavia is to see at close quarters cross-cultural ministry practiced by people eager to express in their own language a truth which had first been taught them in Latin or German. . . . For the Catholic church the folk tradition was barbaric, while the evangelical church spirit sought to make itself one with the folk tradition.”

So, as if following Christiansen’s prompting on the one hand and employing the music’s history on the other, Rølvaag’s use of the hymn operates similarly—as a cultural artifact.

SACRED MUSIC AND CULTURAL SALVATION IN GIANTS IN THE EARTH

Rølvaag first introduces music in Giants in the Earth when Store-Hans is alone on the vacant prairie. He discovers that “thoughts of
his mother and the porridge didn't quite bring him all the feeling of safety he needed; he hunted through his mind for a few strains of a hymn, and sang them over and over in a high-pitched, breaking voice."6 The introduction of singing fills a void for the young boy on a landscape that offers nothing familiar, nothing recognizably his. Certainly the spirituality of the hymn, with its probable references to God, offers solace, but it also represents the only piece of home or tradition with which he can surround himself; the hymn no longer functions as a cry of praise or penance, but as an anchor to his heritage, although his "high-pitched breaking voice" suggests an element of terror that is not completely assuaged.

Outbursts like Store-Hans' are rare, for music occurs sparingly in Giants in the Earth. Silence becomes normative, a descriptor of the physical landscape of the prairie and the psychological landscape of Beret Holm. Like her son, Beret feels the emptiness and loneliness of the plains, thinking "She had passed beyond the outposts of civilization" where "the stillness had grown deeper, the silence more depressing." There were "no waves that sang" to her. She finds herself living where "no living thing [could] exist."7 The sense of separation from her civilization, therefore, creates for Beret a distancing between herself and her cultural landmarks, prohibiting her from putting her imprint on the land and breaking the silence. Instead, "darkness and infinitude" creep in, making escape through death one of the few palatable options.8 Unlike Store-Hans, Beret cannot readily assimilate. She discovers herself isolated—physically and psychologically—in a land where "there was nothing to hear . . . nothing except the night wind, which . . . stirred with so many unknown things."9

Slowly Beret begins to break the silence in Book I by patching together and saying aloud "pious little verses" remembered from her childhood.10 These verses, though not properly "songs," not only provide a glimpse of Beret combating the stillness on the prairie, but also usher in the pietism associated with her during the rest of the novel. The five stanzas she recites, rather than reflecting "doctrines fundamental to the faith" found in most of the older, yet more liturgical, Norwegian Lutheran hymnals, exhibit the themes of the revival hymn and sermon that more readily define an earlier evangelical and grass roots Lutheranism: "sin, conversion, and eternal life."11 For example, one of Beret's verses reads as follows:

Weighed by guilt I weary wander
In the desert here below;
When I measure
My transgressions,
Breaches of Thy holy law,
I must ponder
Oft, and wonder;
Canst Thou grace on me bestow?12

Absent from these verses is the "faith alone" doctrine that forms the foundation of Lutheran theology. Instead, one encounters the more Puritanical emphasis on sin, grace and mercy. For Rølvaag, "the emphasis upon denial, sin, and the ugliness of an evil world" did not constitute faith, but a trial, since it neglected "cultural integrity . . . self-knowledge and self-respect."13 Beret undoubtedly reaches back in her past to retrieve these memories, but what she recalls has the potential for jeopardizing her self-worth by continually reinforcing her sinfulness. Beret's emergence then from the silence signifies at once her rootedness in spirituality and her emphasis on the darker sides of religion. She lives in shades of pietism so dark that they are themselves departures from both mainstream Lutheranism and the compassionate religion preached by Rølvaag's admirable old preachers.

