



Novels, Histories, Novel Nations

Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia

Edited by Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes and Ilona Pikkanen

Studia Fennica
Historica

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Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes, Ilona Pikkanen, February 2015

Preface

Describing the whimsical fate of historical painting, Francis Haskell (1971: 109) pointedly remarked that “No kind of art was more influential during the first half of the nineteenth century and none has now so hopelessly retreated beyond the frontiers of our appreciation”. In the context of Romantic Historicism most of the great painters of the academic art world attempted reconstructions of historical scenes that were appreciated by both art *connoisseurs* and the wider public, but after the breakthrough of Modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century this sort of evocation of the past seemed so banal that the whole concept of historical painting was largely dismissed as futile.

The genre of the historical novel has experienced an equally changeable destiny, even if in a less dramatic form. Having its heyday in the nineteenth century, its emergence at the beginning of the century was linked to the fundamental social and cultural transformations of the era, such as the change in time consciousness, modernisation and the rise of nationalisms. In the course of the century, history established itself as an academic discipline, but the popular forms for dealing with the past, including the historical novel, became equally ubiquitous and were successfully used in the various national constructions of identity (Trumpener 1997; Moretti 1999). Both the historical novel and painting aimed at a total retrospective view of a nation, with a detailed representation of its people and milieu in their historical development and across all segments of society (Maxwell 2009: 59; Duncan 2006: 179).¹ The detailed representations of time and space also allowed for powerful ideological and political generalisations. The decline of the genres in the twentieth century can be linked to the experiences of the two world wars, to the critique of nationalism and to the transformations in the literary and art worlds.

The reasons for the renewed interest in the historical novel (and, indeed, historical fiction) and painting in the last decades of the twentieth century are again similar. The study of nationalism and so-called invented traditions from the 1970s and of cultural memory from the 1990s onwards² made the nineteenth-century forms germane again and posed the question of their relationship to the new modes of representing the past in fictional form that had been developed in response to the experiences of the Second World

War. This volume is a result of those developments in the fields of cultural memory and theories of nationalism.

We will look at Finnish and Estonian historical fiction and its role in the cultural memory of these two countries throughout the past two centuries. We have chosen a broad and inclusive approach and will include not only historical novels but also works outside or on the fringes of that genre. The starting point for the collective study is the realisation that these works of fiction have played a distinct, and in many ways similar role in Finnish and Estonian nationalisms and cultural memory. Both countries have particularly vivid traditions of historical novels, novellas and plays. It has also been widely acknowledged that literature in general and historical fiction in particular have been crucial in shaping cultural identity in these countries (cf. Nummi 1993: 12; Tamm 2008). However, the study of historical fiction in Finland and Estonia has not yet formed the “kind of interdisciplinary borderland, to which historians, novelists and literature scholars have come in growing numbers” as claimed for other countries by a recent authority (Demos 2005: 329).

We intend to venture into this intriguing territory by adopting the interdisciplinary approach of cultural memory studies. In choosing cultural memory as our point of departure, we are interested not so much in historical fiction as a narrowly literary phenomenon, but rather in the ways in which it acts in culture and interacts with other media of cultural memory such as popular and professional history writing, life writing, visual culture, the politics of memory and so forth. As will become clear in the course of the study, the approach enables new perspectives to be opened up for Finnish and Estonian literature and interest to be provoked in the texts, periods and questions that have in many cases lacked a suitable mode of access and have therefore fallen into oblivion.

In opening up new perspectives, the comparative exploration of Finnish and Estonian historical fiction pursued in the book is crucial. Finland and Estonia offer good ground for comparison for a number of reasons. Situated in the north-eastern fringes of Europe, the two countries have especially close geographical, linguistic and cultural links (Raun 1987; Alenius 1998). As they are separated only by the narrow Gulf of Finland, the transmission of cultural influences has been easy. The Finnish and Estonian languages both belong to the Finno-Ugric language group and are closely related, even if they are not directly mutually comprehensible. Both countries were part of the Russian empire during the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century and have therefore often been perceived similarly in theoretical models of nation building.³ On the European map, both Finns and Estonians belong to the ‘late-coming’ or ‘young’ nations, the somewhat earlier Finnish nation building having served as a major model for Estonian activists and led to the construction of a shared Finno-Ugric identity that gained prominence in both countries in the late nineteenth century. Although the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union and the strong Soviet influence over Finland after the Second World War complicated the relations between the two nations for a long period, and economic inequality in the post-Soviet period has left its mark on cross-gulf interaction, the two nations are still

characterized by a very close relationship and more often than not they each perceive the other as the closest brother nation. The parallel developments and close resemblances are also reflected in the many similarities that can be found in their historical fiction, especially when studied in the framework of cultural memory.

However, Finnish and Estonian histories, and consequently their memory cultures, also diverge considerably at certain points. These differences come not only from the significant variations in the course of history, and hence in the 'available pasts', but e.g. in the nineteenth century also from the relationship between the administrative, economic and intellectual elite and the common people, and from the extent to which different classes participated in civil society at the time. All these factors have influenced the development of a national narrative in history writing, historical fiction and other cultural media.

These similarities and differences make the comparison a particularly productive undertaking. It is precisely because of the combination of closeness and strangeness that Finland and Estonia present a good case study for examining the functioning of cultural memory and the processes of remembering and forgetting in the national framework (see also the Introduction). Hopefully the comparative study of the Finnish and Estonian cases will also contribute theoretically to the study of cultural memory, as it focuses specially on the role of literature as one of its central media. The following preface sketches the theoretical context in which this study is situated and explains the structure of the book. The specificities of Finnish and Estonian cultural memory are discussed and an overview of historical fiction in the two countries is given in the next introductory chapter, followed by individual studies of different authors, texts and topics.

The Historical Novel and Cultural Memory

While there is a plurality of concepts in memory studies that are used to refer to how communities remember their past, such as collective memory, connective memory or social memory,⁴ this book draws primarily on the concept of cultural memory proposed by Jan and Aleida Assmann, and further developed in reference to literature by Ann Rigney and Astrid Erll.⁵ The Assmanns define cultural memory as "the reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image" (Assmann 1995: 132). In their theory of cultural memory they are inspired by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs' work on *mémoire collective*. Halbwachs (1992) emphasises the social frames of remembering that create group cohesion and influence individual memory. While for Halbwachs the frames are produced by social interaction, the Assmanns go beyond this understanding and stress the role of cultural objects such as texts, images and rituals and of their continual collective 'cultivation' in the construction, transformation and distribution of the common frames.

Another classic in memory studies, Pierre Nora (1989: 7) also stresses the role of material and symbolic 'sites of memory', where remembering coalesces and crystallises itself.⁶ However, following Halbwachs, Nora allocates these sites a secondary surrogate character in relation to the genuine unmediated memory of the group, which is passed on by intergenerational communication and interaction. From Nora's nostalgic and civilisation-critical perspective, the unmediated memory has ceased to exist and the work of cultural remembering is left to the artificial sites of memory, where memories of the past are only lingering on. The Assmanns, however, assign to cultural artefacts the primary formative and proactive role in creating the long-term historical memory of cultures and communities.

Yet another important implication of the cultural memory approach is the idea that cultural memory is selective and functions through the principle of scarcity crystallising memories in a limited number of canonical texts or sites (Assmann 1995: 130; Rigney 2005: 16). However, as images of the past are always constructed in relation to the contemporary situation and its needs, cultural memory is inherently a processual performance, a constant cultivation of the texts and sites that brings about their gradual transformation and re-interpretation (Rigney 2012: 19).

In addition, Ann Rigney (2005: 20) underlines that certain stories, themes, figures or motifs come to shape cultural memory only when they are repeated in different media that feed into each other. The understanding of remediation opens up a new perspective and offers a framework for studying historical fictions in a wider cultural context. In other words, if we enquire as to how these texts participated in the construction, distribution and transformation of the historical memory of nations, this has to be studied in its relationship to such media of memory as popular and professional history writing, visual culture, theatre, opera and so forth.

The idea that long term cultural memory is formed by cultural media and rituals, rather than passed down from one generation to the next by social interaction, is particularly important in the Finnish-Estonian context, where the nineteenth-century national movements opposed themselves in their rhetoric to the available written cultural heritage and capitalized on the purportedly authentic oral memory of the non-dominant ethnic groups of Finns and Estonians. Even if the collection and archiving of the folklore consequently became one of the most important mobilizing projects of the national movements in the region,⁷ the present study shows that various other cultural media were of equal importance, including the written cultural heritage of other nations, in the making of the memory of the new nations. By studying works of historical fiction of the two countries, this book explores how the historical memory of the emerging nations was constructed in the nineteenth century in highly selective terms by the foregrounding of certain events, themes and motifs and overshadowing of others to suit the contemporary needs of the nation building processes. It then proceeds to inquire into the ways these nineteenth century sites and figures of memory were appropriated, re-interpreted and transformed in the twentieth century in the different political and cultural circumstances. Consequently, the cultural memory approach enables us to show how the cultural processes of

recycling create continuity, and how some sites and figures maintain their importance while others fall into oblivion. It also helps to shed light on the ways in which new memorial forms are introduced and how the relevance of some mnemonic practices, such as the historical novel, has changed in relation to that of the others.

Ann Rigney (2004: 383; 2001: 9) argues that historical novels can function as 'portable monuments', as media of cultural memory, because even if the readers are aware that they are reading a work of fiction, they nevertheless attribute a certain representational value to it. The reading strategy is explained by the hybridity of historical fiction as a genre, which by definition uses both historical and invented story elements and makes use both of historical materials and the poetic licence that allows for invention in the creation of fictional worlds (*ibid.*: 19). It is precisely the freedom to invent that is paradoxically the aspect that makes literary fiction so powerful as a medium of memory, because the facilitation of the narrativisation of events means the images of the past created in fiction are more memorable than those of other cultural fields such as history writing, which is bound by evidence in its rendering of the past.⁸ In addition to the memorability or the ability to stick in the mind that goes with narrative skills,⁹ the role of the historical novel as a public forum for channelling and framing diverse local memories is also highlighted by Rigney in her analysis of Walter Scott's fiction (Rigney 2012: 25).

The cultural memory approach studies literature in its two-fold relationship to memory culture as the mediator between the existing memory culture and its reconfiguration (Erlil 2011: 156–157). When studying how literature channels, fixes, distributes and transforms memories, it is, consequently, interested both in the ways in which fiction makes use of the available sources and figures of memory, and in how fiction is appropriated and elaborated in reception.

Many contributions in this book explore how historical fiction transfers already existing sources into literary narratives and creates the figures of memory that carry specific cultural significance. The interest of these analyses comes partly from the specificity of the Finnish and Estonian pasts. The national elites of Finland and Estonia in the nineteenth century had very few sources, heroes and events available from earlier periods that could be used for creating a glorious past for the emerging nations. In Estonia, especially, there were even fewer that could be persuasively branded as 'the nation's own'. This lack of sources was not inevitable, but resulted rather from the fact that the young national histories opposed themselves to those of their national others, the Swedish for Finland and the Baltic German for Estonia. The national elites wanted to build an alternative history that would focus purely on the past of the Finnish and Estonian-speaking peasantry and it was precisely this choice that led to an inevitable paucity of sources.

In addition, the nineteenth-century writers in Estonia especially found themselves having to write their histories in a struggle with the (colonial) medieval, early modern and modern Baltic German texts, reversing and adapting the repertoire of the events, heroes and narrative templates available in them.¹⁰ For this reason, the study of nineteenth-century Estonian historical

fiction and popular history writing has to trace the ways in which it reworked medieval and early modern chronicles that represented the perspective of the Baltic Germans, the new national enemy. Similarly, historical fiction in Finland appropriated Swedish figures and rewrote them into Finnish national heroes. The limited number of sources, heroes, events and motifs and, consequently, the high level of their recursivity in the construction of the national pasts, makes the process of mediation and remediation, or the traffic of these memories, especially interesting to study.

Furthermore, many chapters in this book are interested in how the different genres, protagonist types, literary devices and motifs, present in the local literary culture or transported from the international one, have participated in the construction of the cultural memory. In addition to the historical novel and historiographic metafiction, subgenres like romance and the slavery story in nineteenth-century literature play a role here. As genres carry values and ways of thinking (Erlil 2011: 74), these literary forms have influenced considerably the ways in which the past is imagined. However, many genres of international literary culture were also considerably reworked in the local context in order to create figures of memory based on the local histories and some of the articles here show how these borrowed elements acquire new interpretation and relevance in the course of this process.

In addition to sourcing from and remediating cultural memory, literature also feeds into it by distributing figures of memory created in fiction that are taken up by other media of culture. Here the questions of canon building and of reception are crucial. Literature as a medium of memory is a phenomenon of reception (Erlil 2011: 160), because it has its mnemonic function only when it is widely read and discussed. To a certain extent this is achieved by the formation of the canon, important works of literature that every culture recirculates and re-affirms with the help of institutional means (Assmann 2008: 100). At the same time however, it also means that scholars of cultural memory have to go beyond the high and low divide in literary studies and explore the distribution of images of the past in popular literature. Speaking on the construction of historical memory for the non-dominant ethnic groups in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, Miroslaw Hroch (1999: 101) has argued that in the nineteenth-century fiction there was no correspondence between aesthetic value and social and national relevance. The study of reception and canon building in the Finnish and Estonian context promises various interesting results. It lets us explain not only why certain texts have maintained their canonical status with or without durable aesthetic value, but also why others have been immensely popular but have then fallen into oblivion. By answering the latter questions, cultural memory studies offers a new key for reading texts that have become irrelevant or inaccessible from the narrower perspective of literary studies such as the Finnish and Estonian popular historical novel of the interwar period or Stalinist literature in contemporary Estonia. In addition, the revision and rewriting of historical fiction in the changed contexts of memory culture or political constraints is of interest here. However, the contributors to the study are well aware that such a re-evaluation of historical fiction and its canon participates itself in the performance and transformation of cultural memory.

The cultural memory approach is interested not only in literary reception but also in the wider afterlife of stories, characters and motifs in other media of memory (Rigney 2012). That afterlife may continue in theatre and film, but also in history writing, public rituals and politics of memory. Ann Rigney (2012: 12, 20) distinguishes between ‘the push factor’ or ‘procreativity’, which is the productivity of historical fiction in pushing towards the creation of new versions of itself or its figures of memory, and ‘the pull factor’, which is the appropriations of the text by different groups for their own ends. When a representational status is given to historical fiction, it functions for Rigney as a history of sorts, a partly unsatisfactory account of the past that precisely due to its incompleteness may spur new interpretations, rewritings and appropriations. In giving a promise of ‘imminent history’ and creating a historiographical desideratum for future generations, historical fiction accelerates diverse cultural production around the figures and events represented (Rigney 2001: 55–56). This leads Rigney (2012: 38) to suggest that sometimes it is not their coherent, memorable storylines that earn some historical novels a prominent role in memory culture, but rather the tensions and ambivalences in their structure and reception that provoke new interpretations.

The Historical Novel and the Nation

Alongside the perspective of cultural memory, the recent studies that draw the link between the historical novel and modernisation and more specifically between the historical novel and nation building (Duncan 2006: 173), are relevant for the inquiry into the historical fiction of the ‘young’ nations like Finland and Estonia. Given the belated modernisation and ‘young’ nationalisms of the two countries, the comparative study of their two literatures has a revisionary or corrective potential in relation to the canon of the European historical novel which is based mainly on the literatures of long-established nation states like Great Britain and France.

In his groundbreaking study of the genre, Georg Lukács (1983: 42, 53) argues that one of the most important innovations of Walter Scott’s fiction was the way it modelled time. Scott represented the past as radically different from the present but linked to it as a phase in the teleological historical process.¹¹ The concept of history has increasingly been seen as having enabled the imagining of the nation.

In his argument about the relationship between the nation and the modern novel more generally, Benedict Anderson (1991: 24–25) for his part sees the modern ‘meanwhile’ as the configuration of time that made the imagining of the nation possible. The novel with its multiple storylines allowed a community of individuals to be imagined who may not have known each other but still belonged together because their lives moved contemporaneously onward in the homogeneous empty time. The simultaneity of the storylines creates the space of community.

Building on Anderson’s idea, Franco Moretti (1999: 20) has shown how many subgenres of the nineteenth century novel functioned as “the symbolic

form of the nation state, ... a form that (unlike an anthem, or a monument) not only does not conceal the nation's internal divisions, *but manages to turn them into a story*". Even if for Moretti the historical novel negotiates space rather than time by addressing the internal borders of the nation state, the spatial divisions still represent the different temporal stages of development. By erasing these internal borders in the course of its plot, the historical novel 'streamlines' the nation (*ibid.*: 40).

Jonathan Culler (1999: 25) has pointed out that two separate arguments are intertwined in these reflections on the novel and the nation: one about the capacity of the novel to model national space in its purely formal features and the other emphasising the role of the novel in representing the social space of specific nations. Culler doubts the strength of the latter argument and questions the ability of the novel to influence the processes of nation building by its representations of social space and the nation's past. Instead, he stresses the importance of socioeconomic (markets) and political (wars) factors in strengthening the differential identity of 'us' and 'them' and leaves to the novel the auxiliary role of creating the conditions for an imagining of communities that can be pitted against each other in this way. Many contributions to this book show how the novels shape the nation by negotiating social borders for the sake of the differential construction of identity.

The political and social relevance of the classical Scottian historical novel in the context of modernisation and nation building is usually limited to the period before 1848 (Lukács 1983; Maxwell 1998: 545; Jameson 2013: 264). After that, it is argued, its representations of the past were cut off from the vital present interests and the historical novel turned into an antiquarian form, the main task of which was entertainment (Anderson 2011). In addition, the Marxist tradition of the study of the genre has been haunted from its very beginning by the obvious links of the genre to romantic nationalism. Consequently, it tries to define only specific parts of the tradition of the historical novel as politically progressive and aesthetically refined literature worthy of scholarly interest (Jameson 1983: 3; Anderson 2011).¹² A history of the genre that is modelled on a few European literatures and tries to split 'the serious historical novel' off from its popular forms, denying them social relevance, is unhelpful in understanding the role of the genre in smaller literatures, in particular for the performance of cultural memory.

The relatively belated emergence of historical fiction in Finland and Estonia in the second half of the nineteenth century can be explained by the processes of belated modernisation and nation building. Historical novels modelled on Scott proliferated at the end of the nineteenth century in both countries because they enabled a historical memory to be constructed for the new nations that were being made at that time. However, what cannot be drawn in the Finnish and Estonian context is any dividing line between the serious historical novel and the romance. This book is determined to show the relevance of the popular historical novel for the processes of nation building, in particular the role of the romance plot in negotiating the social borders between communities. In accordance with the cultural memory approach, we will emphasise that memory work is done not only

by canonical novels but also by novels that have had a huge influence on the imagining of the national past but have then quickly fallen into oblivion as literary works.

Although the function of the historical fiction on both sides of the Gulf of Finland in the nineteenth century still coincided with that in Europe, even if belatedly, the presence and the position of the genre in Finnish and Estonian literature of the twentieth century diverged considerably from canonical European literary history and there is a plethora of questions that need to be addressed. At the turn of century, so the story goes, the historical novel is internationally a middlebrow realist genre that loses its reputation for good after the arrival of Modernism, as it is inherently incompatible with its interests (Anderson 2011).¹³ In addition to aesthetic innovations, the First World War strongly deheroized the favourite subjects of historical novel, the wars and revolutions, and the Second World War changed for good the ways in which literature approached history. The post-Second World War novelistic form dealing with the past has been studied and theorised since the 1980s under the title of historiographic metafiction, which stresses the playful subversive stance of the form in relation to the credos of nineteenth-century history writing and historical fiction (Hutcheon 1988: 105–123).¹⁴ But as the form is strongly linked to postmodernism and late capitalism (Elias 2001: ix), it seems to be a First World genre that leaves out much that has been written elsewhere.¹⁵

Furthermore, the new memory culture that took shape from the late 1980s in response to the Holocaust and decolonisation (Huysen 2003: 12) has led to new ways of approaching the past in fictional form, such as literature modelled on the testimonial mode and dealing with the traumas that violent histories have inflicted on individuals. Literary scholars have only begun to approach the question of how these new ways of engaging with the past in literature are related to earlier ones.

Under these circumstances, how do we explain the prominence of the historical novel in several periods of the twentieth century? If it is true that the historical novel is the most political of all subgenres of the novel, can the differences in literatures be reduced to diverging historical and political circumstances? Should we argue that the genre was strongly present in interwar Finland and Estonia because of the continuing relevance of nation building in the newly established nation states, or because a belligerent culture and its products stood the test of time in both countries? Or is the prominence of the historical novel related more generally to burning domestic political issues such as the legacies of the Civil War in post-Second World War Finland or the political resistance to Soviet regime in Estonia in the 1970s? And if we argue for the continuing relevance of nation building in the region throughout the twentieth century, does the historical fiction dealing with it remain within the limits of the traditional forms stemming from the nineteenth century? What are the formal responses to the attempt to symbolize the twentieth century events in these texts? Seen from Finland and Estonia, the gap between nineteenth-century and postmodern historical fiction does not seem to be so wide and there are various in-between forms.

In order to shed light on at least some of these issues, the definition of historical fiction in this book is broad and inclusive, as already pointed out. Some contributions analyse historical novels in the traditional sense, the others include historical novellas and plays or hybrid forms that intertwine fictional parts with other discursive genres. In addition, the function of related genres, such as slavery stories or novels dealing with recent political history for the construction of cultural memory, is explored.

The Structure of the Book

The book opens with a comparative introductory chapter on Finnish and Estonian cultural memory and on the history of historical fiction in these two countries throughout the past two centuries. As there are so few comprehensive studies of historical fiction in these countries, the chapter provides the reader with a wider frame of reference and outlines where the Finnish-Estonian comparative approach can prove fruitful. The aim has been to focus on the political and social frameworks in the texts, to discuss the pasts chosen by writers and the ways they handle those pasts, rather than describe their individual works, although the most important novels for cultural memory will be highlighted. The following chapters of the book are then gateways to the individual texts themselves, their more particular writing context, their modes of past-orientedness and the literary devices they use. The chapters roughly follow the chronological order in which the texts they study were written. Another option for structuring the book would have been to follow the chronology of the historical events the texts deal with. Such an order would have highlighted the relevance of certain events and periods that structure cultural memory. However, we opted for the current arrangement in order to foreground the continuous remediation of these events, themes and motifs.

The chapters dealing with the individual authors, texts and topics are subdivided into three sections and combine studies of Finnish and Estonian literature. The first section discusses nineteenth-century Finnish and Estonian historical fiction in the context of the national movements of the two countries. As already briefly mentioned, and as discussed at more length in the introductory chapter, the Finnish and Estonian national movements chose the peasantry as the core of the new nation and consequently, the first historical novels from the region had the difficult task of imagining the past of these people. In the struggle to reverse and adapt the written historical sources of the dominant ethnic groups of Swedes and Baltic Germans, these novels then established many historical events and characters as the landmarks of the new national histories for the following centuries.

Mari Hatavara's chapter on the first Finnish historical novelist Zacharias Topelius shows how the decision by the national elites, belonging themselves to the higher social classes, to choose the peasantry as the core of the nation creates social tensions that are projected into the past of their historical novels and represented by Topelius as a confrontation between the aristocracy and the peasantry. Hatavara focuses on how Topelius negotiates some of the

genre conventions of the nineteenth century historical novel, such as the figure of the narrator and his audience, to discuss the meaning of the past. Further, Topelius's take on the Hegelian idea of historical process is shown to facilitate his imagining of the Finnish nation and to open up a certain view of the present by representing the past.

The discussion of Estonian historical fiction tellingly opens with **Piret Peiker's** chapter on the stories about the New World's slave rebellions, which were adapted by the Estonian authors from German *Kolportage* literature and were extremely popular among the national movement. In her study, informed by postcolonial theory, Peiker shows that the slavery stories were so popular even though they were set in the faraway Americas, because they allowed a discussion of the legacies of colonialism and serfdom, which were the burning social issues of the time, and helped shape the cultural memory of them. In scrutinizing the practice of adaptation, Peiker shows how the Estonian texts appropriate the elements of the colonizing German culture that their literary models stem from, and charge them with new meaning. In particular, this pertains to the double figure of the natural slave/noble savage that is used to compare the local peasant serfs to the black slaves. Peiker's chapter highlights one of the clear differences between the Estonian and Finnish nineteenth century historical fictions, as Finnish authors did not address slavery in such explicit terms.

Eneken Laanes's chapter deals with the first Estonian historical novella *The Avenger*, which uses the sources of early modern chronicles and popular history writing to create the historical event of the St George's Night peasant uprising in the fourteenth century as the major landmark in Estonian cultural memory and history writing. Laanes is particularly interested in the role of literary devices, such as Walter Scott's mediating protagonist, in the creation of the figure of the free man, a figure of memory in the local cultural context. She argues that by imagining the ahistorical figure of the free peasant, the novella does not so much negotiate the role of the peasantry in the nineteenth-century national movement as it represents the intermediary Germanized social strata as members of the nation. Laanes also shows how contrary to the essentialist definitions of ethnicity widespread in the twentieth century Estonian culture, the novella represents the national belonging as a learned and chosen affiliation.

Quite surprisingly for a section that deals with the novels about wars and rebellions that are represented as a sign of the striving for independence, one of the common questions that arises in the contributions is the function of the romance plot in these early historical novels and novellas. Thus the section closes with a chapter by **Heidi Grönstrand** that addresses head-on the problem of the romance plot that runs more or less distinctively through all the articles. Grönstrand argues that although the Finnish national movement defined Finnishness by the rationalistic concepts of development, education and order, the emotionality brought to the equation of social and ideological questions by the romance plot also had an impact on the definition. The chapter follows the feminist re-evaluation of romance and argues that romance with its state of being in love provides the characters with a utopian vision of a world open to change. In the context of the historical novel this

visionary character of romance is coupled with the present and futural interests that historical novels have while representing the past. Grönstrand analyzes two novels Fredrika Runeberg's *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters* from the period when Finnish literature was written in Swedish, and one of the first Finnish-language prose texts E. F. Jahnsson's *Heikki from Hatanpää* and demonstrates the importance of the romance plot for the definition of Finnishness and for the switch from Swedish to Finnish in the Finnish literature and culture of the nineteenth century.

The second part of the book focuses on the masculine and militarist historical fiction and popular history writing of the interwar period. Whereas the historical novel lost ground after the First World War in the high registers of literature in many European countries, in Finland and Estonia the foundation of the independent Finnish and Estonian nation states at the end of the second decade and the troubled aftermath of the Civil War in Finland and the War of Independence in Estonia gave rise to a new boom in historical fiction. **Ilona Pikkanen's** chapter on Aarno Karimo's popular historical text *From the Darkness of the Tombs* traces the highly nationalistic re-masculinization of Finnish culture after the more varied literary spread at the beginning of the century. She shows that to a large extent Karimo recycles the stories, themes and motifs of the nineteenth century national narrative, but does so in a hybrid form that mixes historical novellas, popular history writing and vivid visual images. Describing the text in the wider context of popular historical culture, Pikkanen argues that although the inward-turning national culture emphasized its overall authentic originality, the models for rendering Finnish history are largely borrowed from its national others. In resolving the problem of the scarcity of national heroes and victorious events, the transnational models are indispensable; in forming the secular national pantheon, Karimo appropriates and nationalizes historical figures belonging to the groups of national others such as Catholic bishops or Swedish noblemen. Pikkanen shows further how negative character traits are paradoxically as useful in the construction of national individuality as positive ones.

The comparable tendencies of militarization in the Estonian context are explored by **Linda Kaljundi's** chapter on the novels of Estonian Vikings, which represent a turn to a pre-colonial history in the historical fiction of the interwar period. Kaljundi takes as her point of departure two novels, *Urmas and Merike* by Karl August Hindrey and *Lords of the Baltic Sea* by August Mälk. She argues that even if the Viking novels boost a new version of a victorious Nordic history for the newly established Estonian republic that is promoted institutionally by it, beneath their surface the literary texts still expose the rifts and fissures in that new version of the past. In an interesting contrast to the Finnish situation of the time, a point was made in Estonian historical culture of emphasizing the ancient ties to Scandinavia. By discussing not only historical fiction, but also the visual culture around it, Kaljundi also demonstrates how Estonian nationalists adopted far more elements from the Baltic German version of history than it has been popular to admit. The use of the stories of the masculine war heroes and the motif of the looting of Sigtuna, which many countries around the Baltic Sea have

tried to appropriate and write into their national histories, reveal some serious signs of inferiority that can be linked to legacies of colonial history in Estonia.

The last section of the book traces the divergent histories of fiction dealing with the past in post-Second World War Finland and Estonia. **Aare Pilv**'s chapter on the Soviet Estonian author Rudolf Sirge asks why Soviet literature has fallen out of the active cultural memory in the post-Soviet period and how it could be brought back there. Pilv starts his analysis with an interesting case of rewriting in the Soviet period when Sirge reworked his naturalist interwar novel about the German occupation of Estonia during the First World War. Pilv argues that behind Sirge's pretext of rewriting the naturalist novel as a socialist realist one was a more urgent wish to save the novel from being pushed into the crypts of cultural memory in the special collections of the libraries without public access founded by the Stalinist authorities to store a significant part of interwar Estonian literature. The second case Pilv explores shows that, contrary to widespread understanding, Soviet literature still dealt with the painful and politically sensitive questions of Stalinist crimes, even if it did so in a very particular way. Pilv analyzes the hidden traumas that are signalled in complicated, sometimes unconscious, ways by these texts. More generally Pilv argues that the Stalinist literature has to be read not only as a document of its time, but also in terms of how it highlights the ways cultural memory, including our own contemporary one, is always present-oriented and always excludes other ways of remembering the past.

Jaan Undusk's chapter on Karl Ristikivi, the most prominent historical novelist of the Estonian diaspora, ponders why Ristikivi ceased to write about Estonian topics after leaving Estonia before the Soviet occupation in 1944 and opted instead for historical novels about European medieval history. Undusk reads the turn to pre-modern history as a choice that was forced on post-Second World War Estonian writers both in exile and in Soviet Estonia. He argues that in writing about Europe, Ristikivi was writing about Estonia not only in the allegorical sense, but also in the sense of appropriating European history as his own, given the loss of his more restricted homeland, Estonia, in the diaspora. Further, European history allowed more creative freedom for Ristikivi, since Estonian cultural memory with its fossilised oppositions to Germans and Russians had become a straitjacket for the creative writer.

The most prominent Estonian (historical) novelist Jaan Kross is considered by **Tiina Kirss**, who concentrates on his novel *Between Three Plagues* from the 1970s. Kirss is interested in the ways Kross deploys and reinvents Balthasar Russow's *Chronicle of the Livonian Province*, one of the most important early modern sources for Estonian history. Kross takes his cue from his contemporary historiographical hypothesis of Russow's Estonian background and crafts his metafictional novel as the writing of the chronicle. Kirss is particularly interested in the function of the fictional enlargement of the episode of the peasant uprising, which is mentioned only briefly in the chronicle but makes up one of the four volumes of Kross' novel. Kirss shows how Kross writes the uprising into an event in the dominant narrative pattern of resistance and the fight for freedom in Estonian cultural

memory, by using the dynamics of interpolation, by building a scaffolding of analogues between events, by stylistic 'hyperrealism' and by the suspension of the eye-witnessed reality in the rhetoric of dream and memory.

Finnish historical fiction after the Second World War is represented in this book by texts from northern Finland about the memories of the Lapland War and by postmodernist historical novels from the 1990s. **Nina Sääskilahti's** article explores novels from the 1980s that remember the Lapland War where Finns fought against the retreating German troops at the end of the Second World War. Sääskilahti discusses the novels that largely spring from the local memory culture and argues that the memories about the Lapland War were the object of institutional forgetting at the national level in post-war Finland because it was shameful to recall the Finnish collaboration with Germans in the preceding Continuation War. Sääskilahti is interested in how the memories are negotiated through the depictions of the barren landscapes that the Germans left behind as a result of the scorched earth technique they used to destroy the areas, represented as the symbolic sites of a cleansing and reconstruction of the community. She also demonstrates how in these novels the shame for the collaboration and the blame for the subsequent devastation of Lapland are problematically transferred onto the women who had had sexual relationships with Germans. The historical fiction figures here as a kind of 'post-memorial work' that addresses the complicated relationship of guilt, responsibility, apology and respect for the memory of the post-war rebuilders of northern Finland, and offers these stories for wider cultural circulation.

The last chapter focuses on the contemporary Finnish author Lars Sund's *Siklax* trilogy from the 1990s. In her contribution **Marita Hietasaari** explores the Finnish tradition of representing wars in historical fiction and its deconstruction by Sund's postmodernist historical novels. Hietasaari traces the intertextual relations of Sund's fiction to the nineteenth century historical novels by Topelius analysed by Mari Hatavara in the first part of the book and to the Civil War novels from the 1920s. Furthermore, she demonstrates how historiographic (meta)fiction not only contributes to but also plays with the multimediality of cultural memory, as the characters in Sund's novels are surrounded by aural and cinematic references to national figures of memory, thus creating an effective continuum between their experiences and those of their readers. As is typical in postmodernist fiction, Sund presents his critique of Finnish war heroism by deploying parody and a grotesque style. His revisionist approach to war representation is further boosted by his perspective on Finland's Swedish minority, which has historically been a corrective to Finnish cultural memory.

Finally, the book is rounded off by the postface by **Ann Rigney** who discusses the Finnish and Estonian historical fictions in a wider international context and points to the fruitful ways the comparative regional study can contribute to the inter- and transnational research on cultural memory and historical fiction.

NOTES

- 1 Richard Maxwell argues that history in Walter Scott's novels is both deep and wide, "stretching far back in many layers and spreading out at each of its turning points to encompass the world". Maxwell 2009: 59. For Maxwell's comparison of the historical novel and panorama painting see p. 94. For the ways the visual novelties of the nineteenth century, such as panorama paintings, photography and illustrated newspapers, displayed historical themes and generated a popular memory culture that deeply influenced the modes of narrating academic history, see Maurer 2013.
- 2 For a study of nationalism and invented traditions see Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Anderson 1991; for cultural memory see Assmann 1995, 2006; Nora 1989; Assmann 2012.
- 3 For a contextualisation of the Estonian case in the framework of the theories of nationalism see Raun 2005; Piirimäe 2009.
- 4 For a useful overview see Olick, Robbins 1998.
- 5 See Assmann 1995; Assmann 2008; Assmann 2012; Rigney 2004, 2005, 2012; Erll 2011.
- 6 Nora's *lieux de mémoire* is sometimes also translated as realms of memory. See Olick, Robbins 1998.
- 7 For the Finnish context see Karkama 2008; Mikkola & Laitinen 2013; for the Estonian one see Jansen 2004; Pöldvee 2013. For the British context as a possible model also for the belated nationalism see Trumpener 1997.
- 8 Rigney lists such narrative strategies of fiction as selection, transformation and supplementation, which all reduce figurative diversity and make the events and characters represented more memorable. Rigney 2001: 23.
- 9 On 'stickiness' see also Rigney 2008: 347 and 2012: 17.
- 10 On the relationship of nineteenth century popular history writing to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia see Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011.
- 11 For a detailed analysis of Scott's configuration of time see Maxwell 2009; Jameson 1983: 1; Jameson 2005: 284.
- 12 In that tradition Walter Scott's *Waverly*, arguably influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment, is preferred to the more romantic *Ivanhoe*. Anderson 2011: 4. For a recent attempt to separate the 'serious historical novel' from romance see Hamnett 2011.
- 13 There is an exception to the story even in the context of big European literatures, as in Germany, unified only in 1871, the historical novel continues to be important even in the 20th century, represented by such authors as Heinrich Mann and Lion Feuchtwanger.
- 14 The representative authors of historiographic metafiction seem to be John Fowles, Graham Swift and Umberto Eco, and also J. M. Coetzee and Salman Rushdie. See Hutcheon 1988; Wesseling 1991; Elias 2001; de Groot 2010.
- 15 For an attempt to include novels about the revision of national history, about the histories of race, women, gays and lesbians, and about the anti-colonial struggle in the postmodern historical novel, see de Groot 2010: 139–182.

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Note on names

The historical names of places, regions and geographical features (rivers, lakes, etc.) in Finland and the Eastern Baltic region have gone through several changes from the Middle Ages until nowadays. In this book, where they exist, English forms have been used for places and geographical features; otherwise we have used modern names to help the readers to identify them. Where these forms differ from the old names and where the difference is relevant, the corresponding forms in Swedish (Swe.) or German (Ger.) are given in parentheses on their first occurrence in every chapter. In the case of historical personal names, forms used are those judged to be most familiar to English-speaking readers; the names of all other individuals are usually given in the modern forms of their own languages.

Abbreviations

- HA = *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* (The Finnish Historical Journal)
- JBS = *Journal of Baltic Studies*
- SKS = Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (Finnish Literature Society)
- SKST = Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia (Proceedings of the Finnish Literature Society)
- SFE = *Studia Fennica Ethnologica*
- SFL = *Studia Fennica Litteraria*
- SFH = *Studia Fennica Historica*

Introduction

Historical Fiction, Cultural Memory and Nation Building in Finland and Estonia

“If ever the inner dignity of our people has been offended so directly, it has been done through this play and most pronouncedly. I understand well that a Finnish author can write as she wishes, and this can be successfully translated into other languages, but why we circle around it so warmly, my heart does not understand.”¹ Thus wrote an Estonian critic in 1935 after the premiere of the historical drama *Mare and Her Son* (“Mare ja hänen poikansa”) by Aino Kallas (1878–1956), an author who was indeed of Finnish origin and wrote in Finnish, but on Estonian history. Nevertheless, Aino Kallas is today one of the canonical authors of ‘our’ historical fiction in Estonia. She also appears to have served as an inspiration for the major Estonian author of historical fiction of the late twentieth century, Jaan Kross (1920–2007).² In 2008, Juhani Salokannel, a Finnish literary scholar, wrote the most extensive monograph about Jaan Kross to date, and he repeatedly returned to the idea that it was precisely his Finnish background that enabled him to study the Estonian writer so well: the distinctions and controversies between the histories and cultures of the two closely related nations expose the most essential features of both.

The idea that both the similarities and the differences in the development of two national cultures that are not only seemingly but in fact genuinely close illuminate both of them exceptionally well also stands behind the present joint study. In the Preface, we discussed historical fictions written in these two countries in a broader context. This introduction, however, has grown out of the recognition that although there are some comparative studies of Finnish and Estonian nationalism and culture, there are no comparative treatments of historical fiction available. The introduction, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap, even though this narrative in no way claims to exhaust all the nuances of the two national literary traditions.

First, however, a brief contextualisation of the previous studies in this field in both countries is needed. In Finland literary scholars have debated phases, waves, typologies and generic definitions of the (Finnish) historical novel for decades.³ In the post-war period, three models for the development of the genre from the mid-nineteenth century onwards have been advanced.⁴ Although the number of ‘phases’ or ‘waves’ varies, as does the importance placed on disruptions and changes, all these models

emphasise the fundamental importance and endurance of the nineteenth-century national-idealistic tradition. However, they could only glimpse the first signs of the rise of the postmodern historical novel or ‘historiographic metafiction’, which, as many recent studies have pointed out, is perhaps the most historically obsessed literary movement in the history of the West (Hutcheon 1988: 4; White 2005: 152). In contrast to the Finnish case, there are almost no studies dealing with the development of the genre in Estonia: it has been less an object of scholarly research and studies and more a subject of public debate (cf. Laanes, Kaljundi 2013). Two periods in particular have born witness to a wider, semi-popular, semi-scholarly interest in historical fiction. Not surprisingly, these have coincided with the two booms of the genre in twentieth-century Estonian literature in the mid-1930s and the 1970s–1980s. In both periods the discussion focused on the societal role of historical fiction, and on its relations with history as an academic discipline.⁵

Despite these differences, it is important to note that there is a strong tradition of treating historical fiction from the aestheticizing point of view in the literary histories of both countries. This means that many popular works are left out of the discussion, although they have been widely read and are thus influential for cultural memory. And even though the recent research on Estonian cultural memory has again drawn attention to the role of historical fiction (e.g. Tamm 2008), these studies have also been mainly concerned with canonical authors. This is where the conceptual framework offered by cultural memory studies breaks new ground, as also pointed out in the Preface. Every scholarly work, even a critical one, contributes to the construction and maintenance of a cultural canon. However, the cultural memory approach also offers concepts for placing canonical and non-canonical authors on an equal footing, thus highlighting ‘invisible cultural memory’ and disregarded literary works.

An illuminating example for the need of such an angle is the current Estonian literary canon that sets out from the idea proposed by the author Jaan Kross in the early 1980s that historical fiction has had three golden ages: the 1880s, the late 1930s and the 1970s–1980s (Kross 1982, 1986a, 1986b). Consequently a number of texts written between these periods are prone to neglect.⁶ However, things were seen differently in the 1930s, when critics welcomed the novels depicting the early 1900s and valued them highly as narratives about the social and political rise of the Estonians.⁷ It seems likely that one of the reasons why these texts, touching upon the participation of Estonians in the Revolution of 1905, have fallen from grace today is linked to the post-Soviet reorientation of Estonian history, which has led the revolutionary past to be omitted as it was the leading theme of the Soviet version of history.

These few examples may suffice to demonstrate that the national literary canons and the premises on which they found themselves may benefit from re-readings that pay particular attention to the wider social and historical functions of literature both synchronically and diachronically.⁸ In what follows, the discussion has been divided into four rough subsections, following the Finnish and Estonian nation building, the role that fiction played in it, and the socio-political and cultural factors that influenced

the history cultures of both countries. We will examine first the ‘fictional foundations’ of these two young nationalisms in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Second, we will look into the historical fiction of the new nation states in the interwar period. Third, the diverging cultural memories and amnesias of the post-war period will be addressed. In the Estonian case these include both Soviet and émigré literature, while the Finnish historical fictions contributed to the rise of regional memory cultures and participated in the construction of the welfare state from the 1960s onwards. Fourth, we will discuss works depicting alternate pasts in the 1990s and 2000s, the new nationalisation of historical novels and the metafictional turn especially in the field of Finnish historical war novels. While we can only offer a limited sample of case studies and many of the observations made would benefit from more thorough research, we can still hope that the volume at hand creates a wider interest in the rich variety of texts active in cultural memory at any given time as well as in the crucial role historical fiction plays in the formation and maintenance of a collectively shared identity.

Fictional foundations

For a better understanding of the functioning of historical fiction for these two nations, a brief insight into their history is necessary. From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards, Finland formed the Österland, the East Country, of the Swedish kingdom. The area became well integrated into the realm, and the original annexation of these regions to Sweden was more a process of settlement than of colonisation. The fairly long and stable period of Swedish rule, which lasted well into the early nineteenth century, created a native Swedish-language upper class and a small Swedish-language peasantry in the area (Engman 2009). The territories of present-day Estonia have a more disrupted history. In addition the area has experienced sharper ethnic and social divisions. The conversion and colonisation of Livonia (which includes both present-day Estonia and Latvia), by the German and Danish crusades at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries resulted in the lands being divided between the Teutonic Order, the archbishop of Riga, and the Danish kingdom.⁹

Although there was no centralisation of power in Livonia in the Middle Ages, a number of neighbouring early modern states, principally Sweden, Poland and Russia, fought over these territories from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. After the Livonian War (1558–1583), Swedish rule was established in the area and for about a hundred years Finland and Estonia were part of the same kingdom, Sweden. As a result of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), however, the Baltic provinces became a part of the Russian Empire, while the small German-speaking elite still continued to hold most of the estates and privileges that it used with great autonomy until the late nineteenth century. During the political manoeuvrings of the Napoleonic Wars a hundred years later, Finland became a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, retaining its earlier legislative and administrative structure.

This meant the two countries were again part of the same empire during the rise of their national movements.

The earliest vernacular writing in Finnish and in Estonian dates back to the religious texts produced in the late medieval and Reformation period. However, any considerable literary production in the two languages only took off after the mid-nineteenth century. By that time both countries already had a well-functioning domestic literary landscape, which used Swedish in Finland and German in Estonia.¹⁰ In Finland the creation of the new Finnish-language literature did not result in the replacement of the earlier Swedish-language literary heritage. Members of the former Swedish-language intelligentsia¹¹, going through a linguistic conversion inspired by the Herderian monolingual paradigm (Yildiz 2012), started consciously to build a Finnish-language literary culture and to demonstrate their close connection to the rural population who were perceived as the ‘authentic’ Finnish-language people. This educated upper class remained practically (although not always ideologically) bilingual, and the literary tradition remained coherent even after the Finnish-language literature started to accumulate from the 1860s onwards (Syväoja 1998: 227).¹²

Whereas there were pronounced connections and continuities in Finland in the emplotment and topoi of historical fiction across the Swedish-Finnish language divide, in Estonia two distinct traditions of historical fiction developed: the Baltic German tradition and the Estonian one, though they appeared around the same time in the 1880s.¹³ Even though the emergence of Estonian-language historical fiction depended on adaptations from the German literature (Nirk 1966: 462) and – as a number of chapters in this volume also demonstrate – the Estonian nationalists were also closely bound to the Baltic German history culture by way of either opposition or imitation, the two groups were nevertheless aspiring for competing versions of the past. Emblematic to the nineteenth-century Baltic German historical identity was the Romantic glorification of the medieval crusades and colonialism, whereas the Estonian history and nationalism relied on the legacy of the Baltic Enlightenment that at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had strongly criticised the domination of the German nobility in these lands and the enslavement of the native peoples whom the Enlightenment authors envisioned as the heirs of the once most noble savages (Undusk 1997).

This sharp linguistic and ideological divide still lives on in the Estonian literary canon, which to the present day mostly does not count the literary production in German as a genuine part of Estonian literature. As the contributions in the present volume reflect, this is in clear contrast with a Finnish literary history that includes the early Swedish-language historical fiction,¹⁴ the authors of which were the cultural heroes of at least some of the later Finnish-language nationalists. Their works were an elemental part of the active cultural memory in the nineteenth century. Their present existence in the Finnish-language literary canon resonates with the on-going strong Finnish tradition of writing historical novels in both domestic languages, while in Estonia the Baltic German community ceased to exist due to its semi-forced emigration in the wake of the Second World War.

Despite the differences, common features can still be detected in the early literary culture of the two countries. The relative lateness of the development of Finnish and Estonian literatures has already been mentioned, and at certain points the national narratives about the medieval conquest and native resistance to it have also been remarkably similar. This can be observed, for example, in the pre-modern and modern peasant revolts which were constructed as the key moments in the nationalised history of both countries in the nineteenth century, while the revolt itself gradually developed into one of the key tropes of both Finnish and Estonian history (see the chapters by Laanes and Kirss).

Furthermore, much in the spirit of nineteenth-century nationalism in the wider East-Central European framework (Baár 2010), both Finnish and Estonian nationalist leaders envisioned the peasantry as the embodiment of their nation. Constructing a historical tradition for them, however, posed a challenge, as these ethnic groups were historically limited to the lower classes and historical sources provided little information about their past. On top of this, the authors of the nationalist histories had very few events and heroes at their disposal that they could or would have liked to proclaim convincingly as their 'own'. In the Finnish context this meant that in their attempt to construct a continuous national history, the writers of historical novels and plays appropriated Swedish political history by customising and fusing certain parts of it – especially times of wars and revolts – into the Finnish national narrative, a strategy that was disapproved of by the real 'owners' of these events, the Swedes (see Mari Hatavara's and Ilona Pikkanen's contributions in the present volume). In contrast, the Estonian nationalists – although clearly dependant on the Baltic German version of the local past – were unable or unwilling persuasively to brand past German heroes, events and institutions as their own.

In order to explain this strong opposition to the 'German past', a significant resource available in the Baltic cultural memory must be considered, namely the medieval and early modern chronicles. These texts, which were published in growing numbers in the nineteenth century, provided Estonian historical fiction with a rich repertoire of events, characters and milieus (Kreem 2013; Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011). However, these chronicles also contributed to German-Estonian antagonism, either through their violent representations of the crusades, or by the early modern descriptions of the exploitation of the native peasantry. In Finland, in contrast, no such narratives have been preserved and the lack of brutal images of the past might indeed have contributed to the more flexible adaptation of the Swedish past. However, as we shall see below, the lack of crusade chronicles did not prevent this topic being treated in a highly antagonistic way in the 1930s. This illustrates well that next to the cultural resources available, historical fiction is also profoundly influenced by the contemporary socio-political situation and the alterations in literary traditions.

Nevertheless, the scarcity of early written records was a serious obstacle for the Finnish nation-builders, who aimed to bring the national past into existence. This lack of sources that would shed light on Finnish political history in particular geared the interest towards folklore and the mythical

past, and – in academic history writing – cultural and social history (Klinge 2010). Tellingly the first renowned narrativised representation of the Finnish past relied not on written, but on oral heritage. This was the *Kalevala* (1835/1849), a compilation of folk poems that had been collected from the north-eastern border regions of the Grand Duchy. It was quickly embraced as the national epic of the new political and geographical unit. The mythical past depicted in it became one of the cornerstones of the Finnish national identity, especially in the late nineteenth century when its stories started to circulate in an active mnemonic culture (see also Grönstrand's contribution). To a great extent, the importance of the *Kalevala* in the Finnish national memory relies on the continuous repetition of its scenes, characters and motifs in different media of cultural memory.¹⁵ The central position of the epic is most probably also a reflection of the lack of any early literary heritage. Even though the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg* (1853/1862), built on the Finnish model, was similarly influential for the formation of national history and culture, it did not achieve an equally dominating status as a resource for cultural memory.

In Finland some historical plays, serial stories and historical poems had already been published alongside the national epic in the first decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ However, the literary landscape of the Grand Duchy, including historical fiction written in both domestic languages, only expanded after the middle of the century and surged particularly in the last decades of the century when literary production took off in Finnish. Nevertheless, unlike in Estonia (see below), it was not classical historical prose in the style of Walter Scott that really started the boom in fictive historical literature but the 'national poet' Johan Ludvig Runeberg's (1804–1877) first edition of *The Tales of Ensign Ståhl* ("Fänrik Ståhls sägner") from 1848.

Runeberg's heroic epic poems depicted recent history, the war fought between Sweden and Russia in 1808–1809 during which Finland was annexed to the Russian empire. The cultural impact of Runeberg's poems rests not in their historical accuracy but in their focus on the Finnish experience. They established the interpretation of the war as the 'Finnish War': the obvious defeat of 1808–1809 was turned into a story of the virtues of the Finnish soldiers, of heroic resistance that led to a kind of moral victory of the Finnish underdog troops, which became a permanent motif in the Finnish national narrative (Klinge 2004: 460–462). The national entity under construction yearned for identity sagas, and Runeberg himself and the characters and toponyms of his work became hugely popular in the Finnish memory culture, as the present volume also demonstrates. These figures of memory still have a multimedial afterlife from beer labels and pastries to numerous literary allusions (see also Hietasaari in the present volume).

As already noted, the first Finnish authors of historical fiction came mainly from the Swedish-speaking university-educated intelligentsia and wrote in Swedish, like Runeberg and his contemporary Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898). Topelius was a widely read novelist and playwright and Professor of History at the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki, and his major fictional work was the novel *Surgeon's Stories* ("Fältskärens berättelser"),

1853–1867¹⁷), which recounts Finnish history from the 1630s to the 1770s (see Hatavara in the present volume), following, in the Scottian fashion, the fluctuating fortunes of the rising and falling social powers (Lukács 1983). In the stories of Topelius and his followers (like E. F. Jahnsson; see Grönstrand's contribution) the people, who are at first divided into classes, come together to form one unified nation; they thus streamlined the nation according to the social concerns of the mid-nineteenth-century nationalists.¹⁸ Furthermore, a large part of Topelius' work addresses the close relationship between religious and national identity, which gave birth to yet another recurring motif: that of a bordering nation constructed as a western Lutheran bulwark against eastern barbarism, a theme that many eastern European national narratives, including the Estonian and especially the Baltic German ones, have in common (Berger & Lorenz 2008: 538; Syväoja 1998: 139–163; see also Klinge 1998: 303–309).

Typical characteristics of nineteenth-century historical fiction written in the Grand Duchy of Finland were the strong, idealistic, national romantic undercurrent, the search for consensus across the language divide and the emphasis that the Finnish nation needed both Swedish and Finnish populations.¹⁹ Furthermore, Topelius and his generation of nationalists generally emphasised the importance of the Swedish political and cultural heritage. Sweden had turned Finland into a self-conscious national entity, which resulted in a reverential attitude towards the former *Patria* and its rulers. However, at the same time, Finnish ethnicity was defined against the western neighbour, and especially its nobility. This created an important motif in the early historical fiction, namely the anachronic debate on the role of the nobility in the social composition of a nation. In these works, the social stratification was often externalised outside the national borders by the construction of a decisive ethnic distinction between the local Swedish nobility and the Finnish common people who, nevertheless, had the more distant Swedish rulers on their side. Consequently, one of the most important themes of these texts is the special relationship between the benevolent king and his trustworthy low-class subordinates. Common people, or to be more precise, country folk, are depicted as the main carriers of the national idea: their high ethical integrity is cherished and their bravery connected to their main position as self-sufficient subjects, usually freeholding peasants, which, in its turn, is connected to the Scandinavian metanarrative about the historical freedom of the peasantry (Martinsen 2012).²⁰

In Estonia, the nobility had been mostly German from the medieval until the modern period, but the territory had never been directly subject to German kings. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the royal or imperial power had been Swedish and thereafter Russian. Thus the Estonian literature lacks German rulers who would act as mediators in the conflicts between the local nobility and the peasantry. The topics of early Estonian historical fiction also form a clear contrast to the Finnish ones. The earliest historical short stories from the 1860s–1870s by Lydia Koidula (1843–1882), the leading national poetess, were not only adapted from German, but also dealt with an imported topic, the history of slavery in the New World. However, these stories appear to use the distant setting for discussing the

key problems of the contemporary Estonian situation, where the legacy of serfdom and colonialism loomed large despite the major social reforms of the era (see Peiker's chapter). Furthermore, the authors who came after Koidula and initiated the real boom of Estonian historical fiction in the 1880s also remained focused on colonial humiliation and exploitation. While they abandoned the foreign setting and discussed these issues in direct relation to Estonians,²¹ these writers still projected serfdom back to the distant, medieval past. A particularly good example of this is the author who imported Scottian historical fiction into Estonian literature, Eduard Bornhöhe (1862–1923) (see the chapter by Laanes). The publication of his first novella *The Avenger* ("Tasuja", 1880) was a major success, which led to a boom in the genre in Estonia. Against the backdrop of the St. George's night uprising (1343–1345), interpreted as an Estonian peasants' revolt against the German landowners, the novella discusses the major concerns of the nineteenth-century Estonians. This manifestly anti-German work not only projects modern social problems back to the medieval past, but also focuses strongly on such topical issues as the upward social mobility and Germanisation of the Estonians and, at the same time, serfdom and exploitation.²²

The Avenger also offers a particularly good example of the potential of historical fiction in shaping national histories. Introducing the uprising as a major event of Estonian history and treating it as a continuation of the national fight against the German conquerors that had been lost during the early thirteenth century crusades, Bornhöhe provided the basis for restructuring Estonian history around the pattern of an eternal fight for freedom (Tamm 2008). Gradually, as the national version of history developed, other events were added to this scheme, particularly the nineteenth-century peasant uprisings and the War of Independence (1918–1920) (more on this below). Due to the adaptation of this narrative in Soviet Estonia as well, *The Avenger* and its main hero of the same name have been appropriated by various media of cultural memory and conflicting political regimes. The novel itself has been reprinted more than twenty times, and ever since the Soviet period it has been a compulsory book to read in elementary school.

Amongst the many writers who sought to follow the popularity of the genre, Andres Saal (1861–1931) developed into the second most influential author (see the chapter by Laanes). Even though Saal wrote about various periods, his most influential and best-received novels focused on the crusades to Livonia and Estonia.²³ That the reputation of this prolific writer in the eyes of contemporary critics and later literary historians is considerably lower than that of Bornhöhe (Nirk 1966: 482–493; cf. Urgart 1931) largely seems to derive from generic reasons, as Saal used techniques typical of sentimental and adventure literature. Despite this, his widely popular work strongly shaped the historical imagination of the contemporary public. First and foremost, Saal's novels designate a major step in the fictional creation of a totalising retrospect of the national past, which is one of the main characteristics of the nineteenth-century historical novel (Lukács 1983). Whereas Bornhöhe's work lacks detailed descriptions of historical milieus, Saal's novels introduced

a number of historical figures, events, and (pseudo)ethnographic details. Significantly Saal transmitted a number of these elements from the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, the early thirteenth-century crusade chronicle and founding narrative of the German colony.²⁴ As such, his works illustrate well that the strategies of the national narrative vis-à-vis the colonial discourse stretch from negation to adaptation and imitation: despite his ideological opposition to the crusades, Saal domesticated a number of details from the old German chronicles to the Estonian storyworld.

The highly popular novels by Bornhöhe and Saal thus set the key features of Estonian historical fiction. First and foremost, these concerned a keen focus on the colonial conflict between Estonians and Germans, which was discussed within the framework of medieval wars and uprisings. Resistance to the (Baltic) German elites secured its position in this way as a leading theme of Estonian historical fiction (cf. the contribution by Kirss). The representation of the past as a struggle against the Germans by an Estonian national community with markedly peasant characteristics corresponded well to the situation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where the Estonians were moving upwards socially and culturally, but colonial legacies and hierarchies still abounded. This also explains the prominence of the second key feature of Estonian historical fiction, colonial humiliation.²⁵ In close connection to this, the nineteenth-century authors also coined a third characteristic element, the archetypical protagonist of Estonian historical fiction as a hero who is socially positioned in between the Estonians and Germans, and who has to choose between collaborating with or resisting the Germans (Laanes 2012).

However, even though the majority of protagonists chose resistance, some works also pondered collaboration. This illuminates well the complicity of the late nineteenth century in a situation where a large number of socially upwardly mobile Estonians were Germanised. The novel *Karolus* (1892) by Jaak Järv (1852–1920) provides an intriguing case, even if despite its contemporary popularity this sentimental adventure story has fallen into oblivion. *Karolus* also deals with the St. George's Night uprising, yet its Estonian protagonist, brought up among the Germans, disapproves of the revolt. When he is finally forced to join the rebels despite this and gets imprisoned, he kills himself. Thus *Karolus* provides an interesting reaction to Bornhöhe's vision of the uprising, as it openly admits that the revengeful mob of the Estonian peasant rebels hardly matches the idealised vision of knightly honour that was one of the cornerstones of nineteenth-century Romantic Historicism.

Compared to the Estonian historical novel of the time, the Finnish equivalents deal with a more recent past. However, the ancient past proved increasingly useful too, especially at the outset of Russification, which began around 1890 as an outcome of Russian nationalism and aimed to tie the fringes of the empire more tightly to the central administration. Responses to these efforts varied in Finnish domestic politics, and this caused deep divides between political parties and other groups in civic society. At the same time, the lower classes, both urban and rural, were well on their way to becoming active, visible powers in society, challenging the traditional

societal structure and fulfilling the fears of most of the elite since the previous century (Aronsson, Fulsås, Haapala and Jensen 2008: 267; Engman 2009: 27, 229–236; Kurunmäki 2005; Vares 2000: 51–52). The imagined national idyll was thus torn asunder, and literature actively fed elements into these political and ideological upheavals.

As already noted, one attempt to deal with the contemporary threats to the national existence was to emphasise the ancient roots of Finnish society and culture, and consequently the story elements provided by the *Kalevala* were appropriated and taken into active cultural use. The number of historical plays, operas and images recycling and adapting stories from the *Kalevala* surged in the 1890s.²⁶ The Kalevalaic storyworld provided the nation not with victorious heroes, but with tragic, classicist figures; yet these were valuable for a nation that simultaneously underlined the originality of its culture and crafted it according to Western European models.²⁷ The ancient past also enabled allegorical discussions to be held of contemporary political disputes that went unnoticed by the censors. However, it was mainly artists, playwrights and poets who took over the Kalevalaic themes, although references to its storyworld were used as markers of the ancient roots of the Finnish-language culture in historical novels too.²⁸

In historical novels and novellas settings, emplotments and topoi mostly reflected those coined by earlier fiction, albeit with a more critical approach towards the worldly, foreign authorities and the former *Patria* (which was also a way of expressing implicit criticism towards the Russian rulers), and sometimes with more explicit political commentaries (Syväoja 1998).²⁹ Furthermore, character building became more varied than previously. In the earlier historical fictions the Finnish-speaking population was idealised,³⁰ whereas now more nuances emerged in its presentation, and the stories start to feature traitors to the national cause. In contrast to the nineteenth-century Estonian fiction that underlined the unity of the Estonian people by juxtaposing it with the German upper class, the topos of the brotherly feud between different Finnish tribes arose as a historical explanation for the difficulties the Finns faced as a nation during the years of Russification and the political fragmentation that followed.³¹ In spite of this, the idealisation of the Finnish common man was a lasting feature, disappearing only after the outset of postmodern historical fiction.

An interesting case in point is the Swedish-language author Johan Jacob Ahrenberg's Viking novel *The Right of the Mighty. Adventures and Battles on the Eastern Trade Route* ("Med styrkans rätt. Äventyr och strider i Österled") from 1894. Ahrenberg takes ample advantage of the motif of *mésalliance*, a popular theme in the nineteenth-century historical novels participating in nation building (see also Laanes and Kaljundi in the present volume). Consequently his bilingual hero is of a mixed Finnish-Swedish (Karelian-Varangian) background and as such is a mediating character (Lukács 1983: 36) between two cultures or ethnic groups, enabling encounters between distinct social forces. Ahrenberg's narrative is very much an address to the domestic political disputes of the 1890s and an appeal for the distinct linguistic and political factions to cooperate in the face of the eastern threat (Pikkanen 2015). Indeed, the works by Ahrenberg and his contemporary

Santeri Ivalo (Ingman, 1866–1937) represent the key features of the historical fiction from the period: the emphasis on national unity, the didactic warnings about the loss of it, and the reminder of the threat looming beyond the eastern border.

The prolific Ivalo published thirteen historical novels between the 1890s and the 1920s, and they are among the Finnish representatives of the nineteenth-century classical historical novel with their detailed ethno-historical approach, and can be compared to the Estonian novels by Andres Saal mentioned above. Ivalo's adventurous stories are often set in the border region between Swedish Finland and Russia and take as their main theme the many instances of Finnish guerilla warfare against the Russian intruders from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, which was a recurring motif in the Finnish cultural memory during the years of Russification and the first years after independence was gained in 1917.³² Furthermore, Ivalo shares Saal's destiny in the present literary canon: his status is much lower than that of his contemporary Juhani Aho (1861–1921), who became the cultural hero of the Finnish-speaking nation firstly by translating Topelius' *Surgeon's Stories* into Finnish, thus receiving part of the fame of Topelius' towering historical narrative (Niemi 1986: 149), and secondly, by publishing his historical duology, *Panu* and *The Spring and a Cold Spell* ("Kevät ja takatalvi").

Panu (1897) is a story of modernisation and an attempt to historicise, and illustrate through fiction, the Christianisation of the Finns and the disappearance of the ancient world view. It is also a rare Finnish example of a crusader story, albeit in a very late eighteenth-century setting. The main subject matter is the epic demise of corrupt paganism in the face of progressive Lutheran Christianity, exemplified by the duel between the last sage Panu and the priest Olaus Magnus. The third, mediating ideology introduced in the narrative, the original Kalevalaic animist religion of the ancient Finns, is depicted in idealist, almost sublime tones. However, it has no chance of surviving the wave of modernisation and in the end the small group holding to its tenets leaves the known world and retires further into the protective wilderness. Aho's slightly later *The Spring and a Cold Spell* (1906) adds nationalism into the thematic setting. Here, Aho moves closer to his own social circles and depicts the national intelligentsia of the 1840s. The university-educated protagonist of the novel is almost an antihero; a philosophical searcher and a weak character who reflects the world and absorbs impressions. He tries to reconcile between nationalism and revivalist Christianity, dreaming of a new kind of national culture that would unite both, giving birth to a 'Finnish Renaissance', a new national Humanism based on the *Kalevala* and the Bible. The philosophical core question of the novel is whether an individual in the modernising society should turn away from the mundane world (in congruence with the contemporary revivalist mind-set) or actively participate in it (Hypén 1993; Nummi 2006; Sallamaa 2008; Sulkunen 2013). Although Aho was lauded as a 'true Finnish novelist' in the late nineteenth century, his later fame is based mainly on his contemporary fiction; in the 1920s and 1930s Aho's formerly canonical *Panu* was already being denounced as giving a false image of the heroic past

and the then elevated religion of the ancient Finns (Sulkunen 2013: 65), indicating the ways the elements of cultural memory are constantly and sometimes retroactively evaluated.

Finnish literature grew more varied at the turn of the century. Pre-censorship was abolished and the publication of both fiction and non-fiction – including textual renderings of the national past – grew rapidly, especially in the Finnish language, in the politically and socially activating and more liberal era.³³ In Estonia, in contrast, the Russian imperial censorship prohibited historical prose fiction after 1893, including reprints of earlier works (Nirk 1966: 504). Nevertheless, by that time historical fiction had already obtained a prominent place in the Estonian literary landscape.³⁴ Partly this stemmed from the popularity of Bornhöhe's and Saal's works, and partly from the role of historical fiction vis-à-vis academic historiography. Unlike the Grand Duchy of Finland, where history had already been established as an independent academic discipline at the beginning of the nineteenth century when professors started to lecture specifically on Finnish history, Estonia underwent the professionalisation of Estonian national history only after the founding of the nation state in 1918.

During the last decades of the Russian empire, however, fictive works that addressed Estonian history were also published, but these narratives discussed the most recent past. In the early twentieth century, the most prominent Estonian author of that time, Eduard Vilde (1865–1933), wrote a trilogy that addressed the life of the Estonian peasantry at the time of the great social reforms and changes from the 1850s–1860s onwards.³⁵ Even though Vilde's works are not included in the canon of Estonian historical fiction today this has not always been the case.³⁶ In the 1930s Vilde's novels were seen as a genuine part of the first boom of Estonian historical fiction, which, in this understanding, started in the 1880s and ended in the early 1900s. Despite Vilde's open scepticism towards the literary value of the late nineteenth-century Romantic prose, his works continue to elaborate the key topoi established by earlier historical fiction: the focus on the rebellion of the Estonians against the Germans, and the legacy of slavery. However, unlike the earlier authors who projected colonial humiliation back to the distant, medieval and early modern history, Vilde now explored serfdom in the context of the most recent, mid-nineteenth century Estonian past. Thus, his works put the imageries of violence that had already been used by Bornhöhe and others in past settings into the place where they belong: the exploitation of the peasantry in the Baltic estates in the nineteenth century.³⁷

Next to this, Vilde had a fundamental impact on the structure of national history, as the first novel of his historical trilogy, *The Mahtra War* ("Mahtra sõda", 1902), added another great rebellion to the history of the Estonians, in the peasant unrest in Mahtra (1858), which the writer tellingly labelled as a war. The event was linked to the narrative about the Estonians' centuries-long fight for freedom, which already contained the St. George's Night Uprising, also introduced by historical fiction as noted above. The novel, published on the eve of the Revolution of 1905, gained a near-legendary success. Although Vilde's historical works held a distinguished position during the interwar period, it was in Soviet times that they were made into one of the

very central works of the national canon, due to their suitable focus on the class struggle. The significance of *The Mahtra War* in particular grew due to its steady representation in a wide variety of cultural media, which stretched from visual arts to history writing (Lust 2003).

This leads us to the question of the afterlives of the nineteenth-century historical fiction in Finland and in Estonia. The early Finnish historical fiction from the mid-nineteenth century up to Finnish independence is seldom read or staged nowadays, and the cultural effectiveness of these texts as whole literary works has dwindled. However, some of them are continuously part of the scholarly discourse and the teaching programme and as such in the middle ground between what have been defined as the canon and the archive, or the active and passive cultural memories (Assmann 2010). Furthermore, as already noted, some of their topoi and characters have remained in the active cultural memory: for example Runeberg's influential stories were still relevant in the cultural atmosphere of the early 1930s (see Pikkanen's contribution). In the 1970s Runeberg's soldierly characters were used to argue for pacifism, whereas in the later postmodernist historical fiction they become literary allusions showing the absurdity of the earlier ways of remembering the past (see Hietasaari's contribution).

In Estonia, the status of the historical fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is quite different. Fundamental for the emergence of Estonian nationalism, the historical novels served as an inspiration during the War of Independence. During the 1930s, a lot of new historical fiction was produced, which became widely popular and to a certain extent replaced the earlier works (see below). However, a vast majority of the 1930s historical fiction was unsuitable for the Soviet ideology and was either prohibited or at least not reprinted. Consequently, it was again the earlier historical fiction – particularly the works of Bornhöhe and Vilde – that was promoted widely by elementary and high school curricula, as well as other, particularly visual and performative media during the Soviet period. Since the 1990s, the interwar works that were excluded from the Soviet canon have returned to the public literary culture, but as a legacy of the Soviet period the nineteenth-century works still hold a prominent position and are still considered as important cornerstones of the national identity.

In both countries, however, the nineteenth-century historical fiction has provided later writers with culturally available plot-structures. In the Finnish case, furthermore, it has been argued that the early twentieth century historical novels, even the realistic ones, are all written according to the idealistic, national romantic emplotment established by the Topelian tradition (Ihonen 1992). After the First World War, the nationalistic collective metanarratives of endurance, heroic resistance and pure, rural national values stemming from the nineteenth century became increasingly useful both in Finland and in Estonia in the process of consolidating the historical culture and securing the survival of the young nations which gained their independence in the last phases of the war.

New-Born Nations and Their Historical Fictions

The first decades of the twentieth century saw dramatic changes on the fringes of the Russian Empire. In the aftermath of the First World War, the October Revolution of 1917, and the disintegration of the Russian Empire, both Finland and Estonia gained their independence, Finland declaring itself independent in 1917, and Estonia doing so in 1918. Estonia gained its de facto independence after the War of Independence of 1918–1920, which was fought against the Soviets and the Germans. In Finland, the political vacuum and the sharp political divisions stemming from the General Strike of 1905 and beyond led the country into civil war in 1918, out of which a sternly right wing First Republic emerged. Unlike many European countries in the 1930s, the moderate Finnish government managed to keep the most radical right-wing movements mostly at bay. Estonia, on the other hand, bore witness to the rise of an extreme right-wing movement, the War of Independence Veterans League. After the party was crushed by the state authorities, a somewhat more moderate but still strongly conservative right-wing authoritarian regime was imposed in 1934.

During the interwar period, the concern in both countries for reinforcing national culture, history and identity increased. While the nation state produced a more ideologically homogeneous view of the past, the resources made available by it also increased the variety of media of cultural memory and hence ultimately also the invariants of the national history. This affected education, history writing, visual culture, propaganda, and other affirmations of national identity, but obviously also broadened the means available for producing historical fiction. In this process, the new state-managed nationalisms also adapted ideologies, strategies, and topoi from the inherited cultural memory, some of which were discussed previously, but intensified and nationalised them further.

In Finland, both academic history writing and historical fiction adapted quickly to the change in the political situation after independence was gained in late 1917, and the subsequent bloody Civil War was fought in the winter and spring of 1918 between the white, bourgeoisie and farm-owning Finns who were aided by Germany in the last months of the war, and the red, mainly lower class segments of the population supported by Russia. Historical literature became highly nationalistic, protecting the new-born nation and its morals and values from both internal and external enemies and taking the point of view of the Whites, the winners of the Civil War. The frantic defence of national values meant, among other things, that the military could not be criticised and in the 1930s a law was passed which prohibited the 'desecration of national memories', like the heroic nineteenth-century oeuvre of J. L. Runeberg (Fewster 2006: 309–313; Ihonen 1992: 59; Koskela 1999: 332).

Scholars published both scholarly and popular representations of the national past and historical novelists were very industrious too, writing the past from the Finnish perspective more fervently than ever. History books and fictional works endorsed what was perceived as exceptional national heroism and dreamt of a Greater Finland. They displayed contempt for the

former Swedish and Russian rulers, thus intensifying the motif adopted in the 1890s, and they depicted colourfully different historical instances when Russians had streamed across Finland's eastern border. Following the late nineteenth century interest in the ancient past, the history of the new republic was determinedly rooted in the period of 'ancient independence' on the pages of fiction and non-fiction: the historian Jalmari Jaakkola (1885–1964), among others, wrote about the Middle Ages as if Finland had been an independent state.³⁸ The novel was the favoured fictional genre, promoted by novel competitions, and many historical novelists received State Prizes for Literature and were appointed as Honorary Professors (Ihonen 1992: 58; Sevänen 1999: 258).³⁹

The "visual and verbal climax" (Fewster 2006) of the 'winners' history from the interwar period is perhaps Aarno Karimo's four-volume *From the Darkness of the Tombs* ("Kumpujen yöstä", 1929–1933), which presented visions of Finnish history throughout the centuries from the ancient 'original independence' until the 'second independence' and the Civil War, by way of fictional and real-life story-telling and multi-coloured images. Most of the high-nationalistic historical novels of the period later disappeared from the national literary canon, partly due to changes in aesthetic demands, partly due to the humbling post-war hangover from the Great Finland fantasies they promoted. However, Karimo's work has partly remained in the cultural memory because of its hybrid, multimedial character: its illustrations are still recognised, as they were long used in schools as teaching devices, and its adventurous, emotionally-appealing stories have inspired their readers to historical studies (Tommila 1989; see also Ilona Pikkanen's contribution).

In Estonia, in contrast to Finland, historical fiction had lost its prestige during the modernisation of literature prior to the First World War. In spite of this, the resources of memory production increased as the study of Estonian national history and archaeology were professionalised after independence was gained. While the base narrative of the nation's past still relied on the interpretations developed in the nineteenth century, the victorious outcome of the war also resulted in a re-design of the earlier past. All the previous conflicts were now treated as parts of a long, but eventually victorious, national fight for freedom against the foreign invaders (Tamm 2008). Likewise, the achievement of political independence also changed the representation of ancient Estonia, which was now refashioned to suit the image of a predecessor of a modern nation state.

As well as homogenising the historical narrative, the interwar period also aspired towards a more detailed reconstruction of the nation's past. This particularly concerned the well-funded 'national scholarly disciplines' of archaeology, ethnography, folklore studies, linguistics and history, which were dedicated to the study of what was perceived as the ancient and authentic culture of the Estonian nation and first and foremost associated with the peasantry. In the mid-1930s, historical fiction became again the leading medium in the constructions of the nation's past and the researchers working in 'national disciplines' often cooperated with the authors of historical fiction (Kirss 2008: 224).⁴⁰ Even though the popularity of historical fiction stemmed from the growing demand for national history under the

authoritarian regime, the dominance of fiction over most other media of cultural memory is still remarkable. The scarceness of visualisations of the Estonian past stands out particularly (Abel 2000), also marking a notable difference with the Finnish interwar media of cultural memory, where visual culture continued to play a prominent role. This appears to be due to the youth of Estonian art, and also to the scarceness of earlier Baltic German historical images (Kaljundi, Kreem 2013).

Even though at first glance the boom in Estonian historical fiction seems to be at odds with the international loss of prestige of the genre (cf. the Preface), the Estonian – and also Finnish – enthusiasm for historical fiction in the 1930s is not unprecedented, but is paralleled by the prominence of the genre in many other new nation states (cf. Hamnett 2011: 11, 290). This suggests at the functionality of fictionalised histories for the young nations. However, the Estonian case shows well that the new context also transformed the stories set in the past. For example, while historical fiction of the interwar period continuously sustained the motif of the Estonians' ancient fight for freedom, the new works also reflected a demand for triumphant narratives of past glory. The project nevertheless posed a number of challenges. The first and foremost of these was the scarcity of victories in the cultural memory of the nation. Consequently, the works from the mid-1930s, introduced new subjects.

The only major victory of the Estonians during the time of the crusades, the battle of Ümera in 1210, was quickly appropriated when Mait Metsanurk (1879–1957) published *On the Ümera River* (“Ümera jõel”, 1934). The novel became one of the key works of the new boom, although in contrast to the right-wing attitude of the authoritarian regime, it reflected the author's leftish world-view. It might be, however, that precisely this focus on class and social issues is one of the reasons for the novel's lasting popularity, as it helped to keep it in the canon during the subsequent Soviet period, when it was included in the school curricula. The almost pacifist novel is also a good example of how the treatment of the ancient war for freedom was not merely militant.⁴¹ In contrast to Metsanurk's work, the construction of militant heroes and triumphant narratives was most clearly pronounced in the novels that focused on the pre-colonial past, introducing the image of the ancient Estonians as Vikings.⁴² This provided an attractive alternative, as the lack of sources about the Estonian Viking Age enabled more flexible myth-making – and seemed to allow writers to leave behind the legacies of the much more difficult colonial past (see Kaljundi's chapter; Kirss 2008).

Along with the militarisation of history, a number of novels explored the other two great wars of the region, the Livonian War and the Great Northern War.⁴³ It was, however, difficult to convert these wars between the early modern states into a national enterprise of the Estonians. Hence only the nearly contemporary War of Independence provided an obvious resource for Estonians' victorious history. Nevertheless, the leading works on the topic represent a remarkably multi-perspective and ambivalent picture, which is far from straightforward heroism. August Gailit's *The Land of Our Fathers* (“Isade maa”, 1935) is resiliently satirical, while Albert Kivikas' *Names on Marble* (“Nimed marmortahvil”, 1936) highlights the conflicts between the

Red and White Estonians. Tellingly, while the latter has today gained the status of the great War of Independence novel, with its cult status also owing to it being prohibited during Soviet times, in the post-Soviet reception its focus on the inner boundaries of the nation has largely been omitted.⁴⁴

In Finland too there were competing literary trends challenging the seemingly monolithic conservative literary culture of the First Republic, like the strong current of Modernist literature that either plumbed the inner depths of humans or praised the modern urban world with its technical advances (Rojola 1999a: 189). There were competing views of the past, too. The White narrative dominated the public discussion of the Civil War, but the workers' literature brought more nuances to the interpretation as early as the 1920s, and there were other critical voices too, trying to understand the conflict from a humanistic, social or psychological point of view (Varpio 2009: 444–448).⁴⁵ In addition, some women novelists challenged the masculine militarist culture and the dominant motifs and settings of historical fiction (Melkas 2003: 550; Rojola 1999a: 155–157).⁴⁶ For example the novelist Maila Talvio's so-called Helsinki trilogy *The Daughter of the Baltic Sea* ("Itämeren tytär", 1929–1936) depicted mid-eighteenth century Helsinki and thus participated in the thin but existing tradition of setting historical novels in urban surroundings.⁴⁷

Yet another case in point is the Finnish-born novelist Aino Kallas (née Krohn) mentioned earlier, who lived in Estonia most of her life, being married to a prominent Estonian folklorist and diplomat, but was considered a foreign in the nationalistic circles of historical fiction in both countries: in Finland because she wrote about the Estonian past, in Estonia because she chose her protagonists from the German-speaking society, which made her topics different from Estonian historical fiction, and because she wrote mostly in Finnish.⁴⁸ Kallas was a true cultural outsider, which may have been an advantage as she was able to adopt a critical distance to the patriotic, heroicising requirements of the high-nationalistic historical fiction. Her female protagonists were active, testing and breaking the norms and restrictions of their social and cultural settings, and consequently facing tragic ends. Kallas' novels also questioned national metanarratives and the possibility of acquiring absolute knowledge about the past, by pointing to differing story-versions of the same historical events, thus creating mnemonic multi-perspectivity. In this, they have been related to the works of some of the nineteenth-century female authors, and paralleled to Virginia Woolf's works from the same period (Kurvet-Käosaar & Rojola 2011; Melkas 2003: 549–561; cf. Erll 2011: 150–151).

While the Estonian historical fiction from the interwar period focused solely on Estonian topics, Kallas was not the only one in Finnish literature to employ a non-local setting in the interwar period.⁴⁹ However, the focal point in Finland too was the nation and its past, and, as already said, the national images reached new levels of popularisation, although the community had already been imagined through the works of novelists, historians, musicians and artists in the previous decades. Furthermore, the state support for literature was directed to nationalistic history and only a few publishing houses agreed to publish literature written from the leftist point of view,

which meant that historical fiction was a pronouncedly right-wing genre, strengthening the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie⁵⁰ (Ihonen 1992: 69; Sevänen 1999: 252–258). The situation changed after the Second World War, while an even bigger political and cultural change occurred on the other side of the Baltic Sea, although there were, again, clear continuities to the previous traditions in both countries.

The Legacies of the Past in the Post-War Period

The course and outcome of the Second World War was traumatic for both nations, although not for similar reasons. The post-war period is also the point when the development of the cultural memory of these two geographically close nations diverges drastically, although the new historical fiction produced in both countries and in the Estonian émigré communities addressed the legacies of the twentieth-century turmoils both covertly and overtly, while also bringing new social groups into the limelight. This process was again intensified further in the 1990s due to the rapid political and social changes following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Finland fought three consecutive wars during the years of the Second World War: the Winter War 1939–1940 against the Soviet Union, the Continuation War 1941–1944 in alliance with Germany against the Soviet Union, and the Lapland War of 1945 against the German troops still residing in northern Finland. The country managed to retain its independence although the question of how far this independence extended during the years of ‘Finlandisation’⁵¹ is debated even today, as the Soviet influence on Finland was remarkably strong. During the war, the publishing of light, entertaining, often patriotic fictive literature – including historical novels – bloomed, as in all countries caught up in the war.⁵² When the Second World War ended in the destruction of the fantasies of Greater Fin(n)land and the political conservatism struggled to survive, the high-nationalistic historical fiction discussed above and the national rhetoric feeding it lost their standing for good, at least in the official discourse. Even when revised, historical fiction fell from grace with the literary critics. It resembled ‘faded national costumes’ and lacked the key features that were considered essential for Modernist high literature, such as multi-layered symbolism and advanced narrative structures (Nummi 1999: 99). However, the historical novel in particular gained huge popularity among the reading public. It offered adventurous, yet philosophically challenging journeys in non-local settings, or alternatively, adopted the difficult task of depicting the twentieth-century past, and especially its wars, providing in many cases a fillip to scholars.

The political situation changed even more drastically in Estonia. During the war, the country was first occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940–1941 and then by Nazi Germany in 1941–1944, and at the end of the war it was again annexed by the Soviet Union in 1944. Soviet rule gave birth to state-managed control and censorship of all media of cultural memory, including the study of history. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Second World War and its aftermath abounded with difficult and often officially repressed memories

in Estonia: next to the Soviet deportations that affected a large proportion of the community were the legacies of Nazi occupation, the wide spread of the violent anti-Soviet partisan movement, and the migration of a considerable proportion of the Estonian population in the face of the Soviet advance towards the end of the war. Even though it would be wrong to assume that in Soviet Estonian history writing, literature and other media of cultural memory most of these issues were beyond the pale, they were supposed to be discussed from an ideologically correct and didactic standpoint, which did not leave much room for working through the past.

Next to this, the Soviet version of Estonian history adapted, or indeed radicalised, many of the key elements of the interwar nationalist scheme: above all, the pattern of an eternal fight for freedom, the strong opposition to Germans, and the focus on the peasantry (Raun 1999). Narratives about the peasants' fight against their German overlords matched the principal subject of historical materialism, the class struggle, and also harmonised well with the strong anti-German attitude that was especially characteristic of the Soviet discourse during the Second World War. The wartime use of history for propaganda was very important for setting the tone for the Soviet Estonian history culture during the following decades. Especially influential were the large-scale celebrations of the 600th anniversary of St. George's night in 1943, which also secured the prominent role of Eduard Bornhöhe's novel *The Avenger* and its eponymous hero in Soviet Estonian history.⁵³

The early Soviet Estonian history also favoured discussion of the age-old friendship of Russians and Estonians. This was a topic first introduced to Estonian-language histories during the last decades of the Russian empire (Viires 2001: 32–34) and it is also visible in the Estonian historical fiction from the late nineteenth century.⁵⁴ The pro-Russian attitude was abandoned by the historical novels of the 1930s, many of which bore witness to a strong anti-Russian sentiment. The new Soviet vision of age-old Estonian-Russian brotherhood was as hierarchical as the imperial one, clearly reserving a patronising role for the Russians and representing them as the saviours of the Estonians in their fight against the aggression of Western feudalism, imperialism, or Nazism. However, as this tradition lacked strong literary landmarks, new historical fiction was produced to affirm this eternal Russian-Estonian friendship. Tellingly, during the Second World War and the Stalinist years the topic was often addressed in historical short stories for the young, which also bears witness to the wish to reach the growing audience quite specifically.⁵⁵ The earliest of these fictive works also produced the most influential affirmation of this historical friendship in Estonian cultural memory. This was Enn Kippel's (1901–1942) *Meelis* from 1941, published a year before the author's death during the siege of Leningrad. The story celebrates the friendship of a fictive Estonian boy, Meelis, and a historical figure, the Russian prince Vyachko⁵⁶, and their joint, though ultimately defeated, fight against the common enemy, the German crusaders in the 1220s. To illustrate the rapid re-orientation that was so common in the 1940s, it is worth noting in passing that in the interwar republic Kippel was known for his anti-Russian works; today the latter are largely forgotten, and the author is mainly associated with *Meelis*. This owes a great deal to the

inclusion of this historical short story in school curricula throughout the Soviet period, and to its representations in other media of cultural memory.⁵⁷

All these works bear witness to the centrality of the ‘ancient fight for freedom’ in Estonian history, while in the 1950s–1960s the early Soviet Estonian historical fiction also addressed class struggle in the context of modern capitalism. However, in a way reminiscent of the identity patterns characteristic of the earlier nationalism, these works did not focus on urban workers but on the Estonian peasantry particularly in the years around the Revolution of 1905.⁵⁸

In Finland, the most visible characteristic of the immediate post-war historical fiction was the abandonment of the national terrain. These ‘new historical novels’ (Ihonen 1992)⁵⁹ disregarded explicit national discourse, which created space for more general, philosophical questions about humanity; psychological, philosophical and religious reflections about individuals replaced the old heroic imaginings. These novels departed from the national grounds, and depicted faraway cultures in historical periods of transformations. Many novelists quite consciously constructed analogues between the time depicted and the writing context of the post-war reality.

The most prolific of the historical novelists was Mika Waltari (1908–1979).⁶⁰ His first historical novels used the previous topoi of Finnish history.⁶¹ After this Waltari published in quick succession his seven non-local novels.⁶² Waltari’s adventurous narratives move from the New Kingdom of Egypt to ancient Rome and from there to the time of the Reformation and the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The novels deliver a detailed picture of the past at moments of change, often through the eyes of a wanderer figure: for example in *The Egyptian* (“Sinuhe egyptiläinen”, 1945), the protagonist is the royal physician and spy Sinuhe, who travels through the Levant, the Hittite Empire and Mesopotamia, landing at Minoan Crete before returning to Egypt. In most cases there is only one focaliser, a fictional or fictionalised character who closely follows a historical person (Hatavara 2007: 147; Ihonen 1999b: 128). The new psychological biography, written for example by Stefan Zweig in the interwar period, influenced the character building of Waltari’s works: they do not hesitate to reveal the weak character of their mundane protagonists, and have been characterised as studies into how power and greed debauch even the noblest of souls. Furthermore, there are no obvious metanarratives like in the nationalist literature from between the wars; the only certain thing is that human nature, which is depicted in dark rather than bright colours, does not change. Indeed, Waltari has been described as the great ‘disillusionist’ although it has also been argued that his basic trust in humanity stays intact (Envall 1994; Ihonen 1999b: 126–128; Laitinen 1991: 407; Rajala 2011: 556). The public discussion about Waltari’s novels is a case in point when it comes to the double demands on the historical novel: his inventive narratorial skills were praised, but Egyptologists were also mobilised to testify for the factual accuracy of the *The Egyptian’s* storyworld (Rajala 2011: 567–581, 776).⁶³

In the post-war Estonian literary world, a similar tendency of creating distance from the Estonian past appears. However, these narratives were written not by the Soviet Estonian authors, but by émigrés who had left

the country during the war and thereafter mostly lived in Sweden, Canada and the United States (Kruuspere 2008). They turned towards European and world history, or when they were still dealing with their native land's past, they showed considerably greater interest in alternative perspectives which had been excluded from the earlier historical fiction that represented the manifestly Estonian viewpoint of the past. This makes these works considerably more heterogeneous in their form and content than is the fiction produced in Soviet Estonia, which, as already noted, re-used many of the patterns characteristic of the interwar nationalist history.

The most acclaimed of the émigré authors was Karl Ristikivi (1912–1977) (see Jaan Undusk's contribution). Ristikivi wrote three major historical trilogies in 1961–1972, all of which are set in late medieval and early modern Europe and the Middle East.⁶⁴ That Ristikivi's turn towards international history bears witness to a broader tendency is suggested by the works of another émigré author, Ain Kalmus (1906–2001), who, in 1950–1969, published three novels addressing biblical and early Christian history.⁶⁵ However, in 1956–1964 Kalmus also wrote a trilogy about the Christianisation of Estonia around the time of the crusades, the most archetypal topic of Estonian historical fiction.⁶⁶ The trilogy also appears traditional in its form as it focuses on ascending and descending social powers and represents this conflict through the inner struggle of the protagonists who have to choose between the old world and the new. Nevertheless, it treats the crusades not from the customary perspective of the national freedom fighters, but through the eyes of those who cooperated with the European crusaders and missionaries – even though tellingly the author sympathises not with the Germans, but with the Scandinavians. This reflects the traditional anti-German attitude of Estonian national history and literature, but possibly also the much broader criticism of German expansionism that was evidently present during the immediate post-war period. Next to this, the explicit pacifism of the trilogy, where the protagonists refuse to join the Estonians' great fight for freedom, not only contrasts with the militant attitudes of the interwar (and also of Soviet Estonian) historical fiction, but also echoes the experiences of the war.

The interest in the 'other' perspectives on the Estonian ancient fight for freedom was developed even further in a much later work by yet another central émigré author, Bernard Kangro (1910–1994). In 1980, Kangro published a novel constructed as a fictive diary of the Archbishop Andreas Sunesen (r. 1201–1228), who had led the Danish crusades to Estonia.⁶⁷ As with Kalmus, Kangro's treatment of the crusades manifests a strong anti-militant ethos. The novel also illustrates well the longing to connect Estonian history more strongly with Scandinavia – a trend that had already been prevalent in the interwar republic (cf. Kaljundi's contribution) and was continued by the émigré authors, many of whom, including Kangro, also lived in Scandinavia.

Kangro's novel also expresses the deep wish to find alternative historical sources about the Estonian past: in this text, the diary of the Danish archbishop functions as a counter-narrative that constantly contests and contradicts the pro-German Chronicle of Henry of Livonia that, however,

is the only contemporary narrative source about the Estonian crusades available. Yet another indicator of the relevance of this dream of finding an alternative, Scandinavian source about the conquest and conversion of Estonia is the much later novel *Excavations* (“Väljakaevamised”, 1990) by Jaan Kross (see below). Although this novel bears witness to the wish to work through the specifically Soviet experiences – the novel is set in the 1950s when the victims of the Stalinist repressions were gradually freed – the plot centres around the finding of a fictive diary by the very same Archbishop Andreas.

The present canon tends to value most highly those historical novels written by the émigré authors that touch upon the pre-modern past – above all, this concerns the works of Karl Ristikivi, which have become even more prestigious in the newly established Estonian republic than they were at the time they were originally published. The émigré community did indeed show an almost overwhelming interest in history (Undusk 2006); however, they were first and foremost concerned with the most recent past. Émigré authors treated topics such as Estonia’s loss of independence, the Second World War, the great escape, the Soviet repression and the anti-Soviet resistance movements. Life writing was their favoured genre; fiction and professional historiography played a considerably smaller role in working through the difficult past (cf. the contribution by Undusk). After the leading authors had produced some works on the loss of their homeland almost immediately after the war, their focus moved on to earlier historical periods. Save for the adventurous war and partisan fiction,⁶⁸ it was only in the 1970s and 1980s that the loss of independence was addressed anew.

Like that in Soviet Estonia, the official Finnish post-war discourse drew a clear dividing line from the earlier right-wing nationalism and what was perceived as cultural conservatism, pushed by the Finnish political need to comply with Soviet manoeuvring.⁶⁹ However, unlike in Estonia, under the politically correct surface the strong pre-war attitudes of nationalism and anti-communism were largely sustained,⁷⁰ although the most recent past was also rewritten especially by way of historical fiction. Besides Waltari’s non-local adventures discussed above, the most popular historical fiction was that which offered an understanding, reconciliatory and yet realistic approach to the twentieth-century past of the nation, which was struggling with the post-war physical and mental reconstruction. Finns had not directly experienced the mass destruction of the First World War and consequently their Civil War sacrifices mostly retained a romantic aura in the literature of the 1920s and 1930s (Tepora 2011). This meant that the realist ‘War Literature Boom’ (cf. Anderson 2011; Nünning 2012: 68–69) was a relatively late phenomenon in Finnish literature, which only now abandoned the Runebergian idealistic, elevated images of war heroes and brought the experiences of the common people to the fore (Hökkä 1999: 75, 82–84; Niemi 1999a).

The most prominent of these post-war novelists was Väinö Linna (1920–1992).⁷¹ In 1954, Linna published his *Unknown Soldier* (“Tuntematon sotilas”), set in 1941–1944.⁷² The heroic underdog interpretation of the Winter War of 1939–1940 had begun when the battles were still being fought, but it took longer before novelists and scholars alike started to discuss

the latter half of the Second World War, during which the Finnish troops aggressively seized their opportunity in the Continuation War to cross the established national borders and progress to the east with the assistance of Nazi Germany (see also Hietasaari's and Sääskilahti's contributions). Once begun, however, the Continuation War – and especially Linna's influential work – dominated the popular historical culture until the late 1980s, due to its stronger imprint on the everyday experience (Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 451).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, historians had presented their simultaneously politically sensitive and nationalistic theory of the reasons that led Finland to fight on the same side as the Germans in the second half of the Second World War: the small nation was just driftwood in the rushing stream of big politics, and had no real choices.⁷³ This idea was, however, confronted by the novel that depicted the war from the perspective of common soldiers and brought forward their doubts about the sanity of the whole enterprise. Linna's *Unknown Soldier* respected those who had to do the actual fighting and ironically disrespected those who had decided about it, also ridiculing the Great Finland dreams of the commanding officers.⁷⁴ In other words, the historical novel articulated and gave shape to much that until then had seemed shapeless and disconnected in the very recent past, in this way rewriting it (cf. Erll 2011: 166). It also paved the way for the slowly starting public discussion and more nuanced historical research on the war.⁷⁵ Indeed, Linna's novel on the Continuation War has been described as not only adventurous war fiction, but also a history of mentalities, or a sociological study of what war does to individuals. And yet its popularity may partly be explained by the positive, future-oriented (albeit ironic) ending of the novel, which reminded its readers that even after the atrocities of the war, "the feisty little Finland finished a good second" (Häggman 2003: 206, 214; Nummi 1993; Haapala 2001: 25–34; Haapala 2007: 231–232; see also Hietasaari in the present volume).

Linna's war fiction was autobiographical and personal, whereas his slightly later representation of rural Finland before and after the Civil War, *Under the North Star* ("Täällä Pohjantähden alla"), published in three volumes in 1959–1962, was based on meticulous historical research.⁷⁶ This novel depicted the Reds, the losing side in the Civil War of forty years earlier, with unprecedented sympathy. As such, it was in clear contrast to the interwar literature about the 'Freedom War', which depicted the Reds as animals at the mercy of their mass sentiments. Linna's novel opposed the former Runebergian depictions of the humble, resigned lower classes; accordingly, those who became Reds in the Civil war were not trash (as the interwar literature saw them) nor idealists (the vision of socialist workers' literature), but ordinary people who were genuinely aiming to build a better society (Kirstinä 2007: 11; Manninen 1990: 320; Varpio 2009: 422–459).⁷⁷

Linna's novels were read as factual representations and created a fervent public debate about the accuracy of the depictions (the scholarly value) and the aesthetics of Linna's narratives (their literary value), very much as Waltari's works had done before, but now with the additional motivation of the home base. Many modernists disapproved of Linna's literary ways and

many traditionalists disliked his depictions, especially of the Continuation War.⁷⁸ Historians were on the warpath too: they claimed that Linna took sides and represented only the Red story in his Civil War depiction. Although some historians thawed slightly in the course of the public debate, they never acknowledged that it was actually the historical novel with its persuasive narrative means that had filled in a clear vacuum in the scholarship and actually changed the scholarly paradigm (Häggman 2003: 216–217, 222–236).

In other words, as had happened from the outset of the genre in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the historical novel offered an alternative forum for narrating stories that historical scholarship could not yet accommodate and created aesthetically and morally appealing, emotionally triggering, and therefore memorable and influential narratives which were recycled in the different media of cultural memory (Rigney 2005: 20–21; Rigney 2012: 26). Furthermore, despite all the social, class-based tendencies, the historical fiction presented by Väinö Linna's historical works and their film and television adaptations offered the nation not revolutionary but reconstitutive narratives by creating a common past that most of the readers could recognise.⁷⁹

Unlike historical fiction from the previous decades, Waltari, Linna and other contemporary, post-war Finnish authors of historical fiction are still read by the wider public. In the current Estonian literary canon meanwhile, the most prominent position is held not by the early Soviet or émigré authors discussed above, but by the critically acclaimed historical novels that were written in Soviet Estonia in the 1970s. This new boom is associated mainly with Jaan Kross (see the chapter by Kirss; cf. Salokannel 2008), who became the main Estonian writer of the late twentieth century. Kross sought to awaken his Estonian readership in Soviet Estonia to the stores of their cultural memory, as Tiina Ann Kirss writes in her contribution. In many ways, Kross' historical novels differ from both the interwar and the Soviet traditions: instead of limiting himself to the manifestly Estonian past, he searches for other perspectives for examining the history of the region. What Kross does, however, share with the previous historical fiction is his interest in intermediary, socially mobile characters and the ways he uses them for discussing the preservation of Estonian identity in the face of overwhelming German or Russian cultural influences.

The best example of this is the four-volume novel *Between Three Plagues* ("Kolme katku vahel", 1970–1980), which established Kross as the leading author of historical fiction in Estonia. Adapting the format of a fictive diary of a popular early modern historian Balthasar Russow (1536–1600), he took advantage of Russow's *Chronicle of the Livonian Province* (1578) to create a totalising retrospect of Tallinn in the tumultuous times of the Livonian War in 1558–1583 (Kreem 2013). The novel lends itself to a wide readership thanks to its vivid descriptions of the pleasures and horrors of early modern urban life, and of the adventurous life of the main character. At the same time, Kross started from the idea coined by Paul Johansen, an émigré Estonian historian of Danish origin, that Russow was not a German but an Estonian who had moved upward on the social ladder; and he used this figure as well as the characters of his other works⁸⁰ for discussing

the boundaries of Estonian identity. Kross also brought into the Estonian historical novel a new kind of protagonist, namely a Baltic German figure⁸¹, which he used for developing the other key theme of his works, which is the limits of collaboration and resistance.

The obvious parallels to the Soviet regime in Kross' works, where the protagonists are surveyed by secret police, imprisoned for their political views, forced to submit their work to censorship and so forth, has today led a number of scholars to ask how far the past functions as an allegory targeted towards criticism of Soviet rule. As an author however, Kross mostly denied these parallels. Kross was thus in clear contrast to the aforementioned Finnish author Mika Waltari, who did not deny allegorical constructs in his historical novels.⁸² The question of the allegorical interpretation of the past could also be linked to the much broader rise of historical fiction in Soviet Estonia in the 1970s and 1980s, when, in the wake of Kross, a number of prominent writers turned towards historical fiction, and the past became exceedingly visible in the various forms of cultural media and also in tourism (Näripea 2011).⁸³ It can perhaps be argued that this revival of historical fiction was supported by a kind of public demand for at least a hidden criticism of the Soviet regime. Nevertheless, the interest in the past could also be associated with the trends prevalent in Soviet culture, where interest, or even nostalgia, towards the pre-Revolutionary past and its material and artistic heritage exploded in the 1970s and 1980s (Reid 1993).

However, contrary to what is often argued and believed, Soviet Estonian literature did to some extent discuss the difficult topics of the recent past in their original historical context. While the fiction of the 1940s and 1950s first and foremost served the aim of establishing a Soviet interpretation of the recent past, it would be wrong to say that the difficult experiences that haunted the majority of the population were suppressed entirely, save for the mass deportations by the Soviets, although they no doubt were subject to rigid censorship and ideological didactics. Topics such as collaboration with the Nazis or emigration were often raised in various fictive media, which also provided a platform for judging these actions. Whereas the Socialist Realist fiction written immediately after the war lacked ambivalence, the representation of the recent past slowly and vaguely started to gain more heterogeneity through the works of Rudolf Sirge (1904–1970), most notably his *Land and People* ("Maa ja rahvas", 1956) (see the chapter by Pilv).

Furthermore, the 1960s and the liberalism of the Khrushchev era brought out new, previously silenced topics and introduced ambivalence, particularly in the depiction of the Second World War, echoing the changing, more multi-faceted and humane representation of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union as a whole. Thus for example, a new female perspective on the war appeared and provided a new coverage for the experience of the Nazi-occupied home front.⁸⁴ However, even better indicators of the changed paradigm were the relatively more open discussion of the difficulties the Estonian soldiers had had while seeking motivation for fighting in the Red Army, or even the experiences of the recruits who had fought on the side of the Nazis, or those of the civilians who had escaped the country ahead of the advance of the Soviet troops in 1944.⁸⁵

The 1970s, known for the cultural and social stagnation of the Soviet Union, saw the continuing transformation of the fictive treatment of the recent, difficult past. In particular, the decade bore witness to the appearance of new artistic means of expression, most significantly the rise of a pacifist, semi-documentary novel that was used for depicting the experience of the Second World War from the perspective of both the recruits and civilians.⁸⁶ In the current canon, however, it is not these works, but the critically most highly acclaimed novel that has gained the status of a symbolic landmark in breaking the Soviet taboos of history. This is Viivi Luik's (b. 1946) *The Seventh Spring of Peace* ("Seitsmes rahukevad", 1985), published in the wake of Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*. Set in the years 1950–1951, Luik's novel uses a child narrator to give an unbeautified, uncanny picture of the destitute post-war everyday life in an Estonian village against the backdrop of the forced collectivisation of agriculture, with hints at topics such as the presence of the anti-Soviet partisans, or the mass deportation of the wealthier peasantry in 1949.

Unlike that in Estonia, Finnish society was transformed profoundly in the 1960s and the 1970s: the period has been defined as a time of 'memory conflict', as the new ideologies like communism and pacifism challenged the nationalistic paradigm (Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 446). These changes created even more multivoiced narratives about the past, and the national memory culture was counterpointed by local memory cultures as the strong Agrarian Party and the strengthening provincial government found their mouthpieces in literature (see Sääskilähti's chapter in the present volume). Despite these changes, historical fiction retained its role as a central identity discourse. This is particularly visible in the war fiction discussed above, but also in the strong tradition of rural literature, usually dealing with the twentieth-century past.⁸⁷ In many cases these works take the form of long serial novels, often trilogies, and depict the destinies of specific families. The stories usually start either in the beginning of the 1920s or in the 1950s, which means that the novels deal either with Finland struggling to recover from the Civil War or with the post-war reconstruction.⁸⁸ The undertone of these family sagas is optimistic, which differentiates them from much of the European tradition. They aim at creating coherent worlds where each person had his or her own, well-defined place within clear social hierarchies, and they present the success of a family as a metonymy for national survival, which perhaps made them popular at a time when the welfare state was slowly being built (Szopori Nagy 1986). Indeed, it has been claimed that all these novels demonstrate how it is possible to have an honourable recent past, and as such they are invariants of Linna's Civil War depiction *Under the North Star* (Ruohonen 1999: 270), and, even in their realism, a retake on the Topelian tradition of historical fiction.

Furthermore, the genre of the historical novel, which was formerly characteristically masculine, became to be if not dominated then at least strongly influenced by women writers in the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁹ At this point the emphasis was momentarily shifted away from the twentieth-century past. Many pieces of historical fiction provided the readers with depictions of independent female protagonists (with weaker male partners) leading

adventurous lives in the royal Swedish past or in a nineteenth-century setting and addressed questions such as women's right to education.⁹⁰ Besides these narratively more traditional fictions, some more experimental historical novels were also published,⁹¹ which depicted disillusioned worlds where coincidences replaced national teleologies and emphasised the relativity of values. There were no clearly positive heroes but the set of characters consisted of petty criminals, opportunists and cowards, a feature that had been visible but mainly externalised outside the national borders in Waltari's historical novels from the 1940s and 1950s. International models were also important, for example Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* was translated into Finnish in 1983, but this more entertaining subgenre of the historical detective story only saw the light in Finland in the 1990s.⁹²

Whereas Finnish historical fiction momentarily abandoned its explicit national task in the 1970s and 1980s (Kirstinä 2007: 16; Turunen 1999b: 194–196), in Estonia the most recent past became topical during *glasnost* in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when a number of prominent Estonian writers produced works about the Soviet repressions, most notably the mass deportations.⁹³ Unlike several other troubling aspects of the twentieth-century past, these topics had only been discussed covertly in Soviet Estonian literature and history, which also meant that the writers had to conceive a whole new pattern for expressing them. In other words, it was historical fiction that gave the first examples of how to narrate these previously repressed memories, even though the genre's ground-breaking role has been forgotten due to the oral history boom that followed shortly after and replaced the more or less fictive treatment of the difficult past with memoirs produced by witnesses of the era. Although many of the writers had also relied on their personal or family experiences, the influence of the fictive forms, themes and figures on the memory culture should not be underestimated. The best examples of the fictionalisation of a personal life experience, as well as its formative impact on the national narrative, are the semi-autobiographical novels by Jaan Kross, who abandoned the distant past in the late 1980s and produced a series of novels that addressed the loss of Estonian sovereignty in the 1940s.⁹⁴

Diversity, Metafiction and the Return of the Nation: Historical Fiction of the 1990s and 2000s

The fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union had a profound impact on the history culture and historical memory in both Finland and Estonia. From a wider perspective, these changes are part of a much greater transformation of memory culture after the end of the Cold War both internationally and in Central and Eastern Europe in particular. 'Reconstitutive nostalgia' (Kõresaar 2005) about the interwar republic played such a major role during and after what was perceived as the re-establishment of the Estonian nation state in 1991 that it has even led some to speak of a 'Republic of Historians' (Tamm 2013). The Finnish memory culture and society as a whole were also affected in many ways by the changes of the

late 1980s and early 1990s, although the country had remained a Western democracy after the war. The historical fiction at least partly regained its 'national task' of addressing traumatic collective issues, and today the field is flourishing.

Furthermore, in both countries the 'Europeanisation' of the national emplotment has been an irrefutable phenomenon during the last couple of decades, emphasising the close connections these north-eastern areas had to the European mainland from the medieval period onwards. However, the nationalising gaze has by no means disappeared, and a wave of nostalgia for the interwar period in Estonia and wartime social and national unity in Finland was particularly notable in the 1990s. The main dividing line in the present situation across the Gulf of Finland is the distance to the past narratively dealt with: the twentieth-century events, especially the wars, still dominate Finnish historical consciousness, whereas Estonian historical fiction tends to focus on the distant past, although the Estonian experiences of the recent past are by no means irrelevant to the official memory.

In post-independence Estonia, the major tasks of the politics of memory have been to establish continuity with the interwar republic and to promote an Estonian version of the Second World War and the Soviet period. The latter task of rewriting the difficult past was made more difficult due to the lack of suitable, manifestly national patterns of interpretation in the face of the overwhelming reservoirs of the Soviet remembrance of the Great Patriotic War and its aftermath. After the intense period of memory work during the *glasnost* period discussed above, the national past was largely laid aside in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as Estonia was building up its liberal or neo-liberal capitalism and striving to join the European Union and NATO. In contrast to this, the deep economic depression in Finland in the 1990s saw a renaissance of patriotic values (cf. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012) and a surge of historical fiction, as the past needed to be re-explained at the time of national crisis. The ancient past – the prehistory in the pages of the so-called paleofiction and the medieval period – became topical again, as the primordial national roots were re-constituted in the period of transformation but now from the women's point of view, or as a setting for historical crime fiction, thus mixing generic borders.⁹⁵ An interesting and a telling feature are also historical thrillers imagining an alternate, Sovietised Finland, which started to appear in the late 1990s after Finland became a member of the European Union in 1995.⁹⁶ The post-Soviet age freed the cultural imagination, thus providing a framework for testing the transmitted images of 'us' by replacing the general self-affirmative teleology of the national metanarrative with an imagined disrupted history.

The majority of the Estonian historical fiction that has been written since the end of the Soviet Union has focused on the distant past. Even though at a first glance this may seem like an attempt to create distance from the conflicts related to the recent past, the importance of the ancient and medieval past for the Estonian national narrative should be remembered, as well as its centrality in the traditional canon of historical fiction, which was largely cemented during the Soviet period. Since the 1990s though, the relationship to this distant past has become more complicated, due to new

values that were propagated before Estonia joined the European Union and NATO in 2004 and that complicated the attitudes towards the crusade period, as they introduced an alternative Europeanisation narrative that treated the medieval conquest and colonisation as an integration of Estonia and Livonia into the Western European world.

Consequently, an interest has emerged in historical or fictive heroes who chose to cooperate with the European crusaders and colonisers, thereby giving voice to previously condemned ‘collaborators.’⁹⁷ Equally emblematic is the appearance of a character who decides to leave Estonia for Europe and thus functions as a kind of a reversed invariant of the traditional national protagonist who, even when captured, returns home at the first opportunity to continue the national fight.⁹⁸ Next to this, the recent historical fiction has also introduced alternative, ‘foreign’ viewpoints on the Estonian past. These new perspectives tellingly start with the author of the colonial founding narrative, the chronicler Henry of Livonia⁹⁹, but also include more provocative angles, such as the Russian take on the various wars and conflicts in Estonia.¹⁰⁰

Against the backdrop of this overwhelming interest in the distant past, the novels by Ene Mihkelson (b. 1944) form a notable exception, particularly her *The Dream of Ahasuerus* (“Ahasveeruse uni”, 2001) and *Plague Grave* (“Katkuhaud”, 2007) (Laanes 2009). Discussing a complicated family history set in the post-war period against the background of the anti-Soviet partisan movement, they represent a highly uncomfortable past that does not fit the new national paradigm, but instead questions whether a clear watershed can be drawn between cooperation with the Soviets and resistance to them. Beyond Mihkelson’s works, and somewhat unlike in Finland, the troubling aspects of the past have not received much attention in Estonian literature, and neither have the existing frameworks for remembering the Second World War and the post-war period been challenged.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the fictive treatment of the Second World War and the Soviet repression has also remained a female genre, in contrast to the presently overwhelmingly male genres such as memoirs or popular military histories of the war.¹⁰² In a more problematic way, the polemics that have been aroused in Estonia around the novels by Sofi Oksanen (b. 1977), a Finnish author of Estonian lineage, which address the Second World War and the Soviet repressions, highlight the lack of fictive treatments of these topics in Estonia.¹⁰³ On the other hand, the unprecedentedly wide resonance of her novels also illustrates the potential of fiction in dealing with the difficult past.

The emphasis in Finnish historical fiction had already moved towards the more recent past during the 1980s (see also Sääskilahti in the present volume) and especially at the outset of the 1990s, when, as already mentioned, historical fiction regained its national task, returning to and writing anew about the previously established topoi.¹⁰⁴ However, the real comeback of the Finnish depictions of war took place in the beginning of the twenty-first century,¹⁰⁵ and especially in historiographic metafiction (cf. Hallila and Hägg 2007: 74; Kirstinä 2007). These works underscore both the reflexivity of historiography and the nature of the novel as a human construct, using irony and parody as the strategies for social and political commentary

(Hallila and Hägg 2007: 75; Hietasaari 2011: 50–62). It has been observed that the average Finn reads fiction, especially national historical fiction, in relation to the ‘reality’ it depicts, not as a representative of a certain literary genre, believing that fictive literature has a direct, uncomplicated relationship to the past (Manninen 1990: 317–319). However, historical metafiction seems to indicate a new and more critical approach to national truths and metanarratives. At the same time though, the neo-patriotic discourse contests this critical reevaluation of the national or nationalised past and idealises and romanticises the war, holding up the Winter War and the Continuation War as true embodiments of Finnishness (Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 451).

It seems that especially in Estonia, historical fiction has been less prominent in working through the traumas of the twentieth century, which probably still reflects the limits on discussion of these topics during the Soviet period and hence the considerably smaller and less heterogeneous literary tradition on them. However, even at present fiction appears to prefer to leave the difficult topics for the official, state-funded memory politics and for other media, which have been traditionally favoured due to their ability to target a larger audience, such as films, television, or monuments. In Finland fiction has retained its cultural role more evidently, but it also seems that novelists are freer than for example documentarists to deconstruct earlier images and metanarratives. Historiographical metafiction plays a central role here as they question the historical teleology, for example by constructing senseless cause-effect relationships. In the Finnish context this can mean, among other things, presenting a chain of barking dogs as the ultimate cause of the German destruction in northern Finland in the final stages of the Second World War, as Lars Sund does in his *Erik's Book* (“Eriks bok”, 2003) (see Hietasaari in this volume), or breaking down the heroic images of the national founding fathers or war heroes¹⁰⁶.

Besides the historical metafiction that features in the literary studies, the dominant category of historical fiction is nevertheless that of more realistic novels which endeavour to sustain the referential status of a fictive subject (cf. Hallila 2012: 44). The strong tradition of the genre within the Finnish Swedish-speaking minority (Finland-Swedes) comprises both these approaches: besides evidently metafictional works, writers compose identity sagas for the Swedish-speaking part of the population.¹⁰⁷ These originally Swedish-language novels sell well in their Finnish translations, which means that their stories become integrated into the cultural memory of the linguistic majority and may even inject new elements into it (cf. Erll 2011: 152). Following the earlier changes, what unites much recent historical fiction is that it reflects the sense of historical marginality and deals with issues of historical relevance by depicting them from unexpected viewpoints (Hallila and Hägg 2007: 76), which include women featuring as protagonists in novels depicting the twentieth century wars and their aftermaths (see also Sääskilähti in the present volume).¹⁰⁸

Such a strong metafictional turn has not taken place in Estonian literature, which nevertheless has borne witness to a more relaxed and partly ironic attitude and a distance from the past that was particularly strong in the early

2000s. At that time, the widespread idealisation of the interwar republic of Estonia and especially the authoritarian regime of the late 1930s were parodied¹⁰⁹, and other previous topoi characteristic of the national narrative were also reworked.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, in works addressing the distant history, authors played with the clichés of the traditional Estonian historical fiction about the ancient and crusade periods.¹¹¹ During recent years, however, this trend of reworking and bringing ease to the old and established patterns of the nationalist history has been replaced by the adoption of new, international genres, of which fantasy, alternative history, and historical crime fiction have been most prominent in the Estonian literary scene.¹¹² As the background of these authors lies in science fiction, this might imply that the future Estonian historical fiction will be shaped by the impulses coming from the subgenres of this literary field.¹¹³ This brings new techniques with it, but also a change of the major topics, which have already shifted to the depiction of medieval and early modern urban life. Even though this does not appear to leave room for re-visioning the national narrative, the authors working with the new genres have still continued to introduce non-Estonian protagonists in discussions of Estonian history.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, a good litmus test showing that the comeback of national history in Estonia still closely relates to historical fiction was the heated public debate during the winter of 2013 that followed the publication of the medieval volume of the new general history of Estonia (Selart 2012). The controversy stemmed from the conflict between the more European-focused perspective offered by the new book, and the traditional nationalist view of the Estonian past. Tellingly, most debates focused on Estonian realms of memory that have been constructed with the help of historical fiction of the nineteenth century, such as the St. George's Night uprising, or the ancient fight for freedom.

Compared to Estonian cultural discussions, it seems that textual enactments of the national past do not bring on such stormy public debates in Finland. It can thus perhaps be argued that Finnish historical fiction acts less as a lightning conductor for social, political and cultural tensions, but it certainly continues to have a role in the national self-fashioning. Historical novels dealing with twentieth-century topics held the top positions when Finnish readers were asked their favourite novels in the late summer of 2013¹¹⁵ and the newly published literature of the same autumn verifies the trend: approximately 25 new historical novels were about to come out, and more than half of these are clearly set in the twentieth century, with a very strong emphasis on war fiction recounting and circulating the events of the Second World War in the Finnish cultural memory. In other words, wars fought on the Finnish terrain have been and continue to be fundamentally important to the Finnish literary self-image as a nation, and still hold a prominent place within historical fiction, as this volume also demonstrates. Furthermore, the Civil War has been a recurring topic of research across a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities, from history to folklore studies and oral history, and a theme constantly addressed in fiction too, pointing to its continuous importance as one of the critical junctures of Finnish history and denoting the still-existing need to tell its story from new perspectives¹¹⁶.

Even though the centrality of historical fiction in nation building and in defining the national identity is by no means uncommon (as also shown in the Preface), the extent to which this particular medium of cultural memory has shaped the narratives and histories of these two young nations still seems highly remarkable. Nevertheless, as the preparation of this volume has well shown to us all, it is often the differences, and not so much the similarities, between the two national traditions that offer the most illuminating points for further interpretations and even broader comparisons. As discussed in more detail in the following chapters, the Finnish and Estonian fictive representations of their respective pasts therefore offer good grounds for studying the interplay of available pasts, cultural schemata and present socio-ideological needs in the making of the national narrative.

NOTES

- 1 Citation from Pöldvee 2013: 652–653. Cf. Laitinen 1995; Melkas 2006: 220–230. The works of Kallas are discussed in more detail below.
- 2 See Pöldvee 2013: 650, 656–657; cf. Kross 1982: 103. For more on Kross, see below.
- 3 See Suolahti (1948), Suomi (1967), Riikonen (1976), Niemi (1980), Huhtala (1984, 1986), Kettunen (1986), Saariluoma (1986), Nummi (1993), Syväoja (1998), Ihonen (2002), Grönstrand (2005), Melkas (2006), Kirstinä (2007), and Hatavara (2007; 2009). The historical novel has also been addressed by historians. See Manninen (1990), Haapala (2001; 2007) Klinge (1998; 2004), Sulkunen (2013), and Pikkanen (2015). Saari (1989) and Salmi (2004) have discussed the relationship between historical fiction and history writing and Fewster (2006) has included works of historical fiction in his study of the Finnish medievalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- 4 Raoul Palmgren (1986: 15–27) suggests four phases: the initial one came in the last third of the nineteenth century, and the second (and the most important for him as a leftist scholar) was that of realistic historical novels, which in Palmgren's model were published especially in the beginning of the twentieth century. These were followed by the modern historical novels of the 1930s and the new historical novel of the postwar period. Juhani Niemi (1991: 29–30) refutes Palmgren's Lukácsian definition of the realist historical novel and represents the life span of the genre in six chronological waves, emphasising breaks, changes, and their political and social contexts. He suggests that the first phase of the historical novel in Finland in the mid-nineteenth century 'degenerated' in the 1880s as a result of the success of literary Realism. The new boom took place at the outset of the twentieth century, when the historical novel defended the Grand Duchy in the political dire straits caused by Russification. The third, high-nationalistic wave occurred after the Finnish independence of 1917. The more 'humanistic' approach after the Second World War was followed by the rise of historical novels in the 1950s and 1960s that created national consensus by depicting common people amidst the Civil War of 1918 and the battles of the Second World War. The last phase is that of fragmenting national metanarratives. In contrast to Niemi, Markku Ihonen (1990; 1992) proposes a more pronounced continuation between different types of novels, and thus discusses not waves, but partly overlapping traditions stemming from the nationalist and idealist nineteenth century novels. Ihonen's typology is based (partly implicitly) on patterns of emplotment, aesthetic criteria and the author's choice between local and non-local setting. In Ihonen's model, the first tradition proposed is that of national-epic novels, written by Zacharias Topelius

- and his followers. It grew thinner after the tragedies of the Second World War, but was taken up again by the so-called trilogy novels, following the atoning pattern of *Bildungsroman*, in the 1960s and 1970s. This later layer of the tradition abandons the Topelian idea of providence for the ideal of communal or national consensus. The second tradition comprises those few ‘modern’ historical fictions that were written mainly in the 1960s and 1970s and the third consists of historical fictions that broke the national paradigm by choosing a setting outside the national borders, reflecting the European tradition of the historical novel.
- 5 The discussion from the mid-1930s aimed for a positive re-conceptualisation of historical fiction. It partly strove to do this by highlighting the role of the earlier, late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fiction for the rise of the Estonian nation state; and partly the studies capitalised on the qualitative improvement of the historical novel of the 1930s, which arguably stemmed from close cooperation with academic historians and archaeologists. See e.g. Palm 1935, Suits 1938, and Urgart 1940. In the 1970s–1980s, the discussion was even more heated and involved a number of prominent writers, historians and archaeologists. These debates were characterised by the distrust of historians towards fiction, and at the same time by the ambition of writers to move from the field of pure fiction to the field of history. See Väljataga 2013. One of the major catalysts for these discussions was the popularity of the works by Lennart Meri (1929–2006), a film director and writer, and later President of Estonia. Another set of issues centred on the equally admired historical fiction by Jaan Kross (more on which below). Kross himself also took an active part in these discussions, addressing the issues related to the genre and the position of the genre in Estonian culture (1982, 1986a, 1986b).
 - 6 Furthermore, the gatekeepers of the current canon also prefer works that depict the pre-modern past, preferably pre-Christian or medieval. On a more popular level, a good indicator of the much greater heterogeneity of Estonian historical fiction was the series *Estonian story* (“Eesti lugu”, 2008–2009), published by the national newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht* and consisting of fifty books that covered Estonian history from ancient times to the twenty-first century.
 - 7 The most significant example being Jaak Kärner’s *People on Ascent* (“Tõuse rahvas”, 2 vols., 1936–1937). Tellingly it is the Netherlands-based scholar, Cornelius Hasselblatt (2007) who has recently pointed out that the Revolution of 1905 is, in fact, one of the key historical topics of Estonian literature.
 - 8 In this sense, our cultural memory approach is a contextualist approach to literature or what has been recently called a new sociology of literature. See for example Sevänen 2011.
 - 9 The Danish rule in present-day northern Estonia lasted until 1346, when the lands owned by the Danish king were sold to the Teutonic Order.
 - 10 In the 1700s–1800s, the Estonian territory remained a part of the German *Kulturraum*, and due to the rapid development of literary culture it was seized into a German-language communication system that stretched from Hamburg to St. Petersburg. In Finland, the role of Swedish grew even stronger after the Finnish areas had been annexed to the Russian empire, as schooling and literacy in Swedish (and Latin) spread, and Swedish remained the language of administration for around the next 80 years. This meant that the Swedish-language population could still be part of the literary life of Sweden and many of the cultural influences, including narrative models and topoi, arrived in Finland through the Swedish book market. Hakapää 2008: 146. However, Finnish gradually caught up from the 1860s onwards and became the dominant language around the turn of the century.
 - 11 These ‘Finnish-nationalists’ are known as Fennomans, and the Swedish-language nationalists as the Svecomans in the Finnish historical discourse; both terms stem from the nineteenth-century discussions.
 - 12 The first Finnish-language prose writer was Pietari Hannikainen (1813–1899)

- who published historical stories in newspapers and periodicals, for example *Torkel and Viborg Castle* (“Torkel ja Viipurin linna”) in 1845. The first Finnish-language historical novella was published in 1859, when the future professor, the Senator G. Z. Forsman (under his pen name Yrjö Koskinen) published his short piece *Pohjanpiltti* (the title denotes a small rock in the Gulf of Finland). The first Finnish-language historical novel *Heikki from Hatanpää and his Bride: A Story from Bishop Thomas’ Era* (“Hatanpään Heikki ja hänen morsiamensa. Kertomus Tuomas piispan ajalta”) by E. F. Jahnsson appeared in 1884 (see Grönstrand’s contribution in the present volume). In many cases the Swedish-language literature was translated into Finnish, and in some cases the translation was the other way.
- 13 For a brief overview of Baltic German historical fiction, see Lukas 2006: 234–239.
 - 14 Separate literary histories are constantly being written, but the Finnish version always discusses the first Swedish-language phase of literary production as well, and the Swedish-language literary histories also present Finnish-language literature. See Rojola 1999; Varpio & Huhtala 1999; Wrede 1999; Zilliacus 2000.
 - 15 However, it is important to bear in mind that identifying with the ancient past depicted by the *Kalevala* was a project of the educated upper classes for a long time: throughout the nineteenth century, the deeply religious rural people were suspicious about what they saw as superstitious old tales. Mikkola 2009.
 - 16 The novel as a genre had a slow start in Finland and a relatively low aesthetic status in the middle of the century. In spite of this, the 1840s were declared ‘the era of novel frenzy’ and Victor Hugo, Walter Scott and Charles Dickens, among others, were read widely in their Swedish-language translations. In the context of the present volume it is worth pointing out that most of Scott’s works were translated into Swedish from the 1820s onwards, and became popular in the Grand Duchy of Finland too. The earliest Finnish translations are from the 1870s. Grönstrand 2005: 286–287; Huhtala 1986: 29–30; Ihonen 1999a.
 - 17 The stories were initially published serially in *Helsingfors Tidningar* in 1851–1866, followed by the partly parallel book published in 1853–1867. Topelius is also a fine example of the effective use of several mnemonic media: while working on *The Surgeon’s Stories*, Topelius used one of its central characters in a historical play *Regina von Emmeritz* (1852).
 - 18 The same ideological basis can be found in the works of the Swedish historians E.G. Geijer and Anders Fryxell. Topelius particularly follows Fryxell in his idealistic picture of peasants. Ihonen 1992: 49–50; Klinge 1998: 39–126. For Scott’s influence on Zacharias Topelius, see Hatavara 2003, *passim*. and 2007: 39.
 - 19 That said, it should also be noted that for example female novelists were already bringing more nuances into the national metanarrative in the nineteenth century. The novelist Fredrika Runeberg depicted the past from women’s point of view in her historical novels like *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters: A Story from the Time of the Greater Wrath* (“Fru Catharina Boije och hennes döttrar. En berättelse från stora ofredens tid”, 1858; see Grönstrand’s contribution in the present volume). Due to her upper middle class social background and her position as the wife of the lauded national poet J.L. Runeberg, she was able to challenge the masculine tradition of the historical novel: in the latter half of the nineteenth century it was generally expected in Finland that a historical novelist should also be a professional historian, which at least partly excluded women from the task. Hatavara 2003; Melkas 2003.
 - 20 Hannu Syväoja (1998) has gathered these authors under the rubric of the first wave of ‘Topelian historical fiction’. Besides Topelius, he mentions such authors as August Ahlqvist, J.A. Bergman, J.W. Calamnius, Betty Elfving, K.J. Gummerus, Pietari Hannikainen, Rafaël Hertzberg, E.F. Jahnsson, Kaarlo Karikko, Julius Krohn, Pietari Päivärinta, Juha Reijonen, and Emanuel Tamminen. Altogether he lists some 30 historical novels from the period. See Syväoja 1998: 55, 290–291.

- However, as the list only includes works depicting events that date back 50 years or more, some writers dealing with more contemporary events are left out. Besides these novelists, mention could also be made of the visible and influential Professor of Aesthetics and Modern Literature Fredrik Cygnaeus (1807–1881), who wrote historical plays set in the Swedish court during the Reformation.
- 21 However, the historical novels addressing overseas colonialism did not vanish entirely. The best examples are the novels by one of the key authors of historical fiction, Andres Saal (see below), which are set in Indonesia where Saal lived from 1897. These texts address the Boer War (*For Freedom and the Fatherland* [“Priiuse ja isamaa ees”], 1902–1903) and Dutch colonialism in Java (*White oath* [“Valge vanne”, 1904/1911]; *Morning Light* [“Valgus hommikust”, 1908/1929]).
 - 22 Similar traits dominate Bornhöhe’s other two historical novellas, particularly *Villu’s Fights* (“Villu võitlused”, 1890), which is also set during the St. George’s night uprising. The third, *Prince Gabriel or the Last Days of Pirita Convent* (“Vürst Gabriel ehk Pirita kloostri viimsed päevad”, 1893) takes place during the Livonian War and introduces a strong pro-Russian sentiment. These two texts never quite reached the popularity of *The Avenger* though, and neither have they been rated very highly in the literary canon.
 - 23 Particularly the trilogy *Vambola* (1889), *Aita* (1891), and *Leili* (1892–1893). Next to this, Saal’s works touch upon the St. George’s night uprising (*Hilda* [1890] and *Uudu and Meeta* [“Uudu ja Meeta”, 1892]), the Estonian Viking Age (*Dan and Singa* [“Dan ja Singa”, 1893]), and the witch-hunt in the seventeenth century (*The Brown-Eyed* [“Sõstra-silmad”, 1890]).
 - 24 For the adaptations of the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia in the Estonian and Baltic German cultural memories, see Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011.
 - 25 Another good example of this is the short story *Maimu* (1892) by August Kitzberg (1855–1927), one of the leading young Estonian authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this story, the fourteenth-century setting is used for addressing colonial violence.
 - 26 Besides the Kalevalaic past there is a wave of historical fiction set in classical Greece or Rome in the twentieth century, like Arvid Järnefelt’s plays *The Teachings of a Slave* (“Orjan oppi”, 1902), also known as *Titus* (1910), and Volter Kilpi’s novel *Antinous* (1903), which mainly follows the reflections of the young, tragic favourite of Emperor Hadrian. Further examples are Eino Leino’s historical play *Alkibiades* (1909) and Arvid Mörne’s historical play *Spartacus* (1914). Mörne was a working class writer and the theme of the play – a slave revolt – was gratefully received by the workers’ newspapers complaining about a lack of suitable literature. Lyytikäinen 1999: 138; Roininen 1999, 101; Rojola 1999a: 153.
 - 27 Kalevala’s compiler, Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), turned some of the characters of folk poetry into typical classical heroes. For the alterations in the popularity of two of the Kalevala’s central male characters, tragic protagonists Kullervo and Lemminkäinen, in art, see van der Hoeven 2009: 52.
 - 28 In Finland, several plays and operas depicting the Kalevalaic past were written and staged in the 1890s and early twentieth century, among others J.H. Erkkö’s play *Aino* and Karl Müller-Berghaus’ opera *Die Kalewainen in Pochjola* (both 1892), J.H. Erkkö’s play *Kullervo* (1895), J.H. Erkkö’s play *The Wedding at Pohjola* (“Pohjolan häät”, 1901), Eino Leino’s Kalevala-inspired poems and plays from the turn of the century (*The Swan of Tuonela* [“Tuonelan joutsen”, 1898], *The War for Light* [“Sota valosta”, 1900]), and plays in the *Masks*-series (“Naamioida”, 1905–1907). For Kalevalaic references in works of historical fiction, see Grönstrand in the present volume.
 - 29 Besides Jacob Ahrenberg, Santeri Ingman and Juhani Aho (who are discussed in what follows), the most prominent writers in the last decade of the century and around the turn of it were John Bergh, Jalmari Finne, Eirik Hornborg, Eemeli

- Jaakkola, Anni Kepplerus, Petrus Nordmann, Aukusti Oravala, Eino Railo, Oskar Relander, Lauri Soini, and Kyösti Wilkuna. They published their historical novels, short stories and plays in 1894–1917. *Syväoja* lists more than 40 texts from the period. *Syväoja* 1998: 55, 291–292. The playwright Gustaf von Numers who wrote popular historical plays for the Finnish Theatre Company should also be added to the list.
- 30 However, some earlier novelists, like the Swedish-language Zacharias Topelius, had already drawn an occasional difference between the language groups: Swedish-speaking Finns were depicted as more active and outgoing, and sometimes also as superior to the Finnish-speaking population. *Syväoja* 1998: 112–113, 226.
- 31 Furthermore, some pieces of coeval historical fiction, like the poet, novelist, playwright and journalist Eino Leino's (1878–1926) medieval plays *Lalli* (1907), *Maunu Tavast* (1908) and *Bishop Tuomas* ("Tuomas piispa", 1909) questioned the uniting national narrative and stressed conflicts between the collective and the individual. Kalemä 2004; *Syväoja* 1998: 86, 202–203, 224; Rojola 1999b: 165, caption.
- 32 The six novels of the *Karmala* cycle deserve special mention here: *The Battle of the Wilderness* ("Erämaan taistelu", 1909), *Viborg's Explosion* ("Viipurin pamaus", 1911), *Pietari Särkilahti* (1914), *The King in Finland* ("Kuningas Suomessa", 1919), *The Cudgel Men of the Wilderness* ("Erämaan nuijamiehet", 1922) and *In the Age of the Count* ("Kreivin aikaan", 1926). Palmgren 1986: 18–19.
- 33 According to Kai Häggman (2012: 199), in 1895 approximately 400 new Finnish-language books and 250 Swedish-language books were published, whereas in 1905 the respective figures were 690 and 310. In other words, the number of Finnish-language items grew by over 72% between 1895 and 1905, in contrast to the more modest rise of 24% for Swedish-language literature. See also Pikkanen 2012: 71 (footnote 171).
- 34 In 1880–1893, around 30 Estonian-language historical novels and novellas were published. Nirk 1966. Next to prose, historical topics were also appropriated in other genres such as poetry or drama. One of the finest examples of this is the poem *Lembitu* (1885), set in the crusade period, by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803–1882), the author of the national epic *Kalevipoeg*.
- 35 The trilogy consisted of the novels *The Mahtra War* ("Mahtra sõda", 1902), *When the Anija Men Went up to Tallinn* ("Kui Anija mehed Tallinnas käisid", 1903), and *Maltsvet, the Prophet* ("Prohvet Maltsvet", 1905–1908).
- 36 Tellingly, in the post-war period only the émigré scholar Herbert Salu (1964) has discussed Vilde in the context of historical novels. Published in Helsinki, Salu's monograph is also one of the very few extensive treatments of Estonian historical fiction available in Finnish.
- 37 For a discussion on the complexity of Vilde's representation of violence and exploitation, see Kirss 2013.
- 38 At this point Viking motifs also became popular in the Finnish-language literature, and especially in popular publications aimed at boys and youngsters, which presented the adventures of Finns in different phases of 'Finnish' history. See for example Fewster 2006: 356–364.
- 39 One of these novelists was Artturi Leinonen, who wrote 18 novels and 23 plays, both contemporary and historical, and won several State Prizes for these achievements. Koivisto 1999: 183–184.
- 40 As argued by one critic, for the years 1935–1936 it seemed to overshadow all other prose genres. Ugart 1940: 14. The situation in Estonia thus differs from the Finnish one. In Finland historical fiction had a prominent and visible position in the field of cultural memory and yet even during the most prolific period in the mid-1930s (1933, 1935–1937) it amounted only to approximately 5% of all published fiction. Ihonen 1992: 58.