Toward the end of the novel, Beret experiences another kind of music, the sacred hymns of Norway, invading more completely the silent desolation that once defined her world. The sacred songs that surround her now are of
a different character from the verses she recited in bed. Reflecting on a recent service in her home, Beret recalls how a traveling pastor made them sing exactly the same hymns here in this sod house as the people sang in the churches in Norway—yet no harm had befallen the house on that account. Melodies, still sung and echoing in the home, transform the dwelling and even the land into a holy place where miracles unheard of in the homeland can happen—"You never would have become the grandmother of a minister if I had remained in Norway," she imagines writing to her mother. The music casts a spell, and Beret’s psychology changes from one fascinated by death who had no hope for survival in the new land to one who, by taking hold of the familiar, unlocks her identity and realizes the potential power and good in her situation. Beret taps into that power while sitting in the room where her friend and neighbor, Hans Olsa, lies dying. Confronting a cultural “filth and pollution” not unlike that she formerly experienced on the prairie, Beret “felt a physical desire to cleanse the place of its corruption,” and so softly sings a hymn prior to changing the cloths. Lyrics referring to forgiveness and salvation act, then, as both spiritual and cultural cleansing agents necessarily preceding the physical chore of replacing soiled sheets, as Beret performs her role in preparing the way for one whose “day of grace is nearly over.” Beret’s self-righteousness, according to the old preacher, is more destructive than cleansing.

Rølvaag clearly associates Beret with religion, and her affinity toward church music solidifies that tie. But Rølvaag further broadens the connection by linking her husband, Per, almost exclusively with the folk music tradition. Upon his arriving in South Dakota, Per’s new religion becomes a worship of the land, a place where he will build his kingdom and where he feels “a divine restlessness [run] in his blood.” Per looks to the land, not the heavens, for his sustenance, so not surprisingly Per is drawn to the earthier, less sacred (in a religious sense) folk music played at the community dances and social get-togethers. He responds with as much gusto to the music that is played as to the land that he farms: “Per Hansa began to breathe hard and fast . . . completely forgot himself” as “Waves of spasmodic twitching passed over him in time to the jigging tune.” Thus, Per’s rather euphoric response to music, though infrequently witnessed by the reader, parallels his euphoric response to the land, just as his wife’s piety is mirrored in her affinity to hymns.

By linking two fairly separate musical traditions with Beret and Per, Rølvaag not only shows the distinctness of each character, but also heightens our awareness of the chasm in their relationship. In Prairies Within, a work exploring the influence of Kierkegaardian philosophy in the trilogy, Harold Simonson discusses Rølvaag’s employment of the concept of either/or, an absolute and deliberate system of choosing character traits. It is used as an operative device in Giants in the Earth illustrating the all or nothing natures of Per and Beret. Simonson concludes that “as between all or nothing, Per Hansa’s cultural all becomes Beret’s nothing, just as her religious all is his nothing.” A cursory glance at the characters’ actions clearly leads to such interpretations, even when focusing passively on the music, for each character’s nearness to one specific musical tradition fits the pattern of cultural and religious all or nothing posited by Simonson. Yet Per is not entirely bereft of a religious tradition, nor Beret of a cultural one. Though distanced from the faith of his homeland, Per manufactures his own religion on the prairie, worshipping the land, finding sacred hymns in the folk music and the “quacking and grunting, mooing and neighing, from every corner of the farm.” Though Per is as pagan as a saga hero, he thinks of himself as Christian and values Christianity—just as the saga heroes were written into Christianity. Likewise, Beret rediscovers and reclaims the culture of her homeland within the old Norwegian Lutheran hymns. Regularly throughout the novel “words [are] far and distant between Per Hansa and his wife,” making a
blending or borrowing of respective cultural and religious preferences impossible. Apart from each other and in their own private spheres, music as cultural icon and sacred tradition fills each other’s void. In this way Beret and Per are prohibited from living in an entirely all or nothing world.

MUSIC AS ACCULTURATING AGENT IN PEDER VICTORIOUS

Rølvaag closes his epic Giants in the Earth with the grizzly image of Per Hansa’s death, as if to reiterate and then bring to an end his emphasis on the individual’s response to life on the prairie. Focusing less on psychology and more on sociology, Peder Victorious operates primarily as a study of immigrant community life, examining the second generation’s “mixed loyalties and eventual revolt from the world of tradition and allegiance to... Norwegian heritage to the immediate world of the American language and point of view.”