- 41 Karl August Hindrey's popular crusade dilogy *The Sunset* ("Loojak", 1938) also does not centre on warfare. The most militant of the crusade novels is Enn Kippel's *Domini canes* ("Issanda koerad", 1938), which narrates the Livs' fight against the Germans.
- 42 The two most influential examples of this are Karl August Hindrey's *Urmas and Merike* ("Urmas ja Merike", 1935–1936), and August Mälk's *The Lords of the Baltic Sea* ("Läänemere isandad", 1936).
- 43 The Livonian War is discussed in Enn Kippel's *At the Time of the Great Lament* ("Suure nutu ajal", 1936) and in *Hannibal's People* ("Hannibali rahvas", 1936) by Edgar Valter Saks; the Great Northern War is the setting for Kippel's *When the Ironheads Came* ("Kui raudpea tuli", 1937) and August Mälk's *Dead Houses* ("Surnud majad", 1934).
- 44 A good illustration of the ways in which today's reception of the novel prefers to focus on the bravery of the schoolboys who joined the Estonian army is the film based on the novel that came out in 2002.
- 45 For this counter tradition, see also endnote 77 below.
- 46 Women writers started to move into historical fiction all around Scandinavia at the turn of the century, which has been interpreted as a conscious strategy for acquiring and distributing historical knowledge. In Sweden examples include Sophie Elkan and Selma Lagerlöf. In Norway, Sigrid Undset wrote a historical trilogy *Kristin Lavransdatter* (1920–1922), which led to her receiving the 1928 Nobel Prize in Literature. Melkas 2003: 550.
- 47 In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Finnish writers such as F. C. Burghauser, A. Ehrnrooth, Charlotte Falkman, Rafael Hertzberg, Arvid Järnefelt, Z. Topelius and Sara Wacklin had chosen urban surroundings for some of their stories. See Palmgren 1989. In Estonia, medieval and early modern town milieus had been an important theme in Baltic German cultural memory, including historical fiction, but medieval and early modern towns had also been depicted in the late nineteenth century Estonian historical fiction. These works were written for example by Jaak Järv and Elisabeth Aspe.
- 48 Her main work is the *Eros the Slayer* ("Surmaava Eros") trilogy, comprising of the novels *Barbara von Tisenhusen* (1923), *The Rector of Reigi* ("Reigin Pappi", 1926) and *The Wolf's Pride* ("Sudenmorsian", 1928).
- 49 Armas J. Pulla's novels *The Marquise's Command* ("Markiisittaren käskystä"; 1934) and *Joan of Arc, the Virgin Warrior* ("Jeanne d'Arc, neitsytsoturi", 1938) are both set in France and Harald Hornborg's *Bühlingen in Revolt* ("Bühlingen i uppror", 1936) and *Farewell Flüstringen* ("Farväl Flüstringen", 1937) in Germany, while Arvi Järventaus' *The Arrival* ("Maahantulo", 1931), *The Burning Land* ("Savuava maa", 1932) and *The Charcoal Burners* ("Sydenpolttajat", 1937) all take place in Hungary, which was considered a kindred nation due to linguistic similarities.
- 50 The main authors were Jalmari Finne, Lauri Haarla, Arvi Järventaus, Artturi Leinonen, and Martti Santavuori. Ihonen 1992: 54–55.
- 51 Finlandisation is usually defined as the influence that one powerful country may have on the policies of a smaller neighbouring country. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 447 fn.
- 52 In 1938, 25% of all publications were fictive, whereas in 1945 42% were. After the high period of fiction that lasted until the 1950s, the non-fictive literature started to boom, which can be observed from the annual statistics of the Society of Finnish Publishing Houses. In the immediate post-war period, the reading audience's interest in fiction created a debate about the dangers to society of 'bad literature'. In these discussions, popularity and consequently commercialism were seen as the ultimate enemies; literature should be educational and didactic, seeking for the 'truth'. It was also argued – in terms reminiscent of the nineteenth

- century literary discussions – that becoming a novelist should be an ethically-binding calling. See Häggman 2003: 4–7, 283; Lassila 1999: 31–32, 36–37. See also Niiniluoto 1999: 43.
- 53 These celebrations were mostly targeted at the Estonians who had been recruited into the Red Army or evacuated to the Soviet Union. Due to its strong anti-German undertones the uprising was widely commemorated in a wide variety of media from popular and fictive history writing to visual arts and propaganda leaflets.
 - 54 E.g. Eduard Bornhöhe's afore-mentioned historical short story *Prince Gabriel or the Last Days of Pirita Convent*.
 - 55 Thanks to its inclusion into the elementary school curricula, a still influential example of this tradition is the historical short story *Vesse's Son* ("Vesse poeg", 1948) by Aadu Hint. During the Second World War, Hint had already written a number of strongly anti-German short stories for the young about the ancient Estonians' fight for freedom; many of them were published in the collection *Wild Geese* ("Metshaned", 1945).
 - 56 Vyachko is one of the chief antagonists of the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, the pronouncedly pro-German crusade chronicle from the early thirteenth century, also mentioned above.
 - 57 An opera based on *Meelis* was premiered in 1954. Later, in 1980, this joint heroism was granted a spatial manifestation, when a monument to Meelis and Vyachko was erected in the city centre of Tartu, near the location of the ancient hill-fort there. The sculpture, designed by Olav Männi (1925–1980), originally also dates back to 1950.
 - 58 For example, Erni Krusten's *Young Hearts* ("Noorte südamed", 2 vols., 1954, 1956). The most influential example of this tradition is the four-volume *Windy Seashore* ("Tuuline rand", 1951–1966), a panoramic novel about a fishing village around 1900–1940, written by Aadu Hint.
 - 59 The earliest of these, Tatu Vaaskivi's *The Dictator* ("Yksinvaltiäs", 1942), was published in the middle of the Second World War. Vaaskivi's novel depicts the rule of Emperor Tiberius, and was influenced by Lion Feuchtwanger's and Robert Graves' historical novels, which had already been translated before the war. Häggman 2003: 53–54; Ihonen 1992: 95, 141–146.
 - 60 Further examples of historical novels set in a non-local setting are the works of Tatu Vaaskivi, K. V. Kaukovalta's *The Shadow of the Emperor* ("Keisarin varjo", 1944), Aarne Haapakoski's *The Maker of an Emperor* ("Purppurantekijä", 1951), Eila Pennanen's *Children of Light* ("Valon lapset", 1958) and Helvi Hämmäläinen's *Wolf's Honour* ("Suden kunnia", 1962). Later Sirpa Mäkelä (*Agrippa*, 1990), Tiina Kaila (*Bruno*, 1990), Jukka Heikkilä (*The Sea Consul* ["Merikonsuli", 1995]) and Kristina Carlson (*To the End of the Earth* ["Maan ääriin", 1999]; *Mr. Darwin's Gardener* ["Herra Darwinin puutarhuri", 2009]; *William N. Diary* ["William N. päiväkirja", 2011]) have continued this tradition.
 - 61 *Queen Catherine of Sweden* ("Kaarina Maununtytär") from 1942 depicted the life of the late sixteenth century Swedish queen and *The Dance over the Graves* ("Tanssi yli hautojen") from 1944 the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars in Finland.
 - 62 *The Egyptian* ("Sinuhe Egyptiläinen", 1945), *The Adventurer* ("Mikael Karvajalka", 1948), *The Wanderer* ("Mikael Hakim", 1949), *The Dark Angel* ("Johannes Angelos", 1952), *The Etruscan* ("Turms, kuolematon", 1955), *The Secret of the Kingdom* ("Valtakunnan salaisuus", 1959) and *The Roman* ("Ihmiskunnan viholliset", 1964). *The Adventurer* starts in early-sixteenth-century Turku (Swe. Åbo) but the story is soon taken to a wider European setting. English-language translations appeared as follows: *The Egyptian* (abridged) in 1949, *The Adventurer* in 1950, *The Wanderer* 1951, *The Etruscan* in 1956–1957, *The Secret of the Kingdom* in 1961, *The Roman* in

1966. *The Egyptian* is the most famous of Waltari's novels and it has been translated into some forty languages. See the database 'Finnish literature in translation': <http://www.finlit.fi/fili/en/> [Last accessed 17th September 2013.]
- 63 Testing the historical accuracy of Waltari's work has been an important trait even in scholarly studies into his work, e.g. Haavikko 1982.
- 64 The 'trilogy of chronicles' (*The Burning Banner* ["Pölev lipp", 1961]; *The Last City* ["Viimne linn", 1962]; and *The Riders of Death* ["Surma ratsanikud", 1963]); 'the trilogy of biographies' (*The Bridal Veil* ["Mörsjalinik", 1965]; *Hymn of Joy* ["Röömulaul", 1966]; and *A Sorcerer's Apprentice* ["Nöiduse õpilane", 1967]), and 'the trilogy of amalgamations' (*Noble Hearts* ["Õilsad südamed", 1970]; *Dragon's Teeth* ["Lohe hambad", 1970]; and *A Double Game* ["Kahekordne mäng", 1972]). Ristikivi also published a collection of historical short stories *The Gates of Sigtuna* ("Sigtuna väravad", 1968).
- 65 *The Prophet* ("Prohvet", 1950), *Fiery Chariots* ("Tulised vankrid", 1953), and *Judas* ("Juudas", 1969).
- 66 *Gods Leave the Land* ("Jumalad lahkuvad Maalt", 1956), *Winds of Toonela Blow over the Land* ("Toone tuuled üle Maa", 1958), and *Home before Evening* ("Kuju enne õhtut", 1964).
- 67 *Six Days: The Diary and the Confessions of Andreas Sunesen* ("Kuu päeva: Andreas Sunepoja päevaraamat ja pihtimused", 1980).
- 68 The most popular of such works was Arved Viirlaid's (b. 1922) *Graves without Crosses* ("Ristideta hauad", 1952), which has been translated into nine languages. Set in 1944–1946, it discusses the end of the Second World War and the anti-Soviet partisan movement in Estonia. Viirlaid also authored a number of other novels on similar topics.
- 69 The Allied Control Commission and Finnish self-censorship took care that all the anti-Soviet literature was removed from bookshops. A special institution was established to censure textbooks and for example descriptions of the Sovietisation of the Baltic Countries were removed from the Finnish school history books; high-nationalistic pre-war poetry was also banned. Häggman 2003: 78–79, 82; Turunen 1999a: 206–207.
- 70 Tiina Kinnunen and Markku Jokisipilä have emphasised the post-war division of memory culture into an official sphere which was repentantly silent about recent history and drew a decisive border with the pre-war and war-time nationalist rhetoric, and the popular sphere of novels, popular history books, films and theatre plays, where the nationalist interpretation of the Finnish past (especially the twentieth-century wars) still dominated. Furthermore, there was a high level of continuity in the state bureaucracy, schools and universities, even if the radical left pushed for political purges. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 439–440.
- 71 Besides Linna, there were many prolific war novelists, many of whom were war veterans. For example popular writers Niilo Lauttamus, Reino Leväslaiho and Onni Palaste alone published 84 titles in 1957–2009. During the Cold War years, well over a thousand fiction and non-fiction books on the Finnish experience of the Second World War were published. In other words, the central claim of the 'neo-patriotic turn' of the 1990s, namely the 'imposed silence' about the war in the Finnish cultural memory between late 1940s and 1980s, can be contested. Historical representations about the recent (wartime) past abounded. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 444, 458.
- 72 With 700,000 copies sold, the novel ranks fourth among the all-time Finnish bestsellers. Cf. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 444.
- 73 The most influential were the historian Arvi Korhonen's nationalist work *The Handbook of the Finnish History* ("Suomen historian käsikirja", 1949), and his *Five Years of War* ("Viisi sodan vuotta", 1958) and *Operation Barbarossa and*

- Finland* (“Barbarossa-suunnitelma ja Suomi”, 1961), where the ‘driftwood theory’ originated. In spite of these representations, it took decades before the process whereby Finland rejoined the Second World War was analytically opened. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 442; Manninen 1990: 319.
- 74 However, *Unknown Soldier* was still censured by the publishing house: for example depictions of the executions of Finnish soldiers were considered too daring only 15 years after the end of the Continuation War. The uncut version, titled *The War Novel* (“Sotaromaani”), was published only in 2000.
- 75 For a similar situation in regard to the Lapland War in the 1980s, see Sääskilahti’s contribution in the present volume.
- 76 The publishing house even hired a historian to help Linna with the details. The first historical study on the Civil War, discussing the events not only from the viewpoint of the winners, had been published in 1957 (Juhana Paasivirta’s *Finland in 1918* [“Suomi vuonna 1918”]). After Linna’s novel, in the 1960s, several historians took the subject matter over. Furthermore, three other novels dealing with the Civil War came out around the same time: Veijo Meri’s *The Events of 1918* (“Vuoden 1918 tapahtumat”, 1960); Paavo Haavikko’s *Private Issues* (“Yksityisiä asioita”, 1960) and Paavo Rintala’s *Granny and Mannerheim* (“Mummo ja Mannerheim”, 1960–1962). In contrast to Linna’s more traditional approach, Meri’s and Haavikko’s historical novels have been treated as attempts to present a modernist, more fragmented and narratively experimental interpretation of the national past; Rintala’s novel has been seen as a mediating form between the two competing literary trends. Häggman 2003: 234; Hökkä 1999: 76; Niemi 1999b: 165.
- 77 When it comes to the counter tradition within the Civil War literature, Varpio (2009) is referring to, among others, Sigrid Backman, Elmer Diktonius, Jarl Hemmer, Kössi Kaatra, Joel Lehtonen, Mikael Lybeck, Runar Schildt, and F. E. Sillanpää. Contemporary writers to Linna also addressed the Civil War theme (Ilpo Kaukovalta, Oiva Paloheimo, Lauri Viita). It is also worth noticing that Linna’s novels were published at the same time as English Marxist historians Eric Hobsbawm and especially E. P. Thompson published their major studies (*Primitive Rebels* from 1959 and *The Making of the English Working Class* from 1963 respectively), which emphasised the active, participatory role of individuals from lower classes.
- 78 For example Linna’s *Unknown Soldier* resonated strongly with the majority of Finnish war veterans. However, it also offended many, as it contested the National Romantic visions of the war and the patriotic-conservative value system centred on the slogan ‘Home, Religion and Fatherland’. Furthermore, some reviewers representing the intelligentsia blamed Linna for creating national discord by depicting the class-based divisions of the society so openly in his *Under the North Star*. Häggman 2003: 219, 232–233; Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 442–443.
- 79 For example *Unknown Soldier* actually contributes to the nineteenth-century topos of the idealised Finnish man, as one of its central characters, Lieutenant Vilho Koskela, personifies “all the good qualities” of the Finnish people: the sense of responsibility and unpretentious bravery. Cf. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 443.
- 80 In the early 1970s, Kross produced a number of short stories on characters standing in between the Estonian and German or Russian communities: *The Swivel Chair Hour* (“Pöördoolitund”, 1971) examines the controversial figure of Johann Voldemar Jannsen (1819–1890), one of the founding fathers of Estonian nationalism; and *The Immatriculation of Mihkelson* (“Mihkelsoni immatrikuleerimine”, 1971) tells the story of Johann von Michelson (1735–1807) who despite his peasant origins rose to become a general of the Russian imperial army. Both short stories gained wider resonance in the local cultural memory thanks to their theatre adaptations that premiered in 1985 and 1983 respectively.

- 81 *The Czar's Madman* ("Keisri hull", 1978) focuses on Timotheus von Bock's (1787–1836) protest against Russian absolutism, yet also uses the topos of *mésalliance* between a German nobleman and an Estonian girl, who is originally a serf. The protagonist of *Professor Martens' Departure* ("Professor Martensi ärasõit", 1984) is the Russian diplomat and law professor Friedrich Martens (1845–1909). *Sailing Against the Wind* ("Vastutuulelaev", 1987) deals with the optician Bernhard Schmidt who struggles between his professional ambitions and his conscience as his work contributes to the militarisation of Nazi Germany.
- 82 For example the representation of the military machinery of the Hittite Empire in *The Egyptian* has been interpreted as an analogy to the military power of the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany, depending on the interpreter.
- 83 One of the key works of the period, Mats Traat's (b. 1936) *Dance around the Steam Boiler* ("Tants aurukatla ümber", 1971) also illuminates well another significant change that left its imprint on the revival of the genre: the growing interaction between historical fiction and performative media of cultural memory, particularly theatre and film. Traat's novel was a reworked version of an unrealised film script and it was soon turned into a theatrical performance (1973) and finally also filmed (1987). Next to this, Traat's series of *Life-Stories From Harala* ("Harala elulood"), a collection of epitaphs somewhat in the style of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), constitutes the most extensive treatment of Estonian history in poetry. The works of the third key author of the 1970s, Arvo Valton (b. 1935) also bear witness to a search for new means of literary expression. But unlike Traat, whose experiments focused on the archetypal location of national fiction, the Estonian village, Valton's choice of topics and settings also seriously broke with the previous tradition: he focused on European (the collection of short stories *Courtly Game* ["*Õukondlik mäng*", 1971]) and Asian history (the novel *Road to the Other End of Infinity* ["*Teekond lõpmatuse teise otsa*", 1978]). As a good indication of the increasing traffic between the different media it can also be noted that Jaan Kross' *Between Three Plagues* grew out of a script that Kross wrote for a television film of the same name (1970). Next to these artistically more challenging authors, mention should be made of Hermann Sergo (1911–1989), whose historical novels gained a remarkably wide public and thus illuminate well the attractiveness of historical topics in the 1980s.
- 84 The best examples of this perspective were the novels *Village with No Men* ("Meesteta küla", 1962), *Primavera* (1971) and *Girls from the Sky* ("Tüdrukud taevast", 1979) by Lili Promet (1922–2007), who also authored a screenplay *Darkened Windows* ("Pimedad aknad", 1961) for a television film (1968) set during the final days of the Nazi occupation in Estonia.
- 85 A more multi-voiced approach to the Estonians who fought in the Red Army appeared in the novel *The Two Selves of Enn Kalm* ("Enn Kalmu kaks mina", 1960–1961) by Paul Kuusberg (1916–2003); in 1968 a film was made based on the novel that amplified its impact. The experiences of those who fought on the German side were, for the first time, discussed in a more open context in *Forty Candles* ("Nelikümmend küünalt", 1966) by Raimond Kaugver (1926–1992). In turn, *The Ship of Refugees* ("Põgenike laev", 1966) by Hermann Sergo gave a voice for the first time to those who had emigrated the country in fear of the Soviets. In addition, in 1970 Heino Kiik (1927–2013) published a novel *Lodging for a Ghost* ("Tondiõmaja") that represented the forced collectivisation of agriculture by the Soviets in the 1940s almost ironically. However, the work had already won the first prize in the national competition for new novels in 1967, before the Prague Spring of 1968.
- 86 The closest to a documentary novel was Ülo Tuulik's (b. 1920) *Trampled By the War* ("Sõja jalus", 1974), which tells of the evacuation of the Saaremaa people in 1944. Most influential among the pacifist novels was *I Fell in the First Summer of*

- War* (“Ma langesin esimesel sõjasuvel”, 1978/1979) by Juhan Peegel (1919–2007), a prominent journalist and war veteran. The novel was also staged in 1979.
- 87 Besides Väinö Linna, mention can be made of the prolific novelist Kalle Päätalo with his popular 26-part *Iijoki*-series, depicting the western coast of Finland from the 1920s onwards.
- 88 The most popular novelists were Eeva Joenpelto, Tuure Vierros, Erkki Räikkönen, Heikki Turunen and the aforementioned Kalle Päätalo.
- 89 Ursula Pohjolan-Pirhonen and Kaari Utrio are the most prominent names. In addition Eila Pennanen, Pirjo Tuominen and Laila Hietamies (later Hirvisaari), ‘the queen of historical fiction’, published their first historical novels in the 1970s. These female authors broke what has been defined as the ‘masculine tradition of the wanderer novel’. Juutila 2002.
- 90 These works were in clear contrast to more documentary literary forms, reporting the real, contemporary world, adopting their methods from TV documentaries and reports. The publishing boom of the 1960s and 1970s mainly took place in non-fiction literature: the amount of fiction plummeted from two-fifths of published items in the 1960s to one quarter in the 1970s. Niemi 1999b: 161.
- 91 The reference here usually being to Erkki Ahonen’s early Biblical *Mountains are Stones* (“Kiviä vuoret”) from 1965 and Ralf Nordgren’s Civil War novel *Such Things Did Not Happen* (“Sellaista ei tapahtunut”) from 1978.
- 92 For example Kirsti Manninen’s and Jouko Raivio’s historical novels that depict murder mysteries in the Grand Duchy of Finland.
- 93 Among the first and the most influential novels were Heino Kiiik’s *Mary in Siberia* (“Maria Siberimaal”, 1987/1988 [manuscript from 1978]), which presented a female perspective on the Soviet deportations based on the experiences of the writer’s mother; Arvo Valton’s *Depression and Hope* (“Masendus ja lootus”, 1989), which is a semi-autobiographical novel about Valton’s childhood in Siberia where his family was deported; and Raimond Kaugver’s *Letters from the Camp* (“Kirjad laagrist”, 1989), which reflects the writer’s personal experience in a Soviet prison camp.
- 94 *Treading Air* (“Paigallend”, 1998) (see Laanes 2013) and *The Wikman Boys* (“Wikmani poised”, 1988) discuss the disintegration of the Estonian state in the Second World War; the latter also significantly contributed to the nostalgia for the interwar republic, especially when a popular TV series (1994–1995) was based on it. *Mesmer’s Circle* (“Mesmeri ring”, 1995) and the collection *The Conspiracy and Other Stories* (“Silmade avamise päev”, 1988) address the experience of the Second World War during both the Soviet and Nazi occupations.
- 95 Writers such as Aulis Aarnio, Kristina Carlson, Juha Ruusuvoori and Kaari Utrio. Juutila 2002: 183–186.
- 96 From the late 1990s onwards, Ilkka Remes has been writing counterfactual historical thrillers in which Finland has become a part of the Soviet Union during the Second World War.
- 97 The earliest example of this is Rein Raud’s (b. 1961) novel *Kaupo* (1990), which focuses on the archetypal traitor of the Estonian national history, a Livish chieftain of the same name who cooperated with the Germans from the onset of the Livonian crusades.
- 98 In Tõnu Õnnepalu’s *Flanders Diary* (“Flandria päevik”, 2007) the Estonian youngster decides to settle in a Flemish monastery. The protagonist of Tiit Aleksejev’s crusade novels *The Pilgrimage* (“Palveränd”, 2008) and *Stronghold* (“Kindel linn”, 2011) (Kaljundi 2010a) also appears to be of Estonian origin. However, he does not return home, but joins the campaign to the Holy Land. Cf. Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011: 447–448.
- 99 Endel Nirk’s drama *Tabelinus* (1990) still presents Henry in a traditional way as a naïve justifier of aggression. The play *Marsh-ship* (“Soolaev”) by Triin Sinisaar

- (staged 2005–2006) converts him into a Romantic hero, while the popular parody film *Malev* (2005) uses his figure to caricature the all too easy approach to chronicle writing. Yet, Henry makes his most provocative appearance in the play *Henry* (“Henrik”, 2006) by Andrei Hvostov (b. 1963), which uses the chronicler’s authority as an ‘eye-witness’ to challenge the nationalist imagery of the ‘ancient fight for freedom’. See Kaljundi 2006.
- 100 The historical short stories by Andrei Hvostov, published in a collection titled *Foreign Tales* (Võõrad lood, 2008) not only introduced non-Estonian (German or Russian) perspectives on Estonian history, but manifestly focus on deconstructing the negative stereotypes of the ‘other’.
- 101 Recently, these issues have been addressed by Leelo Tungal (b. 1947) in two semi-autobiographical novels about a childhood in the post-war period: *Comrade Kid and the Grown-Ups* (“Seltsimees laps ja suured inimesed”, 2008) and *Velvet and Sawdust* (“Samet ja saepuru”, 2009). Possibly also thanks due to Tungal’s background as one of the most popular Estonian authors of children’s literature, the novels, which are also less controversial than, for example, Mihkelson’s, were very well received.
- 102 One of the few exceptions being Tiit Aleksejev’s drama *Legionaries* (“Leegionärid”, 2010; staged 2013). Its title refers to the Estonian recruits in the Waffen SS, and the play explores the diverging memories of the Second World War.
- 103 This particularly holds true for *The Purge* (“Puhdistus”, 2008; Est. translation 2008), and to a lesser extent also to *When the Doves Disappeared* (“Kun kyyhkysed katosivat”, 2012; Est. translation 2012) and *The Cows of Stalin* (“Stalinin lehmät”, 2003; Est. translation 2004). See Laanes 2010, Kaljundi 2010b.
- 104 Leena Kirstinä mentions writers such as Laila Hirvisaari, Simo Hämäläinen, Jari Järvelä, Sirpa Kähkönen, Tuomas Kyrö, Leena Lander, Rosa Liksom, Ulla-Lena Lundberg, Fredrik Lång, Kaiho Nieminen, Jusa Peltoniemi, Hannu Raittila, Ilkka Remes, Asko Sahlberg, Juha Seppälä, Lars Sund, Juhani Syrjä, Harri Tapper, Jari Tervo, Anneli Toijala, Pirjo Tuominen, Antti Tuuri, and Kjell Westö in her study about Finnishness in prose-writing in the 1990s. Kirstinä 2007: 15–18; see also Kirstinä 2012. It is also interesting to note that whereas historical fiction had been a genre of women writers especially in the 1970s and also in the 1980s, the number of male writers clearly rose again in the 1990s.
- 105 Between 2000 and 2010 approximately half of the published historical novels depicted twentieth-century events, whereas a decade earlier it had been around 35%. These novels describe individuals in the Civil War, the happy but ominous decades between the wars and the Second World War. As there are no comprehensive, macro-perspective studies on the post-war period of historical fiction, a bibliographical list compiled by the Rauma library has been used to make rough estimates of the thematic division of historical fiction during recent decades, supplemented by information from other sources. The list is not exhaustive and does not include most of the popular (often autobiographical) war fiction, but it comprises 320 items and can thus give an approximate picture about the trends.
- 106 Erik Wahlström has depicted the erotic adventures of Uno Cygnaeus, ‘the father of the Finnish public education’, in *The Dancing Priest* (“Den dansade prästen”, 2004) and the similar, but also homoerotic, excursions of the aforementioned ‘national poet’ J.L. Runeberg in *The Tamer of Flies* (“Flugtämjaren”, 2010). Eeva-Kaarina Aronen’s historical novel *The Scull Drum* (“Kallorumpu”, 2011) focuses on the complexities of the family life of C. G. Mannerheim, the former Finnish president and the White General who won the Civil War. On Mannerheim and metahistorical fiction, see also Hietasaari in the present volume.
- 107 Examples include Ulla-Lena Lundberg’s *The Marzipan Soldier* (“Marcipansoldaten”, 2001) and *Ice* (“Is”, 2012), Mikaela Sundström’s *Around Us All These Heavens Remain* (“Dessa himlar kring oss städs”, 1999) and Kjell Westö’s urban historical

- novels such as *The Misfortune of Being Skrake* (“Vådan att vara Skrake”, 1999) and *Where we Once Walked* (“Där vi en gång gått”, 2006). Kirstinä 2012: 17–18. See also Hietasaari in the present volume.
- 108 For example, Sirpa Kähkönen’s series of six historical novels (1998–2012), Sofi Oksanen’s *Purge*, and Katja Kettu’s *The Midwife* (“Kättilö”, 2011).
- 109 This attitude is best illustrated by Andrus Kivirähk’s *The Memoirs of Ivan Orav* (“Ivan Orava mälestused”, 1995, 2003), which appeared as a book, but the main protagonist also featured in the newspapers, on television and radio, and elsewhere. Very popular among the public, he is the most emblematic post-Soviet caricature of the national version of history.
- 110 For example Andrus Kivirähk’s novel *The Old Barny, or November* (“Rehepapp, ehk November”, 2000) can also be read as a caricature of national history and the victimising approach towards the Estonian peasantry: in this novel, set in the somewhat timeless nineteenth-century past, the German nobility suffers at the hands of the peasants and not vice versa.
- 111 Among visual representations of the past, most characteristic of the new, relaxed attitudes was the Monty Python-style parody film *Malev* (2005) about the Estonians’ not so glorious ‘ancient fight for freedom’, which ridiculed a number of topoi of national history (Kaljundi 2007). A contesting, yet not all too evidently ironic approach to the ‘ancient fight for freedom’ discourse can be found in Andrus Kivirähk’s novel *The Man Who Spoke Snakish* (“Mees, kes teadis ussisõnu”, 2007).
- 112 The most illuminating example of the new impulses that the international development and novel genres have brought to Estonian literature is the texts by Indrek Hargla (b. 1970). Starting as a science fiction and fantasy author, Hargla has also authored many novels on alternative history and recently, with his series on the medieval apothecary-detective Melchior he has also introduced historical crime fiction, which has turned out to be the most commercially successful new genre in Estonia.
- 113 Another example would be Meelis Friedenthal, a science fiction writer who has recently authored a historical novel, *Bees* (“Mesilased”, 2012) set in the academic milieu of seventeenth-century Tartu (Ger. Dorpat).
- 114 The ways the recent literature has turned away from discussing the national narrative contrasts with the rising trend of promoting national history. This holds particularly for the period since the so-called Bronze Soldier Crisis in 2007 over the removal of a Soviet memorial to the Second World War from Tallinn city centre, which escalated the conflict between the Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking communities, while also radicalising the competition between the two groups’ diverging memories of the war and the Soviet Union.
- 115 The winner was the Finnish-Estonian author Sofi Oksanen mentioned earlier with her novel *Purge*, while second place went to Ulla-Lina Lundberg’s *Ice* and third to Kjell Westö’s *Where we Once Walked* (*Helsingin Sanomat* 6.8.2013).
- 116 This includes oral history approaches that discuss the Civil War folklore collected from the Reds, and the oral memories attached to the *lieux de mémoire* of the war, see Peltonen 1996, 2003; and equally, fictional works that depict for example how the Civil War atrocities broke the minds of the young white officers, like Kjell Westö’s historical novel *Where We Once Walked*.

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Fictional Foundations:
Histories for the Young Nations

I

Composing Finnish National History

Zacharias Topelius' *The Surgeon's Stories*

That the Professor of history, novelist and playwright Zacharias Topelius (1818–1898) was the first to successfully popularise the concept of Finnishness in his schoolbooks, fairy tales and historical novels, has been noted in previous research (see e.g. Fewster 2006: 142). The means and modes used in the process remain mainly unstudied though. This applies especially to Topelius' major fictional work, the historical novel *The Surgeon's Stories* ("Fältskärens berättelser", 1853–1867), which recounts Finland's history over the centuries, tracing the first signs of what was to be called Finnishness.

The Surgeon's Stories was essential in creating and outlining the concept and content of Finnish history. Today it is almost a critical commonplace to understand nations and nationalities as being forged through narratives. Equipping the people with a story of how the group came into being is crucial to the imagined unity of a nation (Hobsbawm 1991: 20). A shared prehistory, an understanding of the past, legitimates the present as an outcome and a result of a historical process. In these narratives, many of them fictional, national unity is created by highlighting shared features within one nation and accentuating its differences from the others (see Anderson 1991; Bhabha 1990; Hobsbawm 1991). Thus the distinctive character of a nation may be created.

Taking this general frame of reference, the central point of departure of this chapter is the assumption that each present moment has a history of its own just as every depiction of the past is directed towards giving a history to the present moment (see Collingwood 1986/1946: 247). Therefore, the emphasis here is on how Topelius wrote about the past for his contemporary audience in the mid-nineteenth century and how his effort to produce a story of a national past, an effort which has already been proven, became the time of the national awakening in Finland. Since gaining its autonomous position as a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire in 1808–1809, Finland had needed to separate itself from Swedish influence and history, and to build its own national identity. Finland as an imagined community was first and foremost a project of the educated classes even if they aimed to include the lower classes too, at least rhetorically. In practice it often proved difficult for the national intelligentsia to sell their idea of an idealised peasantry

to the common people themselves, or to create a dialogue with them. It is also important to note that the aim of the national project was not to create a sovereign nation but to legitimate Finland's autonomous position as part of Russia (see Alapuro 1998; Karkama 1997; Karkama 1999: 90–91; Molarius 1999).

This chapter studies the manner in which Topelius wrote Finland's history in *The Surgeon's Stories*. I will first discuss Topelius' role and significance as a history writer alongside the other pioneers of his time. After that I will analyse his main work *The Surgeon's Stories*, first with an overview of the narrative structure of the massive work and the historical setting of the story, and second through a study of its main plot line. Finally, I will analyse how the narrative as a whole is part of the creation of a shared cultural memory and proposes a certain kind of Finnish history to its readers.

Topelius as a Historian

Zacharias Topelius was an extremely versatile and influential figure in Finnish culture for decades from the 1840s onwards. As a writer he started with children's fairy tale collections and also wrote several types of journalistic texts, including literary criticism, for the newspaper *Helsingfors Tidningar*, where he was an editor in chief. His first historical work was the novel *The Duchess of Finland* (Hertiginnan af Finland), published as a serial in *Helsingfors Tidningar* and then as a book in 1850. *The Duchess of Finland* was the first historical novel written in the Grand Duchy of Finland, and indeed was one of the very first Finnish historical texts, or fictional novels for that matter. The novel led Topelius to be appointed as a supplementary professor of Finnish history in 1854 at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki. Later, in 1863, he was awarded the professorial chair in Finnish, Russian and Nordic history at the same university.

The Duchess of Finland consists of two parts: the first can be classified as a historical description, while the second is a romanticised story. Both parts deal with the events after the Great Northern War of 1700–1721, and especially with what was called the Lesser Wrath, the Russian occupation of the eastern part of the Swedish empire in the 1740s. In this first attempt at a novel depicting a particularly Finnish past, the historical elements of battles and official politics and the novelistic element of the romantic tale of two lovers, a Finnish lady and a Scottish officer in the Russian army, were textually separated from each other as the two parts. In Topelius' later novel *The Surgeon's Stories*, the historical and the fictional are combined more closely and take turns in a more subtle way. In a manner typical of the genre, this novel is characterised by the interplay between story elements that are historical and those that are invented (see Rigney 2001: 19).

Other notable authors who were contemporary with Topelius include Fredrika Runeberg (1807–1879), whose first historical novel was published in 1858 and second in 1862 (see also Grönstrand's contribution in the present volume). Runeberg's first novel, *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters: A Story from the Time of the Greater Wrath* ("Fru Catharina Boije och hennes

döttrar. En berättelse från stora ofredens tid”), hints at the same problem of uniting the historical with the personal, since it partially consists of diary entries taken from a real historical source.¹

Besides these two pioneers in fictional historical writing, Josef Julius Wecksell (1838–1907) is worthy of mention for his historical play *Daniel Hjort* (1863). All these three authors wrote in Swedish, and there were very few and only modest representatives of Finnish-language fiction before the 1870s (for the language situation and the common cultural memory across the linguistic divide in the nineteenth century, see the introduction to the present volume).

In academic history writing, Finnish got a somewhat earlier start with Georg Zacharias Forsman² (1830–1903), whose *The Club War. Its Reasons and Events* (“Nuijasota. Sen syyt ja tapaukset”, 1857–1859) marks the beginning of stylistically modern historiographical writing in Finland, with proper source criticism and argumentation. Forsman was one of the strong proponents of Finnish-language nationalism. His research on the Club War, a late medieval/early modern peasant uprising integrates nationalistic emphases with learned study of the archives. However, even with Koskinen’s Finnish-language publications, the first stages of Finland’s nation building were in Swedish (Karkama 1999: 90–91; Molarius 1999: 79–80),³ and not much was available in Finnish before the late decades of the nineteenth century beyond the mythical past represented in the national epic *Kalevala*. Since the first published versions appeared in 1835 and 1849, the epic had become the foremost symbol of Finnishness (see Fewster 2006: 93–9).

The *Kalevala* does not, however, build up a historical continuum to the present, but portrays an epical past detached from the present. For this reason, it did not help in the construction of the continuous narrative history of Finland, the point of departure of which was under dispute in the early years of the nineteenth century. In a lecture entitled *Does the Finnish nation have a history?* (“Äger finska folket en historie?”, 1843) Topelius put the year 1809 as marking the beginning of the history of Finland. In doing so he set the birth of the nation at the moment when Finland gained an autonomous position as a Grand Duchy within the Russian empire. However, on other occasions and by other writers, Finnish history was traced much further back than that. Tellingly, like the aforementioned study by Forsman, both Runeberg’s second novel and Wecksell’s play are set in the same period at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Together these representations placed the Club War as the point when the Finnish part of the Swedish aristocracy took a stand of its own for the first time, an appealing theme for nationalistic history writing.

Topelius also adjusted his opinions about the beginning of Finland’s history in *The Surgeon’s Stories*, where he wrote a grand, epic narrative for Finland. In Topelius’ novel, Finns already appear as a distinctive people during the Thirty Years War in the early seventeenth century, after which the story spans temporally to close to the time of writing, thus giving a long view of Finland’s history and the development of the Finnish nation. Topelius’ novel describes the gradual development of the Finnish nation and thus follows Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophy of history.

As Georg Lukács (1955/1937: 21–22), one of the first theoreticians of the historical novel, pointed out, Hegel's philosophy of history enabled the present time to be presented as the outcome of history since it understood human development to be governed by a great historical process. In Topelius' Hegelian thinking, the national history was led by Providence, and the nations had a mission to realise this providential process whereby the real and the reasonable coincided (Forsgård 2000: 86–89; Noro 1968: 149–151, 181).

The importance of *The Surgeon's Stories* was marked from its first reception. One of the critics in the Finnish newspaper *Litteraturblad* noticed the value of popularising national history with romantic detail:

With all this the stories gain higher value as popularising the history of the fatherland during certain eventful times [---] all signs thus indicate that this work will be worth its great goal of enlivening the memories of the fatherland. (Elmgren 1853.)

This review was written after the first part of *The Surgeon's Stories* was published as a book in 1853.⁴ The critic praised Topelius for balancing national history with romance and thus providing an original view of history. The venue, *The Literary Journal (Litteraturblad)*, was a paper headed by one of the most prominent national thinkers of the time, the philosopher Johan Ludvig Snellman (1808–1881), which at least partly explains the positive response emphasising the national role of the novel.

As a counterpart to the Finnish reception, which praised Topelius' project to enliven Finland's history, the reception in Sweden, although positive in its overall tone, rebuked Topelius for giving too much emphasis to Finnish history. From the Swedish perspective, the history Topelius wrote about was Swedish, and the Swedes scorned Topelius' attempt to appropriate a part of Swedish history for Finland, which had only been a small part of the Swedish kingdom at the time depicted (*Aftonbladet* 4.12.1858). This criticism is quite justified, since the historical outline of the novel follows Swedish history, mostly the history of Swedish kings, but concentrates intensely on the role of the Finns. On top of this, the main fictional characters are from Finland.

While Topelius was able to use Anders Fryxell's and Erik Gustaf Geijer's history series as a historical basis in the early parts of the novel, his novel bypassed academic history writing in the latter parts, which came closer to the time of writing. Thus Topelius did more than just popularise history; he studied and wrote it himself, and, of course, invented it too. The possibilities of fictional history for enriching historical understanding and filling in for academic historical writing are widely recognised today (see Fay 2002: 1; Harlan 2005: 143; Salmi 2004: 151). Ann Rigney (2004) has noted that fictionally reworked and artistically designed representations may prove to be most influential in the formation of cultural memory. It may also be noted that during the nineteenth century the distinction between academic and fictional history writing was much more vague than it is today. Some critics even understand historiography and the historical novel to have been competing with each other over the public that was interested in history

(Rigney 1990: 4). This gave even more liberty to authors to write and forge history by using fictional modes while still maintaining historical credibility.

The two main ways for historical fiction to comment on and illustrate the present day are for it to provide a narrative continuum from the past to the present or to relate analogical situations between the past and the present. The first method, presenting the past as a prehistory leading to the present, is strongly promoted by Lukács' (1955: 58–59) theory of historical fiction mentioned earlier. Other theorists like Hans Vilmar Geppert (1976: 2–3; cf. Shaw 1983: 52) have emphasised consistency in human nature and in the philosophy of history, making the relationship between the past and the present more parallel. In the following sections I will illustrate how *The Surgeon's Stories* relies mainly on the construction of a historical continuum and thus creates a prehistory for the Finnish people, but at times represents history in a more cyclical and parallel-building manner.

The Narrating Surgeon

The Surgeon's Stories introduces a prominent narrator figure right at the beginning as it starts with a foreword entitled "Introduction: the Surgeon and his life". The text that follows informs the reader that the old field surgeon Andreas Bäck has travelled in many countries and taken part in many wars and other significant events, but always as a side character only. Soon it becomes evident, that Bäck is not the only narrator, but there are several narrative layers. This setting follows the custom by which narratives with several narrators often begin by introducing one claimed narrator (see Genette 1997/1987: 282). More importantly, these frame narratives were typical for the nineteenth century historical novel, following a model given by Walter Scott (see Schabert 1981: 23). The introductory foreword in *The Surgeon's Stories* is humorous in tone, at times ironic towards its subject the surgeon Bäck. He is described as a simple and congenial man, who is openly claimed not to hold proper historical knowledge, meaning his original stories are claimed to lack narrative coherence or a steady worldview (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 6, 17).

The narrator of the foreword discloses his relation to the surgeon's stories by pointing to "us children," who were allowed to play freely in the attic of the surgeon's home while he told the stories (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 5). Thus he becomes a first person narrator inhabiting the same storyworld as the alleged narrator Bäck. At the end of the foreword this narrator tells the reader he has compared the surgeon's stories to other documents and books, which has resulted in the stories he is now about to tell. This kind of reference to historical documents was, and is, a generic tradition of historical novels in a foreword or a frame narrative, providing support for the historical basis of the story to come (Maxwell 1998: 543). In addition, the alleged ignorance of the surgeon, who is claimed to act as the narrator of the whole novel, follows the custom distinctive in the forewords of nineteenth century novels of undermining the importance of the narrator in a humble manner (see Arping 2001). In *The Surgeon's Stories* it becomes evident that this image of

an ignorant narrator is just a frame, as Bäck turns out to be a knowledgeable historian and a skilful composer of stories.

According to the authorial first person narrator of the foreword, the stories that surgeon Bäck relates are but one of the subtexts of the stories now presented in the book. Besides, they were in need of serious revision, which has now been made by the narrator who had listened to them as a child. It is therefore a surprise for the reader after the first story to read the following:

When the Surgeon had ended his first story, his hearers sat for a time in silence, reflecting, perhaps, upon the death of the great king, or perhaps not realising that the tale was ended. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 127.)⁵

Here, and even more clearly in many passages to come (see for example *The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 181–182), it is the surgeon who iterates the stories word by word. This is in disagreement with the foreword where the authorial narrator claims to have modified the surgeon's stories before now rendering them to the reader. In addition, the narrating instance here does not identify with any of the persons present: the surgeon is referred to in third person and the rest are all “those” present, not all of “us” present as someone in the original audience would have put it.

The novel turns out to have yet another narrator, who is neither the surgeon nor the authorial first person narrator of the foreword. This becomes more obvious in the following passage, where the surgeon's comment is given:

“Let us wait ten or twenty years longer, when some diligent man will take the pains to glean from the old chronicles our brave countrymen's exploits. Until then we must content ourselves with sketches, disjointed – and perhaps a little fanciful,” added the Surgeon, in so low a tone as not to be heard by the little ones, whose belief in the veracity of the story he did not wish to disturb. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 13.)

The narrator of the foreword was one of the children. However, it now becomes obvious that the “little ones” could not hear the surgeon's words, and consequently cannot pass the information on. Evidently, the novel has at least three narrators: the surgeon, the child listening to his stories and speaking in the foreword, and a narrator without a given personality or a role in the storyworld. These narrating instances overlap and cross each other in several ways, and often it is hard to determine who is the speaker.

As Gérard Genette (1980/1972: 234–235) has pointed out, crossovers between narrative levels and agents may produce a feeling of strangeness in the reader. In *The Surgeon's Stories* a possible ambiguity arises from the narrator of the foreword, who disappears after introducing the surgeon. From that point on, the narrative situation remains quite stable: the third narrator seems to be an omniscient one, and the mimetic telling frame of the surgeon talking to a certain audience is maintained between the stories. The other narrative layers given, especially the authorial narrator who has compared the surgeon's stories to other documents, come close to pseudodiegesis, not really having an impact on the narrative (see *ibid.*: 237).

Regardless of the multiple narrators and narrative layers given and not consistently maintained, the permanent narrator figure, the surgeon, provides a stable narrative frame for the story. I will return to the interpretative effects of this frame narrative, especially to the importance it endows the audience within the novel with, after discussing the structure of the stories and the main plot.

History from the Beginning

The Surgeon's Stories comprises about 1500 pages in the original book form without the illustrations added in the 1880s. There are five sections with three stories in each, making a total of 15 stories. The time covered in the story spans from the 1630s until the 1770s, about 150 years. The first story gives a historical place and date at the beginning:

For centuries there has resounded through the history of Germany and Sweden a name, at the recollection of which the Swede raises his head higher and the freedom-loving German uncovers his head in admiration. It is Leipzig, Breitenfeld, and the 7th of September, 1631.

King Gustaf Adolf stood with his Swedes and Finns on German soil, to protect the holiest and highest interests in life – liberty and faith. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 28.)

This beginning emphasises that it is history, and grand history, that is about to be told. What is more, this history is something known to people and admired not only in Finland or Sweden, but more widely in Europe. This not only firmly attaches the story to be told into historical reality, but also stresses its importance.

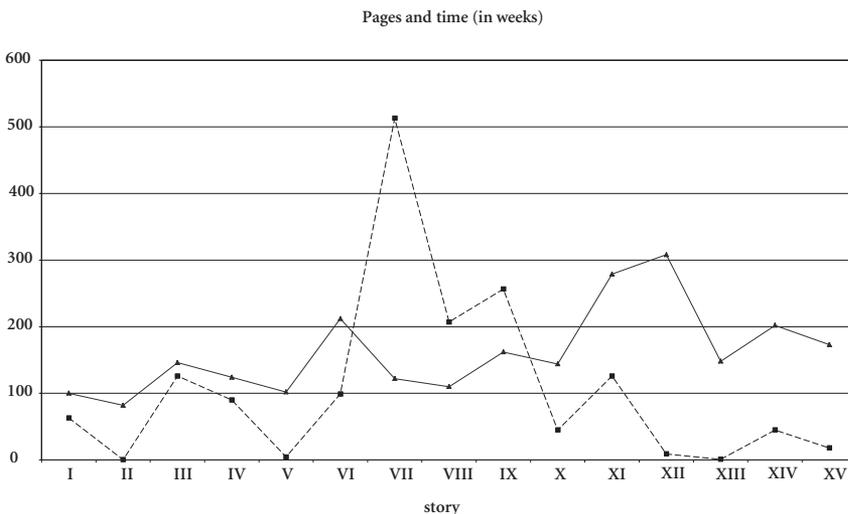
Whereas the first paragraph gives the two nations at war, the second mentions Swedes and Finns separately. In what follows, Finns are distinguished as particularly good soldiers: they have been placed at a crucial position at the very end of the line by the king himself, who trusts them to excel in combat. On the third page of the story, a fictional main character is introduced, a young cavalryman Gustaf Bertila. His short meeting with the king – who later turns out to be his father though at this point this is unknown to either characters or readers – reveals the main tension in the novel: that between the peasantry and the nobility. The king asks whether the young officer seeks to win nobility for himself, but Gustaf answers that this would be too much for him, as he is a son of a farmer. Against Gustaf's overt report the narrator tells him to blush as a sign of the king uttering out loud his secret, devoted hope. And it so happens that Gustaf's bravery leads to him being offered a knighthood.

The second story is the only deviation from the chronological order in *The Surgeon's Stories*. The beginning is set three months earlier in Finland in Bertila's home farm, but the end follows events after the battle in Breitenfeld. At the beginning Aron Bertila, who has posed as Gustaf's father but is in reality his grandfather, reveals his own plans to be even more ambitious

than Gustaf's. According to Aron, only the king and the people are needed in a constitution, and anything like the nobility trying to get in between is nothing but a leach for the people. Aron hopes Gustaf, the illegitimate son of his daughter Meri and King Gustaf II Adolf of Sweden, will become the heir to the throne. The king's sudden death makes this hope impossible, and at the end of the third story Aron disowns his grandson because of his newly achieved noble position. In a dramatic scene Gustaf and his wife to be, a Polish lady Regina von Emmeritz, learn the truth about Gustaf's origin and his mother Meri is killed by the high emotions. Thus the first cycle introduces the theme of peasantry against nobility, and classes represented by individuals become the main characters of Topelius' novel. The novel thematises the problems apparent at the time of writing in uniting people from different social backgrounds and with different interests toward society.

As stated already, the story to follow is in chronological order, which was typical of nineteenth century historical novels. The time lines of the individual stories range from two days (the second story) to almost ten years (the seventh story). A particularly long time is related in stories seven, eight and nine in the third cycle. The subject of that cycle is the early years of the eighteenth century, the battles of King Charles XII of Sweden around Europe and the battles of Gustaf Bertelsköld – the grandson of the original knighted Gustaf Bertelsköld – in a Finland suffering under the Greater Wrath.⁶ The events of this cycle, in contrast to the other cycles, follow the known historical events most faithfully. In spite of this, a tendency to depict historical events more briefly than the fictional events is evident throughout the novel. The stories also get longer towards the end of the novel.

The overall structure of the novel can be seen from the next chart which shows the number of pages in the continuous line with triangles and the time depicted in weeks in the dashed line with squares. Here the space given to each temporal sequent related may be seen clearly.



Whereas the first two cycles, stories one to six, tend to take about one page to describe a week's events, the third cycle accelerates the tempo and the last two cycles, especially the final one, take a considerable number of pages to describe a short time. Two overall tendencies prevail: fictional events are described in greater detail and thematic importance is reflected in the number of pages used. As far as the national narrative is involved, the first four cycles form a coherent plot from the beginning to the end, as I will demonstrate next.

Individuals, Families and Classes

The novel centres around two families, the Bertelskölds and the Larssons. At the same occasion that he disowns his grandson Gustaf, the progenitor Aron Bertila takes the son of his farm manager, Lars Larsson, as his foster child and heir. The events escalate in the third story of the first cycle, as Gustaf informs Aron about the possibility he may be knighted and asks him to give his blessing to the marriage with the noble lady Regina. Aron's harsh attitude towards Gustaf makes his real mother Meri, whom he has regarded as his sister, reveal his true origin and give a mother's blessing to Gustaf. A pivotal symbol is introduced as Meri recognises the ring Gustaf wants to give to Regina as a talisman she had herself given to the king, Gustaf II Adolf of Sweden. After the king's death it had turned out he wanted Gustaf to get the ring – for reasons not yet disclosed to either Gustaf or the reader.

Meri gave this Finnish talisman to her beloved king in order to protect him. She tells now that the ring protects its bearer from death and brings success and fortune to the whole family but also brings misfortune to the surroundings and finally a violent death to the bearer. The following dialogue reveals the great dangers embedded in the ring:

“And this ring, O Regina, is ours!” exclaimed Bertel, with mingled fear and joy.
“What a wealth and what a responsibility go with this ring!”
[Might! Fame! Immortality!] exclaimed Regina jubilantly.]
“Beware, my daughter!” said Meri, sadly. “Behind these words lurks the greatest danger of the ring!” (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 336.)⁷

As Meri warns the young couple, the ring proves to bring with it a heightened ambition, which causes the people close to the bearer to suffer and finally the bearer to fall victim to his own self-confidence. The ring has an engraving, “Rex Regi Rebellis,” the king who rebels against the king. The message is later illustrated in Gustaf Bertelsköld's destiny: besides self-confidence, the ring arouses arrogance and disregard towards others. The people around Gustaf are victims of unpleasant destinies while he rises in fame and richness, and, in the end, Gustaf's self-confidence leads to his violent death (*The Surgeon's Stories* 5: 114).

The ring described like this is the final insult for the old Aron Bertila, who sees it as a symbol of the wrong kind of ambition. For Aron, the ring is a symbol of a striving for power and position over the common people,

which he sees is characteristic of the nobility and harmful for the country. As a counter-balance to the ring Aron gives an old hatchet to Lars Larsson, who is to become his heir, in order to highlight the importance of honest work. In a dramatic scene Aron casts a curse over Gustaf and his offspring, but Meri gives her blessings to them. The two families, the offspring of Aron Bertila, are set sharply against each other: the Larssons become hard-working, thrifty farmers, and later also merchants, while the Bertelskölds become soldiers and diplomats, proud of their nobility.

This divide into the opposing forces follows the Hegelian dialectic understanding of history and of the epic form, elaborated later in this chapter. As a historical detail it can be noted that the dispute over the significance of the nobility in Swedish history had raged fiercely between two historians, Anders Fryxell and Gustaf Geijer, just under a decade before Topelius wrote his novel (see Boëthius 1923; Estlander 1918: 130–131). Both this debate and Topelius' novel dispute whether the nobility was and is necessary or futile or even a destructive part of a nation state. Therefore, Topelius' choice of conflicting matter was not only suitable for demonstrating national development but also reflects contemporary political and social questions at the time the novel was written.

Topelius' strategy of portraying the young couple in detail as they face the immovable Aron Bertila highlights the importance of thematising this opposition in the pages of historical fiction. Furthermore, Lars Larsson and Meri Bertila offer the reader models for an emotional response to the events. The description of the events that lead to the main conflict between the classes in the novel could well be described as a vivid scene (*tableau vivant*), often used in the contemporary history writing to highlight a certain view of the events (see Rigney 1990: 77–80).

The two families come into contact several times during the narrative, but the conflict is brought to the fore only in the fourth cycle of the novel. This section begins from the 1720s and spans about 30 years. The tone of the section from the beginning is one of resurrection after long periods of war both in Central Europe and in Finland. At the end of the first story of this cycle, a new hope for the whole Finnish nation is clearly stated in connection with a happy family incident for the Larssons, the reunion of Thomas and Marie, father and daughter separated and estranged by the war. Thomas says:

As I am now, so is our whole Finnish land this spring, having lost ten children out of eleven, but when it has found the eleventh, behold, it once more feels happy and rich, as though it had never lost its joy. Come, children, it is too close here in the house. Let us behold the sun of God's grace go down in light and rise in mercy! (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 129.)

The same tone is used by the narrator who comments, "all was peace, light, trust, and hope – and thus again struggled in the first green spring over the waste of Finland" (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 129). This highlights a new era in the history of Finland, which also enables the novel to proceed to settle the main conflict between the two families.

The plot that resolves the conflict retells the story of Romeo and Juliet; it is a romance with severe obstacles along the lovers' way, the most important being the long-held hatred between their families. The main characters are young people from both families, Ester Larsson and Carl Victor Bertelsköld. As the plot model of romance suggests, family disagreements first seem to keep the youngsters apart despite their mutual affection. This is very clearly expressed, since the parents of the couple go as far as to take an oath together to keep their children from wedding each other. The narrator comments, "Higher walls than the Norse Alps now rose between the two young people – double unyielding walls of hatred and the inherited prejudices of centuries" (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 355). This indicates that the young couple is separated because the parents mistakenly cling to old prejudices. That, again, suggests this is not where the novel will end, but instead these negatively labelled old views will be rectified.

The ring is central in the process of bringing the two families together as the symbol of pride. Both families need to give in and let go of their long-held positions. The significance of the marriage between the two families is already made evident in the prolonged romance storyline where the couple needs to overcome several obstacles. What is more, the narrator comments on the event in the following manner, as the old Larsson gives his blessing to the couple:

With that he broke the wand over that long strife, which for centuries had sundered nobles and commoners in Finland, and the spirit of peace was beginning to preach reconciliation between those severed classes of society. [...] The first morning watch of the freer spirit of the eighteenth century had broken the point of the opposing columns. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 5: 270.)

Here the marriage is clearly expressed as meaning not only a union between the two individuals getting married but also between the classes that they represent and that their families have represented throughout the novel (for romance as a general plot structure for national historical fiction, see Grönstrand's contribution). Only a few pages later, at the end of the story, the narrator makes a comparison between the new generation in the Bertila farm and that in the whole of Finland.

Given all this, it is legitimate to state that the first four cycles of *The Surgeon's Stories* form a coherent narrative, where the people, at first divided into classes, come together in the end to form one unified nation. The synthesis of the classes at the end wrote the Finnish people into being, and ended the dispute between the higher classes and the common people and that between Swedish and Finnish speakers – two divides mostly along identical lines. This is in accordance with the Finnish-language nationalistic thinking of the time, where the peasants were regarded as the central constituent of the people. Furthermore, it united the elite with this homogenous people.

The outcome of *The Surgeon's Stories* fits in with modern theories of nationalism. In addition to securing loyalty towards the nation, nationalism united the modern society in other ways too. After the traditional communities and family ties had loosened, national thinking provided people with

a language and culture of their own (Hobsbawm 1991: 18, 29–30). In *The Surgeon's Stories* this is made especially evident with a strong narrative continuum and connection, where events inevitably follow each other (cf. Carroll 2001: 24–30; Schabert 1981: 24). The opposition and tension between the two families keeps the narrative together. This opposition is further thematised by its representation through strong symbols like the ring and the hatchet or the natural elements of fire and water in the names of the stories in the first cycle. At the same time these thematically powerful symbols suggest the eternal nature of the opposition. However, continuous narrative is not the only form of history in *The Surgeon's Stories*. A more nuanced understanding of the novel's philosophy of history may be gained by taking a look at the frame narrative where the nature of history is often discussed.

The Surgeon and his Audience on History

Throughout the novel the historical stories alternate with descriptions of the narrative situation in the attic of the surgeon's home. Surgeon Bäck often further explains the historical events and gives accounts of his ideas of history. In introducing the surgeon as the narrator character I already noted that his position and nature as a narrator is misleadingly given in the foreword. The same applies to the negative, condescending attitude expressed toward the surgeon's historical knowledge and his capacity for philosophical judgment. In fact quite the opposite turns out to be the case, as Bäck, besides telling coherent, historically well-informed stories, is able to reflect the stories and the nature of history in a learned manner (see for example *The Surgeon's Stories* 2: 114–115). He often acts as a teacher for the others in the frame narrative and may be interpreted as speaking for the author's intention. As mentioned already, the alleged ignorance is an important part of a humble strategy common to the novels of the nineteenth century and aimed at making the reader more open and receptive to the opinions offered. Another strategy for the same purpose is the audience of Bäck's stories, offering interpretative positions for the readers to adopt.

The surgeon's audience does not always take his word for granted. Members of the audience both ask questions and reflect on the stories they have heard from the surgeon. The audience is first introduced as follows:

On the stuffed leather sofa sat the old grandmother, in her brown-plaid woollen shawl, and at her side the school-teacher, Master Svenonius, with his blue handkerchief and brass-rimmed eye-glasses; on the right, Captain Svanholm, the postmaster, who had lost his left forefinger in the last war; on the left, the pretty Anne Sophie, who was then eighteen years of age, and wore a high tortoise-shell comb in her thick brown hair; while around them on the floor, with and without seats, were six or seven frolicsome and mischievous little folks, all with wide open mouths, as though they had heard a ghost story. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 127.)

This audience is skilfully composed to include both men and women, young and old, and characters with opposite ideological views. Whereas the

surgeon weighs different sides of events and views in a temperate manner, the audience expresses strong opinions. This open dispute over history is not uncommon in history writing: Ann Rigney (1990, 173) has shown how historians often also discuss what they want to oppose, and not only what they are eager to put forward. In Topelius' novel the opposing views are voiced by the characters in the frame narrative, and proven wrong by the surgeon.

The old grandmother represents both common sense and the (female) novel reader: she expects decency in the behaviour of the novel's characters and gives aesthetic evaluations of the composition, like requiring that a comedy end with a marriage. The two older men, Svanholm and Svenonius, represent opposing opinions: the former cheers for heroic acts of war, whereas the latter emphasises material well-being, utility and education. Thus Topelius not only gives his interpretation of history in the stories themselves, but has the opportunity in the frame narrative to raise and overrule opposing voices. Many themes are discussed in the frame narrative, but I will here concentrate on the views on history expressed.

The surgeon is eager to stress the historical accuracy of the stories. He feels the need to oppose the grandmother's claim of the necessity of a wedding at the end of a story and points out that this is not the case in reality, continuing:

“Besides, I would tell you, cousin” – and with this the Surgeon, somewhat nettled, turned to the old grandmother – “that no man is allowed to be independent of his time or the events of his time. I can no more have a wedding at *Majniemi* during the great discord, than one could think of a ball in a house, the four corners of which were on fire. [...] I can not remould the epochs; our Lord has formed them as they are in his great crucible.” (*The Surgeon's Stories* 3: 11.)

This is a rare occasion when the surgeon loses his temper, which emphasises the importance of his words here. What he tells in the stories is claimed to be determined by history, which again is claimed to be determined by God's providence. Against the grandmother's ideas of typical plot lines, Topelius may put forward his ideas of historical determinism and progress in Bäck's words.

In the surgeon's stories different periods in history come with distinctive characters. The two families in the novel each have an era of their own: the Bertelskölds belong to the heroic time before the eighteenth century, whereas the Larssons exemplify the epoch of material progress from there on. The shift between the eras is clearly marked and explained by the surgeon at the beginning of the fourth cycle:

Such a time of utility, when everything was to be built anew, and the prime necessity was daily bread, does not glitter with points of light which dazzle us against the background of dark shadows. But if one has any regard for that honest work, if the good offices of peace, the progress of education, and the treasures of human happiness, have any value, this period shall show a picture which, after so many jolting trials, will give a soothing impression. [...] The dramatic tension

of the heroic period is irremediably past; we much search out new springs, and it will be seen how we shall succeed. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 135.)