As the influences on the characters change and in some respects diversify, the music throughout the novel becomes more representative of those shifts away from the homogeneity of the Norwegian community. Though Beret remains staunchly aligned with the Norwegian hymn tradition, her maturing son, Peder, inherits another tradition altogether.

The title of the first section of Peder Victorious is “The Song of Life’s Dismay,” a reference to a song sung by Tambur-Ola, Ola the Drummer. The war veteran sings the song when depressed, and Rølvaag elaborates that “it really consisted of two melodies—a soldier’s song coupled to a Norwegian folk song by some hum-ums, both in a minor mode.” As Einar Haugen points out, the relationship between Tambur-Ola and Peder is significant, for “Peder sees God as ‘treacherous, sly, cunning,’ and is supported in this view by books he finds in Tambur-Ola’s library, such as the works of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll.”

Their relationship is also important on another level. Tambur-Ola replaces Per Hansa as the transmitter of culture to Peder, and the song seeps into the consciousness of the youth. In the Norwegian folk music tradition, “music, whether vocal or instrumental, originally was learned and preserved from generation to generation simply by hearing,” and typically it was “handed down, through the ages, from father to son.” Thus, in passing along the “Kill-deer Song,” a tune Peder sings and whistles regularly throughout the novel, Tambur-Ola acts as a surrogate father who offers a traditional tune blended with an American military melody. In this “tainted” Norwegian song are the beginnings of the growing gap resulting from Peder’s acculturation into American society (and Rølvaag’s own admission that some acculturation will occur) and his mother’s insistence on maintaining strict allegiance to their Norwegian heritage. It is, of course, impossible for Peder’s generation, born in America, to adhere to Beret’s standards.

Further immersion in American culture and distancing from the traditions of his parents’ homeland occurs in school where Peder learns to recite The Gettysburg Address and the Pledge of Allegiance, and to sing “America.” Even after Beret removes Peder to the Tallaksen Schoolhouse to be among the Norwegians, he is introduced to Whitman’s “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” a poem that swells with song and in which he discovers his identity in the words:

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world,
Varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!28

Success in the new land means discarding the past, according to Peder’s misapprehended interpretation; the hope of the future lies in the forward-looking youth, not in, as stated in Their Father’s God, “those silly superstitions and prejudices that centuries ago should have been dumped into the sea.” Thus Peder emerges as a torchbearer of a new folk tradition that starkly contrasts Rølvaag’s own
attitudes toward the preservation of distinctive cultural values, yet affirms his fears regarding the breakdown of cultural integrity and conservation.

Just as she contrasted with the cultural all and spiritual barrenness of Per Hansa in Giants in the Earth, Beret offers opposition to her son’s Americanization in Peder Victorious. Aligned once again with the hymn heritage, Beret embraces fewer of the revivalistic songs and more of the traditional hymns, signaling a shift from her morbid piety to a more sensible and stable faith. A text associated with Beret in this novel, “O Jesus, Sweet and Lowly,” is in fact a Thomas Kingo text, collected in his 1699 hymnal that was commissioned by King Christian V. Kingo, a Dane, compiled his hymnal for use by Danes and Norwegians alike, shunning “the use of translated hymns” while creating “a body of . . . hymns which were indigenous to his homeland and expressed a sentiment native to his people.”

Beret’s knowledge of scriptures betrays her at the novel’s end when she is tempted to read the love poem Peder writes to the Irish girl, Susie. Referred to in the chapter heading as “The Song of the Shulamite,” the verses are actually copied from the Song of Solomon. Sensual, passionate, carnal, the words shock Beret. She fails to recognize them as deriving from the Word of God she holds so dear and destroys the poem in the stove. Her destruction of the text, however, is forgivable. Peder had appeared to borrow from his mother’s sacred tradition, one he perpetually questions and rejects, but his transcription is in English. The translation renders the biblical song almost unrecognizable to the Norwegian immigrant by lifting it out of its cultural context, thereby stripping the text of a function as either a holy song or cultural artifact. Instead, it is yet another signal of the second generation’s forging of a new tradition even if it is sometimes through appropriation of the old. This is a cultural movement Beret, no doubt, would similarly like to rip up and throw into the flames, yet feels too powerless and alone to do.

Music and songs have primarily been used to demonstrate the distancing between generations and individuals. While hints of heritage can at times be found in the hymns and allusions to religion unearthed in the folk songs, the two strains nevertheless remain fairly distinct and separate in order to stress division and create tension. Unlike Rølvaag’s first two novels, the final novel in the trilogy presents a more profound lyrical blending of the two traditions, and, though tension persists in Their Father’s God, we begin to see Peder reclaiming his heritage and discovering an identity through the Norwegian music.

To emphasize Peder’s removal from Norwegian traditions, Rølvaag opens the novel
with a hymn from the “Synod’s Old Hymnal” sung by Syvert Tønseten, Peder’s godfather:

The twilight fades to dark of night
And journeyed has the day to its last hour
La-um . . . la-ha . . . to its last hour.
And towards that evil, darker night
I find the Moth now guides my weary steps
La-um . . . my weary steps.
Where worms at last will wallow in my skin
And cleanse this flesh of all its lust and sin.
La-ha, um-um . . .
And cleanse this flesh of all its lust and sin.33

Besides Peder’s not recognizing the tune as an old evening hymn, what is significant about the lyrics are how they figure into the Norwegian folk music tradition.

Nils Grinde explains in A History of Norwegian Music that one of the major sub-groups within folk music is the lokk, huving, or laling: “a song or shout the purpose of which is to make contact with other people—another herder some distance away, for example, or the milkmaid on the nearby mountain meadow.... A laling is a type of huving, one in which the syllable ‘la’ plays a prominent role in the text.”34 Employing the laling in the hymn, Tønseten puts another cultural stamp on it and transforms it into a song of calling to Peder. And the two do make contact. Their brief conversation allows Tønseten to remind his godson that, with Peder’s marriage to Susie, “You seem to have forgotten all about church and Christianity,” implying not only spiritual but cultural deprivation.35

Despite such a disheartening beginning, the rest of the novel charts Peder’s reclamation of his traditional past and acquisition of an identity through his Norwegian heritage. The next day, in fact, finds Peder among his Norwegian friends dancing to and singing the ballads “Per Spillemand” and “Anne Knutsdotter,” reminding himself that Susie will “never make an Irishman out of me. Nossir, I’m Norwegian, I am!”36 Whereas traditions were once things better left to die, now they instill in Peder a sense of community and joy. When he joins in the singing, he feels his “spirits soaring higher.”37 In contrast, Susie’s refrains from the Irish tune “Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight” sound “unrelentingly” in his ears; “The longer Peder listened to it, the colder became his indifference. Impenetrable darkness had engulfed him. . . .”38 Haunting Peder is a darkness similar to that which Beret experienced upon her arrival on the Plains in Giants in the Earth. Only now the “darkness and infinitude” descends not out of an inability to restore cultural landmarks on an empty prairie, but out of the unassimilability of two cultures—here Norwegian and Irish—and, hence, Peder’s inability to reconcile identity through culture and religion on the one hand and with a marriage relationship on the other.

Neither music nor anything else remedies the religious, cultural, and personal differences between Susie and Peder. This tension continues to draw Peder closer to an identity found within his Norwegian roots. While she finds solace in her Irish Catholic background under the guidance of Father Williams and by taking care of her father and brother, we find Peder singing the songs of his childhood: “O Jesus, Sweet and Lowly” and the lullaby “Ro, Ro, Krabbeskjær.” As he sings the songs to his infant son, one is reminded again of the oral transmission of folk melodies from father to son, and the act becomes one of communicating ethnicity as well as entertainment.