This explanation follows Topelius' Hegelian ideas of historical development, where the idealistic time has been replaced by a more realistic one, aiming not at great heroism for individuals but at overall well-being, utility and the recognition of society with its demands (see Hegel 1965/1835: 179–185, 192–194). This is in alliance to the historical determinism that Lukács (1955: 26–28) admired in Scott's historical novels. From the two previous text excerpts it can be said that *The Surgeon's Stories* presents history as a progress from one stage to another, where everything needs to follow the characteristics of the given era. Only from a certain kind of prehistory has the present evolved, which makes this present inevitable (cf. Rigney 1990: 6–7). Because of this, the Finnish autonomy and the specific character of the Finns may be presented as the legitimate result of the past.

The time of the writing strongly affects the way the past is represented. Furthermore, in Topelius' stories, the past is often judged to be inferior and deemed barbaric in comparison to the present (see *The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 92; 2: 190). This is most evident in the fifth story "The Witch" ("Häxan"), which tells about the persecution of an alleged witch. Furthermore, in connection with the motif of the ring mentioned above, the narrator often reminds his reader that the characters in the storyworld are bound by their outdated superstition when they believe in its powers (see *The Surgeon's Stories* 2: 30). However, the most striking anachronism in the novel is that the characters themselves understand their beliefs to be barbaric and about to become outdated in the future. One example in the story is set in the last years of the seventeenth century. Bernhard Bertelsköld the elder answers to a friend, who tries to convert him from his superstitious beliefs, and complains about the power the ring has over himself:

This witchcraft, which has stained our time, did it not at last become real through the firm belief of the people in its reality? And so it is with the king's ring. The witches disappear, and the ring loses its power, when we no longer believe in them; but alas! we are children of our century; I cannot separate myself from it; I believe in the influence of the ring, and therefore it is to me such a terrible reality. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 2: 385.)

From the point of historical representation this passage carries important features. Firstly, Bernhard is able to tell what the general opinion of the century he is living will be, that historically the witch hunts will be a phenomenon restricted to the seventeenth century and seen as distinctive to it. Secondly, he overtly foretells a future where both the witches and the beliefs in talismans are gone. Thirdly, he understands himself to be bound by the superstition of his own age. Thus, the character perceives his beliefs as mere superstition, soon to become overruled, but still can't change that historically determined reality of his. Anachronisms in the historical novel may serve the mimetic illusion of the story, making the fictional design more

coherent especially when past events seem to lack coherence (see Shaw 1983: 20–21). But in cases like Bernhard Bertelsköld, where a character expresses knowledge not suited to his own time, the mimetic illusion of the historical storyworld is at risk. The temporal perspective of the present seems to penetrate the storyworld and its inhabitants as well.

The surgeon also places characters in the eras depicted in anachronistic ways, for example when he claims that Svanholm belonged to the heroic age and Svenonius to the age of utility (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 8), even though they both live in the surgeon's own contemporary time. What is more, some historical characters like King Charles XII of Sweden are said to have lived in the wrong period of time (*The Surgeon's Stories* 4: 124), or it is demanded that they should have risen above the customs of their time, like King Charles X Gustaf of Sweden (*The Surgeon's Stories* 2: 62). This is not part of the necessary anachronism upholding the link from the past to history (Lukács 1955: 56) but anachronistic thinking where certain features and elements cyclically repeat in history and may be used as analogues to the present (Geppert 1976: 2–3). What is evident is that *The Surgeon's Stories* represents history as a narrative continuum leading to the present, but at the same time draws analogues between different times in the past.

Actually, the ending of the main conflict between the two families and the classes they represent is foreshadowed right from the beginning of *The Surgeon's Stories*, in its projection of the future to come. Aron Bertila asserts to his grandson, who represents the nobility, about his future relation to the common people in the end of the first cycle:

May there be war and no peace between them and you, until this useless glitter disappears from human society. May the axe and ring live an open feud until both are melted in the same heat. When this occurs, after a hundred years, or more, then it will be time to say, class distinctions have seen their last days, and a man's merit is his only coat of arms. (*The Surgeon's Stories* 1: 339.)

In this passage the eternal and the timely come together, when an everlasting “no peace” meets “until,” which points to a certain outcome. The moment in history that makes the whole curse Aron is casting obsolete is predicted in detail, and Aron even sees what comes afterwards. He foresees the progress from a class-based society to one where everybody is equal regardless of origin. This is the picture of the time of writing that the novel wants to put forward: Finland as a unified nation.

History as Analogues and History Anagogical

The past in *The Surgeon's Stories* is inferior to the present, and the characters living it are either barbarians representative of their era or they rise above the customs and prejudices of their time. Some characters, like Bernhard Bertelsköld the elder, both understand their beliefs to be historically relative and yet are bound to act according to those beliefs. However, it is evident

that the novel is designed to be a narrative telling the history of the Finnish people from the past to the present. History is offered in the novel as a process that is philosophically grounded and rationally progressing. Topelius uses history to advance and make evident his opinion of the historical progress of the Finnish nation.

This kind of historical story of progress and success can have two temporal and logical perspectives, depending on whether the present is determined by the stages passed and choices made in the past, or if it is the inevitable outcome to which the past has only posited obstacles to be cleared. In the former sense the whole process is significant, but in the latter sense only the outcome matters. In *The Surgeon's Stories* history is seen as progressing towards the present, and it is the certain vision of the present that the novel wants to propose. The pattern of the novel is that of a romance – not only between Ester and Carl Victor, but also between the classes of society. From the beginning it is obvious that there will be a union, but several obstacles need to be overcome in the process. What is more, this pattern follows the Hegelian aesthetics of the epic, where the process and the outcome merge and obstacles are important, hindering the inevitable outcome but also leading to it (Hegel 1965/1838: 446–447). *The Surgeon's Stories* is therefore a mixture of history as a process and epic history, uniting historical determinism with individual heroism. At the story level, the collective is secondary to the individual, as differences in class and ideology are put aside in the marriage of Esther Larsson and Carl Victor Bertelsköld. Thematically, this represents the great historical process where national unity surpasses class distinction and other ideological disputes.

In Topelius' novel the two families, the noble Bertelskölds (Bertel after being knighted) and the farmer Larssons, represent the Finnish nation, different social classes and languages. Their division is amplified by symbolic dichotomies like fire and water and the sword and the plough. The two families compete throughout the novel, but are in the end united by the marriage between Carl Victor and Ester. This rivalry and the ultimate union between the two families represent in the novel the development of the Finnish people, who, although from different backgrounds, have come together to form a unified nation. The process demonstrates how a nation matures over time, and oppositions finally form a fruitful synthesis.

While other characters in the frame narrative often offer extreme, competing opinions on the events and on the nature of history, the surgeon Bäck brings forth Topelius' largely Hegelian idea of history. Topelius' thinking includes the counterparts of heroic individualism and lawful social order, incarnated in the novel in characters in both the frame narrative and the historical story. Swedish kings and their eras, as well as the two families in the novel, illustrate the move between a thesis and an antithesis resulting in synthesis. The two families and their members are epic characters in the Hegelian sense, crystallisations of a national *Gestalt*. Whereas the Swedish kings are national leaders in a concrete manner, the members of the two families are living exempla of destinies affected by historical change (see Hegel 1965 II, 429). The motivation for the story of the two families derives from historical necessity, in accordance with Hegelian understanding of the

epic and its new developments in the modern, prosaic era, when the role of society becomes dominant over individuals (Hegel 1965 II: 442–443; I: 192–194). In *The Surgeon's Stories* nations are seen as the true subjects of history, destined to follow providence.

NOTES

- 1 For more about Topelius' *The Duchess of Finland* and the two parts in relation to history, see Hatavara 2004. For more about Runeberg's novels, nationality and historical writing, see Hatavara 2007 and 2011. For more about how both authors wrote national history see Hatavara 2002.
- 2 Forsman later took the name Yrjö-Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, after his rise into the ranks of nobility in 1884. His pen name was Yrjö Koskinen, which he also adopted for his Finnish-language scholarly works. In Finnish historiography he is usually referred to by the Finnish version of his name.
- 3 One of the most telling example of the dominance of the Swedish language in the project of building Finnish nationality at the early stages is the Finnish national anthem *Our Land* ("Vårt land", 1848) written by Johan Lugvig Runeberg (1804–1877). For Runeberg's role in the field of early historical fiction in the Grand Duchy, see the introduction.
- 4 Originally, the novel was published as a series in the newspaper *Helsingfors Tidningar* and it took almost a decade to be fully published: 29.10.1851–31.12.1859.
- 5 English translations are from *The Surgeon's Stories* by Z. Topelius, professor of History, University of Åbo, Finland. A series of Swedish historical romances, in six cycles. Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, & Company, 1883–1884. The original Swedish book consists of five cycles. In the English translation the long fourth cycle is divided into two separate cycles. The translation states that the novel is translated from the original Swedish, but the name of the translator is not given.
- 6 The Greater Wrath was the period of the Russian occupation of Finland between 1713 and 1721 as part of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), fought between Sweden and a group of allies including Russia.
- 7 The passage in square brackets is inserted by me. It is missing from the English translation, probably by accident.

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History, Politics and Myth

Lydia Koidula's Novella *Juudit, or the Last Maroons of Jamaica*

Juudit, or the Last Maroons of Jamaica ("Juudit ehk Jamaika saare wiimsed Maroonlased", 1870) was published at the height of the Estonian National Awakening, the period of modernisation and national mobilisation in the nineteenth century, by one of the movement's leading activists, the author and journalist Lydia Koidula (1843–1886). However, at first sight the novella is far removed from the fermenting Estonian context of its publication, and is instead set on its titular island of Jamaica in 1795, in the wake of the French Revolution. That year a group of Jamaican Maroons (escaped slaves residing in difficult-to-reach high mountain areas), fought the Second Maroon War against the Creole planters and against the British military, in which they were ultimately unsuccessful.¹ The reference system of the novella also incorporates the better-known Haitian Revolution of 1791–1794 on the neighbouring island, which culminated with the abolishment of slavery and the establishment of the world's first black republic.

The account of the Maroons' war draws on historical sources and is intertwined with the fictional plot of the novella, which revolves around a racially complicated romantic intrigue. The female protagonist Juudit, though a striking-looking heiress, is known to be one-eighth black. In the racially sensitive world of the planters this makes her social status and marriage perspectives problematic. In her compromised, ambivalent position in the community she also develops an independent outlook and rebellious attitude considered inappropriate for a woman. Yet three men fall in love with Juudit: her pompous cousin John, a comic relief figure; the proud, audacious, intensely racist plantation owner William; and, most importantly for the story, Eewar, a young chieftain of the Maroons, black, and matching William in his pride, passion and resolution.

The boundary between the whites and the blacks is not the only one in the novel. The Maroons are contrasted and compared with the enslaved blacks (Igbos) who work in the plantations and simultaneously look up to the Maroons and bitterly resent them for their freedom. From the other side, the Maroons had agreed in the peace treaty of 1738 to a clause obliging them to return any runaway slaves to their masters. The whites also fall into two groups: the Creole planters, passionately proud of their patriarchal tradition and 'benevolent' slave-owning culture, and the pragmatic, civil but

Realpolitik-conscious metropolitan British military forces. In the beginning of the story there is a peace treaty between Maroons and the whites, but during the course of the novella tensions escalate and the Second Maroon War breaks out. At the end, goaded by William, the British army agrees to bring in bloodhounds. The Maroons are hunted down from the mountains and the survivors deported to North America. William, however, is killed, presumably by Juudit and Eewar in self-defence, and the lovers themselves disappear without trace: they are not found dead or alive. Yet “even today” (Koidula 1870: 176), the black slaves tell the story as a legend and some claim they have heard the steps or glimpsed the figures of the lovers high up in the mountains.

The political plot of the war that the Maroons eventually lose and the love-intrigue that comes to a violent end entangle in themselves the main themes of the novella: the effects of colonialism, slavery and racial loathing on the human psyche, and the complex dilemmas of identity, solidarity and collective formation in a decolonising society. The novella transmits earlier thematic and formal patterns relating to the nexus of the New World: from the beginning of colonisation the topos became (among other things) a *visionary* space in which both Europeans and colonials dramatised issues relating to human nature, self and other, natural law, domination and its legitimations, political change, and ideal forms of social organisation. Thus *Juudit* is transcribing cultural memory, traversing “the space between existing texts” of different periods and ideologies, both literary and non-literary (Lachmann 2008: 304). Simultaneously *Juudit* is also a specific re-writing of this tradition and “all re-writings [...] reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way” (Bassnett, Lefevere 1992: vii). This means that *Juudit* was written in and for the literary and socio-cultural circumstance of its production.

However, the idea of ‘manipulation’ ought not to be taken to mean that a re-writing can take total control over the manifold earlier material ‘usurped’ (cf. Lachmann 2008: 305) and turn it into a unidirectional ideological tool. In Barthes’ (1977: 146) oft-quoted words, in the “multidimensional space” of a text “a variety of writings, none of them original” not only ‘blend’, but also ‘clash’, and they undermine and destabilise one another. This poststructuralist insight has been very productive in the field of Postcolonial Studies. Homi K. Bhabha (1997: 219) suggests that the hybridity of postcolonial texts, which are necessarily re-writings and transcriptions of the colonial situation they stem from, can make visible the cracks and contradictions already inherent in that situation itself, while also opening up the ‘in-between spaces’ where new cultural and political options can be imagined. At the same time, one dimension of this in-betweenness is being “in the midst of incomprehensibility” (*ibid.*: 213). Thus Bhabha (1984: 114–120) considers uncanny Gothic elements, contradictions, aporias, fragmentation and loss of narrative control to be characteristic of postcolonial hybrid writing.²

Bhabha’s approach to postcolonial poetics also offers a useful insight into *Juudit*. In recent years the postcolonial perspectives have been evoked increasingly frequently in relation to Estonian literature, and though not unproblematic, in my view they mostly illuminate decidedly more than they

confuse (e.g. Kirss 2001; Hennoste 2003; Peiker 2005, 2006; Annus 2007, 2012).³ The literary approaches can find support in the eminent historian Ea Jansen's (1921–2005) extensive study of Estonian modernisation where she also maps Estonian history onto the postcolonial framework. "When dealing with the history of Estonians from whatever aspect", she argues, "it definitely ought to be taken into account that, on the one hand, geopolitically and economically the territory has since pre-historicity been part of Europe, but on the other hand, for a long time it has also been a colony of Europe, and this fact has impacted on the whole development in the locality. As claimed by Wilfried Schlauf, the editor [...] of an overview of the social history of Baltic Germans, the history of the German colonisation and decolonisation of the Baltic area followed the same model as the general development of European 'overseas' colonialism." (Jansen 2007: 13.)

A slightly unusual peculiarity in the case of the Estonians, Jansen continues, is the shifting dual arrangement of power in the provinces of Estonia and Livonia, whereby power was varyingly shared between the local German nobility and, after 1720, the Russian Empire. Despite that, "the colonial power over the indigenous people" and a model of European estate society lasted in the Baltics for centuries and "started to crack later than elsewhere in Europe" (Jansen 2007: 13).

The 'cracking' came with the rapid modernisation of and by the Estonians at the intersection of the two hegemonic cultures, German and Russian; a modernisation that was successful by a number of criteria, yet in many an opinion entirely rootless (e.g. Gellner 1993: 97–98) and annihilative of the indigenous pre-modern culture. The circumstances raise interesting theoretical questions about latecomer modernities more generally: the dynamics of the 'catching-up' with early modernisers; the outcomes and viability of an ongoing endeavour to create and sustain indigenous models of modernity and accounts of historical change; and the boundary between colonial mimicry and creative reception.

To study the meanings the New World space comes to produce in *Juudit*, I will first attempt to sketch some of its most relevant Estonian, German and international socio-political and literary contexts. This will help to illuminate two related features of *Juudit* that are of central importance for the imagining of the Estonian national community more generally: the construction of time and history and the double figure of (natural) slave/(ig)noble savage.

Koidula in her Society

Lydia Koidula stands at the foundations of Estonian national literature and culture with her intensely personal patriotic poetry, popular comedy dramas (the first plays in the Estonian language), prose narratives, journalism and organisational work. Her poems were set to music in her life-time and many have since remained a popular part of the national canon. From her teenage years on, Koidula wrote for and helped to run the first Estonian-language weekly newspapers, which her father Johann Voldemar Jannsen (1819–1890) founded (*Perno Postimees* 1857, *Eesti Postimees* 1863) and which quickly

became popular. As the local petty bourgeois circles of her time considered it improper for a woman to participate in public life, most of her texts (including *Juudit*) were published under the name of her father. Koidula, her *nom de plume* by which she is known today, was given to her by the fellow national activist Carl Robert Jakobson (1841–1882) and is a poetic name which could be translated as ‘of the dawn’.⁴

In order to understand Koidula’s place in her society it should be noted that in the middle of the nineteenth century the majority of Estonian-speakers were peasants, and the Baltic German nobility, who made up about 7% of the population, owned almost all the land (Kasekamp 2010: 70). Serfdom had been abolished by 1819, but only from the late 1850s were Estonians allowed to start purchasing land. The upward mobility of Estonians remained low and any career pursued outside farming necessarily demanded assimilation into the German-speaking strata, mostly into the lower-middle classes (see also the Introduction). Koidula’s father came from a peasant family and got an upward push in life thanks to a benevolent patron, a German-speaking pastor who took an interest in the talented boy (Puhvel 1995: 18). Koidula’s mother was a daughter of a relatively well-to-do – and thus probably at least partially Germanised – cheese maker (*ibid.*: 20). It has been speculated that in Koidula’s early childhood German and Estonian were probably both spoken at home (*ibid.*: 22–23). However, she received her education entirely in German, finishing a prestigious secondary school, the Pärnu School for Girls, where she was deeply immersed in German literature and high culture. Though she spoke, and later consciously worked on, her Estonian, German remained her strongest language.

Koidula’s German skills and education not only merged her into the local German-speaking contexts, but they also opened influences to her from beyond her immediate circles of association and outside the immediate grasp of imperial censorship, contributing to her becoming the kind of author and activist that she did. As a secondary school student she had already become a regular reader of *Die Gartenlaube*, the modernising cultural and political family magazine launched in the aftermath of the failed 1848 revolution to promote the liberal concept of German unification.⁵ She knew the Young Germany movement, and also took a major interest in the life and work of other radical patriotic poets, such as Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Friedrich Freiligrath (cf. Undla-Pöldmäe 1981a: 14–15). A formative local influence was the Baltic German publicist Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769–1850), whose *Latvians* (“Die Letten vorzüglich in Liefland am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts, Ein Beytrag zur Völker- und Menschenkunde”, 1796) and *Prehistory of Livonia* (“Die Vorzeit Lieflands: Ein Denkmahl des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes”, 1798) criticise the institution of serfdom and the situation of the peasantry in the Baltic provinces, comparing it to the colonisation of indigenous peoples outside Europe (see also Kaljundi in the present volume).⁶

A major feature in Koidula’s upbringing was, of course, her early immersion in the newspaper work that put her in better touch with Estonian-speaking readers, created a network of contacts with Estonian and foreign national activists,⁷ and demanded a good orientation in the current affairs of the

time. Jannsen's newspapers aimed to enlighten their peasant readers, relating domestic and foreign news in an approachable style, promoting education, enterprise, temperance and ethnic solidarity. A lot of their space was devoted to *belles lettres*, including prose narratives appearing in sequels over several weeks. In this context it is important to note the make-up of the Estonian-language literature and the horizon of expectations of its readers.

Largely as a result of the influence of the Herrnhuter religious movement, which placed great emphasis on individual study of the Bible, Estonians had a high level of literacy by Koidula's time: about 70–80% of adults could read and write. As late as the end of the eighteenth century, Estonian-language printed matter had consisted almost entirely of religious and didactic works produced by the German-speaking clergy. However, from the middle of the nineteenth century, when the situation of the peasantry had improved somewhat and censorship had relaxed, there was explosive growth in secular titles, with almanacs, poetry, sentimental and adventure stories, popular editions of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* (1862), a few publications of high cultural classics, popular science on topics from agriculture to international politics and astronomy, commented translations of imperial laws, and much more.

Most of the Estonian genres drew upon models in German *Kolportage-literatur*: diverse inexpensive books and periodicals circulating among the lower layers of society through travelling libraries and peddlers, including sensationalist writings and political pamphlets that the authorities frowned upon, as well as moralistic fiction (*Volksliteratur*) by conservative clergymen authors,⁸ informational literature and religious tracts. Typically for 'young' literatures the early period of Estonian literature was dominated by translations (cf. Even-Zohar 1978), or, more specifically, by adaptations that did not follow the source texts closely, but modified them as necessary to suit the local concerns and the translator's taste and agenda.

In general the understanding of intellectual property was different from the current hegemonic view, as copyright or plagiarism were not meaningful concepts. Thus foreign stories were re-written and published in Estonian without mentioning the source title and author, and one consequence of this for comparative literature studies is that the models for the Estonian works are hard to discover: not only is the source not made directly clear and is possibly obscure, but the Estonian version can be far removed from the German one.⁹ The practice of anonymous appropriation of foreign sources gradually lost its legitimacy at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Typically for the nineteenth-century tastes internationally, the educative and often politically engaged agenda of the Estonian literati was complemented by historical topics, which are generally common in early Estonian literature, so *Juudit* was in this sense not exceptional. Koidula's father Jannsen alone wrote around twenty historical tales, and was especially fond of the topic of patriotic resistance during the Napoleonic wars. The theme of slavery is also well established, with both non-fiction, and sentimental *belles lettres* texts emerging on the subject in the Estonian-language prose early on.¹¹ However, in the 1860s-1870s Koidula with her *The Last Inca of Peru* ("Perúama wiimne Inka", 1866), *Juudit* (1870) and *Martinique and Corsica*

(“Martiiniko ja Korsika”, 1874¹²) initiates a stream of stories on anti-slavery resistance and slave revolutions set overwhelmingly in South America and the Caribbean. This literary practice can well be characterised as a form of politically engaged translation where elements of the colonising culture are appropriated and invested with new meanings (Tymoczko 2003: 32). The location and manner of engagement with the German models for *Juudit* and other slave rebellion stories will be discussed below.

German Intertexts

Although the particular source-text for *Juudit* has not been discovered, Estonian literary history has without much explanation categorised it as a translation/adaptation, presumably because of the knowledge about the usual practices of Koidula and her contemporary Estonian authors, and because of the foreign setting and characters of the story. This instinctive appraisal seems correct: it is not entirely inconceivable that Koidula invented the story simply by drawing upon her general background reading, but it appears highly unlikely from the perspective of her work regime as we know it. Furthermore, the mostly very streamlined plot of *Juudit* is not typical of the more discursive style characteristic of Koidula. It would be of great help to find the source in order to understand what range of models Koidula used, and to be able to study what kind of changes she made to it.¹³ Even without it though, it is still possible to analyse *Juudit*, comparing its presentations of history and politics to those of Koidula’s previous New World story, *The Last Inca of Peru*¹⁴, the source of which is known to be *Huaskar* (1861) by the pastor-*Volksschriftsteller* W.O. Horn, so that Koidula’s changes have been analysed (Undla-Pöldmäe 1981a: 70–76; Peiker 2006). It is also possible to scrutinise Koidula’s reading and the relevant literary contexts in order to outline poetical models, genres and authors who *could have* served as models for *Juudit* and thus offer insight into its characteristics.

Paradoxically, the conservative *Volksliteratur* which expresses disquiet with potential liberal political change is the most common source that the nineteenth century Estonian national activists used for their New World stories and for their other works. The explanation for this can be that the conservative authors and the Estonian mobilisers shared a sociologically similar target readership of peasants and minor artisans. Furthermore, in very general terms it can be said that both aimed to offer instruction in the form of entertainment, as enlightenment tradition prescribed. (On Germany, see Müller-Salget 1984: 97.) The German *Volksschriftsteller*, however, were pastors who consciously set themselves the task of defending traditional values and the order of Church, feudal system and patriarchal family at a dangerous and confusing time, especially post-1848. They wanted to provide suitable reading material for the rural lower orders “to fight what is new, alien and disturbing”, as the pastor and *Volksschriftsteller* Glaubrecht put it (qtd. Müller-Salget 1984: 27).

The Estonian adaptors engaged with their source material in a particular way. Firstly, the New World and the slave rebellion stories popular with

Estonians constituted a very small part of the *Volksliteratur* (Müller-Salget 1984). Horn, the confirmed source for both Koidula's *Inca*, and Mats Kirsels *Siimon*¹⁵, was altogether exceptional with his Romantic attraction for exotic settings, and his occasional treatments of slavery and colonialism. Most of the *Volksliteratur* preferred domestic village or small-town settings and outsider figures, if any, tended to be presented in negative roles. Thus it seems that the Estonian authors specifically singled out the space of the New World and the opportunities to debate political and socio-cultural change that it carried. They also made specific types of adaptation. The most typical were the historicisation and actualisation of the fictional adventure tales, relating them to contemporary Estonian debates. The slavery story in the source could be supplemented with polemicising asides drawing contemporary parallels, perhaps with post-serfdom in Estonia or with the Civil War and the abolitionist movement in America, or a story beginning *in medias res* in German would get a factual and historical introduction or epilogue embedding the story in documentary commentary.

However, although *Juudit* also shows some of these features and is in several aspects similar to *Inca*, it appears *not* to be based on any of the *Volkschriftsteller* pastors' works, however much Koidula may have changed it.¹⁶ Horn's *Huaskar* has a setting and subject matter that is unusual for its genre, yet its mode is sentimental and its Biedermeier thought-style results in a plot culminating in a clichéd ending. The traces of these features are also observable in *Inca*, despite its use of the historicisation and actualisation strategies. *Juudit*'s mode throughout, on the other hand, is darkly romantic, even morbid and uncanny. Both the white and black characters suffer with guilty passions and gnawing anxieties. There is a sense of tragedy and foreboding almost from the beginning and the story ends in nightmarish scenes with human-hunting bloodhounds which drift into the fantastic in the finale. Simultaneously, however, the story's representation of political history is mostly close to the factual, as even the basic fact that the British military brought in bloodhounds from Cuba to get to the Maroons in the mountains is confirmed in historical documentation, and the history is not confined to excursi or paratexts, but pervades the full length of the novella. The descriptions of the circumstances are in a precise, almost ethnographic, style resembling that of the German pre-1848 fiction that was influenced by travel writing and aimed to cultivate, rather than only to entertain (cf. Theodorsen 2008: 359). Finally, even more than in *Inca*, the story foregrounds the valour and defiance, rather than the helpless misery, of the wronged.

Considering *Juudit*'s novella length, its revolutionary subject and the dark mood that leads up to a finale in a fairy story or a myth, a further genre that can usefully be projected in its background is the post-French-Revolution "German-language novella of the long nineteenth century (1789–1914)" (Gailus 2006: 740). The literary scholar Andreas Gailus outlines this as a genre of crisis, tracing its beginning to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novella cycle *Conversations of German Refugees* ("Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten", 1795). Though in itself one of Goethe's lesser known works it inaugurated the dominance of the novella over the novel in nineteenth-century German literature. Goethe's refugees, an aristocratic household in

hiding from French revolutionary troops, are on the verge of mortally falling out with one another by arguing over the revolution, so they agree to change the subject and narrate one another non-political tales instead, which mostly turn out to be supernatural stories. The stories they tell, much longer than the equivalents in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, make up the novella cycle that ends with an enigmatic *Märchen* without returning to the frame narrative.

Gailus (2006: 739–741) considers the telling of the ghost stories to be a narrative displacement of the crisis of the revolution: a crisis that is perceived not only as an existential threat coming from a foreign body outside, but also as an aggression by autodestructive forces from the inside, i.e. from within the existing social order, the family and the psyche of the individual. The protagonists of the nineteenth-century novella¹⁷ tend to be compulsively self-destructive and their plots “dramatise states of exception” and “the limits of (social, psychic, narrative) systems” (*ibid.*: 740). It is typically set in boundary zones, such as military turmoil, exotic countries, wilderness, or fantasy worlds (*ibid.*: 774), and the genre could be seen as a “*symbolic form*” which, facing incomprehensible change, “*thematizes the boundaries of symbolisation*” itself (*ibid.*; Gailus’ emphasis). Even if Goethe’s refugees try to re-establish conventional social interaction, it cannot be done. Thus the *Conversations of German Refugees* ends with a hermetic *Märchen*, that does not communicate anything directly as an allegory, but can only be admired as an artistic symbol with infinite interpretability and no pragmatically oriented message (*ibid.*: 747).¹⁸

Gailus emphasises the particular Germanness of the nineteenth-century novella, but in our context it is useful to note that its preoccupation with the supernatural and the uncanny; boundary zones and states; excessive passions; and internally split, aggressive and self-destructive protagonists closely corresponds to what are described as Gothic forms in the English-language literatures.¹⁹ The emergence of the Gothic genres too is customarily connected to the cognitive turmoil of the revolutionary change in the eighteenth century (Botting 1996: 80–90): the French Revolution, and also those in the New World (Clavin 2007; Smith 2007: 33–34, 41). Postcolonial studies takes a particular interest in the Gothic as it queries the Cartesian or rational humanism that sustains itself by creating its irrational ‘not-quite-human’ others, including the racial and cultural ones that are used to justify colonialism.²⁰ The strange tales of ghosts, monsters and savages evoke questions about what it means to be human altogether (cf. Smith and Hughes 2003: 2) and throw up gaps and contradictions in the hegemonic discourses of authority. In America, much of the nineteenth-century Gothic imagination was preoccupied with slavery, an ‘other’ to its nationhood of proclaimed freedom and equality, often through stories of tragic or threatening racial hybrids whose appearance does not clearly signal their status and who can thus disturb the social order (Edwards 2002). At that, the Gothic dramatises insecurities and ambivalences without having a uniform agenda: the mode and even particular works can mix escapism and activism, and convey a variety of attitudes, as for example both the cruelty of slaveholders and the violence of black rebels are often depicted in Gothic tones (Clavin 2007).

As we will see in more detail at the end of the article, *Juudit* resembles the German ‘crisis-novella’ and shows strong Gothic features. However, whereas the novellas analysed by Gailus dramatise the crisis as an event ‘out of History’, meaning out of history as a narrative of development and progress (Gailus 2006: 748-53), *Juudit* pays major attention to outlining the historical circumstances and the political and socio-psychological reasons for the struggle of the Maroons, making them carriers of a proto-national consciousness. The protagonists, though definitely romanticised, are also politicised and historicised. They express ideas on racial equality, ethnic solidarity, (il)legitimate uses of violence and possibilities for post-conflict power-sharing. Quite unusually in German nineteenth-century *belles lettres* dealing with violent racial conflict, the agenda of the blacks is presented as reasonable, just and historically progressive.²¹

Could Koidula have found German models with such a poetics and a political outlook? Mainstream literary history leaves the impression that whereas in *Vormärz*²² the topics of slave revolts, the fight against tyranny and foreign horizons were more common, post-1848 they were practically non-existent not only in the conservative *Volksliteratur*, but in German literature altogether. A work as historically specific and politically outspoken as *Juudit* appears even more of an improbability. The solution is to look away from today’s canon of the literature of the time and towards the romantic adventure writing by German liberals like Theodor Mügge (1802–1861).²³ Mügge was a passionate political activist, a journalist and an extremely prolific author earning his living by his pen. Today much of his work is buried under the numerous *Kolportageliteratur* works of his time and is thus extremely difficult to locate. It must be stated clearly that there is no proof that Koidula’s work is actually based on a text by Mügge. Rather, the following sketches the profile of the *kind* of author who *could have* served as Koidula’s example given that the presence of his topics and concerns are all but unknown to present day literary scholars.

As Cathrine Theodorsen (2008: 361) puts it in one of the few articles that have been published on Mügge: “The general theme of all Mügge’s work is the struggle for freedom against injustice and political oppression. His stories are about freedom fighters, oppositionals, revolts of minorities against colonial powers or authoritarian regimes”. Among others, he wrote at least two novels on the conflict in Haiti: *The Chevalier* (“Der Chevalier”, 1835) and *Toussaint* (1840). He was a characteristic representative of the ethnographic style in his fiction as well as in his travel writing. At the same time the foreign settings can have a dark, abstruse feel and the stories verge on the mystical and the fantastic. Theodor Mügge frequently published in *Die Gartenlaube*, which Koidula regularly followed. He also travelled in Scandinavia and repeatedly wrote on Scandinavian topics. *Erich Randal* (1850) about the Finnish resistance to the Russian conquest in 1808 and *Afraja* (1854) on the plight of the Norwegian Sami are among his better known novels. It is very likely that a work by an author with a comparable style, literary taste and political views to those of Mügge served as the source for Koidula’s *Juudit*. However, Mügge generally wrote novels, not novellas. Further, despite his political radicalism he was famous for his preference for happy endings

in this world for his protagonists, even if these had to be patched into his historical plots by contrived means (cf. Steinbrink 1983: 120). Thus it could be said that though *Juudit* aligns with the modes and genres in German and international literature, it appears to do so by binding together quite heterogeneous literary and ideological material.

Traversal of Space between Existing Texts

It would be right to say that the originals of the Estonian stories, the German texts, are also in a sense ‘translations’ or re-framed versions of certain central motifs, topoi and narrative patterns in what could be called the New World nexus. As argued above, the New World emerged as a space of projection since the beginning of colonisation, a space in which both Europeans and European colonials explored issues relating to the nature of humanity, boundaries between self and other, radical change and possible forms of social organisation. This tradition stretches from Bartolomé de las Casas and Guamán Poma in the sixteenth century to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers and literary authors dealing with modernisation and nation building, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J. G. von Herder, G. W. F. Hegel, François-René Chateaubriand, José de Alencar, Frederick Cooper, and many others. There are different sides to the nexus: it serves as a laboratory for contemplation of changes to the status quo, both exploratory and fearful, yet it can also evoke a nostalgic world of traditional manly virtue, or simply provide an escapist space of entertaining exoticism. As we have seen, all these facets are re-presented in a wide range of German eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writing, including *Kolportageliteratur* which is far away from today’s established literary canon. In Koidula’s stories too, the New World is adopted as a pre-existing code for change, which is, however, re-framed in the Estonian context and comes to present a range of new messages.

The parts of *Juudit* where Koidula almost certainly edited the source text and probably supplemented new sections to it, are its very beginning and very end. Like in *The Last Inca* and many other works of historical fiction by Koidula’s contemporaries, the main story of the protagonists is embedded in a frame that draws upon historiographic sources and places it in a broader political history. Before *Juudit*’s main story starts *in medias res* with a conversation between the planters John and William that is dramatically interrupted by Eewar, the Maroon chieftain, the narrator sketches the history of Jamaica from Christopher Columbus to 1795, including references to the revolutionary events in Haiti and to the first, victorious Maroon uprising in Jamaica. As already noted, this was a typical strategy of the Estonian adaptations of the time: it was important to make a point of providing the native protagonists with a pre-colonial history (cf. Peiker 2006: 118–119), while at the same time educating the Estonian reader generally and tying the story to the reader’s own situation.

We know that Koidula had a long-standing interest in Columbus’ voyages and the subsequent history of colonialism in Latin America. This is testified

by *The Last Inca*, and also by her notes for a popular educational talk on the topic that Koidula prepared for her brother Julius Jannsen to present at the Vanemuine Society in 1868.²⁴ The beginning of *Juudit* bears Koidula's trademark style in political criticism: like the talk and *Inca* it is full of angry satire frequently conveyed through ironic rhetorical questions ("Why else would God have created the black beasts other than to slave for the whites?" Koidula 1870: 4). In all these three texts, the two novellas and the talk, she almost verbatim lampoons Spaniards' view of the natives or blacks as non-human tools or animals and the cruel hypocrisy of the Christian mission in America. Both of these were issues which reverberated in the National Awakening period Estonia reassessing the past of '700 years of slavery' under the Baltic Germans.²⁵

In both *Juudit* and *Inca*, the historicising frame is completed after the fictional plots end. This, again, has the effect of making the texts more temporal and contemporary than the isolated fictional plots would be. At the same time, however, in both cases there is a shift, a logical and cognitive disjuncture between the rationale of the fictional plot on the one hand and the historical and journalistic agenda on the other. As noted above, the finale of Horn's German version of *Inca* (*Huaskar* 1861), is a happy end. The native prince marries his beloved Spanish noblewoman and they become the esteemed governors of Peru under the Spanish king. The implication is that they and their people live happily ever after. Koidula's version includes Horn's ending, but it is followed by a second, spatially slightly separated ending (Koidula 1866: 138). The latter, without any explanatory interlude, quite directly contradicts the first ending, reporting that the native Americans of Peru were in the long run unable to withstand the inhuman treatment and heavy workload under colonialism. Further, whereas the Dominican missionary Las Casas had been an entirely positive character in the previous plot, a wise as well as a kind man, Koidula's second ending states that it was he who suggested that black African slaves should be brought in – out of compassion for the Peruvians in order to ease their lot.

In *Juudit*, the uncanny vanishing of the protagonists at the end of the novella, whereby they forsake their troops even though they are presumably still alive, (Koidula 1870: 175) is immediately preceded by their enthusiastic discussion of their exact political plans and their expressions of solidarity with their people (Koidula 1870: 171–72). As the topics and rhetoric of their exchange reflect the concerns of the Estonian national mobilisation of the time, it can be guessed that the conversation may have been added or strongly adapted by Koidula.

Thus an obvious explanation of the discrepancies in either novella would be that Koidula's re-writing created genre conflicts. The literary logics of the models did not fit with Koidula's political thinking. Her drive to historicise and contemporise her Peru did not align with the demands of the *Volksliteratur* romance (*Inca*), nor her supplementation of goal-oriented liberal and nationalist speeches with the ideology of the 'crisis-novella' (*Juudit*). However, it is also worth noticing that in both cases the contradictions and loss of narrative control relate to the doubling trope of the noble savage/natural slave in these plots. As will be discussed in further

detail below, the trope emerges through the ideological entanglement of the valorous rebels (the Peruvians and the Maroons) and the characters who have succumbed to slavery (the imported slaves in *Inca* and the Igbos in *Juudit*), but it can also be observed as an internal split/doubling in the psyche of the protagonists Juudit, Eewar and *Inca*'s Huaskar. Very pertinently for the present study, Hayden White (1985) argues that these seemingly antipodal figures of western imagination historically form two sides of the same coin and have always mutually required one another.

Slaves and Savages

The Greco-Roman concept of the noble savage re-emerged in sixteenth-century Spain in the context of the passionate debate about the nature and status of the American natives inhabiting the recently discovered continent. Initially they were officially seen as regular subjects or vassals of the Spanish monarchs. However, doubt was later expressed about whether the natives, whose morality and practices were far removed from familiar experience, actually had a nature that was able to receive the word of God and be Christianised. It was claimed that it was not certain that they were truly rational and human (Robe 1972: 46–47; Honour 1976: 57). This debate established a long tradition of applying Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery to the American situation (Hanke 1959: 13). The Dominican missionary in America, Bartolomé de las Casas, became the best-known opponent and critic of the doctrine. He attacked the core of the doctrine, arguing that all peoples were able to understand Christianity and thus must not be subjected to it violently. However, he also made the additional plea that the 'Indians' did not fit Aristotle's natural slave model even in its own terms, as they had intelligent and noble minds but weak bodies (as opposed to numb minds and tough bodies).

Las Casas' campaign had almost no political impact, but he inspired a widespread idealisation of the natives as ancient Greeks, an epitome of human virtue and harmony. This image became the repository for the later conception of the noble savage associated with the thinking of Rousseau (although Rousseau did not use the actual term) (Robe 1972: 47–48; Honour 1976: 58, 75). At the same time, the figure of the noble savage thus created remained ideologically intertwined with its double, the natural slave. It is hardly a coincidence that it is exactly Las Casas, the protector of the natives, who is also popularly attributed the idea of bringing African slaves to America in order to ease the lot of the delicate 'Indians' who were unable to bear the hard physical labour (as said, this attribution was also picked up by Koidula). There is no evidence Las Casas actually made the suggestion, but it is certainly a fact that no sixteenth-century documents protesting specifically against the enslavement of Africans have been found.

The idea of the noble savage was most enthusiastically revived in the second half of the eighteenth century after Rousseau, at a time when the actual political question of America's natives had already found its physical conclusion (White 1985: 191). Hayden White suggests an explanation for

this: the noble savage figure had very little to do with the actual New World natives. It was not needed for symbolically redeeming the people in America but rather for discrediting the aristocracy at home, in Europe. The contradictory concept of the noble savage was a way for the rising bourgeoisie to undermine the idea of nobility as a birthright. It served as a subtle tool of discreditation precisely because the noble savage image continued to evoke its other side, the ignoble savage, the half beast, who did not disappear from European thought even at the heyday of the noble savage cult, firmly holding its place in the apologetics of slavery (*ibid.*: 191–192).

White (1985: 193) emphasises that like the aristocrats, the bourgeoisie also divided humankind into qualitatively different parts. They resented the inherited prerogatives of the nobles, yet “in general honoured the idea of a social hierarchy”, though one based on talent and wealth, rather than on birth (*ibid.*: 192). The more homely surrogate for the (ig)noble savage, the inferior social classes, were seen by the enlighteners alternately, and often simultaneously, as noble (the people, the future of society, the repository of authentic values) or as ignoble (the rabble, the ‘dangerous classes’), depending on the context (*ibid.*: 193). In the chapter “On Savages” in his *Philosophy of History* Voltaire directly compares European rustics to non-European ‘savages’ and finds the former infinitely coarser and lowlier (Ginzburg 1996: 17). This is, of course, intended as social criticism of the orders and circumstances responsible for the bestialisation of the peasantry, yet it also abases its object of patronage.

A somewhat similar pattern emerges in the work of the early nineteenth-century Baltic intellectual Garlieb Helwig Merkel, briefly discussed above as a formative influence on Koidula, who was a fierce critic of the Baltic nobility and philosophically an anti-determinist advocate of socio-political change. Koidula read him with fascination and referred to him as “the only friend of the Estonian people among Germans” (qtd. Undla-Põldmäe 1981a: 73). According to Merkel, the role and standing of different peoples were not predestined forever, as the course of history was not straight and teleological, but forever turning and twisting. Much in the bourgeois spirit described by Hayden White, Merkel depicted the ancestors of the Baltic serfs as noble savages and those of their noble overlords as savage plunderers, thus discrediting the local aristocracy and taking the halo of inevitability from the contemporary situation (cf. Undusk 1997: 723–729). However, the transformations constructed by Merkel are logical and continuous rather than random, and thus he created impactful national stereotypes of Estonians and Latvians, indicating dotted lines between the former noble savages and their present incarnations, the numbed slaves. “In the vices of slaves, you can sense the virtues that would embellish them when free,” he wrote (Merkel 1909: 124). The once gracious and merciful Latvians had now become weak and spineless, he argued, and the once valorous and firm-spirited Estonians were now merely malevolent and dully obstinate. Both peoples, thus, still have the noble savage in them, but in a perverse disfigured form (Merkel 1909: 48, 123, 124).

Merkel’s account of these malformations was undoubtedly meant as a charge against the Baltic German nobility and as food for thought for

the wider German audience, Merkel's intended reading public. "Don't judge them [the peasants – P.P.], judge those who have made this people's character so deplorable", he advised (Merkel 1909: 124–125). However, as an unintended part of Merkel's legacy, about half a century later the new native literati and activists ardently drew upon his ideas and motifs to create their national narratives and discourses of resistance. Among other things they integrated Merkel's local version of the noble savage/natural slave topos. Thus the activists tend to see the national self as if in uncanny mirror images where the figures of the noble savage and the dull slave time alternate, and at times merge into one. For the activist, the noble savage ancestor carries the modern promise of changing the world and liberating the slave, yet as the slave and the savage are not entirely separate, this is accompanied by the anxiety that full liberation from natural slavery is never possible.

Koidula, like her Juudit and Huaskar, and a number of her contemporary Estonian national mobilisers, stood between two social worlds as she had a German education and belonged to the thin upper layers of her ethnic group. Even though her family was only recently urbanised petty bourgeoisie and historically not far from a peasant background, their life-style was already removed from that of most of her fellow ethnics and more resembled that of the local Germans of their class.²⁶ To address such a social pattern, it became one of the most dominant discourses of the national mobilisation to urge successful Estonians not to Germanise, but rather to use their achievement to advance the life of the whole 'people' (Est. *rahvas*). Individual enterprise and a sense of self-worth were greatly honoured, and simultaneously they were meant to go hand in hand with ethnic pride and solidarity with the less fortunate (Jansen 2007: 388–390). It is noteworthy that time and again the Estonian national activists discuss their related identity and loyalty problems in the imagery of the New World. Koidula's father, in a letter to his Finnish friend Yrjö-Koskinen (G. Z. Forsman), compares the history of the Estonians to that of "Negro slaves", without education or justice, with Germans still regarding Estonians as "dogs" rather than humans (qtd. Laar 2006: 376–377). Though bourgeois and primarily a German-speaker, it is the Estonians he refers to as "us". Elsewhere, Jakobson employs the recent American Civil War not only for the usual implied stabs at the German "slaveholders". He writes: "During the four-year war in America hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives. And why? So that their neighbours, the poor Negroes, should become free. These people were prepared to die for the honour of their fatherland and for the freedom of the black Negro slaves. What have you done for the freedom of your Estonian brothers?" (Jakobson 1870.) Here, though slaves are kin, Jakobson interpellates the Estonian national patriot as a liberator ready to die for honour and freedom, rather than one who fully identifies with the slaves.

Thus when the noble savage/natural slave figure emerges in Koidula's fiction, the perspective is necessarily completely altered from that described by White. Koidula too employs it to undermine the nobility, yet it is not a figure of an outsider, it is a figure the text primarily empathises with, for all its double-edgedness. In *Inca*, Huaskar is fragile and vulnerable to offence and humiliation throughout the story because of being 'just a Peruvian', thus

ultimately one of the slaves, not a social or moral equal. He is defended with a double-bladed ideology: all human beings are equal, there is no such thing as natural slaves, but his background and behaviour must also attest that he is noble, and nothing like a natural slave. “A poor Peruvian? [...] Huaskar is of the ancient kin of Peruvian Incas!” his Spanish beloved protests indignantly, before she adds: “But even if he were a beggar’s son – wouldn’t he still be a human being like myself?” The narrator of *Inca* identifies with both strands of this argument and passionately relates to the fate of both the Peruvian natives and the imported slaves in the story. Yet these two strands end up in contradiction and ambivalence at the end of the Estonian version of the story, and the confusion is all about the Self, rather than about an Other.

Juudit

Chronologically *Juudit* continues from the place where *Inca* left off, but poetically and ideologically it comes to repeat an analogous pattern with a similar discrepant double end. This time the setting is Jamaica, rather than Peru. The natives are gone and have been replaced by the valorous Maroons and by the humbled, passive Igbo slaves, two groups that Juudit and Eewar fleetingly hope to unite into one people. This remains just a dream, but the noble savage/natural slave tension is one of the main motors of the plot and generators of the rhetorical drive of the story:

[The planters of Jamaica] wanted to be good slave masters, they wanted praise for that – but they wanted to be the masters until the end of time. They wanted to look after their slaves and protect them, [...] but may God save the soul of any blacks who dared to free themselves, to wish for more than for a good master! [...] And the Igbo Negroes put up with it. They sang on the fields during the daytime, in the evenings they danced in the middle of the cocoa bushes to the bagpipe [...] [T]hey picked the fruit of the palm-tree, ate, drank – and cursed the Maroons to the bottom of the earth as their masters had taught them to do, the Maroons who had in a contract promised to send the runaway slaves back from the mountains! [...] The white masters had succeeded in separating kin from kin, this was and remained their firmest control over their serfs! (*Juudit*: 95–96.)

Besides being embodied in the Igbos and Maroons, the (noble) savage/(natural) slave doubling is also present in the split self-images of the main characters Eewar and Juudit themselves. Indeed, it could be said that the circuit of desire between the two is ignited on the tension of that split.

At the joint dinner with the Maroons after a round of peace negotiations where William and Eewar quarrelled and came close to killing one another, Juudit comes to defend Eewar’s pride behind his back. As Juudit’s suitor John comments on Eewar’s handsome looks and says he would like to have the African as a lackey, Juudit answers indignantly: “[...] This black proud man over there, no! Never will he learn to bend and bootlick, to be servile or bind his back! I have heard him talk like a man does, with firmness and rectitude, without fear, without boasting, saying what is true and just, like a king in

front of paupers! With all your fortune you don't own anything that would make him drop to one knee!" (52).

Eewar, who overhears Juudit's raised voice, at first spontaneously accepts the august portrait of a noble savage as being of him. "You are right! Right! You alone know my mind!" he would wish to shout to Juudit (53). Yet a moment later as he catches a sight of his black face in the dining room mirror, he turns his head away and covers his face with his hand (53). Because of his blackness Eewar initially sees himself as below consideration for Juudit, the "the angel-like white lady" (53). Despite his fierce pride, blackness for him still equals "being born to a life of slavery and wretchedness" (67). Even for a rebel like he, a personally free Maroon, it signifies being uneducated and crude, leading a poor, limited and joyless life. In an image that is repeated in many a later text of Estonian culture, Eewar longingly wanders in the darkness gazing towards the manor house with its splendid lights, full of beautiful music, laughter and people in glamorous dress (67).

However, looking at Eewar Juudit sees her own blackness and for the first time truly comes to perceive it in terms of noble savagery rather than shameful 'bad blood'. As she sees it, quite apart from her one-eighth blackness she is treated like a slave anyway because of her womanhood. In the marriage bargaining between her uncle and the rivals for her hand, William and John, she finds she is traded "like a piece of goods" (81), a possession without any independent agency. Ironically, it is William who first in the novel describes Juudit as like a noble savage (answering her uncle's complaint that it is because of her unfeminine proud manner that nobody has wanted to marry the rich heiress): "The hot blood from the warm lands flowing in her veins gives force to her feelings and gamut to her thoughts; the generous heart and compassionate mind add charity and evenness" (31). Yet carried away by his own wild passions, William later ignores this insight and expects to conquer Juudit through coercion and violence.

Eewar, to the contrary, sees Juudit not as a dependent lady, but as a fellow spirit with a steady and firm mind similar to himself (118), a noble ally in the struggle for freedom (146). Whereas in her childhood Juudit had been enraged with her playmates when they mocked her dark complexion (13), towards the end of the book she flees to the mountains to live with Eewar outside Christian marriage, wears traditional Maroon clothes and declares herself an African. Time and again, she symbolically turns the tables on her former kind, accusing them not only of racism, but also of servility, cowardice and a beast-like lack of decency and honour in their dealings with the Maroons. Testifying that she was not kidnapped, but joined the Maroons voluntarily, she says: "In your smugness you counted and recorded every drop of blood in my veins, until my blood boiled over! You sneered at the yellow rings in the whites of my eyes, as it spoke of my ancestors' black blood to you, didn't it? Only fear, only greed ever made you hide the mockery and condemnation at the bottom of your hearts! [...] Go, white servant folk, go crawl in front of your idols: I want to be blessed and happy regardless of all profit, wealth, and standing" (143).

She admires the beauty and dignity of Eewar's tribe and reminds him he comes from a lineage of chieftains (88). "How proud, beautiful and honest

in his heart is this [...] unpolished child of nature” she thinks of Eewar, “and how shameless and cowardly are these tame animals dancing in the hall.” (73). From his side, Eewar’s political vision and his newly found determination to fight for racial equality and power-sharing are strongly inspired by his wish to be “equal with Juudit”, not a source of disappointment or embarrassment for her (115, 120). As briefly noted above, close to the dramatic finale of the novella Eewar talks to Juudit about his political plans and dreams (170–172). It is typical of Koidula’s work and of the discourses of nineteenth-century Estonian national activism in general that they centrally focus on education as the engine of individual and collective empowerment. The blacks too are capable of becoming as educated and cultured as the peoples who presently look down on them, Eewar says. The key to the emancipation of the mind is for them to free themselves from the masters who treat them as horses and cows, to be caressed or beaten at the master’s will (170), and to connect with their own people (172). This is soon to happen, as not only are different groups of Maroons ‘awakening’ across the island, but the Igboes may also be opening their ears to the talk of freedom (172).

Immediately before the endplay of the story when William arrives with bloodhounds, Eewar proclaims: “[A] people is not worthy of freedom, where individuals do not know how to forsake their own good for the good of the people, where kin does not know to stand up for kin” (172, emphasis in the original). These plans are interrupted by William’s sudden assault. The reader will not learn the conclusion of the prolonged fight episode, nor will most of the characters of the novella. Instead after a narrative ellipsis the British find the bloodhounds and William killed in a scene of bloody carnage. The dead William is clutching Juudit’s torn-out hair and rags of her dress, and has a Maroon sword in his heart. The lovers will never be found, dead or alive.

This denouement could be considered satisfactory from the viewpoint of a dark novella of star-crossed lovers and fated passions, which thus receives a bittersweet other-worldly end appropriate to the genre. However, it rings deeply unsatisfying and illogical against the background of the political ideas advanced by Eewar just before William appeared, as well as with his and Juudit’s earlier statements that they will fight until the end, and if need be, die, with their kin (120). “I will not flee! Here is my home, my fatherland, here must I live and fight for the freedom, education and justice for my people!” Eewar had sworn (147). If the couple indeed somehow died after killing William and the dogs, why were their bodies not found? Yet if the couple escaped, as the reader is strongly encouraged to believe, why were they never seen again? Thus, how could they forsake their people for personal safety just after declaring patriotic unity and individual dedication to the good of the people to be the ultimate values?

In the following historical epilogue the reader is left with no doubt that the Maroons did not do well without their leader: they lost the war and many of them were killed and the rest deported “far north to Rhode Island” (175) where “after a few years there was none of them left” (176).²⁷ Unlike *Inca* however, the story does not end merely with the contradiction-laden historical framing of the fictional plot described above, but intertwines with it yet another layer – a mythic one (176). The two final paragraphs of *Juudit*

adopt an elevated epic style and to a large extent drift from the narrative past to the present tense. With the Maroons gone, back on Jamaica among the “other” blacks, the wretched slaves, “the old, very old folks still tell the story of their fathers” about a tribe of Africans the likes of whom do not exist on the island any more (176). This beginning of the epilogue is followed by a contemporising interpolation which relates that the blacks are again ruled “by the whip of the whites” until “some years ago t h i s man raised high the banner urging the call “freedom!” all across America [...]: President Abraham L i n c o l n !” (Koidula 1870: 176, emphases in the original). This echoes the very end of *Inca* where Koidula (but not her German model) also suddenly introduces the American Civil War and the topical figure of Abraham Lincoln into the historical South American context (Koidula 1866: 138–139).

The difference between the two historical fictions is, however, that the ending of *The Inca* stays in the journalistic and historical key, whereas in *Juudit* the uplifted heroic style of the interpolation blends with that of the *mythic* narrative from which it is surrounded on both sides. After the comment about Lincoln *Juudit* continues: “Even to the present hour there spreads an ancient legend which tells about the young Maroon chief and his beautiful wife both still leading their lives deep in the bosom of the blue mountains” (176). Furthermore, Igbo road travellers claim that sometimes they hear a sound or glimpse a shadowy figure at the high tops of the Blue Mountains (176).

The ideological and poetical conflict between the out-of-History crisis-novella and the progressivist decolonising national agitation comes over as somewhat milder and less noticeable in *Juudit* than in the genre discrepancy at the end of *Inca*, because *Juudit*’s politics merges into myth together with its representation of history. The liberator/noble savage becomes a folk legend in the minds of the slaves and in the aesthetics of the work. Although for Koidula the revolution is the event that History sides with, rather than one to be displaced via ghost stories, the attempted political disentanglement of the slave/savage double does end in a conundrum: incomprehensibly the noble savage gives up the liberation of the slaves, yet continues to haunt them.

However, the meaning of a story ought to be sought not only in the close reading/deconstruction of the text, but also in the scrutiny of its reception and the horizon of expectations of its readers. There are no published reviews of *Juudit* known, but Eduard Bornhöhe’s *The Avenger* (1880; see Laanes in the present volume), a canonical near-contemporary Estonian text that can be said to show similar features of the crisis-novella, is both today and in its time usually interpreted as an unambiguous tale of patriotic inspiration. Also, though Koidula’s Finnish friend Antti Almberg praises the psychologically complex characters of *Juudit*, he saves most of his enthusiasm for the patriotic political discussion between Eewar and Juudit close to the finale of the novel described above. “I wish that it [*Juudit* - P.P.] should bring your people the benefit that you intended with it,” he concludes his remarks, without making any comment about the ending of the novella.²⁸ (Almberg 1925: 80.)

Legends can sometimes turn into identity-transforming and politically mobilising mythic narratives for a collective (Schöpflin 1997: 22) in which

case they are likely not to be interpreted with love “for form for its own sake” (Humboldt qtd. Gailus 2002: 747).²⁹ The enigmatic ending of *Juudit* can among other things call to mind the archetypal plot in which a hero departs from History to Myth, but gives hope for his resurrection and his return to save his people. The Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg* ends with exactly such a motif.³⁰ Approached from this perspective, the contradictions between the political and the mythical in *Juudit* are easily ironed out and its pitch is reduced “to that of an allegory” (cf. Humboldt qtd. Gailus 2002: 747).

NOTES

- 1 For a good historical account see Wilson 2009.
- 2 Intertextuality and inner multiplicity is, of course, a quality of all texts, not only postcolonial ones. However, postcolonial texts caught in a forcefield of colonial contradictions foreground the illusiveness of cultural coherence in a specific way.
- 3 I use ‘postcolonial’ to refer to “all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2002: 2), as is customary in Postcolonial Studies.
- 4 Koidula’s legal name was Lydia Emilie Florentine Jannsen, becoming Michelson after marriage.
- 5 On *Die Gartenlaube* see Belgum 1998. Koidula’s father, though politically much more careful and conservative than Koidula, was also influenced by *Die Gartenlaube* as a journalistic model. It can be supposed that it also served as a model for ‘popularising the nation’ (*ibid.*) and for public interaction even if in very different circumstances from those of *Die Gartenlaube* itself.
- 6 Criticism of this type has a long pedigree. Ulrike Plath (2011: 113) points out that German travel writing on the Baltic provinces, such as the influential accounts by Adam Olearius in the mid-seventeenth century habitually describe the Baltic situation in terms of conquest, colonisation, enslavement, ethnic feuds and resistance. Thus they follow the models concerning overseas colonisation of native peoples, rather than those concerning the discontent and unrest of the German peasantry. Of course, the seventeenth-century writings were meant for educated Europeans, not for the Baltic peasant peoples, but a while later and mostly indirectly they also reached the latter and contributed to the re-description of the period from the thirteenth-century crusader conquest and Christianisation as ‘700 years of slavery’ for the previously free and venerable Estonians. This was a symmetrical reversal of the Baltic German narrative of themselves as the *Kulturträger* whose ancestors had saved the indigenes from paganism and savagery. I will return to this topic and to Merkel’s influence on Koidula’s historical novellas later.
- 7 Some of her key contacts were Carl Robert Jakobson, F.R. Kreutzwald (1803–1882) and Jakob Hurt (1839–1907) in Estonia, the Finnish nationalists Yrjö Koskinen (G. Z. Forsman, 1830–1903) and Antti Almberg (1846–1909), and the Hungarian Finno-Ugrist and 1848-revolutionary Pál Hunfalvy (1810–1891).
- 8 See Steinbrink (1983: 2–3) for *Kolportageliteratur* and Müller-Salget (1984) for *Volksliteratur*.
- 9 For example, Koidula’s *The Miller on the Stream and His Daughter-in-Law* (“Oja mölder ja ta minnia”, 1863) was discovered to be an adaptation of Ludwig Würdig’s *Auf der Grabenmühle oder Geld und Herz* (1856) in 1932. The considerably altered and expanded story had been internationally praised and translated back into German in Koidula’s life-time.
- 10 The first scandal over plagiarism came in 1893 when the prize-winning *Olli of*

- Luigemäe* (“Luigemäe Olli”) by Jakob Kõrv turned out to be largely a collage of Chateaubriand’s *Atala* and *Rene* re-set in pre-Christian Estonia. Kruus 1966: 521–523. It can be speculated that the explosion of a major scandal in connection with a practice so recently widespread was also related to Kõrv having made a direct claim that the work was an original and to his overall unpopularity in Estonian literary circles. Cf. Kruus 1966: 516–523.
- 11 The first is probably *Inkle and Jariko* (“Inkle ja Jariko”, 1782) by the Baltic German pastor Friedrich Wilhelm Willmann, a very pious version of the international Inkle and Jariko subject of an Englishman selling his black/native American lover to slavery. Cf. Mits 2012: 74–75.
 - 12 However, this work was extensively cut by the censor and remained unfinished.
 - 13 I took major trouble in searching for the source, but was unsuccessful.
 - 14 *Inca* is set in sixteenth-century Peru and tells the story of a fictional indigenous uprising against the conquistador oppression. Huaskar, a Spanish-educated native, protégé of Bartolomé de las Casas and formerly a Peruvian prince, falls in love with Elwira, the daughter of the newly arrived governor of Peru. Elwira’s father is enthroned by the thug officials previously in power. However, Huaskar’s rebel troops are victorious, and Emperor Charles V, having heard about the excesses of his administrators from Las Casas, endorses the indigenous rule in Peru. Huaskar becomes the governor of his country and marries Elwira.
 - 15 Kirsell (1825–1884) was the author of *Slave Life* (“Orjaelu”, 1872) and *Siimon: The Life-Story of a Negro Slave in Brazil* (“Siimon. Ühe neegriorja elulugu Brasiilias”, 1876). Besides Koidula, Kirsell was the best-known among the many writers on these themes.
 - 16 This opinion was confirmed in personal correspondence by Professor Müller-Salget who is probably the scholar with the most thorough knowledge of the nineteenth-century *Volksliteratur*. I am very grateful for his help.
 - 17 Gailus considers a large number of novellas, including Ludwig Tieck’s *Blond Eckbert* (1797), Heinrich von Kleist’s *The Betrothal in St. Domingo* (1811), E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *Mademoiselle de Scuderi* (1819), Adalbert Stifter’s *The Alpine Forest* (1844) and Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* (1912).
 - 18 Wilhelm von Humboldt writes in a letter to Goethe that the *Märchen* can only be understood by readers who “love form for its own sake. All others will necessarily reduce the pitch of the *Märchen* to that of an allegory.” Qtd. Gailus 2002: 747.
 - 19 See Botting 1996.
 - 20 The critics can see the Gothic as “a literary form to which postcolonial writers are drawn, as well as constituting a literary form which can be read through postcolonial ideas” Smith and Hughes 2003: 2.
 - 21 Heinrich von Kleist’s *The Betrothal in St. Domingo* discussed by Gailus or the America-novels by the popular German author Charles Sealsfield (1793–1864) offer a contrast.
 - 22 The name subsequently given to the 1830–1848 period leading up to the 1848 March Revolution in the German Confederation.
 - 23 I owe the suggestion to Herbert Uerlings, Professor at the University of Trier, to whom I am very grateful.
 - 24 See Undla-Põldmäe 1981b. Vanemuine was a cultural and educational society founded by Koidula’s father in 1865. Among other things it co-ordinated the organisation of the first all-Estonian song festival 1869 and became the basis for the professional Estonian-language Vanemuine theatre, which opened in 1906. Koidula could not give the talk herself because, once again, it was not considered appropriate for a lady. According to Undla-Põldmäe, the prepared talk drew upon J.H. Campe’s *Die Entdeckung von America*, the family copy of which bears Koidula’s comments and notes, and probably also on the German translation of Washington

- Irving's *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, and on other works of the same kind.
- 25 See footnote 6.
- 26 As mentioned above, the social mobility of Estonians in the mid-nineteenth century was still low. Miroslav Hroch's and Ea Jansen's studies of the social background of the members of the national activist group (the Estonian elite) at the time shows that they were predominantly rural elementary school teachers and better educated and wealthier peasants. Hroch 1985: 78–79; Jansen qtd. in Hroch 1985: 79, 199.
- 27 Rhode Island was one of the largest northern slave-owning states and a centre of the transatlantic slave trade. However, according to historical records the surviving Maroons and some other blacks who had been involved in the Second Maroon War (about 600) were deported not to Rhode Island, but even further to the north, to Nova Scotia, Canada. They refused to settle as an agricultural community and petitioned the British government who a few years later allowed them to resettle in Sierra Leone, West Africa (a British colony at the time). The Maroons were not satisfied there either and about 90% of the surviving community, again around 600 had trickled back to Jamaica by 1841. Campbell 1990.
- 28 Letter from 11th August 1871.
- 29 See footnote 17.
- 30 The last stanza of Kalevipoeg reads: "But one day an age will dawn/when all spills, at both their ends,/will burst forth into flame;/and this stark fire will sever/ the vice of stone from Kalevipoeg's hand./Then the son of Kalev will come home/to bring his children happiness/and build Estonia's life anew." Kreutzwald 1982: 266.

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Cultural Memory, Travelling Forms and the Boundaries of the Nation

The Free Man in Eduard Bornhöhe's *The Avenger*

A remarkable study from the 1930s into the impact of nineteenth-century Estonian literary fiction upon its contemporary and subsequent generations of readers reports a story about a fallen soldier of the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920) who was found carrying the first Estonian-language historical novella *The Avenger* (“Tasuja”), published in 1880 (Palm 1935: 171). The novella, the founding text of Estonian historical fiction was written by 18-year-old Eduard Bornhöhe (1862–1923) and depicts the St George’s Night uprising of peasant serfs against their Baltic German landlords in 1343. The story of the man who fights in a twentieth-century war against the Baltic German *Landeswehr* and communist Russia with a novella about the fourteenth-century peasant uprising in his pocket illustrates persuasively Ann Rigney’s (2004: 383) argument that historical novels are ‘portable monuments’ that create images of the past and carry them through space and time. The monument to the uprising against the national enemy in the distant past obviously helped the soldier to make sense of his contemporary struggles in the War of Independence.

The story of the fallen soldier is just one example of the afterlife of *The Avenger* in the cultural memory. After introducing the St George’s Night uprising, an event virtually unknown in the Estonian historical narrative at the time, *The Avenger* captured the interest of many storytellers, artists and playwrights and the Estonian historiography that was being formed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Consequently, it has been argued that the novella founded the ‘St George’s Night text’ in the cultural memory with the large body of texts in different media all circling around the historical event (Tamm 2008a: 113).¹ The growing textual body quickly turned St George’s Night into one of the central pillars of the narrative template of Estonian history that has been promoted institutionally since the 1930s as ‘the Great Battle for Freedom’ (Tamm 2008b: 505). As such it offered the most outstanding moment of resistance to rule by foreigners in the distant past. Thus the novella has been one of the most important texts of nineteenth-century Estonian literature throughout the past century. It has maintained its position in the literary canon as a work of youth literature and is read by all Estonian children to this day as part of their school curriculum.

Studies of the afterlife of *The Avenger* highlight the image of the heroic militant struggle for freedom in the fourteenth century as the answer to the question about the durability of the novella as a portable monument (Tamm

2008a: 112–113). This article takes a different route and instead of the afterlife inquires into the sources and pre-mediated material used in the writing of the novella. I will ask how Bornhöhe reworks existing resources of cultural memory, how he selects characters and events and how he interprets them by gathering them around certain tropes of memory. What emerges in the course of the analysis of the tropes of memory is the figure of the free man rather than a heroic military struggle. The figure of the free man negotiates the ideas of freedom and personal honour and reflects the continuing importance of the legacies of colonialism and recently abolished serfdom in the Baltic provinces of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The article also argues that the figure of the free man is partly inspired by a formal feature of the genre of the historical novel, Walter Scott's mediating protagonist, a fact that has been eclipsed so far by the linear models of literary influence and monolingual paradigm prevailing in the writing of Estonian literary history.

Nation Building and Historical Memory

Bornhöhe's *The Avenger* was written in the context of the Estonian national movement in the second half of the nineteenth century when the markers of belonging for different groups in society moved from social class to ethnicity (Kasekamp 2010: 77) and the peasants and their descendants were redefined by national activists as an Estonian nation that was different from the Baltic German landlords. One of the major challenges for the national elite, many of them Germanised descendants of peasants coached by Baltic German Estophiles and the ideas of the Baltic Enlightenment, was to construct the historical origins of the new nation. Before the national movement the historical consciousness of the peasant class was shaped by calendar supplements and various popular publications on local history that emphasised the Reformation narrative about the arrival of the protestant faith in Estonia (Viires 2001: 36). Although Estonians were not present in the narrative, it prepared the nationalist rewriting of history in the Baltics, insofar as the Baltic crusades in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries attributed to Catholics were already represented in a negative light by a protestant narrative that was strongly influenced by Baltic Enlightenment ideas. In the new national narrative the crusades came to be seen as the decisive turning point in the history of the Estonian people, in the story of the freedom, its loss to the Teutonic orders during the crusades and the promise that it will be regained in the future (*ibid.*: 36).

The decisive momentum in the formation of the Estonian narrative and its dissemination among potential Estonians was Carl Robert Jakobson's (1841–1882) *First Fatherland Speech* ("Esimene isamaakõne", 1868). The speech "initiated a fundamental re-periodisation of Estonian history by changing the positives of Baltic German historiography into negatives" (Tamm 2008b: 503). As the subtitle of the speech *The Ages of Light, Darkness and Dawn of the Estonian people* indicates, the period before the crusades was re-evaluated as the golden age of freedom, 600 years under foreign rulers as a darkness

of slavery, and the contemporary national movement as an age of dawn. Jakobson's conception of history was strongly influenced by Baltic German Enlightenment tradition, in particular the views of Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769–1850), whose *The Prehistory of Livonia* ("Die Vorzeit Lieflands", 1798) had already turned the pagan barbarians and noble crusaders of the earlier historical narrative into noble savages and brutal oppressors (Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011: 423).²

The construction of the historical framework of memory for the emerging nation faced the fundamental problem of a scarcity of historical sources. The peasantry having been chosen as the core constituent of the new nation, it turned out that there were hardly any sources about the past of that social group. The narrative web of national history still had to be woven using the written sources of the colonisers, mainly medieval and early modern chronicles. The chance to find traces of the past of the peasantry in the realm of written history was then accompanied by the unfavourable representations of the Estonian people and their lost fights that allowed only for a national tragedy narrative (*ibid.*: 424). The chronicle of Henry of Livonia, which was written from the perspective of the Archbishopric of Riga for example, contained only a few events that allowed the Estonian peasants to be celebrated as subjects of history and find heroes they could call their own. In a dialogue with the chronicle, the national activist Jakobson still tried to develop the archetypes of victories and losses, images for heroes, enemies and traitors, by turning the evaluative and moral judgements into their opposites. Indeed, the characters, events and motifs highlighted by Jakobson continue to be repeated in various texts of the nation building period and in various media of cultural memory. From the inflammatory speeches of the national elites and texts on popular history they travel into historical fiction.

While the epic *Kalevipoeg*, the landmark speeches and the popular historical texts had set the general framework for the history of the Estonian people, the historical fiction that emerged later in the 1880s faced the challenge of fleshing out the skeleton with people, minor events and descriptions of mores and manners. It was not an easy task as the Estonian literature lacked any tradition of representing the peasantry, the social class who had been turned into the core of the nation during the national movement, in their past. The genre of historical fiction was present in Estonian literature only in translations or adaptations where the international plots were filled in with local topoi and protagonists, but mainly from a Baltic German social environment (Vinkel 1966: 267, 284; see also Peiker in the present volume). These texts lacked Estonian characters, or if any were present, their ethnicity and class was not thematised. After Bornhöhe's *The Avenger* came out in 1880 it was followed by a true boom in historical fiction with 30 novels and novellas set in the past published in a bit over a decade. The flourishing of the fictional accounts of history was forcefully interrupted by tsarist censorship in 1893 (EKA³: 501), a fact that in itself indicates their importance in the construction of historical memory for the emerging nation. As a report to the ministry of internal affairs of tsarist Russia by the governor of Tallinn shows, the prose, though mainly opposed to the Baltic German rule in the

Estonian past, was judged to be more broadly dangerous in disseminating a rebellious spirit among the Estonian population (Palm 1935: 152).

Even if brief, the explosion of historical fiction resulted in many highlighted events, narrative patterns and motifs that would shape the Estonian cultural memory for the century to come. In inquiring into the sources and models Bornhöhe uses in weaving *The Avenger*, a rough idea emerges of the traditions available to the nineteenth-century writers determined to tell a personalised story about the past of the Estonian people at a point when there was a lack of sufficient historical knowledge about the ways of the world of the peasantry.

Bornhöhe's *The Avenger*

The Avenger tells the story of a socially exceptional free peasant called Jaanus in the medieval Baltic world of peasant serfs and Baltic German landlords. The novella recounts how Jaanus becomes the Avenger, the unofficial leader of the failed uprising of the peasant serfs against the Baltic German landlords in fourteenth-century Estonia. As is typical of the genre of historical fiction, the story is focused not on the historical event but on the personal fate of the protagonists of the story, Jaanus and his friends Emiilia and Oodo, the children of a Baltic German landlord. Jaanus is the son of a free farmer, educated by monks and associating with his aristocratic childhood friends as their equal. He has a romantic relationship with the landlord's daughter Emiilia. Then Jaanus' father is beaten and his home burnt down by Jaanus' former friend Oodo, now the landlord after his father's death, in retaliation for Jaanus' attempt to protect another of his friends, a young peasant serf called Maanus, against the violence with which his overseer is threatening him. Jaanus flees from the deadly conflict but reappears years later as the Avenger on St George's Night. He takes part in the plundering of his friends' castle and dies subsequently in the battle at Tallinn that marked the suppression of the uprising.

Given that it has been one of the major historical events in Estonian cultural memory throughout the twentieth century, it would come as a surprise to most Estonians to learn that before *The Avenger* the St George's Night Uprising was mentioned only once in the Estonian language in Jaan Bergmann's (1856–1916) short popular historical text *The Estonian in the time of the Teutonic Orders* ("Eestlane ordu ajal") published in a calendar supplement a year earlier (Bergmann 1879: 14).⁴ The text mentions 'the riot of the Estonians' only in a footnote but it almost certainly led Bornhöhe, educated in German, to turn to Christian Kelch's (1657–1710) chronicle *Livonian History* ("Liefländische Historia", 1695), repeatedly mentioned by Bergmann, where the event was represented in more detail.⁵

In addition to Bergmann and Kelch, Bornhöhe was inspired by the popular historian Jaan Jung (1835–1900). His stories about the past are structured around different geographical locations and concentrate on individuals and so they help the reader imagine the past reality of the peasantry in more specific terms. Bornhöhe reworks Jung's fragment *The*

Last Days and the Death of Old Andres (“Vana Andrese viimased elupäevad ja surm”), a story of an exceptional free indigenous man from Jung’s book *From the Old Days of the Fatherland* (“Mõnda isamaa vanust aegust”, 1874). He borrows from Jung the family story of his protagonist and the deathbed scene where Andres makes a speech to his heirs. However, in *The Avenger* the content of the speech is altered and advances the idea of freedom as it was forming at the time the novella was written.

At the time of the national movement the idea of freedom still meant mainly the freedom from serfdom. It was shaped by major social changes at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the serf emancipation laws abolished serfdom in the 1820s but the peasants remained tied to their former landlords by *corvée* rent because they were not allowed to purchase the land they farmed and were thus unable to move freely (Kasekamp 2010: 70; Lust 2013: 2). As the right to property formed the essential part of the idea of personal freedom at the time (Blickle 2003: 164), the question of freedom remained a burning one. Only from 1860–1880 onwards were the peasants able to purchase the land they had farmed for centuries so that full personal freedom was established. This incomplete emancipation until well into the second half of the nineteenth century brought the question of freedom into the ideological centre of the national movement, not only in the sense of the ability to own land and of the personal freedom to choose an occupation and place of residence, but also in the sense of personhood and personal honour. In conveying the fragility of the idea of personal freedom in the nineteenth century, Jaanus’ grandfather, a former serf who had exceptionally earned his freedom for his services to his master in fourteenth century says to his son and grandson in *The Avenger*: “Watch out, shelter the easily gained freedom – it is sweeter than honey, but also melts faster than it: before you notice it can evaporate and you suck the sweat of slavery” (Bornhöhe 1880: 13).

Like the idea of freedom, the general social design of Bornhöhe’s fourteenth-century fictional world is anachronistic and is rooted in the nineteenth century. Since there was no tradition of representing the everyday life of the local peasantry in a story about the past, and the chronicles and the few texts by popular historians obviously did not provide enough material for a depiction of the fourteenth-century characters and their reality, Bornhöhe transposes the social order of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into the fourteenth century. Thus there are Baltic German landlords represented by Emilia, Oodo and their father, peasant serfs represented by Maanus and a typically nineteenth-century intermediary social class of overseers and storekeepers represented by the overseer. Bornhöhe seems to have been unaware that before the stabilisation of serfdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the social phenomenon of the free peasant existed much more widely than it did later, and he represents Jaanus’ free peasant family as an absolute exception to the social constellation of *The Avenger*.

As historical fiction is almost always geared towards contemporary social and cultural issues even as it represents the past, the general fascination for the figure of the free farmer in *The Avenger* and in other nineteenth-century fantasies about the past can be explained, as already suggested, by the chance to purchase and own land, which emerged at around the time the

novella was written, between 1860 and 1880 (Kasekamp 2010: 71; Lust 2010: 240). However, there is a crucial difference in how Bornhöhe represents his figure of the free peasant, who is not entirely a nineteenth-century phenomenon either. His free peasant has more in common with the Baltic German landlords than with the serfs: he not only owns land, but is also educated and has a high sense of honour. Why then does Bornhöhe make Jaanus the protagonist of his story and choose to represent him as he does? I would argue that the inspiration for the Jaanus figure is literary rather than historical or social.

The character who stands between two conflicting social groups is a travelling protagonist type from Walter Scott's historical fiction. For Georg Lukács (1983: 36) the function of such a hero is to enable an encounter between these social forces, whose clash then represents the historical crisis in the novel. In order to play this role the protagonists of Scott's novels are never great historical characters, but "mediocre, average English gentlemen" (*ibid.*: 33). *The Avenger's* Jaanus is neither typical nor mediocre, but socially and personally exceptional. However, his role in *The Avenger* is still to mediate between two opposing social groups.

Scott's protagonists usually belong to one of the social forces in the conflict but develop sympathies for the opposite side, as in *Waverley* (1814) where the English officer of the Hanoverian dynasty is befriended by Scottish Jacobites and changes sides during the Jacobite uprising in 1745. In Bornhöhe's reworking, the mediating character Jaanus enables the encounter precisely because he is exceptional – he is a free man in the sense that he does not belong to either side of the social confrontation, but he is still forced to choose between them.⁶

Such a free man was clearly an obsession of Bornhöhe's. The protagonists of Bornhöhe's two other historical novellas *Villu's Fights* ("Villu võitlused", 1890) and *Prince Gabriel or the Last Days of Pirita Convent* ("Vürst Gabriel ehk Pirita kloostri viimised päevad", 1893) are also free men, but they are a smith and a half-bred prince respectively. This means that Jaanus being a free peasant is not important in itself. As such he simply represents Bornhöhe's typical character who is free in the sense of standing socially on the border and disturbing the existing social order. In addition, in Bornhöhe's free man one also senses Walter Scott's sympathy for the yeomen, burghers and outlaws of society like Robin Hood or Rob Roy.⁷ In the following I will show how Bornhöhe uses the scarce resources of Estonian cultural memory and the borrowed literary device from the genre of historical fiction to create a powerful trope that starts to draw boundaries between communities in the nineteenth-century Baltics.

Bornhöhe's 'Free Man'

In transferring Scott's protagonist into the Estonian context, Bornhöhe turns him into a free peasant, who is different to most peasants because he is free from serfdom, owns land, is educated and has a high sense of honour. He has something in common both with the nobility and with the serfs, as he shares

education, living conditions and the sense of honour of a free man with the former, and his background and descent with the latter. As such his position generates the plot as his exceptional intermediary position forces him to choose between the two social forces, and this then develops into the central problem of the novella. The drama of inbetweenness, non-belonging and the search for alliances makes up the hub of the text. In the following I would like to look more closely into how Bornhöhe presents Jaanus' trajectory into the avenger.

The first part of the novella deals with Jaanus' relationship with the children of the landlord. The opposite side of the social conflict, the serfs, are completely absent from the first half of the text, emerging only halfway through the plot in the figure of Jaanus' young serf friend Maanus. However, in dealing with Jaanus' friendship with the nobility, Bornhöhe already hints at his difference and non-belonging. When Jaanus' father asks him after the first meeting with the children whether Emiilia and Oodo have been friendly, Jaanus answers: "Yes, they were. But they are still not like us" (Bornhöhe 1880: 28). After a first conflict with Oodo, Jaanus considers that the friends are dear to him but "I wasn't worthy of them. It won't do, being friends with such people" (*ibid.*: 44). These first signs of non-belonging remain vague for the reader, because Bornhöhe does not highlight Jaanus' descent as the reason for his difference. In the prelude to the story, in the scene of Jaanus' grandfather on his deathbed, the grandfather, a former serf, reminds his son and his grandson of "the slavery, the misery of *our* people" (*ibid.*: 13), but as the two are born free they lack the bond established by slavery. The subsequent development of the story shows Jaanus not having much in common with 'his' people.

In the first half of the novella the deathbed scene is the only occasion when Jaanus' descent is thematised. Bornhöhe stages the drama of non-belonging without using the category of ethnicity. Bornhöhe mentions 'Estonians' only in the first chapter, which gives the historical background of the times in which the story is going to take place, but the ethnic markers remain eclipsed until the events of St George's Night at the end of the novella. Instead, Jaanus' behaviour is motivated by his sense of honour as a free man independent of his descent.

However, the drama of non-belonging takes its decisive turn in the eighth chapter, when Jaanus reads a book about the Messenian Wars in Ancient Greece and discusses it with his childhood friend Emiilia. The girl notices that Jaanus is moved by the Messenian pursuit of freedom and draws parallels with his homeland. Following the influence of the Baltic German Enlightenment on the Estonian national movement in identifying Ancient Greece as the ideal of a just social order, the novella makes Jaanus dream of society as it was during the Golden Age in Athens where "the land was blossoming under their feet like paradise, the blue sky always shone over their heads, the mild breeze kissed the clouds of sorrow from their faces, which were not born out of serfdom. I want us to have lived in these times in Athens or a thousand years in the future, where our grey sky too is painted blue by education and freedom, and the junipers turned into rose bushes" (*ibid.*: 68).

Jaanus loves his country but feels alone, without any social bond because as he says “if I seek honour and praise, I would have to go in the midst of the oppressors of my people, make their thoughts mine and seek my honour and praise in the advancement of their pursuits” (Bornhöhe 1880: 69). Here Jaanus poses for the first time the question of ‘his people’ and its oppressors and ponders on his personal belonging and the sense of responsibility emanating from it. When the Baltic German noble lady Emiilia asks Jaanus if he would be willing to become her enemy in the name of his people, Jaanus is presented with a difficult choice.

The historical parallel with the Messenian Wars helps Jaanus to recognise or, even more radically, choose his belonging to ‘his’ people. Only after that episode do serfs enter the stage of *The Avenger*. In the next chapter Jaanus visits his beaten peasant serf friend Maanus and subsequently has a nightmare where Emiilia and Oodo’s dead father calls him a peasant and a serf. It was only after this that “Jaanus saw a big field shimmering in yellow where hundreds of serfs, men and women, were cutting the crop. [...] Looking into the faces of the serfs Jaanus had the feeling of recognising his own brother, his own sister in every one of them” (Bornhöhe 1880: 87–88). In this mirror scene Jaanus recognises that he belongs to the serfs, but the belonging here is not something that a person is born into, but something that is made, learned and chosen. Jaanus comes to recognise his belonging and the responsibility that emanates from it by studying history and drawing historical parallels. From that point onwards the learned and chosen sense of belonging starts to compete with the sense of honour in the subsequent motivation of the plot in *The Avenger*.

While Bornhöhe uses the first half of the story to show Jaanus as almost an equal to his noble childhood friends, the substantial gap that he has to fill in during the further emplotment of the story lies in the question of why Jaanus decides to protect Maanus, who is persecuted by his landlord and set to be flogged. The answer to the question is partly prepared in the scene about the Messenian Wars where Jaanus ‘recognises’ his belonging to the serfs and develops a sense of responsibility, but at the same time his behaviour remains linked to his sense of honour, which comes from his status as a free man. The double motivation of individual honour and national belonging is something that needs to be explored further.

In the central events of the story, Jaanus’ conflict with the overseer and Oodo over Maanus that results in the imprisonment of Jaanus’ father and the burning down of his home, the crucial issue is still the honour of a free man. Jaanus’ acts are motivated by his personal agendas more than by his responsibility for his people. He decides to protect Maanus but not out of the responsibility he felt for his people as was reflected in the scenes discussed above, but because Maanus’ persecutors insult his honour. Even in the events of St George’s Night, when Bornhöhe finally brings in the category of ethnicity in order to signal the national pathos of the uprising, Jaanus is still motivated by his personal agendas.

Bornhöhe makes use of the Scott protagonist in order to represent Jaanus’ trajectory from a peasant close to the nobility into the Avenger, and he shows how learned and chosen national belonging comes to substitute the sense

of honour in the motivation of the protagonist's choices. This is further stressed by the erasure of the category of ethnicity in the first half of the story and its powerful entrance during the St George's Night uprising. With Jaanus, Bornhöhe shows how national feeling is created. In order to explain why individual honour is not replaced completely by national belonging, I will make an interlude and discuss *The Avenger's* place in Estonian literary history. This will also explain why the figure of the free man has always remained an undercurrent to the figure of the militant hero in the reception of the novella.

Travelling Forms in Literary History

The arrival of the popular European nineteenth-century genre of the historical novel in the Baltic provinces of tsarist Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century coincides with the beginning of Estonian-language literature as an offshoot of the local Baltic German literature.⁸ The history of the early Estonian literature is traditionally written as a backward story, as the belated arrival of the literary styles of Romanticism, Realism and Modernism successively from Europe in the local culture. Compared to a self-constructed model of European literature, the Estonian literature is found permanently lacking because no perfect counterparts to the European styles and movements are found in the local context. In this story of belated development the historical fiction marks the brief flash of National Romanticism (EKA: 643) between the preceding prevalence of the narrative *Volksaufklärung* and the subsequent emergence of Realism. Considered aesthetically inferior to Realism, it owes its place in the canon to its relationship to the national movement. However, if looked at more carefully, the body of texts classified as National Romanticism reveals itself to be far from homogeneous, with its models stemming from radically different strata of literary history.

Taking a cue from Toril Moi's recent study on Henrik Ibsen, the heterogeneity of nineteenth-century Estonian literature can best be described as idealist.⁹ In idealist literature the fictional world is determined by one abstract idea that is exemplified in many different episodes, with the characters and milieus also idealised and carrying the one idea (Pavel 2006: 11). The Estonian nineteenth-century historical fiction belongs to that tradition but represents different facets of it.

The novels and novellas by Andres Saal (1861–1931) and Jaak Järv (1852–1920), the two other most important historical novelists of the period, have less in common with the historical novel in the style of Walter Scott than with the local tradition of sentimental literature. The tradition developed following the Estonian adaptations of the stories of Genevieve by such German popular authors as G. O. Marbach and Christoph von Schmid. Due to their roots in sentimental literature, Saal's stories have many female protagonists and the religious reflections of ancient pagan Estonians have a definite pietist taint. As Saal's novellas were serialised they have all the characteristics of serial novels such as extended duration, multiple details and plot twists,

a cliff-hanger at the end of every series to augment the suspense and the reader's anticipation, and various repetitions whereby the past events of the story are repeated through the mouths of the characters (Hughes, Lund 1991: 5, 8; Sassoon 2006: 299). As a result Saal's novellas have very complicated, repetitive plots with such classical plot motifs as the pretender in the sanctuary, the loss of parents or children, the motif of the foundling, cross-dressing and so forth.

The role of this kind of historical fiction for the construction of the historical narrative of the new nation cannot be underestimated. Ann Rigney (2004: 380) links the power of verbal art in the formation of cultural memory to its 'memorability', its power to fix itself in the reader's mind, which seems to be linked to literary skills, but does not necessarily correlate to the aesthetic value of the text. In fact, in considering the role of historical *belles-lettres* in constructing national history in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, Miroslav Hroch (1999: 101), the theorist of nationalism, points out that there is no inevitable link between the aesthetic value and the social and national relevance of a work. As popular literature has a wide audience, it is most effective in transmitting the images of the past. Hroch's insistence on the importance of popular literature for transmitting the images of the past doubtlessly applies to Saal's fiction as his contemporaries report his enormous success, further expressed in the fact that many children of subsequent generations were named after Saal's characters (EKA: 491). However, the sentimental style of his fiction also determined the kind of images it could create and how durable they were in the subsequent cultivation of cultural memory. Even though Saal possessed more extensive knowledge about Estonian history than other historical novelists, being familiar with the texts of the Baltic German Enlightenment and some of the available chronicles (*ibid.*: 483) and acting as a popular historian, the historical events represented in his fiction are strongly overshadowed by the sentimental plotlines, meaning his fiction gives only a limited sense of historicity. However, what his idealist fiction did was to raise national consciousness by creating the powerful image of a noble Estonian people with an ancient history. As such his influence was enormous, but diminished rapidly when literary tastes changed and the exaggerations of the ideographic method went out of date.

The Avenger also belongs to the idealist tradition, because its protagonist is a noble man with high morals who is motivated by his wish to fight for his principles. Honour is one of the central issues of the novella. Appropriately for an idealist text the other characters also carry only one idea or character trait and their vividness is tied to their simplicity rather than to their sophistication. However, the Scottish protagonist brings new elements to the idealist background, because when Jaanus is made to go through his drama of non-belonging and taking sides, he is psychologised in a more modern way. The soul-searching that his choices provoke inevitably requires new protomodernist devices of narration and focalisation that help to represent his problems.

If the sense of honour persists as a motivator of Jaanus' actions alongside the national feeling it is because the novella, like most of the texts of nineteenth-century Estonian literature, consists of elements from different

literary traditions. It is written in the idealist tradition, but also borrows more modern elements. If we lump *The Avenger* together with the sentimentalist texts under the heading of National Romanticism, we miss the literary innovations of the novella that enable it to function differently as a medium of cultural memory.

Scott and other major authors of historical fiction have never been seriously considered as a model for Estonian nineteenth-century historical fiction because they belong to a higher register of literature than that which could be found in such a peripheral literary field with such belated development. The other reason given has been that Scott's work had not been translated into Estonian at the time.¹⁰ Instead, critics have looked to his epigones in German popular literature and to a lesser degree to Baltic German and Russian literature (EKA: 462). What tends to be forgotten in the Estonian literary history dominated by the monolingual paradigm (Yildiz 2012) is that the early nineteenth-century Estonian authors were international men, educated in German or Russian, and they had travelled extensively in search of employment throughout the Russian empire and beyond. Bornhöhe for instance was educated in German and had travelled before writing *The Avenger* in Germany and elsewhere. In his reminiscences he writes: "I read everything I could get from German libraries; no 'genius' remained a foreigner to me [---] For a while I desperately learned languages, learning some dictionaries (Latin, Greek, Russian, French) by heart and could freely read the cultural treasures of the bigger civilised nations in the original" (Bornhöhe 1962: 106, 107).¹¹ This means that the personal reading experiences of the nineteenth-century authors living in multiple cultural spaces may have influenced their writing in a more casual way than a literary history written as the successive arrival of European literary styles and movements in Estonia is able to consider.

In order to be inspired by Scott's character, Bornhöhe did not necessarily have to read Scott himself. The adventure stories by authors like Alexandre Dumas and Robert Louis Stevenson are listed as one of the most important elaborations of the genre of the historical novel in nineteenth-century Europe (Maxwell 1998: 545). Given the popularity of such authors in nineteenth-century Estonia, Scott's protagonist may have arrived with Bornhöhe from that tradition.

In 1955 the Estonian émigré literary scholar Herbert Salu (1955: 136) suggests Dumas' stories about William Tell as one of the possible models for *The Avenger*, but his proposition was hardly followed up in the research on the novella. Dumas covers William Tell in his *Travel Impressions* ("Impression du voyage", 1834), but the stories were also distributed as a separate book that was quickly translated into all the Scandinavian languages. When asked about his sources of inspiration, Bornhöhe denies the use of any direct models. However, when discussing the historicity of his characters he compares them precisely to William Tell, by saying: "They are fictional in the sense that they lack historical birth certificates, historically confirmed names and passports. A similar protagonist from the past who lacks a passport but is still warmly loved is William Tell, of whom the contemporary scriptures remain silent" (Bornhöhe 1962: 109).

The comparison of *The Avenger* to Dumas' text shows that Bornhöhe has borrowed both several central plot motifs and many small details, but the most important source of inspiration seems to have been the type of protagonist itself. William Tell is a character standing between Swiss peasants and their Austrian landlords. He is a tax collector of the convent and a marksman, who is at first not interested in intervening in the conflict. His position generates a plot that is motivated by his personal agendas, and the injustice and insults he comes to experience.

In order to appreciate Bornhöhe's innovation and to trace the changes that took place in Estonian literature at the time *The Avenger* was written, a different understanding of the influence of European literature and of the cultural transfer is required. At this point Franco Moretti's controversial idea of literary forms travelling from the centre to the periphery may prove to be useful.¹² Exploring the emergence of the modern novel in different literatures Moretti (2000: 58, 65) argues that in most cases it came to life through a compromise between foreign (European) form, local content and local forms. The compromise takes different shape in different contexts, always creating new forms full of tension and cracks. Consequently, it is not productive to search for correspondences to these forms in the coherent literary styles such as Romanticism or Realism, because the new texts born out of compromise are necessarily different from their initial formal models.

Moretti (*ibid.*: 57) uses the modern novel as an example and stresses that the travelling of forms can be studied by focusing on any element of literature which is smaller or bigger than the text, such as tropes, motifs, themes or genres, and systems. The Scottish protagonist and the framework it gives to the plot of *The Avenger* is precisely such an element.¹³ Bornhöhe reworks the foreigner form in order to deal with local issues in the local idealist literary tradition. That the sense of honour persists as the motivation for Jaanus' actions alongside the national feeling is the sign of this compromise, the Morettian crack in the form.

While Moretti sees the forms born out of compromise as structurally weak and the tensions and cracks as flaws that only rarely become the very point of the novel, *The Avenger* shows that in the compromised text the tensions may be extremely significant. The competing motivations of honour and the national feeling create the crack in the form of *The Avenger* but the crack itself brings to light the most relevant recognition that Bornhöhe's text has to offer: that the national belonging is not an inborn feeling, but a learned and chosen affiliation, in this case chosen through a psychological struggle.

Furthermore, Moretti's idea of travelling forms is useful for the Estonian context because he conceives the influence relationship between the centre and the periphery rather as a contingent encounter of the foreign forms with the urgent local issues. If we see the development of nineteenth-century Estonian literature as the reception of the literary styles of Romanticism and Realism from Europe, then the perspective of the national literary space functions as the screen that prevents us from seeing the transnational literary power relations (Casanova 2005: 80) and the role of the reading experience of the writers based in multiple literary fields. Bornhöhe combined his formal findings with burning local issues and gave new content to the

borrowed forms. Next I will concentrate on how the powerful trope of the free man, created through such a compromise, has helped to condense and fix memories and structure the Estonian cultural memory from the nineteenth century onwards.

The Boundaries of the Nation

The Morettian crack in the form of *The Avenger* – the incomplete substitution of the sense of honour with one of national belonging – has remained eclipsed in the twentieth-century research on the novella not only for reasons of literary history, but also for social reasons. In contrast to Bornhöhe's contemporaries, the twentieth-century readers did not have any query about why Jaanus decides to protect the serf peasant Maanus – he does so because they are both Estonians. But as shown above, the category of ethnicity is not obvious in the text. It was being created during the national movement and *The Avenger* is one of the literary texts that contributed to a redrawing of the boundaries of the nation and to the shift from the social estate to ethnicity as the factor determining a person's sense of belonging. Lukács argues that Scott's protagonist enables the encounter of conflicting social forces, but here we see that Bornhöhe's helps to stage the conflict in national terms in the first place. Hence, in the shadow of a heroic military struggle, *The Avenger* negotiates the problem of the drawing of boundaries between communities in the Baltic provinces of tsarist Russia for the purposes of Estonian nation building. This is the local issue for which Scott's or Dumas' protagonist is borrowed.

If the historical novel always deals with the social and cultural dilemmas of its present, then in the figure of the free man and the drama of his inbetweenness and need to take sides Bornhöhe negotiates the nineteenth-century choices not of the peasant class, the declared core of the new nation, but of the people who had already moved upward and left the social class of peasants. In other words, in the figure of the free peasant Bornhöhe actually deals with the national belonging of the people of the intermediary social classes, the (partly) Germanised people of peasant descent.

Germanisation was perceived as a problem by the national elites during the national movement. In his speech in 1879 the national activist Jakob Hurt complains that “after schooling, the educated Estonians depart not only from the peasant class but also from the Estonian people” (Hurt 1939: 67). The question of how to be educated and successful without being Germanised may even have been a personal dilemma for Bornhöhe. His family had moved upward and relocated to the capital city of Tallinn, but it was not Germanised because it sympathised with the Estonian national movement. However, Bornhöhe was educated in German and Russian and earned his living in these language environments. While working as a tutor for the children of the Baltic German nobility, he was disturbed by the pride they took in their social standing, but their company was still culturally nurturing to him, “while my other acquaintances and relatives took me for a fool who gave up good positions and wasted his money on travels and

books” (Bornhöhe 1962: 107). As Bornhöhe’s own case shows, the question of how to convince the partly Germanised strata to become Estonians and how to create the feeling of belonging among the different social strata may have been as burning an issue in the nation building period as that of the economic, social and educational advancement of the peasantry, which has usually been considered as the central problem of national movement.

The problem of Germanisation is most visible in the way Bornhöhe treats the *mésalliance* plot. The literary scholar Jaan Undusk has drawn attention to the literary motif of the love story between the German nobility and the lower Estonian classes in Estonian literature. Undusk argues that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the motif figures as a ‘literary compensation’, the gentrification of the base extramarital relationships that existed between the German nobility and the lower Estonian classes in reality. The motif reverses the relationships into a social utopia about the equality of human beings independent of their social standing (Undusk 1998: 221). Bornhöhe’s *The Avenger* figures as one of his examples of the use of the literary motif.

In exploring the function of the motif of *mésalliance* in the foundational fictions of Latin America, Doris Sommer shows likewise that these are predominantly “stories of star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests and the like” (Sommer 1991: 5). However, for Sommer (*ibid.*: 14) the plot of *mésalliance*, the erotic passion realised in the heterosexual marriage, is an opportunity to erase the internal differences of class, race, economic interests and so forth within the nation. Along the same lines, Franco Moretti has noted that one of the functions of the nineteenth-century European historical novels was to ‘streamline’ the nation (Moretti 1998: 40). These ideas suggest that with the motif of *mésalliance* there may be more at stake than Undusk assumes with his social utopia.

In *The Avenger* there is a modest love story between the free peasant Jaanus and the Baltic German lady Emiilia, which however does not have a happy ending from the romantic point of view. When he has to choose between his honour and national feeling and his love, Jaanus chooses the former. Bornhöhe’s representation suggests that the failure of the love story does not have to be read as the sign of an unrealisable social utopia. In line with Sommer’s analysis the literary motif is in the service of the historical novel as the nation building form. The erotic passion between Baltic Germans and Estonians is not realised because the Estonian national project was not aimed at erasing the social and economic boundaries between Baltic Germans and Estonians, but on the contrary at strengthening them in order to erase social boundaries between people of peasant descent. The unhappy ending of the love story is therefore in the service of the national interest.

In another treatment of the motif from the same period, in Jakob Pärn’s (1843–1916) *The Black Coat* (“Must kuub”, 1883) the love story between Estonians and Baltic Germans is played out in the form of two mixed couples. Tellingly the story is resolved upon the marriage of the couples’ Estonian parties. It further shows how love stories of Baltic Germans and Estonians negotiate the social and ethnic boundary but only with the aim of strengthening the ethnic one.

When answering the question of why he decided to represent his protagonist as a free man, an educated land owner with a strong sense of honour who is an ahistorical figure in both the period represented and the time of writing, Bornhöhe argues that his choice was driven precisely by the requirements of historical veracity. He explains that the uprising of the peasant serfs would have been unthinkable without heroes whose minds had been “sharpened by German education” (Bornhöhe 1962: 109).

But if we assume that *The Avenger* negotiates the boundaries of the nation, this ahistorical choice also has a futural dimension. Bornhöhe’s free man has all the characteristics – personal freedom, property, education and a sense of honour – that the nineteenth-century cultural imagination required for a person who would make the new nation possible as a future member of this nation. As such Jaanus is also the two-faced Janus from ancient Rome, the God of new beginnings and transitions who faces the past with one face and the future with the other. Positioned in the past, the figure of the free man projects into the future a vision of different times and a different order of things. Notably, when discussing his ideal of ancient Athens with Emiilia, Jaanus says that he would have liked to live there or “a thousand years in the future..., where the sky of our land is coloured blue by education and freedom and the junipers¹⁴ turned into rose bushes” (Bornhöhe 1880: 68).

When discussing the relationship of the novel to nation building, Jonathan Culler (1999: 37) questions the idea put forward by Moretti and others that novels shape, justify or legitimate the nation by their representations. Rather, he sees the novels as the formal conditions for an imagining of the nation in the sense that they draw boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and therefore help the reader imagine communities through a differential construction of identity. These imagined boundaries can then be mobilised for political processes such as wars. The parable about the fallen Estonian soldier who was found carrying *The Avenger* in his pocket seems to confirm Culler’s correction to the argument about the nation-shaping forces of literature and its ability to function as the medium of cultural memory. *The Avenger* alone did not bring the Estonian nation into being. By borrowing a protagonist type from the genre of the historical novel, Bornhöhe created the figure of the free man whose drama of inbetweenness and the need to take sides draws boundaries between communities in the nineteenth-century Baltics. These boundaries were strengthened in the twentieth century in the military struggle for the nation state.

The afterlife of *The Avenger* in the twentieth-century Estonian cultural memory remains outside the scope of this article. I would like only to draw attention to two facets of it. The relevance of the forging of the alliances in *The Avenger* is further confirmed by various revisions to the novella. The text was revised at least twice for the 1905 and 1921 editions.¹⁵ Research into Bornhöhe mentions language revisions (Nirk 1961: 110, 128), but a comparison of the editions reveals much more extensive modifications and additions that, particularly in 1921, are meant precisely to strengthen the boundaries between communities. It appears that the opposition between the nobility and the peasantry needed to be radicalised in the context of the newly established nation state and the recent War of Independence. While

the significance of the literary classics is often updated in cultural memory by new readings of the texts, *The Avenger* is adapted to the needs of the politics of memory of the brand new republic by textual revisions and rewriting.

Finally, when the most important Estonian (historical) novelist Jaan Kross outlined the genealogy of Estonian historical fiction in 1982, he characterised *The Avenger* as “an impassioned story of National Romanticism” and dismissed nineteenth-century historical fiction more generally as “a fruit of the feeling of national inferiority born out of century-long pressure and a counter-movement to it” (Kross 1986: 139–140). Estonian literary history also sees an insurmountable gap between Bornhöhe’s novellas and Kross’ ‘serious’ oeuvre. However, Kross’ own central protagonist type of an Estonian split between his social standing and his descent still seems to bear strong resemblance to the type first envisioned by Bornhöhe.

NOTES

- 1 See Tamm 2008a for a thorough analysis of the afterlife of *The Avenger* in cultural memory.
- 2 On the Merkel-Jakobson relationship see Undusk 1997, 1999, 2000. On the relationship of the national movement to the Baltic Enlightenment in more general terms see Plath 2009. Other important landmarks in the formation of the new narrative are Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald’s (1803–1882) epic *Kalev’s Son* (“Kalevipoeg”, 1857–1861), and Jakob Hurt’s (1839–1907) *A Few Impressions of the Fatherland’s History* (“Mõni pilt isamaa sündinud asjost”, 1871). Undusk 1997; Tamm 2008b: 503.
- 3 *Eesti Kirjanduse ajalugu viies köites*. 2. köide: XIX sajandi teine pool. Toimetanud Endel Sõgel, 1966.
- 4 The uprising did not figure as an important historical event in the contemporary Baltic German history writing either.
- 5 Bergmann’s mediation is visible from the fact that Bornhöhe quotes the same passages from the chronicle that Bergmann does, although his translations are different.
- 6 For the taking of sides as the crucial characteristic of Scott’s mediating character see Jameson 2013: 270. Jameson links the configuration of the character to the commitment to collectivity as a definitional trait of the genre of the historical novel.
- 7 I will discuss the trajectories of influence from Scott to Bornhöhe below, but here it might be worth noting that I have no information on Bornhöhe’s reading. Scott’s influence may have reached Bornhöhe through the translations of his novels into German or through his followers in German literature.
- 8 One of the first historical novels, Jaak Järv’s *The Maiden of Vallimäe* (“Vallimäe neitsi”, 1885) is also the first Estonian-language novel.
- 9 For *Moi Idealism* is an understanding of aesthetics that was relevant throughout the whole nineteenth century and contemporaneous and compatible with some strands of Realism. Idealism became obsolete only with the arrival of Modernism, which was its true antithesis rather than Realism. Moi 2006: 67. Idealism was also the term used in the Estonian criticism of the time.
- 10 Scott’s first novel to be translated into Estonian in 1888 was *Quentin Durward*. See Pittock 2006.
- 11 Bornhöhe spoke on his historical fiction only very briefly in two letters sent to Martin Kampmaa in response to his questions in 1912. There is no information on his reading in the letters.

- 12 Moretti's idea has been heavily criticised by many postcolonial critics for its 'scopic vision' of world literature and its drive towards 'authoritative totalising patterns' (Spivak 2003: 108) and for its preference of narrative engagement with texts at the cost of linguistic engagement (Apter 2003: 256).
- 13 In the case of Scott's protagonist, the travelling of the forms is made even more complicated by the fact that historical novel was invented by the Irish and Scottish periphery of English literature. Trumpener 1997: xi.
- 14 Paradoxically the Germanised people of peasant descent were termed 'juniper Germans' in Estonian.
- 15 In 1905 Bornhöhe probably revised his text himself. In 1921 *The Avenger* was republished by the publishing house *Kool*, which specialised in school books. According to an audio interview with the Estonian writer Friedebert Tuglas in 1971, the edition was "spoiled by school teachers". Tuglas 1971. However, all the subsequent editions follow this version.

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Historical Fiction and the Dynamics of Romance

The Cases of Evald Ferdinand Jahnsson and Fredrika Runeberg

When the first historical play in the Finnish language *Bartholdus Simonis* was premiered in 1873 by the Finnish Theatre Company (*Suomalainen teatteri*) in Helsinki and later also in other cities, it was met with applause and praise. Many newspapers published the same positive reviews with the prediction that *Bartholdus Simonis* was going to remain a valuable and popular play in the repertoire of the Finnish Theatre Company.¹ The leading Finnish-language newspaper *Uusi Suometar* noted in its thorough review that the lasting position of the play had been ensured due to its distinctive patriotic spirit. Although the reviewer did not specify in detail what was this patriotic spirit, the reception of the stage performance of *Bartholdus Simonis* is a good example of how historical fiction, collective enthusiasm, and nation building are intertwined with each other. In the 1870s Finland was still a society where Swedish was the language of education, administration and cultural life even though efforts to promote Finnish language had been going on for several decades. This made the performance of *Bartholdus Simonis* by the Finnish Theatre Company, which had only been established a year earlier in 1872, an important landmark in the strengthening of Finnish-language culture in a society where Swedish still dominated.

Bartholdus Simonis is set in the year 1656 at a time when Finland was under Swedish rule. The events take place at a fortress in the city of Vyborg in the border region between Sweden and Russia, where young boys guard and defend the city against a Russian offensive. In one sense the play can be regarded as a conventional espionage story (Paavolainen 2013: 51), but at the same time there is a romance at the heart of the play, a love triangle plot in which the young female protagonist Anna leaves Bartholdus Simonis, a student and the true Finn of the play, because of Gerbert, a Russian, who in the end turns out to be a betrayer. The romantic emplotment brings questions of identity, loyalty and national belonging to the fore in a highly emotional mode: the plot intertwines personal feelings and choices with the destiny of the city of Vyborg and the whole of Finland. As such plot compositions are anything but unusual in nineteenth-century historical plays and novels, they are worth discussing in more detail.

The author of *Bartholdus Simonis* was Evald Ferdinand Jahnsson (1844–1895) who, inspired by the Finnish-nationalist tendencies of the late

nineteenth century and the success of his play, later continued to write on historical themes in Finnish. He wrote several historical plays, and in 1884 he published the first Finnish-language historical novel *Heikki from Hatanpää and his Bride: A Story from Bishop Thomas' Era* ("Hatanpään Heikki ja hänen morsiamensa. Kertomus Tuomas piispan ajalta", 1884). Jahnsson was one of the pioneers of Finnish-language literature, but he has not had a visible position in Finnish literary history.² Some of his works were celebrated in the 1930s and 1940s during the heyday of Finnish nationalism, but as the last version of *Heikki from Hatanpää* was published in 1931 in a series of children's books, it shows that in some regard Jahnsson's works did not meet the genre expectations and conventions set for 'serious' historical fiction and especially the historical novel any more.³ However, this does not mean that Jahnsson's fiction is not worth examining more closely. This chapter argues that the elements that are more or less attached to popular forms of writing, such as sentimentalism, melodrama or romance – the elements that are often connected with emotions and their effects – should be included in research into historical fiction and cultural memory.

In the field of memory studies there has been growing interest in memorial dynamics, the processes by which memories are socialised and mobilised (e.g. Rigney 2004; Radstone & Swarz 2010: 6–7; Crownshaw 2011). One of the more important means by which an interest in history and the past is awakened in historical fiction is precisely romance. It also plays an important role in shaping collective experiences, common heritage and cultural memory, and in creating the bonds of belonging that are so crucial in the processes of nation building (see also Rigney 2004: 390). In the narrative of Finnishness, the aspect of emotions has been dismissed almost entirely in favour of a story where the emphasis is on development, education, order and rationality, the qualities that are highly valued in the formation of a modern nation state and its citizens. Nevertheless, there are hidden emotions even in the standard story, for example in the form of shame that follows when one fails to fulfil 'the norm of education' inscribed in the national discourse (Rojola 2011: 202–224, also 2009: 19–21). This aspect is already present in the first Finnish-language novel *Seven Brothers* ("Seitsemän veljestä", 1870) by Aleksis Kivi, though the novel is most often read as a development story of the brothers who at the end of it adapt themselves to the norms of society (*ibid.*). As emotions are formative not only of subjects but also of social relations, forms of politics and political mobilisation (Koivunen 2010: 20), they are also intertwined in history writing, nation building and cultural memory (see also Pikkanen 2012). And as historical fiction has had a significant role in the construction of the past, so the emotional aspects of these works are worth highlighting.

There is no doubt that the historical novel, in Finland as in other European countries, has played an important role in forming ideas of the nation and national identity and in making the past memorable. However, the collective remembering of the past is always governed by a system of relevance that highlights certain aspects of the past and sidelines others (see Rigney 2005: 18; Rigney 2004: 381–383). Although there is a great deal of knowledge about the ideologies embedded in nineteenth-century literary practices

such as writing and publishing, and about the norms whereby literature was interpreted and valued, the emotional aspects involved in these mechanisms which aimed to establish a modern nation have been given far less attention.

In the following I will discuss the dynamics of romance in historical fiction by looking more closely at how historical fiction employs the romance plot, its codes and conventions, and how the conventional constructions of love, desire and sexuality are connected to fantasies about nation and nationality. In addition to Jahnsson's *Heikki from Hatanpää and His Bride* from the 1880s I will discuss Fredrika Runeberg's (1807–1879) Swedish-language debut novel *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters: A Story from the Time of the Greater Wrath* ("Fru Catharina Boije och hennes döttrar. En berättelse från stora ofredens tid", 1858). I have chosen these two novels, which represent two different periods of Finnish literature and are often discussed separately, not only to show the continuities and interconnections between them but also to highlight the possibilities of romance in discussions of ideological questions that are simultaneously highly emotional.

The authors of these works, E. F. Jahnsson and F. Runeberg, are in many regards opposite to each other. Runeberg was one of the first women novelists in Finland and one of the first authors of historical novels too. She started her career in the 1840s, at a time when domestic literature became an important part of the national culture of the Grand Duchy of Finland. As was typical of this period in Finnish literature, she wrote in Swedish. As discussed in the introduction of the present volume, it was the Swedish-speaking educated class who initially worked to give Finnish a higher status, and this project also has a strong voice in her novels. Runeberg was married to the 'national poet' Johan Ludvig Runeberg and she came from a well-educated family. Jahnsson, in contrast, was born in Kustavi, a Finnish-language village in the Turku archipelago. He came from a bilingual, lower-class family but had the chance to get an education, a key to social mobility at the time. Jahnsson wrote originally in Swedish but changed language in the 1870s and published actively in Finnish.⁴ *Heikki from Hatanpää* was first published as an award-winning feuilleton in a competition organised by the newspaper *Uusi Suometar*, the main public voice of the Finnish-language nationalists.

However, before turning to the analysis of the romance plot of Runeberg's and Jahnsson's works, let us discuss their nineteenth-century reception, which will give us a clue to more general reflections on the romance tradition and literary scholarship of today.

Historical Fiction and Neglected Romances

Runeberg's *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters* centres around the destinies of two sisters, Cecilia and Margaretha, and their romantic adventures in the times of the Great Northern War. However, the contemporary critics paid more attention to the male characters and the author's ability to depict historical settings and the characteristic features of the historical period (see e.g. Grönstrand 2005: 238–240). The philosopher and author Senator Johan Vilhelm Snellman, who played a pivotal role throughout the nineteenth

century in outlining the ideas of nationality, culture and literature in Finland, wrote in his appreciative review that “the scenes of the little volume are highly variable; they are located in a stormy and important period of time, absorbing many of its characteristics” (Snellman 1859).⁵

While the reception of Runeberg’s novel *Lady Catharina Boije* was positive, the same was not the case for Jahnsson’s *Heikki from Hatanpää*, nor for his next historical novel *A Certain Finnish Warrior from the Era of Queen Kristiina* (“Muuan suomalainen soturi Kristiina kunigattaren aikakaudelta”, 1884). In one review the theme of *Heikki from Hatanpää*, the ancient history of Finland, is acknowledged but the conclusion of the review implies that the novel cannot be regarded as a modern ‘scientific’ historical novel (anon.1886: 103–104). In an extensive and brusque critique, which reads almost as a declaration of the principles of Realism, Juhani Aho – one of the best-known Finnish Realists and a contemporary of Jahnsson – states explicitly that the “time demands” of its authors an ability to discuss in their works “solid ideas” and to portray scenes “true-to-life” instead of for example portraying ghosts and unnatural adventures (Aho 1885: 360).

In other words, the central romantic features of *Lady Catharina Boije* were dismissed by the reviewers. It is also obvious that *Heikki from Hatanpää* as an adventurous love story between Heikki and his fiancée in pre-modern Finland did not meet the literary standards at the time of its publication. As Realism was acquiring status as a literary model, such romantic stories with unexpected events had lost their appeal.

Romance is a classical element of fiction. However, its negative connotations and strong associations with popular culture and the early romance tradition mean it is no exaggeration to argue that it has not been in favour among literary scholars. Although researchers dealing with the sentimental or adultery novel or, for example, the Gothic tradition have certainly discussed the subject in one way or another, scholars of nineteenth century historical novels have traditionally not expressed much interest in discussing elements that are more or less attached to popular forms of writing such as romance, sentimentalism or melodrama.

This can be at least partly explained by the fact that the eighteenth and nineteenth century realist novel has usually been defined in contrast to the earlier tradition of the novel, romance literature. Whereas the romance tradition favoured mythological stories and plot lines, and episodic, fantastic love stories with no relation to everyday life and its conceptions of time and history, the theories of the modern novel have often emphasised that the special features of the genre are amongst other things a realistic, verisimilar narration of the individual’s everyday life and the protagonist’s development.⁶ Following Georg Lukács and his influential work *The Historical Novel* (1937), the historical novel has also often been defined as representative of Realist literature. Drawing on Walter Scott, Lukács outlined the principals of the historical novel, emphasising the role of the protagonist, a middling character, whose life is strongly shaped by social and economic factors (see e.g. Anderson 2011, 1; Hamnett 2011: 1–6). The emphasis on social and economic aspects, originating from Lukács’ Marxist background guided research into historical fiction for a long time.

Recently, however, some scholars have argued that it is problematic to detach Scott or the historical novel as a genre entirely from the romance tradition or from popular forms of writing (see Hatavara 2007: 82–93; Hamnett 2011: 7–8). Furthermore, popular roots have been detected in many historical novels that draw on melodramatic contrasts and moralising stereotypes (Anderson 2011: 4–5), and it has also been pointed out that historical novels do not necessarily offer a notable contrast between the epoch in which the novel is set and the time it is written. Instead, there might be a very weak sense of history, which can be characterised as a world of ‘a kind of continuous present’ in which the “characters perform as if they were contemporaries of the author” (*ibid.*: 5). Novels that possess a whole range of features not present in the classical definitions of the genre, and which operate with elements of the romantic or sentimental tradition, the sensational novel, the *Bildungsroman* or the detective story, have thus been included in the genre.⁷ It has also been emphasised that the peculiarity of the historical novel has been to elude any stable division of high and low (*ibid.*: 7).

Romance has also been disparaged for political reasons other than those important for Lukács. For the early feminists in the 1970s, romance was a mark of false consciousness, a cultural tool of male power aiming to keep women from knowing the social reality (Stacey & Pearce 1995: 13). The perspective changed radically after Janice Radway published her book *Popular Romance* (1984) where she discusses romance in positive terms as a genre offering (women) readers a way to explore their identities and their social and emotional desires. Many other feminist scholars have followed her interpretation by emphasising the contradictory and complex nature of romance.

Whereas the most elementary, but still useful, definition of romance sees it as a story of love or of a quest for love that is threatened by a series of barriers (e.g. Stacey & Pearce 1995; Strehle & Carden 2003: xiv), Lynn Pearce has elaborated the concept further. Instead of concentrating on the formal features, she discusses romance in relation to culturally and historically specific themes and contexts. She is interested in looking more closely at the values associated with romance and romantic love at any given cultural and historical moment. Although she does not explicitly deal with historical novels, the link she establishes between romance and social and political questions is relevant for the context. According to Pearce (2007: 27–28) romance can be understood as a fantasy, a utopian window onto the world. It is a political vision that reaches far beyond the individual: “The condition of being in love provides the subject with a vision of the world not as it is, but as it might be, and may become the catalyst for revolution and/or social change”.

Susan Strehle and Mary Panicia Carden (2003: xxv) in turn explore the ways in which romance and history are implicated in and vitally necessary to each other, creating metaphors that hold cultures, institutions, families, and individuals together or drive them apart. Romance and history are intertwined in each other in a way that changes the views of nations and

their organising principles (*ibid.*). Such approaches blur the distinction between private and public perspectives of history by highlighting the conflicting emotions and situations that are always involved in the processes of experiencing and interpreting past, present and future possibilities. Moreover, they indicate that historical fiction can be regarded as a genre that stores dreams, symptoms, and even vague promises of social change that have not yet taken place.

Historical Facts, Social Values, and the Power of Romance

Fredrika Runeberg's *Lady Catharina Boije* and Evald Ferdinand Jahnsson's *Heikki from Hatanpää* are novels in which romance is set in the remote past in times of war. The exact dates and names of the places that are given at the beginning of the story help to anchor the story in historical events and milieus, even though the narrators of the both novels also reflect, in the style of the classical historical novel, the temporal dimensions of their story and the distance to the time the novel is published.

The events of *Lady Catharina Boije* start in the year 1712, and the story encompasses a time of Russian occupation of Finland during the Great Northern War (1700–1721). The historical events and the destiny of Lady Catharina Boije's family are linked together, as the assault by Russian Cossacks on the family's manor paves the way for the romantic adventures of the daughters of the family, Margaretha and Cecilia. At the end, when the peace treaty between Sweden and Russia is signed, it is time to resolve the conflicts and tensions that have emerged during the tumultuous times. The unstable conditions of the war mean that the two protagonists, Swedish-speaking noblewomen Margaretha and Cecilia, become entwined in adventures that cross the conventional gender and class boundaries. Instead of being obedient to their mother and her social values and ideals, Margaretha and Cecilia come to represent a new kind of social order, where middle class values, such as individual choice and happiness and questions of national belonging, are far more important than rigid traditions and social rank.

Heikki from Hatanpää is set in 1245, in the times of religious struggles between Finns and Swedish troops. The year 1245 is when Bishop Thomas of Turku (Åbo), the first Catholic bishop mentioned in the historical records, resigned from his post. It is known that during his reign the Catholic Church tried to strengthen its position in Finland by taking a grip on the pagan places of sacrifice and that there were conflicts between the troops of the bishop and the people in the Tampere region where Jahnsson's story is set. In Jahnsson's novel, Thomas is portrayed as an old white-haired vigorous-looking man sitting upright on his horse with an unflinching gaze, a permanent image in the Finnish cultural memory (see Pikkanen's contribution in the present volume). The efforts to convert the Finns were part of the larger historical process by which the Swedish influence over Finland was strengthened. Jahnsson's novel deals with these conflicts, depicting them mostly from the viewpoint of the pagans but sometimes also from the viewpoint of the troops

of Bishop Thomas. However, at the core of the story, there is a romance between the pagans Lyyli and Heikki, whose love is threatened by Paavo, the leader of the Catholic troops.

In both novels the historical events represented are intertwined with both the romance plot and the adventure narrative. Although the story stretches far outside everyday reality and contains elements of fantasy, it is ideologically charged, promoting discussions of subjects that were of current interest in the nineteenth century, notably national identity and the position of the Finnish language and the Finnish speaking language group.

Margaretha's adventures in *Lady Catharina Boije* start as she is saved from the Russian Cossacks' assault by Magnus Malm, a soldier of King Charles XII of Sweden. Margaretha falls in love with Malm and flees with him into the woods in the middle of winter. Margaretha's sister Cecilia does not have such exciting adventures as her sister, but nevertheless, her views about the role of women and marriage change too during the war as she gets to know Johan Bruce, a controversial man who works for the Russians but dreams about an independent Finnish nation. The relationship between Cecilia and Johan is very close; it is based on sharing emotions and life stories and Bruce becomes for Cecilia a model of what a good husband should be. The destinies of the sisters are closely linked to each other as they share the same values concerning marriage, believing that mutual feelings are of importance in the choice of a suitable spouse. And at the same time, that these emotions are inseparable from larger social issues.

In *Heikki from Hatanpää* the central female character is Lyyli. Like Margaretha and Cecilia in *Lady Catharina Boije*, she is also the catalyst for the story, which discusses national belonging, loyalty and questions of power especially from the perspective of the Finnish-speaking people. Lyyli is pagan herself, and in *Heikki from Hatanpää* the pagans stand for the Finnish views and values, which are closely bound to the Finnish language and culture. These values are contrasted sharply with the foreign values presented by the Catholic Church. As Lyyli is trapped between two men, Heikki and Paavo, who represent ideologically opposite sides, she has a central role in highlighting the conflict. Lyyli is in favour of Heikki, with whom she shares the pagan values, while the rival suitor Paavo in turn represents the Catholic troops of Bishop Thomas. Both Heikki and Paavo propose to Lyyli, who responds positively to Heikki's marriage proposal right at the beginning of the story, though she states in a playful manner that she will discuss their common future only after their fight against the Christians has come to an end. The tensions embedded in the conflict serve as the starting point of the plot.

According to Lynne Pearce (2007: 16, 127–129), romance is profoundly bound up with the adventure narrative: without a series of obstacles there would be neither anything we could recognise as love, nor any sublimation of love. The romance is lived on the limit point of an uncertain future and the promised values of romance are not easily fulfilled. This view also provides important insights into how romance and history are intertwined and how history can be turned into an emotionally engaging plot: the significance of

the ideas and ideologies embedded in the romance is revealed at the same time that the lovers fight for their happiness. In *Lady Catharina Boije*, the main obstacle for Margaretha's and Cecilia's happiness is their mother, Lady Boije. She represents the old class-based society in which origin and rank are of fundamental value. She does not accept Margaretha's beloved Malm as a suitor for her daughter because of his low birth. The ideal husband from her point of view would be the Swedish aristocrat Carl Lejonankar, whom she has chosen for Cecilia. As Margaretha and Cecilia struggle for their happiness and try to overcome the obstacles that threaten it, the new social values important for establishing the nation, such as breaking down old class boundaries, are also thematised. In *Heikki from Hatanpää*, the value of Finnish language and culture are highlighted as Lyyli and Heikki, the true lovers, are driven apart from each other for a long time when Lyyli is taken prisoner by the Catholic troops after she has turned down Paavo's marriage proposal.

Typical of romance, both *Lady Catharina Boije* and *Heikki from Hatanpää* feature various kinds of omens and predictions that indicate the future of the protagonists, heightening the tension of the plot. In *Lady Catharina Boije*, in accordance with the conventions of melodrama, Cecilia is represented as a powerless heroine who is threatened by evil. The evil takes the form of an ugly spider that every now and then threatens her. In Cecilia's dreams the spider spins its web around her heart until it can no longer beat. Soon it becomes clear that the spider and the unpleasant fiancé are closely linked to each other and the spider foretells death. The same omen is repeated by an old country woman living near the Boije's mansion, the fortune teller Vappo, who is able to see only darkness on Cecilia's wedding day (Runeberg 1858/1979:197).

In *Heikki from Hatanpää* there is a dead seagull that indicates a grim destiny for the female protagonist, Lyyli. The lifeless bird falls from the sky at Lyyli's feet at the moment she and Heikki discuss their future, and the interpretation of the bird as an omen of death is confirmed by Tahalan Taara, the fortune teller. The death of the seagull is actually caused by an arrow shot by the rival suitor Paavo, but Tahalan Taara declares that it is obvious that the seagull and its pierced heart foretell a sudden death. And as the feathers on the bird's chest are stained with blood, she says that it means that the death of Lyyli will be a bloody one. As is well known, the figure of a fortune teller is common in historical fiction and is used, for example, by Walter Scott and by Zacharias Topelius in Finland.⁸ It can be regarded as a feature typical of the romantic and popular tradition of the historical novel, but it is also part of 'the grammar of the romance' of the genre. According to Pearce (2007: 16) it is in "the extravagant, often fantastical events and landscapes" that we find the origins of many of the images, symbols and motifs that are still the backdrop of romance today. And as already mentioned, romance and its more or less fantastical elements are not separable from the social values discussed in the historical novels.

Romance as a Fantasy of Affinity between Finns

In *Lady Catharina Boije* the romances are intertwined with the question of class in various ways. The class borders are tested through the protagonists' struggles for their love and happiness. The emphasis on mutual feelings as the basis for marriage rather than rank and economic status indicates a change in the way the relation between classes and social groups is conceptualised. Furthermore, the struggles for happiness lead to the protagonists from a Swedish-speaking noble family coming into contact with the common people. For example Margaretha gets to know Finnish people while fleeing the Russian troops in tough conditions together with her beloved. During their adventurous journey, Margaretha and Malm find shelter in the cottages and crofts of the peasants who are represented as friendly, hospitable and helpful in spite of their meagre livelihood.

The common people represented in *Lady Catharina Boije* are often Finnish-speaking, but sometimes Swedish-speaking. However, they are always portrayed positively, as is the figure of the fortune teller Vappo. Vappo is Cecilia's old wet nurse and her close confidante, who provides support for her when she expresses her views about the future and tries to help her make decisions in moral conflicts. Vappo is also the true representative of a Finnish-language Finn. Cecilia describes Vappo to Margaretha in the following way:

Look, old Vappo who was my wet nurse, she was one of the most thorough Finns. You only know her stiff outward appearance, her quietness, her dislike for using Swedish words; but I know her warm fidelity, her deep fabulously glowing spirituality, the almost terrifying fascination of her songs. (*Lady Catharina Boije*: 15–16.)

Here, Finnishness is associated with such positive values as profound spirituality, the Finnish language and Finnish folklore. Cecilia is deeply attached to this woman and she sees herself as a part of a society in which class and language differences do not matter and in which the Finnish language would be of importance. Cecilia even declares that she is a true Finn, because every now and then she feels that she has Vappo's power to foresee things that are about to come. The magical bond they share is attributed to the fact that Vappo had wet-nursed Cecilia. Following the idea widespread in folklore that witchcraft is transmitted through breast milk, a part of Vappo's magical power has been transferred to Cecilia in the act of breastfeeding. However, the breastfeeding can also be interpreted as a transmission of alternative knowledge from the mother to the child, the knowledge that questions dominant thought (Melkas 2006: 200–201). In *Lady Catharina Boije*, when Cecilia feels that she is more of a Finn than the rest of her family members are, the knowledge is closely linked to questions of language, nationality, and corporeal belonging. Therefore it inevitably disrupts the order and tradition that Cecilia has been brought up with.

As the bond of alliance between Cecilia and Vappo has been formed through the act of nursing, it comprises elements of corporeality and

intimacy, the same features that are relevant in thinking about nationalism in terms of common language and origin. The assumption that it is the 'mother tongue' through which people are organically linked to a demarcated ethnicity, culture and nation is deeply rooted in ideas about the modern, homogeneous nation. As Yasemin Yildiz (2012: 10–14) has stated, the whole constellation is highly emotionally charged as the 'mother' in 'mother tongue' has strong associations with maternal origin, affective and corporeal intimacy, and natural kinship. According to Yildiz, 'mother tongue' is more than a metaphor, because it constitutes a condensed narrative about origin and identity. This connection between origin, identity and nationality is also inscribed in the romance plot of *Lady Catharina Boije*.

The Finnish roots are given positive values when Cecilia has to choose between her two suitors. Whereas the Swedish aristocrat Carl Lejonankar looks down on people who do not belong to the aristocracy, Johan Bruce, his rival suitor, is proud of his roots in the Finnish peasantry. Marianne Hirsch (1989), who has discussed the motif of the 'double suitor' in nineteenth-century novels written by women, points out that a brother-like man is an alternative to patriarchal power and dominance, a fantasy of 'the man-who-would-understand', who helps the heroine to remain a subject by protecting her from marriage and motherhood. The motif is also relevant in the context of the relationship between the romance and the questions of the nation and its future. In *Lady Catharina Boije*, Johan Bruce is represented as an alternative to Carl Lejonankar. His mother language is not discussed, but he regards himself as 'a true Finn', because, as he explains to Cecilia, he has been brought up by a Finnish peasant, and "thus I became [...] a real Finn, a man of the people, instead of a Swede, the like of which our nobility more and more has wished to become" (Runeberg 1858/1979: 103). Bruce is the exact opposite of Lejonankar in many ways, including both rank and nationality. Cecilia gets to know him during the war and his influence on Cecilia is positive:

Cecilia had changed a lot during the years. The girl who used to be pale and faded had turned into a quite slender but blooming and healthy figure. During this year she had for the first time seen a world other than home; for the first time since she began to understand speech, she had heard about ideas and opinions different from what she had heard at home [...]. (*Lady Catharina Boije*: 133.)