The songs are not necessarily meant to be only for the child. It is the nature of Norwegian lullabies that “some of the texts appear to be addressed to the singer or perhaps to other listeners rather than to the child who is supposed to be going to sleep.”39 Both of Peder’s songs are sung as lullabies, and both are self-reflexive. “O Jesus Sweet and Lowly” becomes eerily autobiographical for Peder as he realizes that “He was the child that had strayed far . . . that was hopelessly far” from the religious ties that the hymn speaks of, and from the cultural
moorings that are so intimately a part of the church. Likewise, “Ro, Ro, Krabbeskjer,” which translates loosely as “Now we row us a-fishing,” hardly applies literally to the prairie life of South Dakota, but hearkens back to old Norway where the sea readily impacted the lives of its inhabitants and, for Rølvaag, “meant, above all, promise.” So again we encounter the nexus of the two traditions, Norwegian hymns and folk songs, now further heightening Peder’s own receptivity to reclaiming his heritage and accepting the message of the Reverend Kahldahl that “A people that has lost its traditions is doomed!”

The final musical image captures Peder reclaiming his potentially lost traditions. This in a sense is the culmination of the blending of Norwegian hymns and folk songs, and it comes at Beret’s deathbed. Though not sung, the hymn Beret asks Peder to recite is “I Know of a Sleep in Jesus’ Name,” which he delivers “in a calm, sonorous voice.” Fittingly, the hymn’s lyricist is Magnus Brostrup Landstad, an important nineteenth-century Norwegian composer of hymns and collector of ancient folk tunes. His “work with folk songs and folklore developed and matured his poetic talents,” and in the 1840s he was approached by the Department of Church Affairs of Norway to prepare a national hymnal. In 1879 J. N. Skaar wrote, “Landstad’s work in folk-song gave a decidedly Norwegian ring to his hymns,” and
while parallels with the folk song tradition are not readily evident in "I Know of a Sleep," references to the Norwegian countryside clearly surface, most notably in the fourth stanza:

O that is a morning dear to me,  
And oft, o'er the mountains streaming,  
In spirit its heavenly light I see,  
As golden the peaks are beaming;  
Then sing I for joy like birds at dawn  
That carol in lofty lindens.  

The tune for this hymn, though not sung by Peder in the novel, most likely differs from the melody by C. E. F. Weyse presently accompanying Landstad’s lyrics in the Lutheran Book of Worship, Den signede Dag, which is also the title of Their Father’s God in Norwegian. In 1840, Ludwig M. Lindeman began a series of journeys throughout Norway, visiting villages of the poorer and more uneducated peoples and collecting the old songs. Several important collections of folk tunes resulted from Lindeman’s research, one being the Koralbog (1872), a book containing melodies with an accompaniment for Magnus Brostrup Landstad’s hymnal. Lindeman also printed old chorales from churches in Norway with new melodies based on folk tunes.

The strands of religion and culture that Rølvaag weaves throughout his trilogy reach a crescendo with "I Know of a Sleep." Folk and hymn tradition presented throughout intersect tightly in this final musical moment, having been built upon successively up to this point. Spoken in the Norwegian vernacular, “the profound austerity of sorrow and the simple Christian faith which the lines expressed gripped him,” illustrating the initial resolution of Peder’s dislocation from family and church.

CONCLUSION

Unveiling the complexity of immigrant life through music, both in its presence and its absence, becomes a vehicle for the logical development and progression of characters and themes throughout Rølvaag’s trilogy. This common thread allows Rølvaag to gather the many dissonant chords that evolve in the story—land-taking, religion, customs, social mores, assimilation—and to attempt to give them unity and consonance, predominantly through the tensions and connections between hymns and folk songs.