Cecilia can take Johan Bruce into her confidence and tell him her deepest thoughts. Their relationship stays amicable and brotherly, even if it is obvious that Bruce is in love with Cecilia. As the relationship of Cecilia and Bruce is depicted without any hints of eroticism, what follows is that Johan Bruce appears as a man whose love and loyalty towards his country is unquestionable, and Cecilia stays, in accordance with the conventions of melodrama and sentimentalism, as a moral and honourable figure.

In the light of these examples, romance seems to enable not only border-crossings, but also bonds of alliance between groups and classes that have not yet materialised in society or even been discussed properly, signalling a fantasy of social change that has not yet happened but will take place in

future. There is a lot of rhetoric embedded in the notion of the ‘people’ or the ‘folk’ in Runeberg’s novel, and the same idealistic views, important in the imagination and production of Finnishness and nationality, lie in the heart of romance as well.

The bonds of alliances formed in *Lady Catharina Boije* are hard to maintain, which strengthens the idea of romance as a fantasy of “a vision of the world not as it is, but as it might be” as Pearce puts it (2007: 27–28). The destinies of Cecilia and Margaretha are in many ways opposed to each other, but at the same time they are tightly intertwined. In contrast to Margaretha, Cecilia never ends up in a marriage, neither with the ideal spouse Johan Bruce nor with Carl Lejonankar, who is her mother’s favourite. Cecilia dies at the end of the novel, and it is her death that makes it possible for Margaretha to marry the man she loves. The death of Cecilia therefore has a double interpretation: it can be interpreted as a criticism of arranged marriages or the whole institution of marriage, but at the same time it makes Margaretha’s happiness possible (Grönstrand 2005: 235–236). Margaretha needs her mother’s permission to get married, and Lady Boije gives it only when Cecilia is lying on her deathbed and Vappo, Cecilia’s lifelong support, has tried to convince her that it is worth changing her mind about Margaretha’s marriage. And finally, it is the epilogue, a letter from Magnus Malm to Margaretha written a couple of months after Cecilia’s death, that confirms that there are no more obstacles to their union. There is a utopian tone in Magnus Malm’s visions of his and Margaretha’s future as he writes that he hopes that they will live a happy family life on their beautiful farm he has recently bought.

A utopian tone can also be found in the opening scene of *Heikki from Hatanpää*. It takes place in Tampere in the wild, on a sacrificial place surrounded by blooming flowers and two large, holy spruces providing a perfect, pastoral-like surrounding for love to blossom. This idyllic scenery is also an important key moment of the romance as it is the moment when Heikki is proposing to Lyyli. The romantic moment is firmly anchored in the Finnish-language world by unambiguous references to Finnish mythology. Heikki and Lyyli have come together with other young people to celebrate Ukko, the ancient god of thunder, and other heroes from folk poetry and mythology. Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen and other central figures from the *Kalevala* are present in the songs that are sung during the celebration:

Here and there, hand in hand, sat old singers singing Kalevalaic poems and inventing nice verses about old wise Väinämöinen, magical blacksmith Ilmarinen and ferocious man Lemminkäinen. They told about the eternal wrath between the Northern Land of Pohjola and Vainola, too, and also about the miserable demise of Sampo, the cry of beautiful Aino and the birth of the precious kantele. Multiple listeners surrounded them devoutly listening. (*Heikki from Hatanpää*: 10.)

The publication of the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala* in 1835 marked an important turning point in the history of the Finnish language and Finnish culture. Based on folk poetry and compiled and edited by Elias Lönnrot, it

was immediately given the status of an important national symbol. Although the Finnish language in the *Kalevala* was relatively difficult and the Swedish-speaking intelligentsia had problems reading it, its value was recognised at once by the leading figures of the nationalistic circles at the university and by civil servants. The *Kalevala* played an important part in establishing the idea of a common Finnish past. The Finnish 'narrative of nationalism' needed a historical continuum (Molarius 1999: 72) and an ancient past and the *Kalevala* served these aims well. It inspired not only other literary authors but also musicians and artists, and it was soon an integral part of the Finnish-language subject curriculum (see e.g. Häkkinen 1994: 15, 64; Alhoniemi 1987). A more extensive version of the *Kalevala* was published in 1849, and it has retained its popularity ever since through numerous reprints and various textual and visual adaptations and acts of communication. Thus, it can be regarded as one of the most important textual monuments⁹ of Finnish culture. The nineteenth-century historical novel also made use of the *Kalevala* for its own purpose and participated in the process of making it memorable.

The impression that Jahnsson is attempting to use his novel to write the history of the Finnish-speaking peoples is further strengthened by the dedication and the preface. The title page of *Heikki from Hatanpää* reveals that the work is devoted to the memory of J. V. Snellman, whose work Jahnsson sees himself as continuing. The preface elaborates on Jahnsson's personal memory of his face-to-face meeting with Snellman. Jahnsson recalls in detail how after a performance of his play *Lalli* in the Finnish Theatre, Snellman had invited him to his apartment to discuss the work, which focuses, as does *Heikki from Hatanpää*, on the struggles between the pagans and the Christians. More specifically the play discusses the tensions between the Bishop Henry of Finland and the leader of the peasants, Lalli, who according to legend murders the bishop during his crusade to Finland. According to the preface, Snellman was very pleased with what he had seen, not least because he himself had planned to write about the same subject, though from a different perspective to Jahnsson's. Obviously Snellman found the ancient themes important for history writing too, as he, according to the preface, stated decidedly:

I have, you see, been very pleased that the struggles between the Christians and our pagan ancestors have at last been dealt with through the means of drama and that a play discussing them can be seen on the Finnish stage. One had to begin with those times anyway. (*Heikki from Hatanpää*: 7.)

Interestingly, the preface of the first edition has been reprinted in all following editions, thereby emphasising the need to connect *Heikki from Hatanpää* to the Finnish national movement and in that way guide its interpretation. So whereas Runeberg's *Lady Catharina Boije* only offers glimpses of the changing class order and the significance of the common people, and especially the Finnish-speaking common people, in the principals and practices for the process of nation building, the situation is different in Jahnsson's *Heikki from Hatanpää*. The *Kalevalaic* references of the work clearly point to

a pre-Christian, pagan Finnish-language world, which signals the Finnish-speaking people's long history. Furthermore, the world of the Finns is associated with peace, harmony, unspoiled nature and love. It forms a sharp contrast to the Christian world that is depicted through outward markers of power such as valuable jewellery, fancy clothes and shining steel armour, helmets and lances. The contrast is further emphasised by the language use in Jahnsson's novel. Although many of the Christian troops are literate and know several languages, they mostly do not speak Finnish. Whereas the pagans sing their old Finnish-language folk songs, the missionaries who have come to Finland from Germany to convert pagans, sing their songs in Latin. In contrast to *Lady Catharina Boije*, the Finnishness in *Heikki from Hatanpää* is clearly associated with the Finnish language, and this view is further emphasised by the romance. The protagonists represent clearly the Finnish-speaking common people, signalling a demand for a more valued position for the Finnish-speaking language group and for Finnish-language culture in the 1880s, the time the novel was published.

Double-edged Endings

As is typical of the romance plot, the tensions rooted in the romance reach a climax at the end, in a scene which can be regarded as a key moment of summary and transmission of everything that romance stands for. In Runeberg's and Jahnsson's novels the end scene can be characterised as a kind of duel where the protagonist confronts his or her opponent, someone with a view opposite to the protagonist's. *Lady Catharina Boije* describes in detail how Cecilia meets her enemy – the ugly spider – the night before her wedding day, face to face alone in her room. A large spider first descends on top of her and then lays hold of her heart, exactly as in her nightmare. In accordance with the predictions, she is soon about to die, and her deathbed becomes the moment in which the self-sacrificing sentimental protagonist is rewarded: she has the power to effect a change in values. She is saved from marrying an unpleasant husband, and, as mentioned previously, her death makes Margaretha's cross-class marriage possible (Grönstrand 2005: 236).

In *Heikki from Hatanpää* the rival suitors Heikki and Paavo first meet in a cruel and bloody combat from which Heikki manages to break away. But the second, and more important, duel takes place between Lyly and Bishop Thomas, between the powerless heroine and the evil that is threatening her. And despite Heikki's efforts to save his bride there is nothing he can do to oppose the bishop. Bishop Thomas, who tries persistently to convert Lyly without success, finally takes Lyly from Turku castle, where she has been kept prisoner, to the church to pass his final judgement on her. The authority of the bishop and the Christians is expressed through massive and grandiose decorations and other symbols of power. At the church Lyly is asked to bend her knee and pray as a sign of reverence and submission.

The act of kneeling has of course religious meanings, but at the same time it has been widely used in sentimental fiction. The protagonist stages the crisis with her own body, often at the moment of self-sacrifice

soliciting empathy from the reader (Cohen 1999: 65-67). In contrast to most sentimental heroines, Lyyli does not obey the order to sink to her knees, but in accordance with the principles of sentimentalism she defends her standpoint and proclaims her views in explicit terms as she declares in a strong and steady voice that even though she is a woman, she will not contribute to harming the good reputation and honour of the people in Tavastland, the Finns. Despite Heikki's efforts to save his fiancée, Lyyli is executed in front of a crowd of people who burst out screaming when they see "Lyyli's beautiful head with its bloody hair rolling off the block" (Jahnsson 1884/1931: 244). Lyyli's death is as dramatic as that of the most sentimental protagonists: it is a moment of protest and triumph. It creates intense sympathy towards the protagonist, and draws attention strongly to the values she is fighting for.

In *Lady Catharina Boije* and *Heikki from Hatanpää*, romance is also interwoven with the idea of death as a sacrifice, which is so important for nation building (see also Pearce 2007: 129). In Jahnsson's play *Bartholdus Simonis* discussed at the beginning of this chapter, love, history and patriotic feelings intermingle in a similar way. As in *Heikki from Hatanpää*, the romance of Anna and Bartholdus does not have a happy ending because Bartholdus is shot by his rival suitor Gerbert. His death is a loss for his nation but also for his beloved Anna, and thus Bartholdus' destiny becomes more intense and tragic. Anna's destiny can also be regarded as a sacrifice or self-sacrifice. In the very end of the play Anna speaks, quietly and gently, in a tone of longing to her late beloved Bartoldus Simonis. But although the lovers are driven apart by death, there remains a glimpse of hope because Anna promises in a truly romantic style in her monologue that the lovers will meet again in the future, leaving the hope at the same time that the values they stand for, closely related to the idea of the modern nation, will be realised too. Elements of hope also characterise the final scene in *Heikki from Hatanpää*. At the end, Bishop Thomas deeply regrets his judgement, which he now calls a crime, and the narrative insinuates that the historical fact, the resignation of Bishop Thomas from his post, is a result of his cruelty towards Lyyli and other Finns. The emotional charge of the narrative is further heightened when Heikki suddenly appears with a knife in his hand to avenge the death of Lyyli and his 'fellow citizens' who have died because of the cruelties of Thomas. But like Bartholdus Simonis, Heikki is also killed by his enemies.

In Runeberg's and Jahnsson's historical fiction the romance plot does not often culminate in a marriage of the lovers. Instead of a closure, a happy union of the lovers, there is often a death scene which makes use of the imagery of melodrama and sentimentalism: in the moment of death the moral world is finally revealed and the social injustice is corrected, or at least it is implied that the injustice has been registered and will be redressed. This kind of ending further strengthens the social dimension of romance.

Conclusions

When looking more closely at the dynamics of romance in Finnish nineteenth-century historical fiction, it can be argued that the popular forms of writing hold an important place in historical fiction. The 'grammar of romance' consists of elements that are borrowed from sentimental tradition, adventure stories and mythology, but nevertheless they all participate in mobilising the past and the emotions inscribed in it, and in making history into a captivating narrative. As the lovers fight for their happiness, the tensions and conflicts embedded in the rise of a modern nation and in the history of it, such as questions of gender, class, and language, are revealed, and at the same time new kinds of alliance are suggested. But the grammar of romance is not based only on thrilling events caused by the barriers the lovers confront. An important part of the romance is the elements which are firmly anchored in culturally central texts and experiences of the time the novels were published. In both Fredrika Runeberg's *Lady Catharina Boije and her Daughters* and Evald Ferdinand Jahnsson's *Heikki from Hatanpää and his Bride*, folklore, the *Kalevala*, and other markers of Finnish-language culture signal a need to create feelings of collective belonging among Finns. Romance is a critical means for analysing the change in power relations taking place in the process of nation building and for highlighting the conflicting emotions embedded in it. Simultaneously, romance is also engaged in social change by proposing and testing compelling alternatives to these conflicts and contradictions.

NOTES

- 1 *Uusi Suometar* 2.5.1873; *Morgonbladet* 6.11.1873; *Sanomia Turusta* 23.11.1873.
- 2 In the latest Finnish literary history Jahnsson is mentioned only briefly. Lappalainen 1999a: 28, 39 and 1999b:44–45. Nevertheless, interest in Jahnsson, his life and his works seems to be increasing as he has recently been acknowledged in historical studies as well as in theatre studies. Keravuori 2012; Paavolainen 2013.
- 3 In total *Heikki from Hatanpää* has appeared in four editions, in 1884, 1898, 1911 and 1931.
- 4 The 1870s are known as the decade when 'the sense of Finnishness' strengthened significantly not only in formal and institutional education but also in literature and culture in general. Liikanen 1995.
- 5 J. V. Snellman was influenced by the German thinkers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. He operated very consistently in order to promote Finnish-language culture and literature, which should guide the people to become conscious about their role in the process of uniting the people. Jalava 2006: 112–119; Karkama 1989: 257–258.
- 6 About this discussion, see Mäkikalli 2007.
- 7 However, it should be pointed out that Anderson's attitude towards this kind of novel is remarkably dismissive, though he does provide an interesting interpretation of the genre.
- 8 E.g. Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoore* (1818) and Topelius' *The Duchess of Finland* ("Hertiginnan af Finland") 1850.

- 9 Textual monument is a term that has been used of texts that are outstandingly durable, having a fixed character by which a certain event or common heritage is invoked and borne witness to, again and again, in new contexts and at different historical moments. Rigney 2004: 383–385.

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Masculinities and the Nation
State in the Interwar Period

II

The Dangers of “Too Easy a Life”

Aarno Karimo’s Historical Vignettes and the Post-Civil War Nation

The “unsurpassable nationalistic opus”, the “visual and verbal climax” of Finnish national historical writing and the “codification of the national antiquity”¹ saw daylight in Finland in 1929–1933. This monumental four-volume work contained altogether 1450 pages, weighed 7.5 kilos, and was richly illustrated with mainly multicoloured drawings and paintings. It was written by artist, novelist and soldier Aarno Karimo (1886–1952), and titled grandly *From the Darkness of the Tombs*² (“Kumpujen yöstä”). Karimo’s work is a collection of fictional short stories or novellas alternating with popular history writing and it provides the reader with snapshots of Finnish history from prehistoric times until the Civil War of 1918. It became extremely popular at the time of its publication, with the first edition of the work running to an impressive 52,800 copies.³ The dimensions of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* symbolised in physical form the long past of the Finnish nation and, although not literally ‘portable monuments’ (Rigney 2004: 383), these books had an effective presence in the Finnish memory culture especially in the inter-war period. In addition, the emotionally intriguing illustrations of the work, made by the author himself, were widely used in Finnish historical and historiographical surveys and schoolbooks and large reproductions of them circulated as teaching materials in primary schools.⁴

The multimedial stories of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* had an exceptional cultural staying power as long as the inter-war masculine and belligerent Finnish values and morals were in force. After the loss in the Second World War, when Finland became territorially ‘truncated’ in permanence,⁵ Karimo’s work became equally cut off. Its ultra-patriotic warrior views and the claims for Finnish *Lebensraum* were criticised, and the series was re-edited and published in a more concise form in three parts, with cuts to large sections of its prehistoric stories and to the politically flammable, anti-Russian material. Even so, it still inspired generations of Finnish historians in their historical studies.⁶ The latest stage of the textual afterlife of the work has so far been its publication in the beginning of the 1980s as a 455-page cabinet of curiosities from a faraway period of high-nationalistic sentiments. Nowadays its easily recognisable illustrations are still occasionally used to animate the past,⁷ and the title *From the Darkness*

of the Tombs is constantly used in the Finnish cultural memory as a reference to the nationalist tendency to glorify the ancient past and also to the more specific inter-war military nationalism. The stories themselves, and especially their nationalist rhetorics, have the dusty flavour of times past and many of the historical heroes they proposed have lost their cultural and social significance.

Consequently Karimo's work has been omitted from historical literary surveys and from the few studies on Finnish historiography and on the inter-war nationalistic discourse,⁸ falling into what has been described as passive cultural memory.⁹ Its one-time popularity is easy to explain by reference to the high-nationalist sentiments of the inter-war decades, and especially to the need to establish a glorious, triumphant past for a recently established nation. This chapter, however, will seek more nuanced means for analysing the mnemonic potential of Karimo's work, taking its multimodality and hybridity – which partly explain its disregard in scholarly works – as the point of departure, but conducting a study that mainly remains on the textual, narrative level. Cultural memory studies, with the focus adopted in the present volume, provide a useful set of questions in their inquiry as to how communities establish and maintain their knowledge systems and versions of the past, or in other words, their 'memory'. I will use what has been defined as 'narratology of cultural memory' (Erl 2011) and enquire into those narrative elements that constitute the narrative potential, or a specific 'poetics of memorability' (Rigney 2005) of *From the Darkness of the Tombs*.

Selectivity plays an important part in the formation of cultural memory: remembrance usually crystallises into a limited number of figures of collective significance such as particular novels or characters. (Assmann 2010: 98; Rigney 2012: 18–19, 51–52). The storyline of Karimo's work also rests upon such reusable images, characters and motifs. In what follows, I will examine the most visible of these mnemonic figures, with a special emphasis on those that contribute essentially to the establishment of a coherent story out of an episodic past by appropriating and nationalising it in the process, thus creating a national self-image that possesses permanence and continuity through time (cf. Leerssen 2007a: 340). This is to a large extent a question of ethnic boundary-drawing, reflecting the role the historical literature of a novel nation had in the creation and maintenance of collective cohesion through cultural and social self-positioning. Consequently, the central national images of the Self and the Other propagated by *From the Darkness of the Tombs* will be analysed, and it will be pointed out how even this kind of procedural national disparity¹⁰ is often created by the use of transnational motifs, topoi and emplotments. All along attention will be paid to the intensity of the description and to the values and morals thus proposed.

However, before turning to the results of the proposed close-reading of Karimo's work, the work should first be placed within the intertextual narrative culture surrounding it and contributing to its content and its form.

The Intertextual Memory of Karimo’s Work

The main uniting feature of Karimo’s work is the construction of the narrative tension around the alteration between episodic substories and the metanarrative or national framing story tying the substories together and creating an ever-continuing temporal horizon of Finnishness around the individual accounts. Its main emplotment is a four-stage process that runs from (1) the original, ancient Finnish independence to (2) the loss of it during the Middle Ages when the Finnish territories were annexed to the Swedish kingdom, to (3) the partial regaining of independence in the nineteenth century when Finland became a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire (the ‘inner independence’), to (4) the real return of independence in early December 1917. This emplotment and its central motifs – like the idea of the ancient, vigorous and indomitable national peculiarity that all national narratives employ – gave Finland a subject status in the course of history and they were consequently shared by many a Finnish historical text in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Fewster 2006; Syväoja 1998). The indigenous Finnish past was especially elemental for the power-political claims of the Finnish-language nationalists, and its conscious creation began in the latter half of the nineteenth century by scholars, novelists, playwrights and poets alike.

As discussed in the introduction, the strong Topelian tradition of writing historical fiction that streamlined the nation and atoned its social differences was still dominant in Finland in the first half of the twentieth century.¹¹ The slowly but steadily growing body of historical writing had cemented the main turning points of the national past during the Tsarist decades before the independence of 1917 and history painters, poets, novelists and scholars had studiously been filling the walls of the national gallery of historical heroes. This meant there were culturally available national plot patterns, literary forms and tropes that Karimo could use for his stories and for depicting their protagonists. However, although *From the Darkness of the Tombs* is blatantly nation-centred and clearly anchored to the national cultural memory, an obvious inspiration came from Sweden, which is one of the collective ethnic villains of the storyline of *From the Darkness of the Tombs*.

The Swedish historian Carl Grimberg published his best-selling, nine-volume *Wonderful Destinies of the Swedish People* (“Svenska folkets underbara öden”) between 1913 and 1924. Grimberg’s long, entertaining and nation-centred work was by no means a unique piece of historical writing in the Sweden of the time but it gained an unforeseen popularity (Torbacke 1993). This was noticed on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, where the Finnish historian Professor Einar Wilhelm Juva (Juvelius, 1892–1966) published its ten-volume Finnish parallel, *Chronicles of the Finnish Nation* (“Suomen kansan aikakirjat”), between 1927 and 1938, openly admitting the Grimbergian legacy (Juva 1932: I, preface). However, there was an earlier attempt at a similar take on the national past in the novelist Juhani Aho’s illustrated compilation of stories depicting ancient and medieval Finnishness, *Images and Fantasies of the History of Finland* (“Kuvia ja kuvitelmiä Suomen

historiasta”, 1912), intended as the first part of a larger series but reduced to a one-volume work due to its poor sales (Sulkunen 2012).¹²

Aho’s *Images and Fantasies* is a digest of national historical literature, catching glimpses of the national past mainly through fictional novellas and pieces of Kalevalaic mythology published side by side, whereas both Grimberg’s and Juva’s garrulous works have a stronger overall narrative structure. They consist of chapters that can be read individually, but which have an overt narrator, addressing and inviting the reader to marvel at the national past, which might be one of reasons for the success of these works. They were clearly written in the academic framework, with a short bibliography at the end of each chapter, but aimed to synthesise its results for the wider public. In addition, Juva borrows and adapts some of Grimberg’s chapters into his own work, thus customising and fusing pieces from the Swedish national narrative into the Finnish one.¹³

This kind of multi-volumed, illustrated depictions of the national past, merging elements that were literary, if not purely fictive, into scholarly representation provided Karimo with the general model for his work and some of its central tropes, but *From the Darkness of the Tombs* clearly surpasses its predecessors in its ability to narrativise the past. Grimberg, Aho and Juva were all trained historians, which might have influenced the composition of their representations. Karimo’s imagination did not have such restrictions, and it was indeed his visual take on the past, his “impressions” and “visions”, that were the point of departure for the stories: “scholars [then] urged me to create novelistic texts to support the images” (I: 9–10).¹⁴

In accordance with these literary ambitions, the fictive parts in Karimo’s work start typically *in medias res* and have an open ending.¹⁵ This openness is part of the attraction of Karimo’s stories: it creates an image of the living national past full of stories, anecdotes and individuals at the reader’s disposal. Furthermore, some of the chapters consist of dialogues between faceless speakers, which the reader enters and leaves in midstream. These narrative means indicate that the reader only gets a glimpse of a selection of stories, but is left with the impression of quantitative abundance around them.¹⁶

The mosaic form of Karimo’s work reflected and benefited from the surge of interest in popular history writing in Finland in the beginning of the twentieth century, the conscious attempts to elevate the (historical) novel to the most important literary genre, and the new wave of nationalistic art that broke after Finnish independence was achieved (see the introduction). The tone and emplotment of his work were also in congruence with the literary tastes of the dominant political ideology in the post-Civil-War Finnish nation. Historical writing became pronouncedly militarised in the first decade of the twentieth century¹⁷, and especially after Finland gained its independence in 1917 and the subsequent Civil War of 1918. Nationalistic historical literature protected the newborn nation and its morals and values and took the point of view of the Whites, the winners of the Civil War.¹⁸ Historians and novelists alike built textual fortresses and images of their defenders against internal and external enemies that threatened the new nation. The admiration for the classical and medieval belligerency dominated history-books, novels, poetry, music and other forms of art, emphasising the

need for personal sacrifices for the common good and translating the terrors of the Civil War into a meaningful and understandable story (Fewster 2006: 320–330; Lindgren 2000: 169–194; Tepora 2011).

In this situation, the deceased of the previous centuries became the ideal, normative citizens: according to a contemporary formulation, "the brave chain of our noble ancestors" stepped out "from the darkness of the tombs" and emboldened "their offspring to adopt the same willingness to sacrifice their lives for the patria".¹⁹ However, the concept of the deceased in their barrows watching over their ethnic or racial descendants was already present in the Scandinavian imagery at the turn of the century and circulated widely in Finnish texts too.²⁰ By choosing a title that echoed this image, Karimo not only participated in the heroisation of the human losses of the Civil War, but connected his representation directly and visibly to the earlier Scandinavian glorification of the ancient past, and to the self-sacrificing bravery of its heroes.

In Karimo's work these watchful, binding eyes of the Ancients are divided into four temporal, chronological entities. The scholarly history writing from the early twentieth century was exceedingly interested in the prehistoric and medieval periods and their alleged heroic warrior society, which is also the story matter of the first and second volumes of *From the Darkness of the Tombs*: the first volume *Ancient People* ("Muinaiskansaa") reaches the point of the Crusades to the modern Finnish area in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while the second volume *Under the Cross* ("Ristin alla") depicts the Finnish Middle Ages. The third volume, titled *The Power of the Sword* ("Miekan valta"), covers a period of approximately 200 years of Swedish 'dominance' in detail. The fourth and last volume, *To Independence* ("Itsenäisyyteen"), depicts the period from the mid-1700s until the Finnish Civil War of 1918. Despite its dimensions, the chapters in *From the Darkness of the Tombs* are relatively short, varying from 8 to 10 pages, although in the largest third volume they reach an average of 14 pages. Most of the chapters depict a particular historical event: following the well-trying pattern of the historical novel, the author has compiled small emplotted story-sequences, which are often inhabited by several invented characters close to historical figures, acquiring their narrative dynamic from their description of the moment when the life of the past individuals changes decisively.

The fictive stories are in the majority in the first, 'paleofictive' volume, and the role of imagination is also pronounced in the second volume, which depicts a medieval Finland from which very few textual sources have survived. After this, the ratio changes and the non-fictive telling starts to dominate so that in the last volume 80 % of the stories depicting the very recent past are at least partly non-fictive real-world story-telling.²¹ In spite of this clear difference in the level of fictivity between the volumes, the ancient and medieval history is not totally fictionalised: each story has a short introductory paragraph anchoring it to a professional, authoritative history. Also, the detailed, black-and-white drawings that depict archaeological findings bring authentic colour to the narrative and tie it, again, to the contemporary academic research unearthing the relics of the ancient Finnishness.²² Nor is the recent past totally factualised. The majority of the

chapters in the last volume have fictive parts too, which may be understood as textual illustrations, attaching affective elements into real-world storytelling.

If *From the Darkness of the Tombs* is compared with other contemporary, multi-volumed representations of the past aimed at the wider public, Karimo's work is seen to be the most hybrid one generically, building most strongly on imagination and relying on "impressionistic" views of the past. In it, the imaginative power of fiction and the referential truth function of scholarly history writing both play into the plausibility of the representation. Its clear and close ties to the active cultural memory around it, and its ambiguous multimodality, escaping precise generic definitions, contributed to its inter-war success. In other words, the multimodal triangle of scholarly history writing, historical novella and history painting²³ provided its stories with their mnemonic power.

Memory Figures of the National Past

One way of creating a national past for the emerging national unit called Finland was to create a secular national pantheon. The nineteenth century novelists like Zacharias Topelius (see Hatavara's contribution), poets and artists established its members, and its composition was also explicitly debated amongst academics (cf. Pikkanen 2012). When circulated through different media, these historical and fictional characters became figures of memory, that is single, fused or composite objects which compressed and coalesced several complex ideas, feelings and images (Assmann 1992; Rigney 2005). Any reusable objectification of memory can be understood in such terms, but past individuals are particularly useful in the process of concretising and narrating the collective past, and in embodying cultural values in material, humanised, and singular ways (Rigney 2012: 163).

From the Darkness of the Tombs proposes several historical and fictional characters as figures of memory for cultural dissemination.²⁴ In many of its stories the observer is a common man, a fictional outsider, who reflects on the historical change. However, in several cases the protagonist or focaliser is a historical person. Among these are elevated, almost mythical characters, like the medieval Bishop Thomas of Turku (Åbo), and humoristic counter-heroes like the sixteenth-century nobleman Nils Grabbe. Although very unlike in character, they both exemplify the masculine Finnish nation and the central virtue of resisting foreign influences and their vivid depiction places them among the most important mnemonic nodes in Karimo's work.

APPROPRIATED HEROES

One way of constructing a temporal and conceptual bridge between the 'first prehistoric independence' and the 'second independence' of 1917 is the concept noted earlier of 'inner independence', which denotes the period when Finland was a Grand Duchy within the Russian empire in the nineteenth century.²⁵ However, in order to create a coherent national storyline without fractures, the centuries-long void between the first and the

inner independences had to be appropriated too. This was accomplished by inhabiting the storyworld with purely Finnish or, if born elsewhere, strongly nationalised heroes.²⁶ These heroes had already been established as historical mnemonic figures in the Finnish national story in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their representation in Karimo's work reflects the way historical literature can add new interpretative layers to pre-existing stories and retroactively change or intensify previous interpretations.

The nationalistic twentieth-century narrative closed the borders of the pre-nation state medieval societies. The reader gets the impression that the multilingual medieval bourgeoisie was purely Finnish, and the self-designating gaze is also extended to the nobility which is "totally Finnish: their names, language and minds were all Finnish" (II: 230). This point of departure gives medieval Catholic bishops a prominent position in the national narrative of a protestant country, which had built its collective, separatist identity within the Romanov Empire partly on religion and where freedom of religion was set in law only in 1923. Consequently, the "sinewy bishop" Thomas of Turku (Åbo) (d. approximately 1248) is made to isolate the Finnish church from foreign influences and to plan an independent Finnish church state. Thomas becomes "a bishop, a statesman and a warlord" all in one person. However, his clerical status is downplayed and he is first and foremost the visionary warrior, who is ready to defy papal bullae in order to follow his proto-national insights. These "incandescent, grand plans" include uniting all the "Finnish areas" under his throne, conveniently in line with the Great Finland fantasies of Karimo's generation (II: 69–70).²⁷

Providing Bishop Thomas with heroic status is a deviation from the tendency of national historiographies to apply the current religious situation to the past and to turn the corresponding historical religious figures into national heroes, like the Hussites in the Czech national narratives (cf. Berger & Lorenz 2008: 537–538)²⁸. However, the logic of the nationalising storyline demanded that all the phases in the national 'development' were explained as necessary and inevitable, with prehistoric times as a period of free-spirited (though) pagan nationhood, the Catholic era as a step towards the true protestant religion and so forth. Linda Kaljundi observes in the present volume that late-coming nations had to struggle with the (sometimes) contradictory elements of linear progress and profound societal change in their national narratives, which in the Estonian context led to a thorough reshaping of national history especially in the 1930s. The very first historical novels written in the nineteenth-century Grand Duchy of Finland had progressive, nationalizing emplotments (see Hatavara). These earlier narrative layers enabled a pronounced line of continuity between the storyworlds imagined in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the scarcity of indigenous historical figures combined to the high-nationalistic aspirations furthered the ideological and social streamlining of the national past in the 1920s and 1930s.

Another nationalised hero in Karimo's work is Lord High Admiral, Lord High Constable of Sweden, Baron Clas Eriksson Fleming (1535–1597) who was the trustee of Swedish kings Eric XIV, John III and Sigismund Vasa²⁹. Fleming was the dictatorial governor of Finland and Estonia and in the

Finnish historiography he is known for crushing the late-sixteenth-century peasant uprising known as the Club War. In Karimo's work Fleming looks retrospectively back at the course of his life and the protagonist's inner voice reveals that he was a Finnish-speaking nobleman who never fully mastered Swedish, the language of the foreign conquerors (III: 113), a repeated story element when it comes to Fleming. Consequently, he becomes a prototypical Finnish hero: "the iron admiral" or "the fierce man of power" who had "enormous fists" and a "dreadful appearance ... as his unrestrained power exploded ... the figure of this immense man of power radiates mountainously amidst the night of the times past." (*ibid.*: 111, 119, 124, 138). Although of noble origin, Fleming seems to have lacked the upbringing appropriate for the gentry (Tarkiainen 2001), which provided Karimo's story with a nice twist: Fleming is constructed as stubborn, rude and shabby and, as such, a true Finn, especially when contrasted to the snobbish Swedish upper-class – a theme returned to several times in the course of Karimo's storyline.

However, even Karimo could not nationalize yet another medieval historical figure, namely Birger Jarl (c. 1200–1266). The Jarl was a Swedish statesman who was believed to have led the Second Swedish Crusade against Novgorod, an event that allegedly established Swedish rule in Finland. In the story the Jarl has just arrived in Finland and observes the landscape around him. He is the 'experiencing I' narrator of the scene, conveying embodied, seemingly immediate experience (cf. Erlil 2011: 158), and his authoritative inner voice takes note of the difference between the Finnish and Swedish people and the 'purity' of the Finnish culture. The Swedish conquest is thus textually undone by the emphasis on the insight the conqueror had: these are a *people* who have lived "in the middle of the endless woods since time immemorial" (II: 78).

The historical personages mentioned here are redesigned as Finnish heroes through a variety of narrative means from the depictions of their indisputably Finnish mental landscape to their manly manners and appearance. As said, they bridge the gap between the two 'real' independences, thus turning the fractured, episodic story into a coherent narrative. In the storyline of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* these haughty men form the beginning of the long chain of historical Finnish characters and, consequently, they become the national founding fathers.

EXEMPLARY OUTLAWS

As is also apparent from the above, the gallery of elevated heroes is counterpointed by humorously narrated episodes depicting odd figures, which can be interpreted in the framework of the common European popular memory of bandits (cf. Rigney 2012: 68). One of longest chapters in the third volume, "Wreckers" (III: 34–44)³⁰, is an adventure story and an adaptation of the Robin Hood theme. The chapter deals with the last years of the Kalmar Union, which was a series of personal unions uniting the Scandinavian area under the same throne from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Swedes strove to retain a fair degree of self-government and as a consequence, a war broke out between Gustav Vasa of Sweden and Christian II of Denmark,

which then spread to the eastern part of the Swedish territory, southern Finland, in the early 1520s.

The main protagonist of Karimo's story is the historical Nils Grabbe (d. 1549), a nobleman who became a guerrilla chief during the war. He had already been nationalised with a Finnish name, Master "Niilo", in nineteenth-century Finnish nationalist history writing (see for example Koskinen 1881 [1933], 139) but was, like so many of the early great men, problematic for the national gallery of heroes as there were no images of him.³¹ However, the historical novel has a particular ability to provide faceless heroes with a habitus that meets current demands, and *From the Darkness of the Tombs* attached the vivid image of Master Niilo to the national pantheon.

Niilo's appearance and habits are described in detail. Despite his historical noble background, he is not depicted as an upper class heroic leader like many of Karimo's protagonists, but as an odd character and a witty trickster figure who challenged the social distinctions with his outward appearance: "The outfit of the chief was slightly peculiar. He was wearing a knight's helmet and nobleman's gear around his shoulders, but had trousers made out of hemp and old-fashioned, clumsy leather boots. He had a sword and also a peasant's knife hanging from his belt" (III: 34). Despite his odd appearance, he commands the deep loyalty of his troops, "all weather-beaten men, hardened by the sea, their eyes open and courageous, and their arms able to deliver strong strokes and draw even the tightest bow" (*ibid.*).

The Danish enemy is depicted as numerically superior, but always outfoxed by the clever Finns, whose "stamina was dictated by their quality, not by their numbers" (*ibid.*: 35). The Finns hide and observe the gullible, unsuspecting enemy in the archipelago and conduct clever, disguised deceptions, including a man appearing in female clothing, seducing the simple men from the enemy side. In the end the property looted by the Danes is returned to its original owners and the Danish officers are cruelly but spectacularly punished. "Wreckers" is an entertaining and persuasive representation of the past, appealing in its fast, adventurous emplotment. The vogue for outlaw figures was often closely related to narratives of resistance (Rigney 2012: 68) and in Karimo's work these figures depict the underdog position of the Finns, emphasising that in spite of their numerical inferiority and material poverty, they would always survive. However, it was not enough to be more adventurous and cleverer than the enemy, as one of the followers of Niilo points out in his line: "And you know, Master Niilo, when it comes to the willingness to die ... in these times and especially on this coast everyone must be ready to face death at any point" (III: 44).

An important ingredient in the creation and maintenance of group cohesion is the shared understanding that some members of the group will be willing to sacrifice themselves in order to secure the survival of the group. The Finnish nationalist rhetorics had emphasised the sacrificial spirit necessary for national survival ever since the mid-nineteenth century, when the 'national philosopher' J. V. Snellman (1806–1881) formulated his Hegelian-based national philosophy of sacrificing personal aspirations on the altar of the common good. As already noted, in the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially after the Civil War, the deceased of previous

centuries – those who died both in the wars and in everyday toil – were also called to join in the sacrificially-inclined group of heroic Finns. Their blood sanctified the national soil as the internal violence of the Civil War was turned into an inevitable formative national experience. The adventures of Master Niilo, like the many other exciting and exotic but harsh destinies Karimo enthusiastically described, are entertaining adventure stories, but at the same time they are part of the didactic, exemplary stock of emplotments of national survival and, as such, moral compasses in the present of reading.

All the memory figures discussed above had had a visible, multimedial presence in the cultural memory from the nineteenth century onwards: for example the core image of Bishop Thomas of Turku (Åbo) as a warrior bishop had circulated in Finnish-nationalist history writing and turn-of-the-century historical novels and plays³² and was reproduced in Juhani Aho's *Images and Fantasies* and Einar Juva's *Chronicles*. The figure of Nils Grabbe / Master Niilo was a popular subject in historical poems and plays from the 1860s onwards,³³ and the historian Senator Yrjö Koskinen (Georg Zacharias Forsman) mentions him, albeit briefly, in his grand Finnish-language narrative of the Finnish past, *History of the Finnish People* ("Suomen kansan historia") from 1881.³⁴ Aho's *Images and Fantasies* does not reach Grabbe's times, but Juva refers to him in passing (Juva 1950: II, 39-40).

Thus, the literal figures of memory discussed in this chapter were clearly alive and reusable (cf. Rigney 2012: 19) in the Finnish memory culture in the early twentieth century, but they have later faded away from the popular cultural memory. For example Baron Clas Fleming and his social equals were the focal point of many a nineteenth century text, whereas the twentieth century historical imagination has shifted the focus to the revolting peasant population and its individuals.³⁵ In Karimo's work, the characters discussed above are condensations of intertextual references both to earlier scholarly history writing and to fictive representations of the past, and as such (cf. Lachmann 2010: 304) they constitute the most important mnemonic nodes of it. *From the Darkness of the Tombs* did not interpret them anew, but it provided fodder for their continuing significance through its effective pictorial and textual reproductions; Karimo adopts the emplotments of earlier representations but amplifies and intensifies them – that is, nationalises and militarises them – in the service of the fervent White nationalism of the early 1930s.

It has been suggested that exemplariness and the capacity to provide a moral compass may be as important as authenticity and truth in the production of collective figures of memory (Rigney 2012: 33). In Karimo's stories these two sides merge: the introductory paragraphs and allusions to the earlier interpretations by trained historians create a referential level to the narrative, while vivid depictions of mentalities and the spatial worlds around them form its indispensable companion, the normative and easily memorable past.

Diachronic and Synchronic National Identity

Part of the effectiveness of Karimo's storyworld is its constant reference to communal traditions, practices and rituals. His stories delve into the community's shared understanding of its core values, morals and mental dispositions in their conscious textual performance of cultural stereotypes, including Finns themselves. In the following, two sides of national identity as displayed in Karimo's work will be discussed. Firstly, identity in the sense of 'being identifiable' will be addressed, closely linked to the idea of permanence through time. Karimo's stories played a part in creating this diachronic, seemingly unchangeable national identity by defining the world of the freeholding peasants as its essence, and by placing those social groups that did not comply with these values into the category of the ethnic Other. However, identity also has a synchronic dimension when it is building on what has been defined as a 'separate and autonomous individuality'. This side of communal identity is based on the assumption that a nation is most itself in those aspects wherein it is most unlike the others (Leerssen 2007a: 335–337). Interestingly this disparity is often created by the use of transnational motifs, tropes and emplotments.

HOW TO BE A FINN?

Crowd behaviour with its alleged feminine, affective sides was a popular subject in interwar Europe, and was also topical in a post-Civil War Finland trying to explain its recent past (Knuuttila 1999). The true character of the Finnish people was debated, as the earlier Runebergian idealised representations of the common people did not fit the experience of reality any more and it was doubted whether literature should even depict the lower classes at all. However, the earlier idealised characterisations of the rural people – educated in nationhood, peacefully and silently accepting their lot in life, and obeying the upper class authorities – survived and were actually revived: novelists contributing to this imagery were established as the true portrayers of the Finnish people, and consequently the earlier, nineteenth-century virtues were demonstratively re-established as the true mental landscape of the Finnish peasant (Varpio 1993: 62, 72–75).

An important ingredient of the national characterology thus proposed was obedience to superiors. Finns needed strong leaders to prevent their society from falling apart in Karimo's stories, but it was only other Finns who could lead them (II: 238; IV: 12). This emphasis on a hierarchical society reflects the fear of Karimo's political compatriots that the parliamentary successes of the Social Democratic party and the communist underground activities would destroy the 'achievements' of the Civil War in the late 1920s. The radical right wing criticised what was in its eyes too moderate a government and planned a *coup d'état* in order to replace the democratic system with a white dictatorship. Too democratic a society was seen as a threat since it would only lead to chaos and destruction, and rural conservatism and the unchangeable structure of the traditional peasant society were taken as models of the ideal society (Tepora 2011). Consequently, social and economic inequality, industrialisation and urbanisation, and the rural and the urban poor do not

belong in Karimo's set of national events or protagonists, and the working class only features in the last section describing the Civil War (IV: 326, 330, 332, 342).

The definition of the ideal prototypical Finn starts in the stories depicting the stone-age society. These stories are usually constructed around an individual who breaks with the traditional way of living and thinking and invents for example a new weapon type or a new hunting technique. And it is precisely the individual who, in Karimo's White storyline, is the backbone of society and the moving force of history. Furthermore, characteristic for Finns is the need to be undisturbed by society, a recurring theme in *From the Darkness of the Tombs* (I: 38, 128, 165; II: 24, 65–66; III: 20; IV: 65). Inventions are made in solitude; sociability and collaboration are not sources of innovation or qualities that create something new.

In Karimo's stories, the stone-age man is peaceful and lives mostly in harmony with his surroundings, whereas the glorious, heroic individuals are found in the Viking era. The folklorists of the recently independent nation emphasised the historicity of the national epic, the *Kalevala*, blotted out its former north-eastern origin and dated it back to the iron age, arguing that Finns possessed the same heroic ancient history as the other Nordic nations (Knuutila 1999). Thus Karimo's stories also depict the ancient Finnish civilisation as equal to that of the Vikings of the neighbouring areas, sharing their enthusiasm for warlike adventures.³⁶ And although no archaeological evidence of the Finnish Viking past existed, the longest chapter in the second volume depicts Finns (Karelians) attacking Sigtuna, the ancient Viking centre by lake Mälarn in present-day Sweden. In much of Eastern Europe the absence of continuous state histories produced a multitude of ethnic narratives that often shared the same geographical spaces (Berger & Lorenz 2008: 531) and the historical invasion of Sigtuna has been claimed by most of the neighbours of the Swedes, including Estonians and Finns (see Kaljundi in the present volume). For Karimo's argumentation based on the original independence it was important to appropriate the cruel expedition for one of the old Finnish tribes. He depicts colourfully the military actions, the pillaging of the town and the killing of its inhabitants, feasting with the brave brutality of the ancient life-style: "Vociferous robbing and macabre murdering ensued."³⁷

In this belligerent textual culture, the alleged bursting violence of the Finnish race was a positive trait. For Karimo Finns are "Leonidas of the North" (III: 238); they are good and loyal soldiers regardless of the war they are fighting very much in the nineteenth-century spirit of Topelius' *Surgeon's Stories* (see Hatavara's contribution).³⁸ Consequently, there is one kind of sociability that is imperative for national survival and that is military comradeship. The youth thus particularly benefit from soldierly discipline, the ideal life is lived in the confines of barracks, the sweetest companionship is military comradeship and the most glorious moment is not the victory but when the king says "Thank you, my men" to his soldiers (III: 200; IV: 139, 142).³⁹

The militarisation of the culture meant also its re-masculinisation after the more liberal, and in some eyes decadent, years around the turn of the

century. In art, this nationally introverted culture of the First Republic of Finland admired what was considered as stern, authentic peasant aesthetics, easily understandable for all citizens (Lindgren 2000). The underlined narrative and rhetorical simplicity and the conscious archaisms of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* are perhaps literary equivalents of these seemingly democratic aesthetic preferences.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the depictions of habits, gestures and physical appearances create a morally and politically manly, uncorrupted and unrefined nation. Thus the Finns occupying Karimo's storyworld seldom laugh heartily; they merely "smile their smiles" and continue with something else, or "smile briefly" (*hymähtävät*).⁴¹ Depictions of nature serve as metaphors or rhetorical enforcements of the national habitus too, like in the description of the prehistoric trial:

The form of the prosecutor was grim, the eyes of the interrogator grave, the jury unwavering, the tribe merciless. The soil was hard too, harder than rocks, the vast forest was impenetrable and the faraway sky distant. (I: 188.)⁴²

Furthermore, the town is not a setting in Karimo's work, with a few stories taking place in medieval towns as exceptions. Novelist Olavi Paavolainen (1903–1964) had represented the rhythm of the modern urbane world in his *In the Search for Modernity* ("Nykyäikää etsimässä"; 1929): "In the meanwhile jazz, silk stockings, traffic police, seven-storey apartment houses, cars selling illegal spirit ... had arrived in Helsinki."⁴³ Among the conservatives, this new, urban life-style was seen as a threat to traditional values (Karkama & Koivisto 1999) and *From the Darkness of the Tombs* opposes this decadent world with its entire narrative and visual means. Accordingly, the role reserved for women is small and narrow – actually almost non-existent. The female image delivered is defenceless, helpless and, according to the illustrations (I: 55; II: 43), preferably half-dressed, all of which emphasises the masculinity of the male protagonists.⁴⁴

In Karimo's work gender defines social relations essentially, whereas the ideal Finnish male society is classless, or very thinly layered below the imperative leading stratum: the prehistoric Finnish (male) civilisation is characteristically egalitarian and the possibility that the Finnish tribal societies also had social tensions is not a theme directly addressed. It thus reverts to the topos of democratic primitivism, found for example in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (Leerssen 2006, 49; see also Kaljundi's contribution in the present volume). In spite of this egalitarian narrative, one of the most important narrative templates, which also essentially explained the Civil War, is the template of the brotherly or tribal feud.⁴⁵ This was the original sin of Finns, and *From the Darkness of the Tombs* builds it up resolutely from the first volume onwards: an inclination to mutual hostility is offered as the ultimate explanation for the hardships the Finnish nation faced (I: 287; II: 114, 153, 350; III: 8, 19, 138; IV: 323).

The obvious process of class differentiation after the ancient society is explained by western influence. The Swedish intruders, other than the nationalised medieval heroes, are exemplified by 'haughty aristocrats' preying upon the Finnish population. It was the Swedish 'domination' that gave rise

to the class differentiation and, by definition, to the exploitation of the Finnish peasantry, a recurring theme in the stories. Finns participating in the medieval and early modern Swedish administration, often doing the dirty job of actually collecting taxes like rural police officials, is not a subject that Karimo looks to deal with; when it is mentioned, the involuntary character of the Finnish administrators is emphasised (II: 195–202). Introducing ancient Finns siding against their compatriots would undermine the narrative motif of foreigners conquering the formerly independent nation and break down the simplified and thus powerful ethnic opposition on which this motif rested.

THE MOST IMPORTANT OTHERS: FEMININE SWEDES, MURDEROUS RUSSIANS

As is apparent above, Finnishness is explicitly exhibited in a variety of ways in Karimo's stories. Finns also occupy different roles: there are both elevated heroes and slightly peculiar, humorously described lower class figures, especially in the adventure and war stories. Finnish characteristics are thus both exemplary and odd, and even the slightly negative qualities like stubbornness, muteness, drinking and fighting are almost proudly manifested as proof of racial and national peculiarity and thus representative of positive originality.⁴⁶ Contrasting Finns to the neighbouring nations also constructs it in more implicit, if not always subtle, ways. Unsurprisingly, the Finnish nation is constantly and emphatically defined especially against Swedes, a clear contrast to the concurrent Estonian Scandinavianisation of history. The status of Finland's Swedish-language culture and the historical role of Swedes as *Kulturtrågers* were vehemently debated in the inter-war period (Mikkeli 1999: 23) and Karimo's stories undermined the importance of such influences by denying any cultural or political loans between the two nations.⁴⁷ They also create sharp ethnic contrasts between the two nationalities, both textually and pictorially. Accordingly, one of the humorous villains of the third volume is a Swedish aristocrat visiting Finland:

And his way of walking and turning around then! Oh – one had not seen anything like that previously. He bowed and minced, held his hands on his waist, stretched his neck, lifted up his nose, smiled flatteringly. ... And when he was chasing away lice hiding in his armpits and other places, he did it with such a grace that many ladies fell for him once and for all. (III: 291.)⁴⁸

The Swedish or Swedified nobility is not only vain and useless. It is also promiscuous and, worst of all, it is suspect in its soft, flickering femininity.⁴⁹ All refinement as well as advanced social skills are ridiculed in Karimo's stories, and the Finns are almost proudly manifested as, "bear cubs going around in the court as if it were a swamp" (*ibid.*). Such contrasting of artificial refinement and natural authenticity mirror perhaps the late traces of the European-wide admiration of the unspoiled and original primitive, stemming from Tacitus and enforced by the Renaissance rediscovery of classical primitivism.⁵⁰ It was usable for the national narratives of developing, subaltern areas on the way to nationhood, and the topos of the savage

character of Finns was repeated in many pieces of historical fiction in the twentieth century.⁵¹

Whereas the western neighbour is described as arrogant, negligent and incompetent in the stories of *From the Darkness of the Tombs*, the eastern neighbour is constructed as the prototypical cruel, evil enemy. The last chapters of the third volume are almost grotesque in their violent imagery of raped women and mutilated infants.⁵² The author sets his stories in the periods known as the Greater and Lesser Wraths, the Russian occupations of the Finnish area in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was a popular theme in the historical writing of the nineteenth century (see for example Hatavara's contribution in this volume), and has divided Finnish history writing in the twentieth century: in the politically sensitive post-Second World War period it was claimed that the earlier tradition of horror stories exaggerated the Russian terror during the periods of occupation. However, the latest research has noted that plundering an area and terrorising its inhabitants was a part of eighteenth-century warfare and the population of western Finland in particular suffered gravely under the Russian occupation (Vilkuna 2005). In other words, modern research would probably recognise many features of Karimo's narrative depicting the Wraths and the Finnish destinies during them. However, in Karimo's storyline it is not the general cruel, inhuman logic of warfare that are the main explanatory force; it is the more specific Russian barbarism and the Swedish neglect that explain the fate of the Finnish nation in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The playground of stereotyping in Karimo's work is the nearby Baltic Sea region: the simple Danes and the adventurous Estonians,⁵³ but above all, the people west and east of Finland. In the constant process of defining and redefining Finnish ethnicity, *From the Darkness of the Tombs* used old elements and rewrote and accelerated them in accordance with the self-congratulatory national self-esteem and optimism of the inter-war decades. In these definitions, a balancing process is in action whereby the internal cohesion and external distinctness of the group outweigh the group's internal diversity and its external similarities (Leerssen 2007a: 337). This stereotyping performs a task on the level of narrative structure too: for the sake of emplotment and narrative tension, there have to be heroes and villains, conflicting characters and characteristics, which contribute to the memorability of the interpretations offered by Karimo's work.

Conclusions

In the end of the story depicting the raid of Sigtuna, the leader of the Finnish Vikings urges his men on to further looting although the town was already taken by stating: "You managed to accomplish it with very little effort ... too easy a life is not a good life" (II: 45). This line is a crystallisation of the general message conveyed by the 1450 pages of Karimo's work: an effortless life creates soft and feminine individuals and nations and only by prevailing through recurring hardships can a nation achieve its true grit and become manly and vital enough to survive.

On the whole, *From the Darkness of the Tombs* is a representative piece of high-nationalistic historical literature of the Finnish interbellum. It emphasised belligerent manliness, reverted to what was constructed as egalitarian rural morals and values as the basis of national culture, defined the Finnish self-image by contrasting it to the feminised western and brutalised eastern neighbours, and passed on embodied knowledge of how to 'perform us' in literary form, as so many pieces of Finnish literature had done since the nineteenth century (cf. Saukkonen 2007). It offered its readers neither new historical heroes nor surprising emplotments: the effectiveness of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* rests at least partly on its apparent and close ties to the active cultural memory surrounding it, for example in the form of the figures of memory discussed above. Historical fiction always plays with the interaction between the readers' prior knowledge and their accompanying ability to recognise the past represented, and the novelistic freedom of opening up or amplifying the singularities of the bygone (see Tiina Ann Kirss' contribution in the present volume). Karimo's work has a very explicit take on evoking the existing knowledge by framing the fictive stories – "visions", as the author has it – with textual and pictorial references to archaeological findings, historical documents and scholarly works. The amplified parts of Karimo's work, both textual and pictorial, then fleshed out historical events or characters, thus tuning up and intensifying the earlier narrativisations.

The cultural weight of Karimo's work in the early 1930s derives precisely from its form as a composite objectification of memory, from its unforeseen hybridity, which defied strict generic definitions. This constant alteration between different literary genres of presenting the past, with their own generic conventions and their own ways of persuasive world-making, is the major feature of the 'poetics of memorability' of Karimo's work. An equally important part is played by those amplified story elements – the depictions of certain characters, events and episodes in the past, defined as figures of memory – that possess the literary and rhetorical, often in Karimo's case multimodal, quality of gluing the readers into the storyworld thus proposed, evoking an identificatory reading and making the bygone alive, significant and 'ours'. They are moments in the text that reach over its intratextual closed universe, referential and associational threads that connect the representation to the web of mnemonic culture surrounding it.

Although one of the main arguments of Karimo's work is the parallel uniqueness of Finnishness and its textual, semiotic enactment at hand, transnational story-matters, narrative templates and topoi were central to and operative in the stories of *From the Darkness of the Tombs*, from the depictions of classical soldier virtues to the heroic characters possessing primitive yet manly qualities to the European-wide fascination for romantic outlaw figures. In the context of the present work, it is also worth noting the clear similarities in the post-independence, secessionist nationalist discourses in Estonia and Finland, both new nations building their autoimages on masculine, military nationhood and rewriting the past accordingly.

The narrative features discussed above gave *From the Darkness of the Tombs* its specific cultural texture, a texture that the inter-war reception was

attuned to. As a complete storyworld and hence an effective proposition of reality, it established an authoritative story of the Finnish past. It did not take any chances when it came to readers’ ability to interpret the metanarrative informing its storyline or the creation of the type of the ideal Finn. It seems that the newborn nation that was about to lose the inheritance of the Civil War – in the eyes of Karimo’s right-wing, conservative political compatriots – could not accommodate vast interpretative horizons, vague storylines or alternate perspectives.

NOTES

- 1 As Derek Fewster (2006: 310, 338) has aptly described Karimo’s work and its influence.
- 2 A clumsy but more literal translation would be “Out of / From the Night of the Barrows”. See for example Fewster 2006: 346.
- 3 The average number of copies of each publication was 3000 at the time. See for example Fewster 2006: 354. Carl Grimberg’s slightly earlier Swedish equivalent, *Wonderful Destinies of the Swedish People* (“Svenska folkets underbara öden”, I–IX, 1913–1924) sold even more at approximately 200,000 copies per volume. Torbacke 1993: 144.
- 4 Mikkonen 2011: 23; Uola 2000.
- 5 Finland fought the Continuation War (1941–1944) alongside the Axis powers. After the war, Finland managed to retain its independence, but had to cede nearly 10% of its territory to the Soviet Union.
- 6 As Professor Päiviö Tommila (1983: V–IX) testified in his short introduction to the last edition of *From the Darkness of the Tombs* from 1983.
- 7 For example a compilation work *The Battles of Finns in the Armies of Sweden, Russia and Independent Finland* (“Suomalaisten taistelut Ruotsin, Venäjän ja itsenäisen Suomen riveissä”; ed. Otto Manninen, 2007) contains several images from *From the Darkness of the Tombs*. Mikkonen 2011: 12. The current prehistoric exposition at the Finnish National Museum uses Karimo’s illustrations too.
- 8 See for example the latest history of Finnish literature, *Suomen kirjallisuushistoria* 1–3 (1999), which covers many pieces of popular literature. However, there are few scholarly works that either study Karimo directly (his biography or his illustrations: see the two MAs written on these subjects: Vappu Wilska’s *Aarno Karimo kansallisen identiteetin muodostajana* [University of Jyväskylä 1981] and Anniina Mikkonen’s *Kamppailun, kurituksen ja kauhun kuvat. Väkivallan merkitykset Kumpulujen yöstä -teoksen kuvituksissa* [University of Lapland, 2011]) or include Karimo’s stories and illustrations among their research material, like the historian Derek Fewster did in his dissertation *Visions of Past Glory. Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (2006). Fewster mainly discusses the first two parts of Karimo’s work.
- 9 Aleida Assmann (2010: 98–104) distinguishes between cultural working memory (the canon; active functional remembering), cultural reference memory (the archive; passive remembering) and passive and active cultural forgetting. The elements that have been passively forgotten are dispersed in forgotten deposits, and have fallen out of the frames of attention, valuation and use. However, they can be and indeed sometimes are, retaken into cultural circulation. Actively forgotten memories are destroyed, censured or tabooed. The model is useful when it comes to analysing literature as a medium of memory, although there seems to be an overlap between passive remembering and passive forgetting. Hence the simplified

- term ‘passive cultural memory’ is used to cover both areas of passive cultural preservation.
- 10 In memory studies, procedural memory is defined as the area of community traditions, practices and rituals, and that of cultural and social skills, passed on at the individual level without conscious learning. See Connerton 1989. However, literature enables this learning too. Procedural aspects of collective identity can take an explicit, visible form, for example when national stereotypes are critically displayed. Erlil 2011: 108.
 - 11 The political upheavals in the beginning of the century challenged it and created literary counter-traditions and new kinds of characters and topoi in historical fiction. However, Topelian historical fiction came out as a winner amidst these new literary currents, to be challenged only after the Second World War. See also the introduction.
 - 12 Also worth a mention is the historian Zacharias Topelius’ influential *Book of our Land* (“Maamme kirja”; the first edition from 1875), a compilation work depicting Finnishness through geographical, historical and cultural points of view.
 - 13 See for example the Viking story in the first volumes of both works that has the same *in media res* beginning. “Ice melts in the north! Snow disappears, brooks gush, and rivers swell. The calm fjord is free of ice. The spring has arrived and the ships are rolled into the sea.” Grimberg 1916: 155; Juva 1932: 128. It is also striking how similar the outward appearance of Grimberg’s and Juva’s works are, from the size to the layout.
 - 14 In the first volume, the illustrations are also listed before the table of contents, emphasising their centrality for Karimo’s narrative. In the later volumes, the order has been turned around.
 - 15 “No one knew whence the anecdote originated. No one probably asked. The knowledge about it spread like a wind across immense distances”, begins the chapter depicting the spread of weaving in the first volume. Karimo 1934: I: 50. In the closing sentence of the chapter describing a Viking attack on the Finnish shores “(t)he watch man hurried down the hill, leaving the fire on. There was nothing left for him to do up there, whereas on the shore every man was needed to defend the possessions, homes and lives of the people”. Karimo 1934, I: 202.
 - 16 Karimo emphasises several times that there actually were many more stories but he had been forced to select only some of them due to the limited space of his work. See for example Karimo IV: 7.
 - 17 This was at least partly a reaction to and an outcome of the political pressure created by the Russian efforts to bring the Grand Duchy closer to the Russian administration, the divided reactions of the Finnish political parties and the more general growth in political participation after the Parliamentary reform of 1906. Tommila 1989: 182–186. See also the introduction to the present volume.
 - 18 In regard to the Finnish Civil War, see the introduction and Hietasaari’s contribution.
 - 19 The line is from the first volume of a collection of militant short stories, *Finnish Heroes* (“Suomalaisia sankareita”) I–II, published in 1915 and 1921 and authored by novelists Santeri Ingman / Ivalo (1866–1937) and Kyösti Wilkuna (1879–1922). Fewster 2006: 346–347.
 - 20 In Sweden for example the novelist Verner von Heidenstam used the formulation in his historical novels from the beginning of the century. Besides Ivalo and Wilkuna mentioned above, authors who used it in Finland were Arvid Genetz, Iivo Härkönen, U.T. Sirelius and Albert Gebhard, among others. Fewster 2006: 346–348
 - 21 In the first volume, 9 out of 33 chapters are real-world storytelling, while in the second volume 5 out of 35 chapters are. In the third and fourth volumes the ratio changes and 18 out of 34 chapters and 24 out of 30 chapters are factual. Besides this clear divide between the volumes, the themes turned into fictional stories do

not seem to follow any discernible pattern. The author had clearly followed his inspiration. Only 13 out of 132 chapters (including the prefaces) consist of purely descriptive event-history with no fictional elements. Most of these are depictions of war.

- 22 It should be pointed out that Karimo does not use photographs like for example Grimberg and Ivalo did in their works; perhaps this would break the illusion of the artistic entity.
- 23 An obvious frame of reference for *From the Darkness of the Tombs* are the paintings of Akseli Gallén-Kallela (1865–1931), the Finnish ‘Golden Age’ artist from the turn of the century, under whom Karimo had studied, and whose National Romantic influence is visible in Karimo’s work. Mikkonen 2011.
- 24 Astrid Erll has emphasised that a media product must always be understood as no more than an ‘offer’ to a mnemonic community. This offer can be accepted, but the media product can also be ignored, or used in ways other than memorial. Erll 2011: 123.
- 25 The idea of the ‘inner independence’ is one of the differences between the national emplotments of Finland and Estonia. In Finland, the relationship to the Tsarist regime was already conceived of in these terms in the later nineteenth century to argue for Finland’s (relative) administrative independence, see for example Engman 2009. In Estonia, on the other hand, the administrative and economic upper class was German Baltic, which in the Estonian view on the pronouncedly Estonian past hardly qualified for an ‘inner independence’. One could also note that Norway, which was first part of Denmark (from 1536 until 1814) and then part of Sweden (1814–1905), correspondingly emphasised its unbroken history from the Viking era to the nineteenth century. The period of ‘inner independence’ underplayed the significance of the Danish past and argued for Norway’s position as a ‘historic nation’, albeit one with an interrupted state history. However, Norway’s situation differs from that in Finland in one essential point, namely that there is an extensive body of medieval historical sources depicting early Norse history. Aronsson, Fulsås, Haapala & Jensen 2008.
- 26 The exceptions to the nationalised, historical heroes in Karimo’s work are the King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden and the Russian Tsar Alexander I. Their voices as narrating characters are used to characterise Finnishness and Finnish qualities from the perspective of ultimately the highest foreign authority, thus supporting the main narrator of the work.
- 27 See also the “masculine and responsive” bishop of Turku (Åbo) Arvidus Kurck (or Arvid Kurki, approximately 1460–1522) “who set to fighting for his patria when he saw that the decisive moment had arrived”, and the depiction of Maunu Tavast who was “great as a bishop, great as a statesman and great as a person ... his mind remained always pure, his heart humble and his deeds noble.” Karimo 1934, II: 292–294, 349, 353.
- 28 It could be also pointed out that in both Danish and Swedish nationalist history writing the Catholic Church and hence the medieval nobility were among the most important internal Others in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Aronsson, Fulsås, Haapala & Jensen 2008: 263.
- 29 Known also as Sigismund III Vasa, the King of Poland.
- 30 There are ten pages, but the chapter was printed using a smaller font than the other chapters.
- 31 See e.g. Lindgren (2000: 76) for the problems sculptors faced when they tried to depict national heroes without accurate pictures of them.
- 32 See for example Zacharias Topelius’ *Book of our Land* (“Maamme kirja”) 1899 [1981], 231–233; Yrjö Koskinen’s *History of the Finnish People* (“Suomen kansan historia”) 1881 [1933], 47–52; Kustavi Grotenfelt’s novel *The Crusade of Bishop Thomas* (“Tuomas piispan ristiretki”, 1895); Santeri Ivalo’s novel *Bishop Thomas*

- (“Tuomas piispa”, 1901); and Eino Leino’s play *Bishop Thomas* (“Tuomas piispa”, 1908). These all present “the war lord” Thomas but naturally the plot varies: Karimo’s work follows the employment of Ivalo’s novel whereas for example Leino presents Thomas’ tragic internal struggles and his destructive ambitions colourfully. The textual afterlife of the character of Grabbe after Karimo is beyond the scope of my chapter, but at least Mika Waltari has returned to him in his novel *The Adventurer* (see the introduction).
- 33 For poems, see for example *Papperslyktan* periodical 25.3.1861 and *Finsk Tidskrift* periodical 1880:5, and for a play *Finland* newspaper 8.2.1887 (“Några posthuma dramatiska blad af Fredrik Cygnaeus”).
- 34 “There was only one Finnish nobleman, Niilo Grabbe, master of Grabbacka, who fought a brave maritime guerilla war against the Danes on the coastal line of the Gulf of Finland”. Koskinen 1881 [1933]: 139.
- 35 See for example the historian Heikki Ylikangas’ many historical studies on the Club War and his historical novel *The War of Ilkkainen* (“Ilkkaisen sota”) from 1996.
- 36 These Finnish Vikings ravage and revenge without mercy by ship and on skis. They organise “courageous” and “glorious” military expeditions, which demand “advanced skills in ship-building, war-craft and sailing and determined discipline”. Karimo 1934, II: 31.
- 37 Karimo 1934, II: 45.
- 38 For the creation of positive sides of violence, see for example Karimo 1934, II: 117: “In the era when Finland was taken by Sweden, the living was powerful but at the same time violent and unrestrained.”
- 39 It seems that Karimo’s stories match the ideal representation of individual warriors that Vera Nünning (2012: 75) has detected in the depictions of pilots in the British Battle of Britain literature: firstly, the characters are bestowed with many attributes of the heroes of adventure tales; secondly, they become characters that transcend the military hierarchy, and thirdly, the group around the characters is presented as an ideal society of equals.
- 40 The protagonist of the first chapters is “The Man”, or more precisely “The Deer Man” or “The Salmon Man”. The stone-age dwellers are shortly and simply “the Stone People”. These national forefathers lived a harsh life at the mercy of nature, protecting their “females” and their “puppies” in their “nests”. Besides the old-fashioned words, there is plenty of repetition and alliteration which makes the dictation sound archaic, and sometimes the author takes recourse to a meter that sounds Kalevalaic. See Karimo 1934, I: 37, 143, 169, 187; II: 99, 182, 237; III: 22, 253, 370–373; IV: 19. However, using archaic expressions was not an unknown feature among contemporary historical novels, although the style varied from author to author. For example the Finnish-Estonian novelist Aino Kallas created a special archaic discourse for her historical novels written in the 1920s and 1930s. Melkas 2003. Another related example is that the Danish author Johannes Jensen’s protagonist in the first part of his Danish exodus series *The Long Journey* (“Den Lange Rejse”, 1908–1922) was simply The Man (*Mand*). For similar archaistic attributes in the Estonian cultural memory of the era, see Kaljundi in the present volume.
- 41 For “short smiles” see for example Karimo 1934, I: 138, 196, 205, 230, 252; II: 45, 78, 110, 180, 330; III: 44, 64, 113, 122, 343, 362; IV: 125, 126, 194, 235.
- 42 For the humanisation of nature, see for example the depiction of new inhabitants arriving in Finland when the territory was released from beneath the ice of the Ice Age, facing “a new land, carrying strong clay on its back.” Karimo 1934, I: 21. See also Karimo 1934, I: 83, 143; II: 76; III: 46, 250.
- 43 Quoted in Lindgren 2000: 123–124.
- 44 See also Kaljundi’s chapter where she argues that gender relations appear to be a more important arena for the construction of masculinity than the battlefield in the Estonian historical novels of the 1920s and 1930s.

- 45 As Joep Leerssen (2007b: 343–344) has demonstrated, the image of a nation includes a compound layering of different, contradictory counter-images, with (in any given textual expression) some aspects activated and dominating. As a result, most images of national character will boil down to a characteristic polarity.
- 46 In the beginning of the twentieth century it was also important to find the right racial category for these characteristics. However, the question of the position of Finns on the European racial map was difficult: Finns wanted to see themselves as the last Western frontier against oriental (Russian) barbarism, a theme shared by many nations facing the vast Russian territories, but anthropological and phrenological studies of the time hesitated to include Finns in the Western racial world. The category of the East Baltic race, invented in the 1920s, was the answer to the problem. East Baltics were defined as an athletic people of ploughers, skiers and hunters. They were physically sturdy, mentally dreamy, artistic, creative, resilient and composed. On the negative side they were constrained, bitter, envious, and even violent. Kemiläinen 1998: 240.
- 47 See for example Karimo 1934, IV: 12. In the introduction to the first volume Karimo (1934, I: 8) also declares that “no international models were available” for his work, although the chain of influence from Carl Grimberg to Juva to Karimo is obvious. This kind of reasoning has been defined as ‘cultural subtraction’ (cf. Knuutila 1999: 121), which in Karimo’s case takes place on several levels: by cleansing foreign elements from Finnishness, Karimo aimed to reveal the purified and unique and thus indisputably authentic core of it, and by denying there were any models for his work he testified to the truth-value of his interpretations.
- 48 See also the many depictions of the poor equipment of the Finnish soldiers in contrast to their Swedish counterparts. Karimo 1934, III: 62, 215, 328, 341, 348; IV: 155, 160, 177. Also the German soldiers, in contrast to the Finns in the Thirty Years War, are wearing “fancy outfits, almost like monkeys at the fair”. Karimo 1934, III: 206.
- 49 See for example Karimo 1934, III: 288; IV: 96–102. As already pointed out above, the relations between genders are depicted as traditional (in the sense of publicly active men and housebound women) in Karimo’s stories. On the other hand, the idealisation of the military life results in almost homoerotic admiration of the stern masculinity of G. M. Armfelt. Karimo 1934, IV: 193.
- 50 For primitivism and nationalism in the European context, see Leerssen 2006: 36, 39–40, 47–51, 66 and Leerssen 2007b: 343.
- 51 See also Karimo 1934, II: 313; III 243. The topos can be found in Kyösti Wilkuna’s collections of historical stories from 1910s to Väinö Linna’s realistic historical war depictions from the 1950s and 1960s. Rojola 1999: 120–121.
- 52 See for example Karimo 1934, III: 361. See also Karimo 1934, IV: 46, 48.
- 53 See for example Karimo 1934, II: 35.

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Challenging Expansions

Estonian Viking Novels and the Politics of Memory in the 1930s*

A summertime visitor to the ruins of the convent at Pirita will at the entrance to the imposing edifice find himself facing two flags, Estonian and Swedish. The sun is shining on the two flags flying in happy brotherhood on the flagpoles of the small south-eastern turret. For me, it is impossible to regard them without a certain sentiment. They are like two brothers who have found each other in their work for culture and justice. May the sun always shine on them!

These lines were written by Sigurd Curman (1936: 23), the National Archivist of Sweden, in a publication dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Pirita Convent in 1936.¹ The archaeological excavations and restoration work at the site had also seen close cooperation between Estonia and Sweden, and in 1932 Crown Prince Gustav Adolf had visited the convent. During the interwar period, the grandiose architectural monument not far from Tallinn acquired great symbolic significance as proof of Estonia's rightful place in the Nordic cultural space. This chapter focuses on two tendencies that were prevalent in Estonian memory politics in the 1930s at the national, scholarly, and popular scales alike. These tendencies were the Scandinavianisation of history, and the creation of a triumphant and militarist past for the young nation. These aspirations to redesign the past as both triumphant and Nordic are closely interwoven with the desire to reject the earlier colonial history and seek alternatives to replace it. In order to trace the complicated relations between colonial legacies and the memory politics trying to suppress them, we will focus on Estonian Viking novels that at first sight seem to offer excellent opportunities for reaching the goals of creating a new, Nordic, and triumphant history.

In addition, the chapter also addresses the similarities and variances of different media of cultural memory in this process. During the late 1930s, fiction quickly developed into one of the leading media for reshaping the nation's past and this period quickly became recognised as the second golden age of the Estonian historical novel (see the Introduction). In general, Estonian sites of memory appear to be primarily built upon stories created in literary fiction, a suggestion that has recently been frequently heard and is certainly well-founded. One of the best examples of this effect is the St George's Night Uprising (1343–1345), a rebellion that does not easily lend

itself to historical interpretation and was largely neglected in Baltic German cultural memory. For the Estonians however, this event became one of the most crucial in their national history because of novellas written in the late nineteenth century during the rise of the Estonian national movement (see also the chapters by Laanes and Undusk). At around the same time, the role of fiction was no less significant in creating the narrative of the so-called ancient fight for freedom, which was based on the histories of the Livonian crusades in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The fundamental importance of these two events, the St George's Night Uprising and the ancient fight for the Estonian version of the past, make it easy to argue that the most influential constructors of the core narrative of the nation's history were not historians or politicians but writers of fiction (Tamm 2008: 507–508; Tamm 2012a). This is essentially not surprising – as Ann Rigney (2001: 53; cf. 2004) pointedly argues, literature is especially efficient in shaping cultural memory for both practical and poetic reasons. First, fictive stories are relatively easy and cheap to publish, circulate and reproduce. Second, novels and novellas are attractive for their aesthetic and narrative qualities, such as a coherent, narrativised representation of events and the possibility of identification. In addition, literature provides a potential source of alternative stories (Rigney 2001: 53–55). This is especially important for so-called young nations without history such as the Estonians or Finns, whom historical sources have not endowed with many heroes or stories they could or would like to identify with (Kaljundi, Kļaviņš 2011: 430).

However, it is not the simplicity of the form and format of the Estonian Viking novels that is of interest for us here, but their complexity, the way that literature is in some cases better than any other medium of cultural memory at enabling us to consider the difficulties and challenges that were encountered in the course of remaking history. Undoubtedly, there were certain paradoxes even in the rituals and monumental works of art and architecture chiefly employed in the Scandinavianisation of Estonian history during the interwar period.² An example of this is given by the Pirita Convent, which had indeed belonged to the Birgittine Order and thus suggested close historical ties to Sweden. However, the convent buildings and their monumentality, which gave Pirita its attraction as a site of memory (Kaljundi 2007), were in fact a memorial to the Germans in Estonia, as the convent, founded in 1402, was built long before the Swedish reign in Estonia, and largely at the initiative of the Teutonic Order (Kreem, Markus 2007). Whereas architectural forms tend not to disclose this kind of misconception, one of the surprising traits of the Viking novels is how clearly they reveal that rewriting the past is by no means an easy task. This should not be taken to mean that the most prestigious Viking novels of the thirties that will be addressed here – Karl August Hindrey's (1875–1947) *Urmas and Merike* ("Urmas ja Merike", 2 vols., 1935–36) and August Mälk's (1900–1987) *Lords of the Baltic Sea* ("Läänemere isandad", 1936)³ – were particularly complicated literary works. However, they were certainly momentous at the time as the authors were renowned writers and the novels enjoyed wide popularity among readers and critical acclaim and accolades from the authorities.⁴ Although both Hindrey

and Mälik were eager participants in the “race towards the past” (Laaman 1936: 117) that had overwhelmed Estonian authors in the 1930s, and both of them published other historical works as well⁵, it was their Viking novels that made them leading figures of the boom in historical fiction. Even though the works of both authors long remained on the list of forbidden books during the Soviet period, the reprints published in exile and in Estonia after the 1990s let us regard both novels as still circulating in Estonian cultural memory even though their authority and appeal are long past their peak.⁶

The following analysis of these two works will sustain a rather Walter Benjamin-inspired attempt to brush triumphant history against the grain. Under the impact of the First World War and the rise of National Socialism in Germany, Walter Benjamin in his famous essay *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (“Über den Begriff der Geschichte”, 1940) criticised the nineteenth-century Historicism that he believed empathised “with the victor” (1969: 256). He urged his readers “to brush history against the grain” and to seek the nameless tradition of the oppressed (Benjamin 1969: 256–257). As we shall see, this task is more ambiguous when related to the Estonia of the 1930s. The earlier version of Estonia’s national history had indeed identified with the oppressed and the nameless in the shape of the peasantry and thus it functioned in a way as a counter-memory to the dominant Baltic German ‘history of the victors’. But now, in an aspiration to adopt or imitate the victors’ hegemonic version of the past, it wished to cast aside the victim experience. Or, as Benjamin states: “all rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. Hence, empathy with the victor invariably benefits the rulers. ... Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession” (1969: 256). Enquiring into the flaws, gaps, and uncertainties in the new, triumphant version of Estonian history, this chapter will link them to the return of the memories of the oppressed and to the legacies of colonialism reflected in literature.⁷

Towards a Triumphant and Nordic Past

As already mentioned, a favourable horizon of expectations for the Viking novels was opened by a considerable strategic change in Estonian memory politics in the second half of the 1930s, the heyday of the authoritarian regime established in 1934 and of the concomitant state nationalism. Whereas the Estonians’ ideological message had earlier been based on the moral superiority of a wrongfully conquered and enslaved ancient *Kulturnation*, it now seemed desirable to replace it more and more with narratives of ancient triumph and glory at the official, scholarly, and popular levels. It is not surprising that war and warriors consequently gained a central role in historical memory, especially given the much wider militarising trends that dominated many late interwar European societies, including Finland (see Pikkanen’s chapter). In Estonia, the War of Independence (1918–1920) and the early thirteenth century fight against the crusaders, known as the ancient fight for freedom, often came to be regarded as two parts of the same, ultimately triumphant, war fought for a sovereign nation state of Estonians,

making them the key events of Estonian history.⁸ This led not just to a general militarisation of history but also to a focus on victories: typical of the period were the debates about whether it was appropriate or not for the Estonian state to commemorate the St George's Night Uprising, which had been suppressed by the Teutonic Order and hence constituted a lost fight (Tamm 2008: 509–510).

Another factor that favoured the emergence of the Vikings was the attempt to Scandinavianise Estonian history. The Scandinavian orientation was obviously present in Estonia before the Second World War, and one of the better-known examples of it is the concept of Baltoscandia, created by the Swedish geographer Sten de Geer (1886–1933) and developed further by the Estonian Edgar Kant (1902–1978) and the Lithuanian Kazys Pakštas (1893–1960). Although security policy considerations were also relevant in the Scandinavian connection, the dimension of memory politics and the desire to build a rampart against the Russian and especially the German colonial history should be ascribed equal relevance. It is notable that a similar tendency to promote Scandinavia in the outlook on the past and the present was also evident in the Republic of Latvia between the two World Wars (Misāns 2008: 188). A point was made of emphasising ancient ties to Scandinavia in Estonian art history and heritage politics, while the idea of the 'good old Swedish time' and its younger relation the 'good old Danish time'⁹ acquired a key position as principles governing the organisation of historical narrative. As the Viking novels chiefly connect Estonian history to Sweden, we are mostly interested in the idea of a golden Swedish age, taken to be the period of the Swedish rule in Estonia in about 1583/1629–1700¹⁰, which had already become popular in Estonian historiography at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹¹ Although the idea is strongly related to criticism towards the German elites, the 'good old Swedish time' is in itself a telling example of Estonian nationalists having adopted far more elements from the German version of Baltic history despite their ideological opposition to it than we are wont to believe. The pronounced pro-Lutheran and pro-Swedish attitude is known to be a legacy of the sixteenth and seventeenth century historians, and especially Balthasar Russow¹² and Christian Kelch, whose chronicles reflected the Swedish sympathies of the German-speaking upper class during the times when the early modern states fought over the Baltic territories in the Livonian War (1558–1583), the Polish-Swedish Wars (1600–1629) and the Great Northern War (1700–1721). Even though the support of the Livonian elite for the Swedish rule was not absolute, the Swedophilia of those times found its way into Estonian national historical writing.

However, it seems plausible to suggest that the idea of the golden Swedish time brings some relief for Estonian history, which is otherwise haunted by the image of a '700-year-long night of slavery', a metaphor that originated in the Enlightenment and that had become attached during the rise of the nationalist movement to the entire long period of history when the German-speaking upper class was dominant on Estonian territory, beginning from the end of the crusades in 1227. Although serfdom first became more clearly established in early modern times and was not ubiquitous even then, this metaphor extended the 'night of slavery' to the entire period of German or

'foreign' rule prior to the abolition of serfdom by the Russian Tsar in 1816 and 1819. For the national narrative, this flash of light – the 'golden Swedish time' – in the middle of the overwhelming darkness of the past enabled a brief breathing spell, a moment of ease from the tensions of the colonial history. The serious need for alternatives is also obvious from the emergence of the strong emphasis on Finnish connections in Estonian national historiography at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although it is worth noting that the idea of Estonian-Finnish brotherhood based on the kinship of languages is also a legacy of Baltic German authors (Pöldvee 2013). However, in the interwar period, the Swedish orientation was given preference over the Finno-Ugrian visions. At first glance, it brought a suggestion of superpower supremacy to Estonian history. The representations of the Swedish period in Estonia focus on the Swedes' military and intellectual superiority as they highlight advances in wars, administration, and education at both university and popular level. At the same time there was a serious problem with Swedish rule, which was the hidden colonial history. As pointed out above, the *Skandinavisierung* of Estonia's past was attractive largely because it established some distance from the legacy of the German and Russian colonialism. As a result, the Swedes have been cleared of all the negative coloniser characteristics in the pattern of the 'good old Swedish time'. Yet a question arises: is it possible to overcome the legacies of colonialism through this kind of transaction? We will return to this issue in our analysis of the Viking novels, assuming that although the discourse of the 'golden Swedish time' is limited to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these works reflect a desire to Scandinavianise even the earliest, ancient history of Estonians.

At the same time however, the Viking novels take advantage of one of the most attractive components of the Scandinavian past. Hence, Estonia's own small 'ride of the Valkyrs' had a much wider background, reflecting the international fascination with Vikings that originated in the eighteenth century and had become a high fashion in the nineteenth. The adoption of the Vikings is a good example of the ways in which the Estonian past was constructed on images and forms of expression derived from an international repertoire. Furthermore, there was no need for the authors of the Viking novels to start from scratch at the level of local cultural memory, as Estonia's young national or nationalist art had already paved the way for the domestication of the Vikings in the early twentieth century. The iconic example is Nikolai Triik's (1884–1940) triptych *Kalevipoeg's Sailboat Lennuk* ("Lennuk", 1910) depicting Kalevipoeg, the eponymous hero of the Estonian national epic, sailing on a Viking ship. Alongside the influence of Scandinavian, especially Norwegian, Nationalist Romantic art, the impact of Russian examples should also be emphasised. A special mention should be made of Nikolai Roerich (1874–1947), the teacher of several Estonian artists, and his strong fascination with the Viking era in ancient Rus.¹³ The romantic fascination with the Vikings brought a considerable dose of militancy to the young Estonian art in the early twentieth century. First and foremost, however, it was the Viking ship – an important Viking attribute recognised internationally – that became the signature of the artistic images of Estonian Vikings.¹⁴ Significantly, we can even see it on the cover of the third *Young*

Estonia (“Noor-Eesti”) album (1909; the artist is again Triik), although that highly influential literary group is generally associated with disavowing the romantic attitude to the past and with the triumph of Modernism in Estonian art and literature.

After the Estonian Republic had been established, the image of the Viking ship retained its fascination, and became widely reproduced thanks to its use in applied art, design and visual culture at large. The best examples of this are the series of postal stamps and a coin that featured an image of a Viking ship.¹⁵ Given how few local visualisations of history there were, both Estonian and Baltic German, and that the existing images therefore gain a considerable impact on cultural memory¹⁶, the sustained visual presence of the Vikings can be regarded as especially potent. The period between the two World Wars did not add many new large-scale historical images either, but one of the few exceptions also makes use of the Viking motif. It was planned to decorate the meeting room of the building of the Office of the President at Kadriorg (1937–1938) with a tapestry that would show the elders of ancient Estonia concluding a treaty with the Vikings.¹⁷ In addition to visual culture, performative media also contributed to the domestication of the idea of Estonian Vikings as they found their way to the stages of the young national culture. In 1928 Evald Aav’s *Estonian Vikings* (“Vikerlased”) was set up as the first ever Estonian opera; this first production of the opera was performed 22 times, a truly remarkable number for those times (Mikk 1999). The libretto was based on Karl August Hermann’s (1851–1909) novella *Auulane and Ülo* (“Auulane ja Ülo”, 1886), which had launched the theme of Vikings in Estonian literature. The key event in both the story and the opera is the Estonians’ attack on Sigtuna in 1187 (more on which below).

On the whole, the Estonian Vikings provide a pertinent example of how events, characters and sites making up the core of historical memory are mostly born out of a cooperation between different media of cultural memory. As Ann Rigney (2005: 20) puts it, “it is through recursivity – visiting the same places, repeating the same stories – that cultural memory is constructed as such.” In other words, the intensity of the meaning of phenomena, characters and events circulating in cultural memory is warranted by repeated performance of acts of remembrance and the recurrent representation of a past phenomenon in different media. The Vikings have mostly been transported between visual culture and fiction, the two most effective media according to Rigney (*Ibid*). Furthermore, the Estonian Viking novels carried on the tradition of visual presentation of the Vikings through the multiple illustrations of both *Urmas and Merike* and *Lords of the Baltic Sea* – the illustrator in both cases was the St Petersburg-educated artist Eduard Järv (1899–1941). In 1930s, Järv illustrated several nation-building works, including many leading historical novels.¹⁸ Incidentally, it is worth noting that Järv also designed the brooch in the shape of a Viking ship that became extremely popular in the late 1930s and was even somewhat emblematic of the period (Kalm 2010b: 601) – another indication of the role played by design in keeping the Vikings visible in the everyday environment. As the illustrations were no longer used in later publications, at least not to the full extent, it would be easy to forget how important the

links to visualisations of history were for the historical fiction of the time (see also Pikkanen's chapter for their role in imagining Finnish history). In Hindrey's and Mäлк's works, several motifs used in Järv's illustrations – especially the recurrent image of the ship – create an association with the image of Estonian Vikings that already existed in cultural memory. The ships sailing on the book covers and on the illustrated chapter heads become a visual introduction to both novels and to most of their chapters. Within the text, ships also acquire a symbol status, appearing in the opening lines of both novels. Although the mutually supportive role of the images created in different media, helping to substantiate the idea of Estonian Vikings, has been stressed here, this is not to say that the representations should be seen as mechanical copies and mere reproductions of existing meanings: each representation carries the meaning further, but also reshapes it, bringing new interpretations (Rigney 2005: 20–21). It would be impossible here to exhaust the many changes inevitably brought about by the shift from the visual to the verbal representation of the Vikings; however, we shall now address some of the most remarkable transformations stemming from the Estonian Vikings' journey from images to the written word.

Viking Fiction and the Rewriting of Estonian History in the Late 1930s

It should first be noted that the two great Estonian Viking novels of the 1930s are not very similar in form. Nevertheless, what makes it impossible to talk about Mäлк without Hindrey or about Hindrey without Mäлк is the similarity of the strategies and subjects that both authors resort to, intending to make the national history greater, and the similarity in the way the flaws in this greater history are revealed. *Urmas and Merike: A Story a Thousand Years Around* is above all a family saga. The main character Urmas comes from a noble family, but has been captured by Lithuanians. Returning home at the beginning of the novel, Urmas discovers that he has lost everything: the family's farm and fortune have been spent on his ransom, and his wife and son are dead. The classic, even predictable plot of Part I tells of Urmas recovering and redoubling his social status as he makes a new, even greater fortune, builds a bigger farm and bigger family, and becomes the elder of the parish and the county. But while the first part of the novel is a real success story, where Urmas easily accomplishes all the tasks he has set himself, in Part II he once again loses all his fortune and finds himself abroad, this time outlawed from his community. He makes another fortune, but now as a pirate outside the socially acceptable hierarchies. At the end, the exiled hero returns to save his country at its hour of need, but he is killed in battle.

The main character of Mäлк's *Lords of the Baltic Sea*, Alar, is also a son of one of the great elders. The novel itself is more or less an adventure tale. Alar's escapades offer a wide variety of events and circumstances rising above the routine of the everyday, with heroic deeds, beautiful women, miraculously narrow escapes, and so forth. However, behind the tale of adventures is a graver purpose: as the subtitle *A Novel of the Estonian Viking Time*

announces, the story aims to depict the ancient greatness of the Estonian Vikings. The choice of the island of Saaremaa as the setting for this novel is only to be expected, and not just because Mälik himself was a Saaremaa man who associated his literary profile with his native island. Saaremaa was named as the home of Estonian pirates in medieval historical sources, and even in later Estonian national cultural memory the local Vikings are mostly associated with that island.

In content and form, both novels correspond to the classic model of the nineteenth-century historical novel as defined by Georg Lukács (1955). The form is epical, and the novels focus on a great upheaval or conflict between old and new societal formations, describing it through characters whose lives are transformed by the changes. The main characters are fictitious, but their adventures are corroborated by historical personages and events. Likewise, both works take considerable trouble to paint as detailed a picture as possible of the living conditions of the past, and especially of the popular culture. While such attempts at the totalising retrospect are usually associated with the nineteenth-century classic historical novel (Lukács 1955, cf. Anderson 2011), this feature is more characteristic in Estonia of the literature of the 1930s. During the first great wave of the national historical novel, there was little research into the history of the Estonians, who were the peasantry, and detailed descriptions of historical milieus and material were hard to find.¹⁹ Estonian authors of historical fiction mostly projected the social relations and manor settings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into the ancient past²⁰, or resorted heavily to popular ethnography in their descriptions of ancient times. Hermann's novella *Auulane and Ülo* referred to earlier is a good example of the latter tendency with its abundant descriptions of folk songs, dances and dress creating an archaic and yet timeless folk festival mood. The authors of historical novels in the 1930s, on the other hand, had at their disposal numerous recent studies into ethnography, folklore and history, as these disciplines, known as national sciences, were very popular at the time and focused programmatically on researching the history of the Estonians as the peasantry or 'country folk' (Kirss 2008: 224; Tamm 2012b: 40–41). Just like writers, scholars also aspired to perfecting the total description of the ancient past and its customs, which in turn were seen as a foundation of the modern national values and culture.

The Viking novels also take considerable pains in (re)constructing the nation's ancient and authentic way of life. Hindrey in particular attempts to render a comprehensive picture of ancient Estonia and the workings of its society. His detailed depictions of the living environment bear some resemblance to ethnographic studies, as not only fortresses and dwellings, but also their interiors and the objects found there are described in great detail, as are the food and drink. On the whole, the novels depict a relatively wealthy, responsible and organised world centred around a well-to-do village guarded by a nearby fortress at its centre. One effect of the detailed descriptions of the ancient environment is to emphasise the difference from the time of writing – the archaistic attributes are needed to create plausibility and suspense among the readers. The careful reconstructions are augmented by the introduction of archaisms, especially prominent in

toponyms and personal names. In Mäлк's work, proverbs are very common in the characters' speech, as are imitations of folk songs written by the author himself (Saks 1936). On the other hand, the descriptions draw attention to similarities that enable the reader to recognise this archaic land of fiction as their own country. A strong association with modern Estonia is created not just by descriptions of peasant life and country folk, but also by the emphasis on county and parish divisions and regional diversity. In the spirit of nineteenth-century nationalism, folk dress unique to each region serves to stress the differences. Even local dialects – another fascination of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – find their way to the map. All in all, this kind of description evokes a picture of wholesome national unity complemented by internal diversity, or regional differences that confirm the perfection of the whole (cf. Gasnier 1997).

The Viking novels are a good illustration of how all memory politics are inseparable from the politics of the present. When reading either of the novels, it very soon becomes obvious that their clear emphasis is not just on the military power and triumphs of the Estonians, but also on the need for a strong government and a strong elite of the elders and betters. This is what distinguishes these works from the mainstream of historiography of the time, which Hindrey and Mäлк otherwise try to follow. Notably the idea of ancient Estonia as a democratic proto-state had become prevalent in the interwar period, a state in harmony with the modern understanding of an ideal society, thereby confirming the honourable history of Estonian sovereignty and permitting an interpretation of the young Republic as a legal successor to ancient Estonia.²¹ In contrast, the word 'master' dominates in Mäлк's novel in both the foreign and domestic political planes. His work is not just meant to acclaim the military prowess of the ancient Estonians, but takes pains to underline the power and privileges of their elite, painting a clearly hierarchical picture of the ancient society. Hindrey's *Urmas* has an even more marked attitude, seeing the ancient democracy still prevalent in the novel as the gravest threat to Estonia's security. He considers uniting the counties and the country's defence under a single leader or even a crown, and thus the subjugation of 'ancient democracy' becomes his main goal. This attitude is somewhat similar to the position of the amateur historian and influential social figure Juhan Luiga, who stated that the crusaders vanquished ancient Estonia because it was a democratic society that, naively as it turned out, preferred treaties and diplomacy to war.²² In both cases, this works as a sort of litmus test, indicating that the ideals of modern statehood are not fully compatible with the past: even if the projection of modern democracy into the past was feasible for the legitimisation of the young country at the time, it proved much trickier to operate with a democratic Estonia in the medieval past.

Equally though, the idea of the role of the elders and betters suited the ideology of the authoritarian period of the late 1930s. The ideological viewpoint and social position of both authors must also have had some significance. Mäлк was one of the most favoured authors politically, whom the state even rewarded with a farm as a token of its special esteem, but Hindrey was a more controversial figure. Although he was ever the Bohemian

and cosmopolite, he was at the same time a conservative, whose outlook on the world and whose works give high priority to a sense of honour and aristocracy (Hinrikus 2010). However, another, more wide-ranging, change – and an attempt to get even closer to the history of winners – might be observed behind the anti-democratic attitude. The emergence of Estonian national awareness and a national interpretation of history had to a great extent been based on the legacies of the Enlightenment (Undusk 1997), including its critical view of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, the idea of the democratic social order of the ancient Estonians originally came from Garlieb Helwig Merkel (1769–1850), one of the most radical and influential Baltic followers of the Enlightenment, who, in the spirit of the age, compared ancient Estonian society to the poleis of ancient Greece (1798) (see also Peiker in the present volume). In this light, abandoning the ideals of democracy for values associated with the Middle Ages acquires even more marked significance. Mälk's and Hindrey's dream of a feudal Estonia embraces ideas that were characteristic of the Baltic Germans of the mid-nineteenth century, who not only made excellent use of the romantic fascination with the Middle Ages, but also firmly turned their backs on the Enlightenment.

In addition it is not impossible that this longing for a strong leader was a manifestation of more extensive changes characteristic of the time. In fact the fascination with feudalism was quite widespread in the 1930s, reaching its peak in Germany, where the contemporary *Führer*-cult had a recognisable impact on the understanding of the medieval state.²³ Thus the traditional view that had highlighted the development of institutions and the constitution in the Middle Ages was replaced, as more emphasis was laid on the political value of personal relations and subordination, and on the role of the ruler. Naturally, “this all served to give a historical basis to the contemporary idea of an individual having personal obligations to the ruler” (Althoff 2004: 5). In addition, the notion of such alliances was specifically masculine. We will return to that keyword later, but here it should be noted that the Estonian Viking novels saw the solidarity of men as the most valuable resource in society. The idea of the state as a creation of a masculine alliance was also very prevalent in Germany, even if it never became predominant (Koshar 2000: 137).²⁴ This does not mean that the Estonian Viking novels were specifically National Socialist, but indicates their links with broader changes in the public mentality, while also serving as a reminder that developments in local cultural memory should always be considered against a wider background.

The novels' obsession with victories is another sign of the times. In this respect, the two works faced a relatively complicated task, both on the plane of the Estonian historical novel and on that of national cultural memory generally. As Jeffrey K. Olick (1994) has aptly demonstrated, recollection of the past is affected not just by the present, but also by earlier recollections of that past. Or as Ann Rigney (1992) has observed, the starting point of historiography is not silence, but what has been said earlier, which means that even revisionist works are intertextually connected to the writings they wish to discard. Ever since its emergence in the late nineteenth century,

Estonian historical fiction had focused on great upheavals, staging a contest between declining and ascending forms of social organisation, as appropriate to a classical historical novel.²⁵ First and foremost it had been concerned with the major social and political change brought about by the crusades and colonisation in the early thirteenth century. The interpretation of this transformation created a basic difference between the nineteenth-century historical novels of the great nations and the early Estonian historical novels, or the historical fiction of other young, emerging nations, such as the Finns. Whereas the historical works of big, well-established nations contain a strong undercurrent of a progress narrative (Anderson 2011), Estonian historical novels interpret the changes in social organisation as disastrous. They present a powerful narrative of a lost golden age, a narrative that already emerged in the very first manifestation of Estonian national history, the literary epic *Kalevipoeg* (1853/1862).

Consequently, a thorough reshaping of the Estonian historical novel was required for a triumphant history to be constructed. The situation was further complicated by a series of additional problems. First, the national version of Estonian history suffers from a scarcity of victories, as most of its moments of heroism are associated with lost battles. The chief works of the 1930s quickly exhausted the short list of triumphs the national canon had to offer: the War of Independence and the Battle of Ümera (1210), the only major victory of the Estonians during the crusades.²⁶ The shortage of victories is complicated by a further quandary: even if the War of Independence lends significance to all the defeats suffered in the past and makes it possible to see them as part of the same, ultimately triumphant struggle, there is still a huge void lasting 700 years between the two victories, a void that is by no means devoid of substance, but is replete with the legacies of colonialism, which the earlier historical writing had often addressed from a victimised perspective. At this juncture, the Viking novels seem to come up with an extremely clever solution: they set their events in pre-colonial times. This way, they complete the trend that had been vaguely present in the Estonian historical novel ever since its birth, as illustrated well by Andres Saal's (1861–1931) trilogy (1889–1892) about the Livonian and Estonian fight against the crusaders, which was the first fictive work to address that topic and was very influential at the time. In the first published part, the trilogy made use of the Estonians' initial victories over the Germans. The following parts, however, proceeded not forwards in time towards the inevitable defeat to the crusaders, but backwards, deeper into the ancient past.²⁷

As Tiina Ann Kirss (2008: 216) has pointed out regarding Hindrey and Mälk, their focus on ancient pre-colonial times seems to contain a promise of efficient counter-narratives to colonial humiliation: the pre-colonial golden age could be “a substitute that compensates, rhetorically and ideologically, for later complexes of inferiority, marginality, subalternity”. According to Kirss, a ‘metanarrative shift’ occurred between the two peaks of the Estonian historical novel in the late nineteenth century and the 1930s. Whereas the nineteenth century Estonian nationalists rejected the template of colonial history, the Viking novels of the 1930s seem to be free of any such counter-narrative strain: “they boldly and confidently proclaimed a proud,

autonomous existence of a people at the height of their powers” (*ibid.*). The reception of the novels at the time welcomed and interpreted them precisely in the sense of discarding the losses and colonial history, as is evident from statements like that of Hugo Raudsepp (1937: 326): “The standing of a sovereign nation does not allow us to build our celebrations and festive meetings around lamentations of the night of slavery and defeats in the ‘Mahtra Wars’²⁸, when at the same time we can write *On Ümera River*, *Lords of the Baltic Sea*, *People on Ascent*, and *Names in Marble* about our history. ... Literature turns to unemployed topics, to our accomplishments, and not just those times when we were defeated and beaten.” It is notable that all of the novels mentioned above cover pre-colonial times or the emergence of the sovereign country and the War of Independence.²⁹

However, this need not be just an easy way to bypass colonialism. *Lords of the Baltic Sea* is an especially pertinent example, as Tiina Ann Kirss (2008: 222) has already observed. In the opening chapter, entitled “Winds of Danger”, the collective protagonists, inhabitants of Saaremaa, make a trading trip to the River Daugava. At Üksküla, they witness the arrival of German merchants and missionaries on Livonian territory and hear about a treaty being reached between the Germans and the Livs. In this way, Mälk’s supposedly pre-colonial characters already start the story facing the opening scene of the *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, the early thirteenth century founding narrative of colonial Livonia.³⁰ The pre-colonial, heroic and golden age is not yet over, the novel has not even quite started, and already colonialism is casting a shadow. Tellingly, the arrival scene, dated to the 1180s also had major symbolic value for the Baltic German colonial discourse and historical memory in the nineteenth century.³¹

In Hindrey’s novel, the legacy of colonial conquests is present in a slightly different manner. Although the novel is set in a period prior to the crusades, around the year 1000, the book looks anxiously into the future, anticipating with Urmas that Estonia would be caught between the Christian kingdoms of Russia and Scandinavia, as indeed happened in reality. As already mentioned, Urmas sees the solution in a form of feudalism that would be able to withstand possible conquests. Constantly addressing these issues in public debates and long internalised dialogues with himself gradually wears Urmas down, and his hope of changing the Estonian society is never to be fulfilled, as the persistence of a peasant nation clinging to its ancient customs prevails. Furthermore, Hindrey also makes the presence of Russia, the later coloniser of the Baltic provinces, felt in a menacing way, often using penetration metaphors: a Russian is like a wedge driven into the earth. In *Urmas and Merike*, Russians, especially Russian warriors, are portrayed in so negative a fashion that the work could almost be considered anti-Russian, a tendency not uncommon for Estonian historical novels of the 1930s.³² The historical events that frame Part II of the novel are also associated with the Russian threat, as at first Yaroslav the Wise (c. 978–1054), Grand Prince of Novgorod and Kiev, conquers the Tartu fortress (1030). A greater part of Part II is then spent in anticipation of the reconquest of the fortress (1061), which takes place in the final pages of the novel. This event also brings to an end the story of Urmas, who is killed in the battle.

Sigtuna, Gender and Status

In addition to the issues listed above, the Viking novels reveal a host of other problems haunting the construction of a victorious and militant national history for the Estonians. Above all, they pertinently prove that this process required not just a change in the timespace and repertoire of events, but also a reshaping of the historical hero and his moral purport. Both Hindrey and Mälk devote much effort to shaping a new type of hero who is militant and masculine. Although earlier historical novels had also embodied the nation with a male hero who was used to storify the struggle and give it moral substance, the Viking novels brought military masculinity much more into focus. There is not much purchase to be gained for this in earlier Estonian cultural memory. It would be wrong to say that there were no warlike heroes at all, but they were not numerous. The main reason for this scarcity lies in the principles by which Estonian history was constructed: a nation that has historically been identified with the peasantry and whose historians have discarded the legacies of the upper classes cannot have too many historical military heroes or triumphant warriors.³³ By way of comparison, this sharply differentiates the Estonian historical memory from the Finnish tradition, which from the nineteenth century onwards had successfully nationalised a number of non-Finnish historical figures (see Hatavara's and Pikkanen's contributions). However, a lost battle can certainly be just as heroic and lend itself to history-making equally well. The great archetypal heroes of Estonian national history – Kalevipoeg of the eponymous epic, chieftain Lembitu from the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia and Tasuja ("the Avenger") from Eduard Bornhöhe's novel of the same name (1880) about the St George's Night uprising – all fell in the struggle against the German knights and are tragic and heroic despite their defeats. The Estonian Vikings, though, are different in one very specific point, and that is probably their most radical innovation: while traditional protagonists of Estonian history fight to defend or free their country or fight against the oppressors of the people, the Estonian Vikings are themselves breaking out and intending an expansion upon other peoples and territories. That Estonian history is no longer written from a defensive or victim position in these novels makes a marked change to the moral message. Thus the greatest novelty of the Estonian Vikings is their penchant for the offensive and for expansion, or even aggression.

To see the consequences that the shift from a defensive to an offensive strategy might have for a colonised people, we could start with the chief target of the Estonian Vikings, the city of Sigtuna. In *Lords of the Baltic Sea* the attack on Sigtuna provides a logical culmination to the novel. In Hindrey's novel, on the other hand, the Sigtuna campaign is given as an epilogue, taking place one hundred years after the events of the novel and it principally functions as a separate short story.³⁴ This further confirms the difficulty of constructing Estonian Vikings without Sigtuna, even if the ending of *Urmast and Merike* already contains a triumphant battle in the victory over the Russians at Tartu in 1061.

At first sight, the choice of the Sigtuna campaign as a subject for triumphant novels might even seem too obvious: it is indeed the only offensive to be

found in the national history. Nevertheless, the Sigtuna campaign is not immediately or directly available, but was appropriated and added to the canon of Estonian history by constant repetition (see Vallas 1990). The same applies for Estonian Vikings in general, as the propagators of national history had at first to start by establishing the understanding that the ancient Estonians could also be considered as Vikings, a powerful and militant image that was hardly associated in the nineteenth century with a nation which at the time was more or less equated with the peasantry. This task was further complicated by written sources describing Estonian seafarers in a deeply disparaging manner, of which observations about the Saaremaa pirates from the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia are the best-known. Thus historical sources only provided the substance, while the usable image still had to be created and associated with the contemporary international image of the Vikings. The Sigtuna card was played for this purpose most effectively by Carl Robert Jakobson in his *First Fatherland Speech* (“Esimene isamaa kõne”, 1868), one of the key texts of Estonian nationalism, whose militant tone is known to have marked a considerable turn in the construction of Estonian national history (Viires 2001: 32). Jakobson made use of the Sigtuna story to show the ancient Estonians as mighty warriors, also stressing the lasting memory of the campaign. “Among Swedes, all manner of tales are still told about the wrecking of the city, and especially about the Estonians’ great bravery at the time.” (Jakobson 1991: 18–19.) The great horror spread by Estonian warriors is also underlined in subsequent canon-building texts.³⁵ Although hardly intentional, it is a motif that brings the Estonians considerably closer to the medieval image of the Viking that seldom fails to emphasise the Christian Europeans’ great fear of Vikings – which also reminds us that originally the Viking image was designed to designate a highly negative ‘other’.

Who exactly attacked the rich Swedish trading city Sigtuna in 1187 will never be known. Different sources and various historians have identified the attackers as Estonians, Curonians, Karelians or Russians (Tarvel 2007). The Estonians’ role in the invasion of Sigtuna cannot ultimately be confirmed or definitely denied as the conquest remains shrouded in mystery owing to the absence of any contemporary sources, with the earliest description dating back only to the fourteenth century. Neither is the actual extent of the devastation known.³⁶ This very confusion seems to lie behind Sigtuna’s later literary fame, as it was not just the Estonians, but many other neighbours of the Swedes – especially those whose history was short of triumphs, such as the Latvians (Misāns 2008: 188) or the Finns – who tried to claim it. In 1936, a Sigtuna novel, Väinö Kainuu’s *The Finns Are Coming* (“Finnit tulevat”), was published in Finland, and a story of a Finnish attack on Sigtuna was also included in Aarno Karimo’s popular multi-genre treatment of Finnish history that came out between 1929 and 1933 (see Pikkanen’s chapter). Scarcity of sources is, of course, common for the entire Estonian or Finnish Viking period, thus providing for a more flexible creation of myths especially during the early stages of national history construction, and making the period still more attractive as a subject for alternative history.

Nevertheless it cannot be claimed that it was too easy to make use of Sigtuna. As argued above, it required a shift from the habitual defensive

victim position to one of offensive expansion. The novelty of the strategy is further emphasised by the way Hermann's earlier narrative about Sigtuna (and the opera *Estonian Vikings*) tells not about an act of aggression, but about an avenging campaign justified by the abduction of women, a motif widespread in both history and literature. As the Swedes have invaded Estonia in this story and taken many Estonian virgins to captivity in Sigtuna, the Estonian attack against them does not lack legitimacy. In the 1930s, however, the recollection of the campaign to Sigtuna was ridden with still more controversy. Given the aspirations towards a Nordic identity for instance, the question arises: why attack Scandinavia, the perfect object of identification?

In Mälk's novel too, Sigtuna is attacked because of a woman – another indication of the widespread use of such motifs in historical writing. Even so, it is interesting how this kind of justification works on the more general background of gender relations evident in the Viking novels. As mentioned earlier, the new history constructed in these works centres around a new type of hero. Both Mälk and Hindrey carefully apply themselves to the construction of ancient and authentic masculinity, which makes both works almost textbook illustrations of Judith Butler's (1990) argument that being male or female depends on the constant performance of gender norms. In this phenomenon, which she has famously called performativity of gender, the result does not depend on a single act, but requires continuous, daily repetition of social norms in both speech and action. In the case of the *Estonian Vikings*, these norms mostly depend on the imagery of archaic, authentic masculinity, shaped to a great extent by Romanticism and the crisis of masculinity brought about by modernisation. This longing for ancient manliness is also well illustrated by the cult of medieval knights and crusaders among nineteenth-century European and American gentlemen (Siberry 2000).

The world emerging in the two novels is prominently masculine, rough, and epic, and governed by warrior ethics; here succession follows only the male line from father to son, and the path of the protagonists is guarded by the spirits of their forefathers. Both works are dominated by such pointedly masculine activities as fighting wars, hunting and seafaring, and both feature wanderings in the wild, another masculine attribute that had emerged in the nineteenth century. Urmas asserts himself as a full-fledged male hero at the very start of the novel through a series of emphatically masculine acts as he kills a bear and an aurochs, tames a horse, and, as a tribute to a more civilised masculinity and male wisdom, takes charge of building a fortress. Mälk's protagonist Alar is a young offspring of the chieftain at the start of the novel, still growing into manhood, and in his case the norms of masculinity manifest themselves in the tough learning process. However, the relation to gender norms is never easy in either case, but is constantly accompanied by anxious brooding over the behaviour befitting a real man. The careful depiction of gender roles is accompanied by persistent contrast and division between masculine and feminine patterns of behaviour. Classically, the crucial standard of masculinity is associated with any show of emotions being inappropriate for a man even in the most extreme situations. Throughout the novel, the emotional Alar aspires towards taciturnity and

emotional coldness, while his frequent lapses keep him constantly reminded of these norms. *Urmas*, on the other hand, is meant to embody the ideal of proud indifference, and his capacity to suppress his feelings even in the most adverse situations is often emphasised. Nevertheless, even *Urmas* has to remind himself constantly in inner monologues that this is his duty to his gender, and a failure would make him look feminine.

The construction of ancient and authentic masculinity in both novels is supported by the persistent underlining of the subdued role of women. The realisation that showing women's inferiority helps to highlight the superiority of men may seem as trivial as the observation that classical national histories were written from a male perspective. However, in the interwar period, the idea that women might have had a more active role in history had begun to take root (Malečková 2008: 186–191) as a natural response to women's changed and more influential role in contemporary society, even though women's liberation obviously also gave rise to gender anxiety and conservative reactions. In this light, the considerable attention that gender roles and differences receive in the Estonian Viking novels acquires further significance, especially if we assume that the novelty of militant, offensive masculinity in the national history leads to further possible uncertainty and fragility. As a result, several subjects that can help to emphasise the inferiority of women are powerfully present in both novels. Abandoning new-born girls in the forest is often mentioned. The inferior position of women in relationships is often stressed to girls on the verge of womanhood, and the abduction and buying of women as either wives or slaves is a common motif in both novels.³⁷ Polygamy is emphasised and seems an equally important tool for the construction of ancient masculinity, especially in *Urmas and Merike*. Observations about polygamy among Estonians can be found in medieval sources, and by Hindrey's time the concept had become fixed both in historiography and in cultural memory at large. However, it is difficult to overlook the marked attention this topic is given in the novel. The number of wives is one of the most important status markers for the main character's rise in the social hierarchy. Moreover, *Urmas* does not just have several wives – their number growing in proportion with his social standing – but he also builds a house for each wife and their children, so that his farm soon resembles a small village. This kind of doubling or overstatement is generally characteristic of the way Hindrey represents his protagonist: *Urmas* usually performs all the actions that confirm his status and masculinity more than once, and owns or carries more than one token to prove his success.

At the same time, the redundancy goes hand in hand with a certain ambivalence. In *Urmas and Merike*, this is first evident in connection with a band of outlaws that figures prominently at the start of the novel. Descriptions of the life of this fur-clad male community of warriors and hunters far away beyond the woods drive the idea of masculine values to the extremes – while indicating that when such ideas are exaggerated, they might lead to a dead end. Another, still more pertinent, example is to be found in *Merike*, the so-called chief wife of *Urmas*. *Merike* is a maid and a woman “of a man's worth”, defined by a series of masculine features such as pride, a strong will of her own, composure and a sense of her own superiority; by

her skills such as her prowess with weapons; and by her life choices, as she lives in a farm of her own even as a single woman, and it is she who proposes to *Urmas* and not vice versa. Masculine characteristics even extend to her physique and it is said she has “thick flesh” (Hindrey 1990: 37). It could still be argued that this character supports the male hegemony, showing that manly traits are a requirement for being taken seriously. Yet at the same time she also appears to contest the sexual, or biological basis of the masculine norms, which might again reflect the fragility of this new type of masculine hero in the Estonian tradition.

In general, however, the women in both novels function in ways that support the masculine values of the ancient heroes. In accordance with the conservative view of the world, they manage their household, food, clothes and children, and also the sustainability of village existence, having no active or public role in the social structure. The military world of men prevalent in both novels exists against a background of panoramic descriptions of villages inhabited by fair-haired children and women. The women are given the role of a secure audience, to listen and admire: for instance at the beginning of *Urmas and Merike* there is a telling scene where a bard is placed in the middle of a group of men singing about their adventures on alien coasts and battlefields, while the women and children listen quietly in the doorway, in a passive and isolated, but necessary, role (Hindrey 1990: 17).

However, this applies only to Estonian women. While there is a marked tendency in both novels to consider women coming from the east of Estonian territory as inferior, Scandinavian women are a source of potential anxiety. This is especially evident in *Lords of the Baltic Sea*. At the start of the novel, the young protagonist is sent to Sigtuna to see the world. In Sigtuna, Alar does indeed see the world, but above all, he sees the Swedish beauty Gyla with whom, needless to say, he falls in love. But Gyla spurns his love because of his Estonian descent. The wish to find Gyla again is one of the motives for Alar’s Sigtuna campaign. This makes the motif contrary to that in *Auulane and Ülo*, where Estonians attack Sigtuna to free captive maidens, as noted earlier. Alar, in contrast, is planning an abduction himself. In the novel, Alar does find Gyla and captures her, this time as his future slave. Yet Alar’s Estonian bride, who has secretly joined the campaigners, frees Gyla (also secretly), fearing that Alar might fall in love with her once again. However, Gyla is killed while trying to escape, providing quite a typical ending for a melodrama, though Gyla’s death also has a special significance for the Estonian hero as it helps to restore his superiority as a man and an Estonian.

The enslavement of Gyla also seems to point in the same direction. *Urmas and Merike* presents even more poignant examples of dreams about slavery, showing Scandinavian women solely in the role of slaves to Estonian men. On a more general level, both novels readily introduce Estonians as slave-owners, as if in compensation for the long ‘night of slavery’. The huts of foreign slaves, some of them even dark-skinned, are an inherent part of the panorama of the Estonian village (see e.g. Hindrey 1990: 29–31). Among his several wives, *Urmas* also possesses a subdued Scandinavian odalisque, and a similar pair balances Hindrey’s version of the Sigtuna campaign. Hindrey never explains the reasons for the attack, and shows it through the eyes of

a Swede instead. At the end of the campaign we learn that an Estonian warrior had captured the narrator's wife and abducted her to Estonia, where she had borne him many children. In both cases, the foreign woman is no longer an object of desire and anxiety – nor a reminder of status or colonial inequality – but has been subjugated to the Estonian man and to her main function of giving birth to new warriors.

These pairs, especially the story of Alar and Gyla, can also be seen in the context of the pattern of 'marriage as utopia' suggested by Jaan Undusk (1998, 2013). Noting the significance of the subject of *mésalliance* in Estonian literature, often presented as an unattainable marriage between an Estonian man and a Baltic German noblewoman, Undusk associates this with a social utopia. In her chapter in this volume, Eneken Laanes has taken the example of Eduard Bornhöhe's *The Avenger* to extend the concept further, showing how the motif of *mésalliance* was employed in the historical novel as a nation-building genre in the nineteenth century. Ostensibly, Mälk and especially Hindrey present an alternative to earlier failed *mésalliances*. In *Urmas and Merike* cross-ethnic and status-breaking marriages happen twice, showing a foreign woman of superior descent, who could be a potential source of threat and anxiety, being totally subjugated to an Estonian man as his slave. However, both versions of the *mésalliance* seem to spring from the same surface and come to a dead end. In the first, traditional, case illustrated well by Bornhöhe, it is the marriage that remains unattainable, even if there is love between the Estonian and the foreigner. In the other case, where the foreigner is enslaved or even killed, as in the Viking novels, it is love or at least free will that is absent. The utopia remains unattainable in either case, the social inequality unvanquished. However, both patterns point to difficulties in managing the colonial legacies, shedding light on different aspects of colonial relationships: there is both mutual attraction and a desire to subjugate, there are fantasies of both love and enslavement.

In *Lords of the Baltic Sea*, Sigtuna is associated with the anguish and humiliation of colonial legacies in yet other ways. As soon as they arrive, the Estonian Vikings understand that the stately trading city of Sigtuna and its inhabitants pose a threat to their existence and status. The Estonians' shame is redoubled when not only Gyla, but also the lords of Sigtuna call Alar a barbarian and a heathen, who should not even think about marrying their women. Thus in Mälk's novel, the powerful 'lords of the sea' are impelled to destroy Sigtuna by their own shame and fear of being scorned as inferiors. The ravaging of Sigtuna and killing of Gyla thus acquire a similar, or even the same function: at least ostensibly, they are meant to abolish the threat to the status of the Estonian militant-masculine hero.

Status anxiety is also evident in *Urmas and Merike*. Urmas' noble descent is emphasised, as he is a natural chieftain, and a lord and master, but at the same time he is often found anxiously brooding about the manners and behaviour proper to a nobleman. Knowing that both chieftains and those of lower status have their own manners, Urmas is constantly judging those around him and feels that he too is being watched. This uncertainty might reflect the legacy of the Estonians' rapid social ascent that Hindrey, coming from a family of rich Estonian peasants, had witnessed in his youth. The author's memoirs amply

illustrate that relative wealth did not warrant acceptability in the eyes of the German gentlefolk (Hindrey 2010). At the same time, Hindrey associates the status issue with his interpretation of the past. In *Urmas and Merike*, it is the protagonist's position as a master that permits him to embody the central values of the novel and the active, powerful, militant attitude towards the world. This is contrasted to the "quiet folk", for whom Urmas seems to feel nothing but arrogant disdain. In this way, the new type of hero appears to conflict with the quiet peasants who traditionally embody the Estonian nation. Nevertheless, as the novel proceeds, village-life becomes more and more attractive to Urmas and an inner struggle develops in the protagonist, compelling him to choose between the quiet life of a farmer and warfare in the wide world. Considering the strong emphasis that has been placed on Urmas' warlike qualities, his desire to become a farmer does not seem too plausible, but such a compromise is easier to understand if we assume that it is the way for the character to bridge the gap between two possible historical identities, one as a war hero, the other, earlier, as a member of the peasantry. However, the protagonist torn between two outlooks and the strain between staying at home and conquering the world, which keeps surfacing in the novel, could above all be seen as characteristic of the struggle between two different ways of writing the history of a nation.

Conclusions

We started out with the observation that at first sight, Estonian Vikings might serve as the best possible substance for politics and memory politics that crave triumphs and the reign of 'the elders and betters.' However, it has transpired that when the warlike heroes who had mostly been domesticated in visual media stepped down from the images into books and started to speak and create stories around themselves, they revealed the fear of inferiority and marginality associated with gender, status, and colonial relations. Such a transformation aptly illustrates how rewriting history as triumphant, and likewise associating the Estonian past with Scandinavia, is much more complicated in fiction than in many other media of cultural memory: the Viking novels do not succeed in making Swedes, the former colonisers, into allies, nor in circumventing the legacies of colonialism.

Pointing out hidden flaws in the new, triumphant version of history serves to illustrate the specific traits of literary fiction, and also the medium's tendency to reveal the strains inherent in the rewriting of history. These strains are especially evident when Mälk's and Hindrey's novels are juxtaposed with *Auulane and Ülo* from 1887, which is governed by entirely different strategies. One of the most remarkable traits – and greatest failings – of Hermann's novella is the absence of any kind of suspense: the valour and might of the Estonian legion is constantly emphasised or overemphasised so that their supremacy can hardly be doubted for a moment. The Swedes are depicted to an extent as mean and cowardly, half-barbarian abductors of women, but at the same time it is still quite clear that the Swedes are honourable and desirable partners, who would improve the reputation of

the ancient Estonians. Therefore, Hermann keeps stressing that Estonians and Swedes are equal adversaries. Quite tellingly both Mälk's and Hindrey's novels emphasise the need to learn Swedish and even show it as a status marker, whereas in Hermann's story it is the Swedish prince who has mastered Estonian (Hermann 1887: 16). Furthermore, the motif of *mésalliance* is also present in this story, although the denouement is quite contrary to those of the two later novels. Here it is a Swedish prince who falls in love with Linda, daughter of an Estonian chieftain held captive in Sigtuna, and proposes to her. Linda refuses, considering the suitor not worthy of her noble status, and preferring the young Estonian chieftain Ülo, who finally rescues her from the Swedes. Thus the situation is quite the opposite to that in Mälk's novel; the Swedish prince is tireless in his mortifying suit of the Estonian maiden, who is similar to Gyla in status, spirit, and attractive appearance, and he is himself "a strong handsome man" (Hermann 1887: 16). All this may be interpreted as a long series of literary clichés or as overcompensation for inferiority, while at the same time Hermann's happy exaggerations could suggest that the author is still free from the strains of constructing a triumphant history.

In their own paradoxical way, both Viking novels demonstrate how gender relations may appear to be a more important arena for the construction of masculinity than a battlefield, as issues of love and gender are allowed more space in total in both novels than warfare is. Moreover, the novels demonstrate that although romantic plots are often associated with less serious genres, romance and melodrama may still be one of the most important footholds for addressing the subject of national history, and such themes have often been used in historical novels (for the potential of romance for constructing the nation and its history see also the chapters by Grönstrand and Pilv). Borrowing an observation from Grönstrand's discussion on romance and history in this volume, we could argue that the attraction of romance for the Viking novels is not only limited to the opportunity to address the history of the nation in an emotional and sexualised framework, but it also enables the authors to challenge social values (cf. Pearce 2007: 27–28). Nevertheless, despite their romantic aspirations, the Estonian Vikings still have to face their impotence at overcoming the social and colonial gap and asserting alternative relations between Estonians and Scandinavians. Thus the sole choice left to them is either to enslave or to destroy the object of their desire. Proceeding from the analysis above, it can be observed that such solutions always clearly indicate that besides the interplay of fear and desire, violence is also always present in colonial relations.

In conclusion, the vision of Estonian history manifest in the Viking novels can by no means be considered a failure. On the contrary, these novels take us back explicitly to the key problems haunting Estonian national historiography, which are associated with the hidden legacies of colonialism and include colonial violence and humiliation. They demonstrate with great clarity that these cannot just be replaced with a different history, but must be addressed. Or, as Tiina-Ann Kirss (2001: 677) has pointedly observed about the Estonian experience of colonialism: "it may be possible, by persistence, to get over but never around colonialism".

NOTES

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- 1 For Curman’s role in the Swedish-Estonian cooperation over the Pirita convent see Ahl 2007; Ahl-Waris 2011.
 - 2 Next to restoration of imposing architectural heritage (Pirita Convent), new monuments were erected, such as a statue to the King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden (r. 1611–1632) in Tartu (1932) and the Swedish Lion in Narva (1936) that commemorates the Swedish victory over Russia in the battle of Narva in 1700 (see Burch, Smith 2007). Public celebrations and ceremonies included the grandiose 300th anniversary of Tartu University (founded in 1632, during the period of Swedish rule in Estonia), and the 500th anniversary of the Pirita Convent (1936).
 - 3 These were by no means the only works about Estonian Vikings. The subject was also addressed in the only Estonia-based historical novel *On the Trail of the Vikings* (“Viikingite jälgedes”, 1936) by young Karl Ristikivi, who became the most distinguished author of historical fiction in the Estonian émigré community after the war. In his Viking novel, the protagonists are, however, not warriors but seafarers, who discover America. Ristikivi also authored the most famous parody of the Sigtuna stories, the short story *The Gates of Sigtuna* (“Sigtuna väravad”, in the collection published under the same title in 1968), where the events have no direct connection with Estonia. For Ristikivi see also the chapter by Undusk.
 - 4 Hindrey’s *Urmad and Merike* received the Estonian National Bank Award (1937). Mälik had received the Elder of State Award for his previous historical novel *Dead Houses* (“Surnud majad”, 1934). A thorough discussion of the reception of the Viking novels is given in Rebane 1991.
 - 5 Mälik had previously published *Dead Houses*, a novel about the Great Northern War (1700–1721), and later a panoramic novel *Open Gate* (“Avatud värav”, 1937) extending from the eighteenth century to the War of Independence; Hindrey had earlier published a historical novella *Estonian Vikings* (“Vikerlased”, 1933) and later a dilogy *The Sunset* (“Loojak”, 1938) about the wars against the crusaders in the early thirteenth century, the so-called ancient fight for freedom.
 - 6 Under the Soviet Union, Hindrey’s works were considered anti-Soviet, and any new publication of Mälik was precluded by his escape to Sweden in 1944. Altogether, four issues have been published of both Viking novels. The second issue of *Urmad and Merike* was published in exile in 1948, the third in Estonia in 1990 (with the original cover design and some illustrations), and the fourth issue in 2008 in the series *Estonian Story* (“Eesti Lugu”) published by the newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht*, which contained 50 works addressing Estonian history from ancient times to the present day. The second issue of *Lords of the Baltic Sea* was published in emigration in 1951; for this issue, Mälik abridged the novel by a quarter and smoothed over the ideology somewhat. The third issue was published in Estonia in 2000 and the fourth in 2008 (also in the *Estonian Story* series).
 - 7 For the signs of colonialism in Estonian literature see also Peiker’s contribution to this volume. For a broader discussion about applying post-colonial theory to Estonian material, see Kirss 2001.
 - 8 For the interlocking of the ancient fight for freedom and the War of Independence see Selart 2003; Tamm 2008; Kaljundi and Kļaviņš 2011: 431–436. A detailed

- analysis of how the War of Independence has been cast as the culmination of Estonian history, and the role different cultural media have played in the process can be found in Brüggemann 2015.
- 9 For the 'good old Danish time', the brevity of the period (the Danes ruled northern Estonia in 1237–1346) and the shortage of sources are expedient for portrayal of the period of Danish rule as an imaginary, positive alternative to the German colonial power. In the context of this volume it may be added that the utopia of Danish rule was perfected in two historical novels of late twentieth century – Bernard Kangro's *Six Days* ("Kuu päeva", 1980), published in the emigration, and Jaan Kross' *Excavations* ("Väljakaevamised", 1990). Both of these present a fictive testimony about the Danish crusades to Estonia in the early thirteenth century, about which no historical sources have survived from Denmark.
 - 10 Sweden had already been present in northern Estonia since the Livonian War (1558–1583).
 - 11 Reiman 1908, 1916. For the genealogy of the 'golden Swedish time' see Kuldkepp 2013; and for the Swedish period in Estonia in general see the recent in-depth study Tarkiainen and Tarkiainen 2013.
 - 12 On the influence of Balthasar Russow on Baltic German and Estonian cultural memory see Kreem 2013.
 - 13 Roerich taught at the drawing school of the Society for Promotion of Arts of St Petersburg, where a number of Estonian artists (Nikolai Triik, Aleksander Uurits, August Jansen, Jaan Vahtra and Peet Aren) were studying. Levin 2010: 111–112.
 - 14 The motif of the Viking ship spread from printmaking (Aleksander Uurits' *The Singer* ("Laulik", 1912)) to oil (Väiko Tuul's *Kalevipoeg's Sailboat Lennuk* ("Lennuk", 1915)) and mural painting (Peet Aren's *Vikings at Sea* ("Viikingite Meresõit")) at the Kalev Society House, an important meeting place for the early twentieth century nationalists.
 - 15 The stamps were printed in 1919–1922 and designed by Peet Aren; the coin, which had a nominal value of one crown, was in use in 1934–1941 and was designed by Günther Reindorff.
 - 16 This is also suggested by the lasting impact of Baltic German historical images on Estonian cultural memory, despite their conflicting message; the most relevant example of this is the reuse of the Baltic German artist Friedrich Ludwig von Maydell's (1795–1846) visualisations of Baltic history in Estonian cultural memory. Kaljundi, Kreem 2013.
 - 17 The tapestry was based on the design by Arne Mõtus. See Kalm 2010a: 374.
 - 18 Järv illustrated Hindrey's *Sunset* (1938), Albert Kivikas' *Names in Marble* ("Nimed marmortahvlil", 1936) and Enn Kippel's *Meelis* (1941).
 - 19 Andres Saal's attempts to reconstruct the ancient environment in his late nineteenth-century historical novels are an exception (see also the chapter by Laanes).
 - 20 This tendency, certainly helpful to contemporary readers in identifying with figures from the past and even more so due to the emphasis on the struggle of the Estonian peasantry against the German-speaking estate holders, is characteristic for instance of Eduard Bornhöhe (see the chapter by Laanes).
 - 21 Alongside the historians, those ideas had an earnest and powerful advocate in minister and professor Jüri Uluots, one of the leading Estonian lawyers and politicians. See Uluots 1937.
 - 22 See especially Luiga 1922–1926. Although judged differently, the idea that ancient Estonians favoured diplomacy instead of fighting also played a significant role in Uluots' vision mentioned above.
 - 23 The best example of the changed view is the German historian Theodor Mayer's concept of *Personenverbandstaat*: a 'state' of people and groups rather than a modern 'institutional state'. Althoff 2004: 4 ff.
 - 24 Cf. Pikkanen's chapter for the spread of similar ideas in Finland.