While the songs of the hymn and folkloric variety typically employ strophic melodies, each novel mirrors the various parts of the classical sonnet form: exposition, development, and recapitulation. As the exposition, the more epic Giants in the Earth “var[ies] widely in structure, revealing . . . a harmonically clear cut primary theme or themes,” Beret’s new life without Per, the more sociologically-styled story line, and the continued conflict of culture and religion in Peder Victorious “follows no stereotyped plan” like the development section; it offers “a restatement of the primary theme in the new key” and a chance to “introduce new or related material.” The third novel, Their Father’s God, completes the sonnet with a recapitulation. It runs the gamut from a “nearly exact restatement of the material of the exposition . . . to thoroughgoing recomposition involving extensive compression or expansion.” So while each novel may be read and likewise appreciated on its own terms, the trilogy functions as a whole, coherent piece wherein Rølvaag achieves a final reconciliation between the culture Beret brought with her in Giants in the Earth and maintained throughout her life to the one Peder inherits in the new land, sadly at the expense of his wife and son. Rølvaag preaches neither an absolute assimilationist nor ethnocentric dogma for his Norwegian-Americans; as if following the examples of the hymns “joyfully and freely appropriating the folk tradition,” he hints at an Americanized Peder rediscovering and becoming more connected to his Norwegian culture—albeit not so joyfully in the final chapter. “Since his mother’s death he had begun reading Skandinaven and was often surprised at finding so much of interest in its
columns both from this country and from abroad,” apparently learning the value of community and discovering an identity in his ethnicity. Yet simultaneously, during the speech delivered by Tom McDougal, his political rival, Peder experiences the alienation that accompanies such ethnic ties, whether cherished or not, as McDougal paints Norwegians as lunatic, heathen, and immoral. And so in Their Father’s God, Rølvaag revisits themes of cultural identity and integrity, community, and alienation begun with Beret in Giants in the Earth and now completed in and complicated with Peder.

Though the three novels build well upon each other and function nicely in this three-part structure of exposition, development, and recapitulation, Paul Reigstad reminds us that “Rølvaag planned a fourth novel to complete the series about pioneer life,” a novel in which Peder, according to Theodore Jorgenson and Nora Solum, “was to find himself in terms of his racial heritage and in terms of the new nation he wanted to bring forward and upward.” Though it is unclear what role, if any, Norwegian music may have played in this fourth novel, certainly the harmony implicit in Their Father’s God would only be more finely tuned, returning coda-like to the primary theme of cultural integrity through ethnic identity. Despite the unfinished novel, the three texts stand well enough on their own, representing not only the artistry but also the subtlety of Rølvaag through the encapsulation of his philosophical and cultural ideals in the novels’ music.

NOTES

7. Ibid., p. 37.
8. Ibid., p. 38.
9. Ibid., p. 41.
10. Ibid., p. 224.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 429.
17. Ibid., p. 431.
22. Ibid., p. 150.
31. Rølvaag, Peder Victorius (note 24 above), p. 101. It should be noted that in her overview of Lutheran hymnody, Marilyn Stulken states that “hymnals brought by early Norwegian settlers” included Kingo’s. Stulken, Hymnal Companion (note 30 above), p. 100. However, “O Jesus, Sweet and Lowly” does not appear in the 1854 version of Kingo’s hymnal, an edition Beret would more likely
have brought over. After publication in the 1699 Kingo hymnal, the hymn does not reappear until the 1898 Sangbogen and then the 1916 Concordia compilations with which Rølvaag would have been more familiar. The preferred tune for the later version does not come out of the 1699 Kingo, but is in fact the tune for “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus,” composed by George James Webb, an Englishman who later came to America. Though not of Scandinavian origin, the tune nevertheless exhibits the qualities of the folk tunes discussed later: “more rapid tempos” rather than the “deadly uniform rhythms and slow tempos” of the older hymns.

35. Rølvaag, Their Father’s God (note 29 above), p. 5.
36. Ibid., p. 59.
37. Ibid., p. 54.
38. Ibid., p. 70.

41. Ibid., p. 200.
42. Reigstad, Rølvaag (note 2 above), p. 7.
43. Rølvaag, Their Father’s God (note 29 above), p. 207.
44. Ibid., p. 249.
46. Ibid., p. 39.
47. Rølvaag, Their Father’s God (note 29 above), p. 249.
49. Rølvaag, Their Father’s God (note 29 above), p. 249.
51. Ibid., p. 765.
52. Ibid.
55. Reigstad, Rølvaag (note 2 above), p. 147.