- 25 Starting with the works of Eduard Bornhöhe and Andres Saal; see the chapter by Laanes and the Introduction.
- 26 These were covered in Albert Kivikas' *Names in Marble* (1936) telling about the War of Independence, and Mait Metsanurk's *On Ümera River* ("Ümera jõel", 1936), which addressed the crusades.
- 27 In the chronology of events, Saal's trilogy has the following order: *Aita* (1891), *Leili* (1892), *Vambola* (1889). Only *Vambola* addresses the Estonian Crusades, while *Aita* and *Leili* depict the Livs' struggle against crusaders, which preceded it. Cf. Nirk 1966: 487.
- 28 Raudsepp refers to peasant unrest in Mahtra in 1858, commonly known as the 'Mahtra war' after the novel of the same name by Eduard Vilde ("Mahtra sõda", 1902). For the thematisation of peasant revolt in Estonian historical fiction, see also the chapter by Kirss.
- 29 For *On Ümera River* and *Names in Marble*, see note 25. Jaan Kärner's *People on Ascent* ("Tõusev rahvas", 2 vols., 1935, 1937) depicts the social and political rise of Estonians in the early twentieth century.
- 30 *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae*, I.2, p. 2.
- 31 For the afterlife of the arrival scene and its transformations see Johansen 1961.
- 32 An association between Russians and hideous violence is especially pronounced in Enn Kippel's works *At the Time of the Great Lament* ("Suure nutu ajal", 1936) and *The Coming of the Ironheads* ("Kui raudpea tuli", 1938), although nowadays the author's later, strongly pro-Russian works, such as *Meelis* are more widely known. The earlier novels describe the Livonian War and the Great Northern War respectively. The representations of Russian warriors as the cruel and barbarian 'other' in *Urmas and Merike* often recall the tradition related to those two early modern wars. By way of comparison, anti-Russian trends are also present in Finnish historical fiction in the interwar period (see Pikkanen's chapter).
- 33 In the 1930s, the scarcity of Estonian military history and war heroes appears to have been acknowledged as a problem on a wider scale: a good indication of this are the appeals to include the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order and the Swedish wars of the great power era into Estonian history under the pretext that the people had sustained them both as purveyors and private soldiers. The most influential advocate of this idea was Johann Laidoner (1938), commander-in-chief of the Estonian army and one of the men behind the authoritarian regime.
- 34 This is also suggested by its later separate publication. Hindrey published the epilogue of *Urmas and Merike* in the short story collection *Doom on Lake Mälaren* ("Hukatus Mälari", 1939), having first removed all references to the novel. Hindrey also addresses the Sigtuna campaign in another novel *The Ruin of Sigtuna* ("Sigtuna häving") in a collection of stories by the same name (1938). The reference to Sigtuna in the titles of both volumes also suggests the attraction of the subject.
- 35 Jakob Hurt's *A Few Impressions of the Fatherland's History* ("Pildid isamaa sündinud asjust", 1871) does not mention Sigtuna, but describes the inhabitants of Saaremaa as "frightful sea robbers" (Hurt 1879: 7). This motif finds its way into fiction, enabling Karl August Hermann (1887: 10) to claim in his Sigtuna story that Estonians were feared all over Northern Europe.
- 36 Mäesalu 2008. However, the claim that the devastation of Sigtuna forced the Swedes to found a new capital in Stockholm, which at the wake of the nationalist movement was made in Jakobson's works (1991: 19) and became widespread later, is definitely groundless.
- 37 In *Urmas and Merike*, one of the first great adventures is a journey eastwards to the far shore of Peipsi to bring or buy women for former outlaws. The motif of a dark-haired slave-girl is also present in the opening chapter of *Lords of the Baltic Sea*.

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Post-WWII Fiction:
Contestation and Amnesia



Is It Possible to Read Soviet Literature Anew?

Rudolf Sirge's Historical Novels

Examining the works by Rudolf Sirge from the 1920s to the 1960s provides a good chance to review the question that secretly haunts the contemporary literary memory in Estonia and other countries with similar historical experiences: how can and indeed should we read literary works from Soviet times that have a certain literary value but do not fit into the ideological frameworks of today's receptive space and are therefore constantly suspected, sometimes justifiably and sometimes not, of lying or distorting the truth? This problematic situation is a testimony to the inconsistency of a cultural memory that was violently distorted in Soviet times and now, as a counterbalance, has experienced sharp ruptures. In that process the development of the patterns of cultural memory has lost its continuity, resulting in enigmatic and traumatic gaps in the historical or mnemonic collective identity.

The historical novels by Rudolf Sirge are a good source for studying fractures in cultural memory for several reasons. First, the genre of the historical novel itself raises the topic of truthfulness more clearly than some other genres. Second, though Sirge was a canonical figure in Soviet Estonian literature, he cannot be labelled as a propagandist writer in its most derogatory sense, as he was a genuine Marxist, not a writer who tried to fit into the ideological frames of Soviet culture inauthentically and only through form. This means that Sirge's writing is not a banal case of formal mimicry and that his novels reveal to us the tensions between the official line and individual non-orthodox leftism in Soviet society. Third, the fact that the course of Sirge's creative life contains several revisions of his works gives us an interesting picture of the dynamics of ideological writing in the strange decades in the middle of the last century.

On a more general level Sirge's historical novels point to a certain strange gap in the literary memory; there was a time when such texts were the norm and shaped our patterns of historical thinking, but now we lack even the proper interpretative key for opening them, and consequently, they are omitted from the Estonian cultural memory in its active functional sense. There is an unexplained and unconscious knot in Estonian cultural identity, and the question is how to untie it. The following analysis is an attempt at a certain rereading of Soviet literature that would make collective memory work more coherent.

This chapter will analyse two different cases among the works by Sirge that hopefully cast some light on the problems of reading Soviet literature from the perspective of the contemporary receptive space. As a result, I will propose two ways that this kind of literature can be reread not only as an intriguing document of the cultural and social climate of the time the novels were written. First, this chapter will suggest that we can search for hidden markers of resistance or trauma writing in Sirge's texts. Second, it will be argued that we can use these texts as reminders of the nature of literature as a field of dissensual reworking of the "distribution of the sensible" (Rancière 2004).¹ These two approaches to rereading are intertwined.

Rudolf Sirge as a Literary Figure

Rudolf Sirge (1904–1970), one of the most important writers in the Soviet Estonian literary canon, was born into a worker's family, spent his school years in Tartu during turbulent times in the town, and developed his Marxist views as a very young man. In the middle of the 1920s he worked as a journalist and writer. He became more famous in 1929 when he published his long, prize-winning naturalist novel *Peace! Bread! Land!* ("Rahu! Leiba! Maad!") about the events of the revolutionary struggle in Tartu in 1917–1918. In 1929–30 Sirge travelled twice to the Soviet Union and wrote a travelogue about his trips, showing positive, and sometimes naïve, attitudes towards Soviet life. Consequently he was fired from a social democratic newspaper for which he seemed too leftist.² In the 1930s he communicated with the Soviet embassy in Tallinn as an 'informer', although it is not clear what the status meant (Valge 2009). The Estonian security police was interested in Sirge, but at the same time he was trustworthy enough to be hired by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1937.

In the second half of the 1930s he wrote two novels: *Black Summer* ("Must suvi", 1936), which depicts the German occupation in the Estonian countryside in 1918 during the First World War; and a psychological novel *Shame in the Heart* ("Häbi südames", 1938) about the moral choices of a man in difficult social conditions. In 1940, when Estonia was incorporated into Soviet Union, Sirge was among the supporters of the Sovietisation: he became the chief of the press department of the Soviet Estonian government and the director of the Estonian News Agency. He also held leading positions in publishing and reorganised the Estonian Writers' Union. During the first Soviet mass deportation on 14 June 1941,³ Sirge's family was mistakenly deported while he was away in Riga. His wife and daughter were released soon after, but the family was reunited only after the war. In September 1941, at the beginning of the German occupation, Sirge was arrested for being a Soviet collaborator, but was released six months later and spent the war years working on a farm under the surveillance of the police.

During the Stalinist era Sirge tried to fit into the dogmatic demands of socialist realism, but was not completely successful at it.⁴ During the 1940s he depicted the social landscape of contemporary peasantry in his works, facing the new complicated circumstances of ideological dogmatics. He

was particularly interested in the social problems between different layers of country people and the fundamental change in these relations after the Soviet takeover. As is typical for works written under the dogmas of strict socialist realism, Sirge's texts from the Stalinist years remain stylistically flat. However, he did not succeed in being perfectly dogmatic, because his natural sense of realism meant his figures of class enemies were not inimical enough and did not fit into the framework of the black-and-white schematicism expected from a description of the class struggle. Nor was he completely credible in the ordinary sense because of the restraints of a Stalinist literature canon that demanded that literary depictions follow a certain ideological ideal without allowing any doubtful or dialectic notes. The long search for a rendition of the topics that would both satisfy the author and still fit into the official ideology ended with the novel *The Land and the People* ("Maa ja rahvas"), published in 1956. It became one of the most significant works of fiction in Estonian literature for all the subsequent Soviet decades, as it was also the most polyphonic representation of the difficult years of 1940–41 ever written in Soviet Estonia. The novel made Sirge into one of the most important Soviet Estonian writers and in 1957 he was awarded the title of Merited Writer of Soviet Estonia.⁵ The second important work from the period is *Lights in the River Plain* ("Tulukesed luhal", 1961), a new version of his first novel *Peace! Bread! Land!*.

In the post-Soviet period Sirge has fallen into oblivion. He is mentioned in the Estonian literary histories as the important liberator of Estonian fiction from the Stalinist restrictions with his *The Land and the People*, but his works are not part of the school curriculum any more.

The First Case: Soviet Rewriting of a Naturalist Historical Novel. Peace! Bread! Land! and The Lights in the River Plain

Rudolf Sirge had published a couple of collections of short stories, but became more widely known after winning the second prize for his *Peace! Bread! Land!* in a prestigious novel competition.⁶ The novel is written in the naturalist style and is almost 800 pages long, and it covers the period from February 1917 to February 1918 as seen through the eyes of the inhabitants of a suburb of Tartu where poor working-class people mixed with criminals, prostitutes and suchlike. Rudolf Sirge had lived in the same area with his aunt as a 13-year-old boy, giving the novel an autobiographical background.

The novel is set right after the February Revolution, at the time of the Dual Power of the democratic Provisional Government and the Bolshevik-dominated Soviets in Russia and their local counterparts in Estonia. At the end of 1917 the Bolsheviks took power in Estonia and ruled until February 1918, when the German army reached Estonia. During the power vacuum that lasted for a couple of days, the Estonian Republic was declared on 24 February, even if de facto it came into being only in November 1918 when the Germans left Estonia at the end of the First World War. It is worth noting that Sirge's *Peace! Bread! Land!* does not mention the declaration of independence in February 1918, the central official landmark in the Estonian

national identity.⁷ The omission can be explained by his realist intentions in rendering the time depicted: for the working class characters of the novel the important event was not some declaration by the bourgeois that had no real effect, but rather the public execution of the Bolsheviks on the ice of the Emajõgi river by German forces, assisted, as Sirge hints, by Estonians, this being the event which ends the novel.

The reception of *Peace! Bread! Land!* in interwar Estonia was varied. The critics faulted the novel for its excessive length and for the overwhelming details that seemed to overshadow the analysis of the revolutionary events. Furthermore, the naturalist scenes of rape, murder and other cruelties were too much for some critics. However, the novel was commended for its realistic description of a historically important period. One of the critics denied it had any great artistic value, but applauded its neutral and many-sided descriptions as a valuable source of history in the future (Palgi 1930: 181–182). This remark is particularly interesting from the contemporary perspective. *Peace! Bread! Land!* offers a picture of how the eve of the Estonian Republic was perceived by left-wing and lower-class people in the interwar period, a picture that was not influenced by any official ideological pressure. In contrast to Sirge's representation, the contemporary discussion of these events stresses the nationalist point of view and eclipses the presence of the left-wing Estonians, even though the opposition between the Whites and the Reds of those years was not so painful in social memory as it was in Finland. Even so, it is possible to see a certain element of civil war in the Estonian War of Independence too, if desired.

However, some of the critics were not pleased with the way Sirge handled historical detail, their criticisms being clearly linked to their political inclinations. Eduard Laaman, a right-wing diplomat, historian and journalist praised the novel for showing how big revolutionary events are only the unconscious, uncontrollable bursts of blind and evil passions, but he finds some factual mistakes, noting, for example, that in the novel Bolsheviks are constantly against the war (Laaman 1929). Another critic, Oskar Kurmiste, a social democratic politician and journalist, claimed that Sirge had described the details of the revolution well, but had failed to understand its real essence, and that the novel involved too many Bolshevik intonations (Kurmiste 1929). In 1929 this sounded almost like an accusation of communism. Thus the problem of the historical accuracy of the novel was addressed from its very beginning, and the problem continued to burn several decades later, as we will see.

It is understandable why the social democratic reviewers perceived the novel as Bolshevik, because it showed how the Mensheviks cooperated with bourgeois politicians, which consequently diminished their credibility for the working class characters of the novel. But at the same time the novel also showed how the Bolsheviks gave up democratic principles and found in the revolution a way to succumb to cruelty and vengeful passions. This apparently seemed so obvious and beyond doubt in 1929 that it was not seen as worthy of specific mention in the reviews.

The reason why the novel's reception was so controversial was partly due to the peculiarities of Sirge's style. Despite the naturalist style, which

always colours the reality represented, often describing it in a pessimistically determinative tone and highlighting its darker and filthier sides, it is nonetheless quite difficult to interpret the authorial voice of the novel. The narrating voice is neutral, dry, descriptive, almost journalistic. Readers trying to describe the position of the author, find themselves revealing only their own. This is quite obvious in the reception of *Peace! Bread! Land!*, where different critics see the different and often contrasting characters as the alter egos of the author.

From the middle of the 1950s Rudolf Sirge considered revising the novel for republishing. According to his recollections, the plans for revision grew into a more thorough rewriting. The new novel, *Lights in the River Plain*, was published in 1961 after several years of work. In the afterword to the revised novel, he sees the two versions not as one and the same novel, but as variations on a theme, to borrow a musical phrase. The notes made by Sirge for the public discussion of the novel in 1963 reveal his thoughts at the time of writing:

The environment, the character of the moment, the memories, the observations, the source materials give a somewhat different understanding of things from that in our history books. My own conception. The talk with J. Käbin in Sept. 1958—I need to go my own way. [...] on 27 September [19]58 I wrote in my notebook: “[...] Discussing the nature of the ‘isms’ (with L. Rimmelgas) a truth suddenly occurred to me: the case is not about editing or reworking a literary text that has once been written, but about transferring, transforming it from the one school, the one ‘ism’ (natur[alism]) to the other. Each detail, each spot of colour, each dash, that earlier was only in the service of imparting the facts, must now become socially conceptualised, dialectically illuminated...” (Sirge 1963).⁸

This is how the author saw the problem of the plausibility of the historical novel. The aim of the reworking is to replace the naturalism that is merely ‘imparting fact’ with a wider illumination. We could term the new ‘ism’ Socialist Realism, as it appeared to be at the time, but since Sirge himself does not use the term, we could also call it the socio-dialectic realism.

Let us proceed by comparing the two versions of the novel in order to reveal the differences between the two ‘isms’. I will concentrate on the tone, the emplotment and role of the characters in the two novels. The initial title of the novel *Peace! Bread! Land!* is a Bolshevik slogan that strikes with its extrovert loudness. It is changed to *Lights on the River Plain*, a metaphor that one of the main characters, the judge of the Bolshevik tribunal, the shoemaker Martin Haspe, uses at the end of the novel shortly before his death. He compares himself and his companions to the faint lights that are sometimes seen on the river plain, glimpsed only for a moment, disappearing immediately and leaving behind only a memory of themselves. Haspe intimates that even if they did not achieve much, they had at least burned for a moment. As the reception quickly pointed out, the metaphor involves a certain tinge of resignation. Sirge omitted most of the rough scenes⁹ and the motivation of characters is not so unconscious and animal any more, as the poverty, hunger and degeneration are still given as reasons for the riot,

but the motives of the participants are calculated and their minds are clear.

These changes were made for several reasons. The new novel corresponds more conspicuously to the official teleological attitude towards the revolution in the 1950s. The revolution was no longer understood as an incomprehensible outburst by hungry workers. Rather, it was obligatory to see the meaning and the aim of the revolution right from its very beginning. This kind of teleological narrative structure is characteristic not only of Soviet historical consciousness, but also of a general pattern of thinking about the past that is characteristic of the modern history writing that participates in the construction of the collective identity independently of particular societies. However, the big ideological and social upheavals can change the interpretative horizon drastically and bring previously insignificant past events to the fore. Accordingly, the October Revolution becomes a turning point in *Lights on the River Plain*. In the first version of the novel it was only a temporary disorder with a noble purpose. The change in the motivation of the characters of the novel is explainable simply by the shift in style. The later version of the novel is a mixture of the traditional critical realism and the liberal form of socialist realism that has abandoned the naturalist conventions, each stylistic key corresponding to a certain philosophy of what a human being is.

Furthermore, the novels have the same set of characters, but their roles in the two versions are different.¹⁰ Kusti Jaanus, who kills his mother in the first version but is spared the crime in the second, experiences a spiritual turn and tries to redeem himself in the revolutionary military forces. He had been part of the forces even before his turn, but abused his position by robbing a rich household under the guise of the Bolshevik commandeering of capitalist property. In the second version the event is softened by the fact that the household is not Estonian, but belongs to a Germanised family, 'the Other' for both the Estonian and the Soviet communities.

In *Peace! Bread! Land!* the leading Bolshevik figure Eduard Mehin is represented not as a person, but as a type with clear political functions. In *Lights on the River Plain* he becomes one of the main characters. Mehin is psychologised and has doubts about using violence as a revolutionary means, reconciling himself with it as a justified evil only towards the end. Another interesting character is Tüürmann, who shares the left sympathies of the others, but becomes hesitant after seeing the possibly violent character of the Bolshevik revolution. He is politically inclined towards the Mensheviks. Several discussions between Tüürmann and Mehin in *Peace! Bread! Land!* outline well the differences among the left, between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. These discussions are also present in the second version, where Tüürmann's hesitations are not so much philosophical as psychological: in the first version he doubted because he was a person who did too much of thinking, now he is shown as a psychologically weak character, who even attempts suicide in an episode that does not exist in the first version. Tüürmann and Mehin also come into confrontation on intimate grounds, as they are both in love with a suburban girl Vanda. In the first version Vanda opts for Tüürmann, because the revolutionary Mehin has no time for a personal life, but in the second version Tüürmann seems too unstable

for Vanda, so she chooses Mehin and attends the meetings of a Bolshevik circle. Despite Tüürmann's attempts to distance himself from the Bolsheviks and their revolution, he is forced to cooperate with them and is finally killed on the river by the Germans in both versions. Overall the wide gallery of characters in the first version is replaced in the second by a hierarchy of characters that inserts a certain vertical dimension to the novel.

A remarkable group in the novel are Latvians, both Latvian riflemen¹¹, who are dislocated to Tartu and align with the Bolsheviks, and Latvian war refugees, who have fled from the Germans and are not very welcome among the poor suburbanites because resources are so limited. This theme is also present in the second version, but now the tone is less controversial since the tensions between the different ethnic groups are muted. The representation corresponds of course to the Marxist-Leninist approach, where class is more important than ethnicity. But at the same time, the opposition between the Russian background of the Bolsheviks and the national consciousness of the Estonian Mensheviks is still preserved in the second version, even the words of a minor Menshevik character which describe Bolshevism as the restoration of the Russian Empire in a new form.

In *Lights on the River Plain* the historical scope is wider, as there are more events that are not directly connected to the life of suburbanites, but represent the political world-views of the historical characters. One of the most prominent scenes is the meeting of two historical persons, the communist Viktor Kingissepp and the right-wing politician Jaan Tõnisson, a scene that provoked a lot controversy between the author and the publishers in the editing process of the novel.¹² Kingissepp has arrested Tõnisson, but they speak to each other as equals, both being educated lawyers, and they explain their world views to each other. Tõnisson was an inimical figure in the official ideology of Soviet Estonia, but Sirge has not distorted his views in the novel. The polyphonic picture is one of Sirge's major achievements. The presence of the historical figures in the fictional story can have several aims. They can add to the impression of objective history, but in this case the two personalities were symbolic, almost mythologised figures in the Estonian historical memory (one in the official history, the other in the unofficial memory), and so they may raise the novel to the mythical level of history.

In the first version there is only one passing mention of Lenin, whereas in the second version Lenin is mentioned several times. It would have been utterly impossible not to mention him in a Soviet novel about revolutionary times. However, sometimes he is mentioned alongside Leon Trotsky, without any difference being made in the attitude of the characters of the novel towards them. The representation of the two as equally significant is historiographically correct, as during the revolution they were obviously mentioned together often. At the same time though, it was also a deviation from the official line of the 1950s, because by that time Trotsky had been turned into a traitor and was portrayed as the opposite to Lenin in the official Soviet historiography. In *The Land and the People* Sirge even discusses the problematic claim that Lenin and the Bolsheviks received financial help from Germany. All these questions are extremely risky for a Soviet novel to

represent and it was made possible only by the high position that Sirge had at the time. The problem of the different leftist factions – the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs)¹³ – is handled thoroughly and the reader gets a good overview of their ideological differences.

As mentioned above, Sirge's neutral style allows him to represent certain things without an evaluative attitude, so that the reader can, for example, interpret the scene where a newspaper editor struggles with the Bolshevik censorship as an allegory of Soviet censorship. It is also left for the reader to decide whether the Bolshevik subjugation of Tartu in 1917 was a justified and necessary action or an act of non-democratic violence. On the other hand, Sirge also lapses into high pathos, describing for example how the wings of revolution spread out above the town in the light of the new dawn. Usually, such passages seem to be mechanically bolted onto the text, lacking natural unity.

In order to sum up the differences between the two versions of the novel, we could say that the new version has more panoramic polyphony, both the set of characters and the plotment have a clear vertical dimension, and the novel corresponds better to the truths of Soviet historiography, though not always, as Sirge bends the rules and his revisions move in different directions simultaneously.

Overall, it is quite difficult to comment definitively on the motives for the changes, whether they are sincere or just the adjustment to the hegemonic ideological patterns. It can also be asked whether the changes are artistically or politically motivated. Further, another factor that should be borne in mind is that the two published versions of the novel themselves have several previous versions. The manuscript of *Peace! Bread! Land!* differs from the published text in several instances. Sirge has, for example, omitted an ideological passage on the Leninist theory of there being two class-oriented cultures inside every national culture. As Sirge underlined that the changes were made without anyone's advice or demand (Tonts 1974: 39–40), was it then his self-censorship that made him avoid overly explicit Communist signals in the Estonian Republic, or was the reworking the result of a compositional decision? However, drawing a distinction between the aesthetics and the politics is also complicated, because each artistic style has its own political implications.

The second version, *Lights on the River Plain* also had several significant modifications between the initial manuscript and final printed version, but these were due to explicit censorship, and give an idea of the filters that literary texts had to pass during the Soviet era. As the literary critic Aksel Tamm, who participated in the publishing of *Lights on the River Plain* in 1961, recalls, the editor made changes in Sirge's text without the author's permission, and when Sirge protested, the editor demanded even more changes. The negotiations were tense and finally eight pages were cut from the already printed run of no less than 21,000 copies. The outcome was ridiculous, because the changes did not meet the initial aims of the publisher, as they were only casual and did not alter the author's intentions in principle (Tamm 2012). In some cases the initial version of the manuscript was restored,¹⁴ in others the initial wording was supplemented with an

apologetic addition,¹⁵ and in others the publisher's will ruled as, for example, in censoring the thoughts of a character who see Bolshevism as a version of the Russian tradition of worshipping religious icons.

The most sensitive passage was the meeting of Kingissepp and Tõnisson. As the different manuscripts show, Sirge made several proposals for corrections to the publisher before the final version of that episode was fixed (Sirge 1961b). The main problem was the proleptic mention of the future destiny of both men. Sirge carefully searched for the right wording and corrected the nuances and, as a result, Tõnisson's respect for his political opponent Kingissepp is somewhat diminished in the final version. However, in principle the episode remained the same, resulting in the desecration of the printed book and in lot of pointless work in the publishing house (Tamm 2003). Nevertheless it seems that on half of the replaced pages, Sirge was on the winning side, achieving the restoration of his initial thought, if not his initial wording.

In total, there are three versions of *Lights on the River Plain*, the initial manuscript, the printed version with the initial changes made without Sirge's permission, and the final version. The different versions could be compared more thoroughly in order to analyse why and by whom the changes were made. A comparison of all the versions and the reception of the novel(s) would highlight the changing attitudes towards a sensitive historical event over half a century. It would also enable us to inquire into the mechanisms for rewriting history in belletristic form during Soviet times, but must remain outside the scope of this article.

However, the comparison of *Peace! Bread! Land!* and *Lights on the River Plain* also points towards several further questions. Were the changes meant to turn the novel into a more mature one artistically, thus invalidating its previous version? Or was *Lights on the River Plain* meant as a replacement for *Peace! Bread! Land!* when the original was denied public access, thus keeping the hidden text in cultural memory? Or perhaps the new version was meant to be a monument not only to the historical events but also to the first version of the novel? Sirge's (1963) notes reveal that his most basic aim was to 'save' his novel for his readership. Complaining that the result of reworkings would obviously not satisfy him, because the transfer of a text from one 'ism' to the other is not entirely possible, he wrote: "I do not expect this work to succeed. It is enough if I manage to save it from the special fund".¹⁶ Much of interwar Estonian literature was assigned to the special funds and thus taken out of cultural circulation, or, as we might also say, moved from the active cultural memory to the storage of things that were meant to be forgotten. Thus they were the targets of active forgetting. *Peace! Bread! Land!* was obviously transferred into the special fund as a literary work that represented the sensitive historical period in a non-orthodox manner.

The thirty years between the two versions transformed the initial novel set in the recent past into a historical novel in the proper sense. To pursue the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter, it could be asked which version needs less hermeneutic work when read from today's perspective, and why? Is there any reason why Sirge's works should be reintroduced into the framework of Estonian cultural memory?

The first version was a description of a revolutionary process that had not fulfilled its teleological end. The second version represents the outcome of a closed historical process which continued beyond Sirge's work. Thus, the interpretation of the second version requires that we step out of the teleological patterns of the post-Soviet Estonian national narrative and distance ourselves from the horizon of our historical teleology, especially as it is partly based on the exclusion of the possibility of the teleology that the novel represents.

The twist of historical consciousness is that it comprises two competing reasons why history is written – truth and identity. The pursuit of truth goes hand in hand with, though sometimes in opposition to, the pursuit and maintenance of identity. The shift in their coherence may be more understandable if we transpose the problem into the realm of personal memories: we want our memories to be credible, but even more important is to remember things in a way that maintains our self-integrity and makes us capable of communicating with others on the basis of common identity patterns. When reading Sirge, we are struggling with an attempt to cast light on our own identity patterns through a contact with something that differs thoroughly from these patterns.

We would do well to remember when analysing ideologically and politically constrained pieces of literature that no completely neutral representations of the past exist. Furthermore, a special effort is required when the representation in question resides outside the processual continuity of our own temporality. Sirge rewrote the past in a new political and cultural landscape, participating in the act of remembering that always takes place in the present moment. Remembrance is also a process and as such, a sign of living intercourse between the truth and identity. And it seems that fictional works have a special role in this rewriting of the past and our identities, as their register, which is not tied by the formal restrictions of academic history writing, can more easily address the problems of moral relations with that which is gone. Fiction, as an area of probability, allows us to illuminate the question *why* we want to remember our past and why the memory cannot be fixed into any final form if we want to keep our identity alive.

Let us pursue these questions further by turning to the second case study of the chapter.

The Second Case: The Land and the People and the Marks of Hidden Traumas

While *Peace! Bread! Land!* and *Lights on the River Plain* frame Sirge's oeuvre as a novelist, his main work is *The Land and the People* (1956). However, the main theme of this novel, the theme of country people and their relationship to the land, had already been covered in his 1936 novel *Black Summer*.

Black Summer describes village life from February until November 1918 during the German occupation in the First World War, when the Germans are leaving the country and the Estonian War of Independence is about to

begin. Two young peasant brothers resist the local German master and his collaborators and there is a little romance and a tragic outcome. The novel reflects the anti-German attitudes that were present in Estonian society in the late 1930s.¹⁷ When the novel was turned into a play and staged in 1937, it provoked a sharp reaction from Baltic German community and the theatre production was removed from its initial venue, the Tallinn German Theatre, which the company had rented for the production. An abridged translation of the novel even found its way to the Secret State Archive in Germany as a proof of the suspicious attitudes in Eastern Europe (Hasselblatt 2003b).

The theme of fighting against German oppressors fits into the earlier literary tradition discussed in this book by Eneken Laanes and seems quite typical in the overall context of the Estonian historical novel in the 1930s (discussed in the chapter by Linda Kaljundi). It was part of the discourse of the Estonian fight for freedom that featured the German nobility as the 'primordial enemy'. This is one of the motifs that Soviet Estonian historical discourse inherited from the Estonian nationalists and it became useful in the propaganda against Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

However, at the end of the novel Sirge turns the representation upside down in several surprising ways. *Black Summer* is a narrative *mise en abyme*. It starts with a letter the author has purportedly received from an old friend, who sends his old diary. The novel is supposed to be based on the diary. At the end of the novel there is another letter, the response from the author to his friend, and we can assume that this is the place where the author expresses his own views. When it comes to the motif of the fight between the Estonians and the Germans, the letter draws attention to the historical role of Germans as *Kulturträger*, who brought Estonia into the European cultural space. That argument goes against the Estonian discourse of the centuries-long oppression of the Estonians by the foreign culture, and was also absent from the Soviet Estonian historiography. Only in the last decade has this point of view been more widely accepted in Estonian historical memory.¹⁸

However, even more surprising for today's reader are the passages that seem to belong to the highly ideological Soviet literature, not to the literature from the era of Estonian nationalist authoritarianism. The author argues that the War of Independence was not about the fight for freedom, but was instead a class struggle, a fight for property and against the proletarian classes who wanted to redistribute the wealth. Capital does not have a fatherland, the author of the letter points out, and, accordingly, patriotism was not the main point of the war. The letter ends with a hope for a time when people can be free from their greed for property. Here Sirge expresses the view that later became the official Soviet interpretation of the Estonian War of Independence, while today the element of the social struggle is almost completely wiped out from the history of the war.¹⁹ Strangely enough, *Black Summer* was one of the few works by Sirge that was not republished in the Soviet period. Apparently the picture the novel gave was ideologically too ambivalent for the Soviet official line or, alternatively, it would have shown that it was possible to express Marxist views publicly even in the authoritarian Republic of Estonia of the 1930s. In any case, *Black Summer*, and especially its letter at the end, opens up the theme of peasants and

their relationship to the land, already pointing towards topics that will be examined in Sirge's later works. These later novellas and short stories on peasant topics from the 1940s and from the beginning of the 1950s seem to be mechanically modelled on prescribed ideological patterns, or in the more sophisticated cases, the remnants of earlier realisms with the more or less obvious marks of dogmatic distortions.

The series of shorter texts culminated in the novel *The Land and the People*, published in the already more liberated cultural climate of 1956. The Estonian literary scholar Sirje Olesk has distinguished between three different 'regimes' in Estonian literature during the Soviet period: 'the Soviet literature in the Estonian language' that dominated in the Stalinist period and was no different from the Soviet literature elsewhere; 'the Soviet Estonian literature' that dominated at the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s; and 'the Estonian literature' that prevailed from the end of the 1960s and did not have much in common with the socialist canon. The third of these is nowadays perceived as the proper tradition of Estonian literature.²⁰ Soviet Estonian literature is then the transitional form between the first, strictly ideological, literature, and the third, which is free from the imposed ideology. *The Land and the People* is usually seen as one of the founding works of the second literary regime (Olesk 2002: 18–20).²¹

The novel is set in an Estonian village²² from the summer 1940 to the end of 1941. Soviet power has taken over, the land reform has been executed, and the big farms have been forced to turn parts of their lands over to poorer families, although nobody speaks about collectivisation yet. The ideological differences start to escalate. One of the main characters of the novel is Karl Allik, a farmhand in the rich Logina farm, who becomes a Soviet activist and later a militia deputy. The main figure on the opposite side is the owner of the Logina farm, the old Peter Torma, who defends the old values of a dignified landowner. The most vicious, and maybe also most hyperbolic character in the novel is the Peter's son Huko, who has Fascist views. Huko becomes the leader of the Forest Brothers, the anti-Soviet guerrilla movement in the Estonian forests. The most important part of the novel for its contemporary readers in the 1950s and the 1960s is the representation of the first Soviet mass deportation in Estonia in June 1941. Talk of the deportations was silenced in the public discourse of Soviet society and Sirge's novel was the first and the most thorough description of the event in Soviet Estonian literature. In the story, old Peter is deported, Karl Allik being one of the deporters. Sirge, who supported the Soviets, interestingly describes the event with compassion towards Peter who is turned into the most powerfully depicted character in the whole novel. As already noted, the issue of deportations was a risky subject. Sirge was able to publish his novel, but theatre performances of the dramatisation of the novel were forbidden at the beginning of the 1960s.²³ The novel ends with the German occupation, when Karl Allik becomes a partisan and escapes to Russia, after killing Huko in a violent encounter.

The novel was a great success. Sirge was awarded the title of Merited Writer the next year. The novel was reprinted three times over the next two decades and was included in the Estonian school curriculum. The critics

praised the polyphony of the novel, which in the terms of those times was referred to as a deep understanding of the dialectics of class struggle. The character of old Peter was foregrounded in all the reviews as a particularly suggestive and credible figure of the class enemy. The character of Karl Allik, on the other hand, was perceived as fuzzy and weak.

The Land and the People was the first major literary work that emerged from the narrow frames of Socialist Realism, even though the contemporary reception of the 1950s praised it precisely as an example of true Socialist Realism, free from the distortions of the Stalinist era.²⁴ Some critics claimed that *The Land and the People* had merged two traditions, the highest examples of Socialist literature such as novels by Mikhail Sholokhov, and the best traditions of Estonian realist representation of peasant life such as the novels by the classic of Estonian fiction, A. H. Tammsaare (Jõgi 1963: 105–106).²⁵ Sirge himself refers to both these authors. There are direct allusions to Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Uplifted* ("Podnyataya Tselina", 1932/1959), which the character Karl Allik has read. The old Peter is reminiscent of Tammsaare's main protagonist Andres, tying him to the central archetype of the Estonian peasant. The third important intertext of *The Land and the People* could be Eduard Vilde's historical novel *The Mahtra War* ("Mahtra sõda", 1902). The motif of the peasant uprising in Mahtra in 1858²⁶ is mentioned in *The Land and the People*, although in quite an ambivalent manner, when a character says that the new regime is fighting with the descendants of the peasants who had fought for their rights in Mahtra.²⁷ Thus *The Land and the People* is a hybrid mix of several controversial traditions, but it nevertheless established a new norm for how to write Soviet literature in an Estonian way.

The novel has two opposed functions. On one hand, it is part of the cultural project that tried to propagate and establish Soviet views, because it follows the Soviet version of what happened in 1940–41. As such, it was helpful for the people, because it showed them how to adjust their views to the 'right' way of remembering those years. On the other hand, it also contains passages which can be read as either marks of hidden resistance or symptoms of trauma. The text is polyphonic, and not only on its surface, where the author does not intervene in the direct speech of his characters, allowing a rich palate of different viewpoints in spite of his explicit authorial position. It is also polyphonic on a deeper level, both affirming the official memory and offering an opportunity to get relief from the forced politics of memory.

In analysing literature that supports the official Soviet ideology as the literature of hidden traumas, I am inspired by Russian poet and literary scholar Sergei Zavyalov. He has written on twentieth-century Russian poetry and on the difficulties of reading the Soviet literary code adequately nowadays, and has proposed a metaphor of 'black gloves'. The metaphor is derived from a particular event in Soviet history. In 1955 a big military cruiser exploded in Sevastopol harbour, killing around one thousand people. The event was neither officially announced nor publicly discussed. The only sign of the catastrophe were the black gloves, which the Soviet navy wore in the parade that took place a week later that was supposed to celebrate the anniversary of the navy. Zavyalov argues that, when reading Soviet literary texts, we should be alert to such 'black gloves'.

Analysing the works by the major poet of the Stalinist years and of the 1960s, Aleksandr Tvardovsky, Zavyalov (2012) traces the traumas that could not be talked about publicly, but were nevertheless written into these text in the form of certain silences or faint hints. For example, the poem *Lenin and the Potter* (“Lenin i pechnik”, 1939) is a telling example of the ‘black gloves’ in Soviet literature. A potter is enraged with a man who is trampling on his crop field, but it turns out that the man is Lenin. On a winter day several soldiers visit the potter to take him away without saying where and why. He prepares himself for a sinister fate and bids farewell to his family. The soldiers take him to Lenin, but only because Lenin’s oven is broken and needs repairing. When the job is done, they sit together in the friendly atmosphere and drink tea. At end the potter goes home to the great joy of his wife. The explicit moral of the prose poem is Lenin’s kindness, but it reveals itself only against a background of self-evident fear of repressions – something that seemed so natural at the time of writing, but which seems very odd today. The poem shows the trace of deep insecurity.

Another of Zavyalov’s examples is the life and works of Olga Bergholz, a poet who suffered severely under the Soviet regime, but was at the same time officially highly recognised for her poems about the siege of Leningrad and her eulogies to the Soviet regime.²⁸ For Zavyalov, Bergholz is an illuminating example of the Soviet specificity when it comes to dealing with personal and collective humanitarian catastrophes. While the western discussions of catastrophes and trauma centre on individual victimisation and dehumanisation, people in the Soviet Union had to ignore their status as victims. It was not possible to speak openly about the worst aspect of being a victim, which was the loss of personal humanity. In the Soviet discourse the traumas were overcome by emphasising the heroic survival, which also meant that confessions of personal losses were not tolerated. However, the victimhood and dehumanisation found their expression in the specific hidden forms.²⁹

The ‘black gloves’ in Sirge’s novels point to a peculiar kind of trauma. It is the trauma of those who are not directly guilty of violence, but who cannot condemn it either. It is a bystander trauma, the trauma of individuals who have been unable to help the victims and are also traumatised by the fact that they end up on the side of the repressors. They are not able to recognise themselves as victims, because in the ‘chain of violence’ they are both victims and involuntary collaborators with violence. In Rudolf Sirge’s case it must have been a painful problem, because he was an activist of the Soviet regime, but at the same time his family was deported in June 1941. Where Sirge deals with the theme of deportation to such a large extent in his novel, it is obviously because he is trying to resolve the complexities of his own personal situation. He tries to show the conditions that led to the deportation and examines possible ways of justifying it, but he also reveals the doubts of Karl Allik and the other characters about the event. One of the reasons why critics saw Karl Allik as a fuzzy and psychologically inconsistent character (e.g. Mellov 1956; Raudsepp 1957),³⁰ may have been the fact that Sirge fails to show Karl Allik as completely convinced in his Communist choice. It may reflect the author’s own inability, or even

reluctance, to be consistently loyal to the official ideology, even if he was a Communist.

Overall, Karl Allik is an interesting and complicated figure. When the critics accuse Sirge of creating a faulty character, they may be denying the psychological realism of the characterisation, reflecting their own inconsistent and traumatised minds. Karl Allik constantly doubts whether he is decisive enough to be a good Communist. The significant moments of his ideological illumination are presented not as a conscious choice, but as passionate bursts during which Karl does not recognise himself. It seems to him that someone new and strange is ventriloquising through him. Right before the end of the novel Karl is an underground partisan, but doubts his activities, as every blow against the enemy is a blow against his own people. Furthermore, the closure of the romantic line of the novel is illuminating. Karl tries to forget his old attraction towards Peter of Logina's stepdaughter and starts a new affair with the daughter of a pro-Soviet peasant, but the choice turns out to be too rationalist and the relationship fails. At this point his old and true love is already impossible. The main character of *The Land and the People* fails in his personal life because of his ideological choices, and the failed romance in Sirge's novel might also be read as a metaphor for a disillusioned world-view.³¹ At the end, when Karl finally kills his antagonist Huko, it is not because of ideas, but as vengeance for his own failed life. Although the final sentence of the novel declares that Karl is among the strongest and the best of men, Karl's act and thoughts can also be interpreted as simply happening to him and him being more a man of passion than a man of action.

There are other places in the novel that are striking for today's reader and that can be seen as 'black gloves'. When people who were not on the initial list of those to be deported are nonetheless sent to Siberia for personal revenge, the party member Lumi laconically explains: "when you chop wood, the chips fly".³² The negative characters thus express opinions that were not part of the official history during Soviet times.³³ An interesting character Otsa Jakob who represents common sense and reads, among other things, progressive British newspapers, claims that the War of Independence was not about Estonians fighting against Socialism, but was the war of small nations against Russia. An additional interesting feature is the change of speech register when people talk about Soviet ideology. In these passages Sirge's fluent language becomes official, rigid and lifeless. It comes closer to the Soviet 'newspaper language' and the reader can feel a certain mechanical montage. It may not be an intentional effect, but in any case it points to difficulties in internalising the ideology and to the resistance to it.

Some passages in the novel are very similar to the symptoms of trauma in *Lenin and the Potter*. Things that are assumed to be self-evident in the context of the writing, do not seem so self-evident when read today. One such thing is the motif of manure. Karl Allik justifies the deportation to himself using the analogy of manure – deporting people is social manuring work, unpleasant, but necessary. After the deportation the party activist Lumi realises that people in the village are afraid of the Communists and, as a solution the Party organises a collective manuring of all the fields to show

the supportiveness of the new power. It is difficult to say whether Sirge chose manuring as a typical agricultural job done in the springtime, or whether he was trying to be consciously and subtly ironic, or whether it was yet again an unconscious symptom of trauma written into the text. In any case the motif of manuring forms an alliance with the deportation.

The attempt to interpret Sirge's text reveals the major dilemma of analysing Soviet literature. We are in constant danger of over-interpreting but also of under-interpreting, because the context and peculiarities of the Soviet cultural code have become closed to us. The rules of reading were not fixed in writing, they were embedded in the oral tradition and even formed as silent contracts between the writers and the readers. The only thing that we can do is to guess.

Furthermore, we should differentiate between the signs of hidden or semi-explicit resistance, which were more widely spread as techniques of writing and reading literature in the 1970s and the 1980s, and the symptoms of traumas. The latter are less intentional and our ability to find them depends on our ability to see the 'black gloves', the certain silent spots or the unfinished thought-lines of the texts. We would like to find a consoling act of heroism, of resistance, in our past, but we cannot count on that – all we can discover is the faint ambivalent movement under the surface of explicit deeds and attitudes.

Conclusion: What Role Can Soviet Literature Play in Cultural Memory?

Several questions have been addressed above: how can we be certain that the signs we read as the hidden marks of trauma or resistance are really referring to them, and not merely imagined as such by us? Even more importantly, how can we distinguish between the unconscious signs of trauma and (semi)conscious signs of resistance. The questions circle around the problem of intentionality, which can be studied by exploring more closely the manuscripts, the author's memories or the memories of his contemporaries. In any case, it is not clear to what extent we can reconstruct the context of reception, the reading strategies of the time and the implicit reader the author has inscribed into his text. The question can best be answered only by analysing particular cases, but we can barely deduce any general principle that would be universally applicable in every single case. If we follow the Wittgensteinian concept that 'meaning is use' (as developed in his *Philosophical Investigations* [1953]), we find that when searching for the meaning of a text, we search for the ways we use or could use the text in our mental practices. Thus, the questions "what do such texts mean for us?" and "why do we want them to be meaningful for us?" can be transformed into the questions "how do we use them?" and "why do we want to use them?". The texts that challenge our habitual patterns of perception illuminate the ways in which patterns are formed, and *that* they are formed at all and not simply given.

Jacques Rancière's (2004) ideas about art as the field of dissensus in the process of the '(re)distribution of the sensible'³⁴ offer a further theoretical

framework for explaining the role of Soviet historical novels as texts of hidden traumas. The reading of Sirge's novel proposed above is based on a notion of literature as a field of differences, as a possible base for the dissensual redistribution of the patterns of how we sense, or are forced to sense, concepts of our past and present identities. According to Rancière, art and literature are ways of making dissensual politics, by providing space for reconfiguring the fixed and 'self-evident' texture of the common experience of reality.

Literature makes sense for us if it offers something that is not subject to rigid signification, if it says or shows us something incorrect. Thus, the reading of Sirge's novels that I am proposing does not seek to rehabilitate the texts that 'do not fit' ideologically any more so that they would work again in the framework of the new regime of truth of our time, but rather to point to the political (in Rancière's sense) potential that is nested in the incorrectness of literature of any time. The role of literature is not only to reshape the frames of our perceptions and the dynamics of feelings, which may then give way to new political subjectivisations. Thus we must read precisely *politically* and give up the illusion that we could read in a way that is completely free from the political. Any text that points to how our ways of perception are not ready-made, complete and finished, and to the fact that the incompleteness is the implicit and necessary trait of our perception, keeps open the dissensual potential.

The 'black gloves' of Soviet literature are the traces of the dissensual potential in the works of art. The polyphonic nature of Sirge's novels is similar to what Rancière (2004: 14) says about Gustave Flaubert. As Flaubert questioned the consensual hierarchy of positions in the established distribution of the sensible by making every subject matter and every detail equal in respect to style,³⁵ so does Sirge's polyphony, because it executes a certain egalitarian tendency beneath the ideological surface of his texts.

Sirge's novels and a certain part of Soviet literature is dissensual trauma literature in several ways, depending on the context of its readers. For its contemporaries it offered the chance to speak about traumas within the limits of the officially accepted discourse. Nowadays it has a different dissensual potential, revealing to us the conceptions of identity that are pushed into silence by the contemporary consensual police. However, these positions are important for us, in order to make our perception more polyphonic and to understand the open and unfinished nature of our own identities. Merely the fact that not too far back, in the 1960s, *The Land and the People* was read in Estonia as good literature worthy of its name, reveals the inner clash, the ability, or even the urge, to question the inevitability of the consensual truth regime of our present.

And I am not talking about the thematic dissensus. Reading the texts reveals the modes and the modalities of how the dissensus in itself works and enables us to see the potentially dissensual points even in texts that seem 'consensual' for our reception. In Sirge's case it is important to keep in mind both the dissensual points in relation to his own normative context, like the marks of resistance and trauma, and how his texts become dissensual in yet another way for us, how they contain material that is traumatic from our perspective, disturbing the ways we imagine our identity and revealing the

unwanted continuity we have with those texts. The poietic power of literature lies precisely in these mechanisms of dissensus. The dissensual points are the reason we read literature. As John Gibson (2004) argues, we read literature mainly for life, not only for aesthetic pleasure.³⁶

Sirge's novels are dissensual and traumatic both from the perspective of the past and from that of the present, but only if we read them in such a way; if we keep the dimension of the undecidability of literature open for those books too that we would like to forget and close for good.

NOTES

- 1 See the more detailed explanation of Rancière's ideas in the concluding part of the article.
- 2 The Communist/Bolshevist movement had been illegal in the Republic of Estonia since December 1918, and after an attempted *coup d'état* in 1924 most Estonian Communists were imprisoned. The Social Democrats, who participated in legal parliamentary politics, tried to maintain a strict distance from the Communists and their pro-Soviet attitudes. Sirge was fired even though he did not participate in any political activity – he was not in contact with the underground Communist movement in Estonia, nor did he try to enter public politics.
- 3 The June Deportation took place on 14th June and the next two days, a week before the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union. It was part of a larger set of deportations that were carried out on the territories annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 (the Baltic States, Western Belorussia, Western Ukraine, and Moldova) and was officially dubbed the deportation of socially alien elements. Some 10,000 people were deported from Estonia.
- 4 Although Sirge had been leftist from his youth and had a prestigious position in Soviet Estonian cultural life, he never became a member of the Communist Party.
- 5 There was the system of honorary titles in the Soviet Union with a whole list of different professions that could get the title (artist, doctor, teacher, builder, pilot etc.); in addition, the most important cultural figures were given the title of People's Writer or People's Artist, which was higher than the title of 'Merited'; the system had two levels: the level of a particular Soviet republic and the level of the Soviet Union.
- 6 The novel competitions of the publishing house *Loodus* were held in 1927–1940 and served as a good springboard for young fiction writers.
- 7 24th February was established as a national holiday as early as 1919, when the War of Independence was still going on.
- 8 Johannes (Ivan) Käbin mentioned in the quote was the chairman of the Estonian Communist Party in 1950–78. Lembit Remmelgas was a literary critic and publicist, a leading figure in the liberalisation of Estonian literary politics and interpretative methods in the 1950s.
- 9 For example, in the first version a girl is raped in a cruel way, but in the second there is only an attempted rape.
- 10 The Estonian literary critic Olev Jõgi compared the characters of the two novels as early as 1964. My analysis builds on his, although his interpretation carries the ideological signs of his time. See Jõgi 1973.
- 11 The Latvian riflemen were an important military force in those times; they were formed in 1915 as a national formation of the Imperial Russian Army, and in 1917 most of them became loyal to the Bolsheviks and fought on different fronts in the Russian Civil War.

- 12 Viktor Kingissepp (1888–1922) was a Bolshevik revolutionary. In 1917 he was one of the leaders of the Bolshevik movement in Estonia, and during and after the War of Independence he organised the Estonian Communists, residing both in Estonia (illegally) and in Russia. He was captured and sentenced to death by a war tribunal. In Soviet times Kingissepp was remembered as one of the most important figures in the Estonian Communist pantheon. Jaan Tõnisson (1868–1941?) was a leading right-wing politician. In the beginning of the twentieth century he was the ideological leader of the national political movement. He was the head of the government of the Republic of Estonia several times and in the 1930s, he was the leader of the anti-authoritarian opposition. In 1940 he was arrested and probably executed.
- 13 The Socialist Revolutionaries were a third major leftist force in Russia alongside the Communists (Bolsheviks) and the Social Democrats (Mensheviks). While the latter two were initially different wings of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, the SRs had their own party which was not strictly Marxist, and they had a significant agrarian element in their programme. Alexander Kerensky, the head of Russian Provisional Government, was an SR. In the Russian Civil War the SRs split between the Reds and the Whites.
- 14 For example "... at every opportunity the Bolsheviks were reproached for sitting in the same boat with Great-Russian chauvinists, harming the Estonian case. From their side came the reply: nationalism was equal to counter-revolution" (editor's version) vs "... at every opportunity the Bolsheviks were reproached for sitting in the same boat with Russians, harming the Estonian case. From their side came the reply: the Estonian case was equal to counter-revolution" (in the initial manuscript and on p 230 in the final version).
- 15 For example the character Martin Haspe's thoughts: "More and more will sound Lenin's name, who calls for all the weary and burdened... He recoiled from his idea of comparing Lenin with Christ..." (initial manuscript) vs "More and more will sound Lenin's name, who, like Marx in the past, calls for all proletarians of the world to unite..." (the editor's version) vs "More and more will sound the name of Lenin, who calls for all the weary and burdened... He recoiled from his slip of thought, mumbling that, well, the Bible stories have made their mark..." (the final version, p 322)
- 16 The 'special fund' refers to the collections of the libraries and archives that contained books and other materials to which the public were denied access. Restricted access for the purposes of the research was possible.
- 17 The clearest example of this inclination was the establishment of 23rd June as Victory Day in 1934, the most important national holiday of the Estonian Republic. Even though the *Landeswehr* war against the Baltic Germans in May and June was only a minor episode in the War of Independence, where the main enemy was Soviet Russia, in the 1930s the victorious battle against the Baltic German army on the territory of Latvia, near Cēsis was chosen as the most important event in the official commemoration of the war. Karsten Brüggemann (2015) has shown in his study of the establishment of the holiday, that the battle had already acquired its mythological status in 1919 and was meant to motivate the army. The decision to turn it into a national holiday was made before the *coup d'état* by the major right wing politician of the period, Konstantin Päts, in March 1934. However, for Päts its first celebration had a special value, because the Battle of Cēsis was seen as one of the few moments when the ideal of the Päts's regime, the "national wholeness", had shown itself for a brief instant.
- 18 At the beginning of 2013 the new chrestomathic volume of the Estonian Medieval history written by historians of the younger generation, provoked an intense public debate. The historians distanced themselves from the traditional concept

- of the 'Great Battle of Freedom' and saw the German conquest in the thirteenth century in the broader framework of the Northern Crusades. The debate around the book raised the question of how nationalist a national history must be, and can be reduced to the problem of the relationship between the truth and identity-construction in history writing. See also the Introduction of the present volume.
- 19 For an interesting discussion of the problems of the historiography of the War of Independence see Brüggemann 2008.
 - 20 One of the watershed moments seems to be the death of many important literary figures in 1970 and in 1971: Johannes Semper (21st February 1970), Rudolf Sirge (24th August 1970), Juhan Smuul (13th April 1971) and Friedebert Tuglas (15th April 1971). The first three had been the authorities of literary life after the war, while Tuglas was the 'literary pope' of the interwar period with a pronounced reputation until his death. Their deaths left a certain gap in the configuration of literary life that was then filled by a new literary regime.
 - 21 For another interesting discussion of how to interpret 'the sovietness' in Soviet Estonian literature see Hasselblatt 2003a. Hasselblatt also discusses *The Land and the People*.
 - 22 In addition to the connections on the thematic level, *Black Summer* and *The Land and the People* seem to be set in the same region. In *The Land and the People* the village under consideration is near Laiuse, a village close to the town of Jõgeva in the eastern Estonia. In *Black Summer* the location of the village is described through indirect geographical coordinates, but seems to be in the same region.
 - 23 The novel was staged by an amateur theatre in the 1970s. The reason for the ban was probably the more collective and affective nature of the theatre compared to literature. It was safer to avoid dealing with these themes in public gatherings such as theatre performances that involved the collective experience of emotions.
 - 24 It must be kept in mind, that such definitions were sometimes part of 'mimicry'. Such concepts were strategically used to defend some works or authors against dogmatist critique or to make the official reception smoother. The model for this literary critical practice is the Marxist namedropping in Soviet writing, the quoting of Marx or Lenin without any actual need.
 - 25 Mikhail Sholokhov (1905–1984) was a major Soviet novelist awarded the Nobel Prize in 1965. His most important novels are *And Quiet Flows the Don* ("Tikhiy Don", 1928–40) and *Virgin Soil Upturned*, which became the models for Soviet literature. A. H. Tammsaare's (1878–1940) main work is the five-volume realist novel *Truth and Justice* ("Tõde ja õigus", 1926–33), which represents the Estonian peasantry and the urbanisation of their descendants from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the 1920s. Characters of Tammsaare's have become certain archetypes in Estonian identity discourse.
 - 26 The so-called Mahtra War was the peasant uprising in Mahtra village in 1858. It was suppressed, but later acquired symbolic meaning as the first major fight for peasant's rights. Vilde's novel played an important role in establishing the symbolic value of the event. See Kirss', Laanes' and Undusk's contributions in the present book on the topos of the uprising in Estonian cultural memory.
 - 27 The reference to Mahtra inserts Sirge's novel in the tradition of the discussion of serfdom (which is discussed in Peiker's article among others), but here it is done in the context of the class struggle, where the masters and slaves are not separated by their ethnicity. The moment of breaking the 'yoke', that initially was identified with the abolition of serfdom in 1816 and 1819, then with the opportunity to purchase land and become free peasants in 1860–1880s, then with the battle of Cēsis in the War of Independence, is now identified with the establishment of Soviet Estonia in 1940.

- 28 She was arrested several times, had two miscarriages because of her imprisonments and lost two husbands, one of whom was shot as an enemy of the people, the other of whom died in the siege of Leningrad.
- 29 The essay about Tvardovskiy, “Aleksandr Tvardovskiy: poeziya ogovorok i zamaskirovannogo straha”, is an unpublished manuscript to be published in Zavyalov’s book *Ars poetica*. The Soviet traumas have also been briefly addressed in Zavyalov 2003a and 2003b.
- 30 Although Raudsepp is more penetrating, he assumes: “If the author hides something in front of the reader’s eye so carefully, surely he does it with a certain artistic intention.” Raudsepp 1957: 146.
- 31 The literary scholar Lynn Pearce has written about the connection between romance and social change: “The condition of being in love provides the subject with a vision of the world not as it is, but as it might be, and may become the catalyst for revolution and/or social change.” Pearce 2007: 28; see also Grönstrand in the present volume. In that light it is noteworthy that Karl, who was the main agent of social change in his village, fails in his romance.
- 32 This is an old proverb, but was used by the chief of the NKVD (the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs and security service) Nikolai Yezhov to justify the Soviet repressions in the 1930s.
- 33 For example, an anti-Soviet farmer who does not like Hitler either, asks why Hitler made a treaty with Stalin “bringing the Russians on our neck”. In this way Sirge is actually mentioning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on 23rd August 1939 between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and dividing Eastern Europe into their spheres of influence.
- 34 The ‘distribution of the sensible’ is, as Rancière defines it, “the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. [It] therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts” and “determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.” Rancière 2004: 12. Rancière claims that establishing a political subjectivity is preceded by establishing (or re-establishing) the certain distribution rules of the sensible (aesthetic) sphere – “[p]olitics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak”. *Ibid.*: 13. ‘Dissensus’ is “a political process that [...] creates a fissure in the sensible order by confronting the established framework of perception, thought and action with the ‘inadmissible’, i.e. a political subject”, as Gabriel Rockhill (2004: 85) puts it. Rancière distinguishes ‘police’ and ‘politics’: the first is “a certain distribution of the sensible that precludes the emergence of politics”; the essence of politics “resides in acts of subjectivisation that separate society from itself by ... polemically reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible.” Rancière 2004: 89, 90. The virtue of Rancière’s theory consists in allowing us to analyse the social changes (including the processes of cultural memory) on a more refined level than that of opposing ideologies. It points to the practical social function of art, while not denying the autonomy of art.
- 35 “... the equality of all subject matter is the negation of any relationship of necessity between a determined form and determined content. [...] This equality destroys all of the hierarchies of representation...”. Rancière 2004: 14.
- 36 I have dealt with the poetic potential of literature, meaning its potential to create and reshape the language games of reality, more thoroughly in Pilv 2012.

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Literature of Amnesia – On the Creative Function of the Loss of Memory

Karl Ristikivi's Historical Prose

Amnesia as Non-recognition

I would like to start this chapter by clarifying what I mean by the term 'amnesia' or 'loss of memory'. The loss of memory is not a total inability to recall, not a complete loss, a blackout, which results from a physical injury, disease, or narcosis. Rather, amnesia is a state during which the sufferer doubts the reality of their memories: something is somehow remembered, sometimes even clearly, but there is not enough evidence to support it as reality. This might lead to the feeling that the event or person recalled is false, meaning it is not a recollection at all. Because to remember should be by definition to bring to mind something that once existed in reality, to recall something that really was. In the strict sense of the word, it is not possible to remember non-existent things, and this should rather be called imagining. A memory as a reflection of some reality should, in principle, be verifiable.

But what is to be done when a memory is not subject to verification? People are loath to give up their memories, which are an integral part of their lives. What should I do when I remember something very clearly, yet *what* I remember of this very particular Something still seems to be inaccurate if compared with other data? I remember and at the same time, it appears, I do not remember, because I remember wrongly, and this is not the act of remembering any more. It is this ambivalent situation that, I believe, should be called the loss of memory. What is completely forgotten cannot be lost, as the loss is not noticeable in this case. What is lost is something that remains firmly in our consciousness in some way.

This kind of logic is compatible with the findings of modern psychological research. Lawrence Weiskrantz (1999: 105), one of the leading specialists in amnesia and brain damage, writes that there was a kind of breakthrough in retention experiments when "a seemingly paradoxical fact" about amnesic patients occurred, namely that "they can remember that their memory capacity is shot – can remember, as it were, that they cannot remember". His explanation continues, and gives a good cognitive background for the following discussion. Amnesic patients, he says, "cannot *recognize* current events in relation to stored items [already in the brain], or if they recall recent events ... they cannot recognize what it is they recall, or even that it is genuine recall" (Weiskrantz 1999: 121).

This can be rephrased to bring the phenomenon to a more social level. It is not possible to remember something when everything else contradicts it, as one person's memory cannot be completely contradictory to everybody else's. There should be a shared element, a social agreement, some kind of consensus, a compatibility with the memories of a community and their inherent logic that is accepted by that community. If this is not the case, memory is qualified as a loss of memory. This suggests that the collective component of remembering is always at work, no matter whether we speak about collective or individual memory.¹

At the same time, I am convinced that memory and imagination are not only mixed in our mind, but that they are in some way mutually conditioned and dependent, and most psychologists would agree with this (cf. Roediger, McDermott 2005: 155–156); what is more, the ability and complexity of our memory are enhanced by the increase in the importance of imagination. In the same vein, I do not think that the “power of the creative, reconstructive, story-telling aspects of memories” (Weiskrantz 2005: 647) must always be disqualified as a source of false memories. For example, a personal memory which is capacious but has few connections to the imagination, can still be relatively primitive and retain a lot of simple information, but is unable to work out complicated associations. Thus the two, memory and imagination, cannot be separated. However, when we try to solve problems in our lives we often feel the need to make this separation, and ask how much of what I remember is real and how much of it only seems to be so? This topic is not merely theoretical and abstract, but quite the opposite, it is vital and sometimes it may be a question of life and death. When individuals are made to doubt the reality of their memories, it may lead them to a fundamental reassessment.

The discussion below does not only concern the Estonian writers who went into the West at the end of the Second World War when Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union.² However, these issues were more pronounced and appeared earlier in exile in the literary output of the Estonian diaspora in Sweden, Canada and the USA, than they did in Estonian literature written at home under Soviet pressure. Estonian literature in exile, as Ilse Lehiste (1922–2010), an expatriate herself and a long-time professor of Ohio State University, put it, “gives voice to the unresolved trauma of a whole generation” (Lehiste 1972: 15). In what follows will discuss Karl Ristikivi (1912–1977), the novelist who had perhaps the most prominent output in exile, but I will begin with his fellow-exile in Sweden, Bernard Kangro (1910–1994), another leading poet and prose writer. From a certain angle, Kangro as novelist serves as a warm-up to Ristikivi, because his attitudes and searches often resemble, and sometimes even imitate, Ristikivi's attitudes, although his artistic world seems to be less sophisticated and less comprehensive, like a prelude to a fugue. In her paper of 1972 Ilse Lehiste reaches a fundamental conclusion from studying Kangro's novels: “The ultimate tragedy of the exiles is to lose even the reality of their remembrances by meeting the transformed reality of the present [that the exiles experienced when visiting Soviet Estonia and the people living there]”. In other words, the refugee confronting the occupied homeland suffers from a loss of memory, in the sense defined above, and the

memories cannot be verified any more, meaning there is not enough to keep a grip on reality, as a result of which the question arises of whether they are memories of a real homeland or only an imagination.

Lehiste wrote her article before Kangro's Jonathan-trilogy³ was published in 1971–1973, about an imaginary trip that the protagonist of the same name makes to his occupied homeland. The framing theme of the trilogy can be the protagonist's loss of memory: "Everything is unknown: who he is, where he is, why and how he has happened to be in this place. Do we have a story of a person who has lost his memory, a contemporary version of the Kaspar Hauser story, a frequently used motif in literature?" (Ristikivi 1996a: 254.) This was the question posed by Ristikivi in 1971 when he reviewed the first volume of the three, published by his friend. The motif of the loss of memory is also evident in a dream retold by Kangro later, in which the trilogy is said to have had its beginning.

Kangro (1988: 363) describes his dream in retrospect in the following way:

I was staying in a strange city which seemed familiar, or in a familiar city which seemed frighteningly strange. When I reached the Grand I thought I was staying at this hotel. After I had entered and asked for the key to my room, the receptionist demanded to know the room number. When I did not know it, he wanted to know my name. I did not remember that, either. "I am staying at this hotel, don't you remember me?" I said. "You've never ever been here," he responded. "I have been here all the time myself." Somehow, he reminded me of Jesus in some medieval paintings. Indignantly I went out into the street again. It was morning twilight, cool and foggy, and I didn't know who I was or where I was, and why I had come to this city ...

Kangro's trilogy proceeds along similar lines: the protagonist, who happens to be in his old homeland, for reasons unknown to himself, wanders around, goes to old familiar places and meets familiar people, knowing that they are old and familiar, but he does not really recognise this old reality. He tries to find a correspondence between his memories and the reality, and he is only partly, but not wholly, successful in his efforts. This means that the remembered reality narrows and fades, the memories themselves are being lost as a verifiable substance of memory since we cannot prove their recollected reality, and the protagonist seems to suffer an amnesic trauma. We know that after 1944 Kangro never returned to his homeland and when invited he replied that in his mind he is "anyway there". This "anyway there", or "always there, anyway", the absolute faithfulness of memories could have been lost after a visit to his changed native land. Kangro was afraid of a loss of memory if his memories clashed with reality. His dream was like a warning sign.

A similar description of this phenomenon can be found in the recollections of the great psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), specifically in connection with Rome, a city significant to Karl Ristikivi as well. Jung's lifetime dream was to go to Rome at least once, to be at "the still smoking and fiery hearth from which ancient cultures had spread, enclosed in the

tangled rootwork of the Christian and Occidental Middle Ages” (Jung 1965: 287). However, he never made it to the Eternal City; once when travelling by ship he succeeded in getting a vague glimpse of the outlines of it. The reason was not the lack of opportunity, but rather it was psychological. Like Kangro, Jung was afraid that the impression the city made upon him would have exceeded his “powers of receptivity”. He gives an explanation:

I always wonder about people who go to Rome as they might go, for example, to Paris or to London. Certainly Rome as well as these other cities can be enjoyed aesthetically; but if you are affected to the depths of your being at every step by the spirit that broods there, if a remnant of a wall here and a column there *gaze upon you with a face instantly recognised*, then it becomes another matter entirely. (Jung 1965: 287–288; italics added.)

In his old age Jung decided to break through this psychological barrier and go to Rome in spite of everything, but while buying the ticket, he fainted. Thereafter he gave up his plans completely.

The description is practically the same as that in Kangro’s dream, the difference being that it is Jung’s cultural homeland rather which is being described. For Jung, Rome was connected with so many cultural memories located deep in his brain that he was afraid of a conflict between these memories and the visible reality: “faces instantly recognised” are everywhere, but how is that possible if it is the first time he has been to Rome? Consequently, where is he? When and in what century is he staying in Rome and what is it that he can see? The memories disintegrate and become symptoms of memory loss, as he does not remember what exactly he remembers, although it is clear that he does remember. It is shocking to see how Jung delineates precisely the same situation in which Ristikivi places Kaspar von Schmerzberg in his last novel *A Roman Diary* (“Rooma päevik”, 1976), to which I will return at the end. Rome is depicted as the essence of Western culture, where every one of us can meet his or her older self and fall through a crack of history.

Texts of Political Amnesia

The types of text to which the novel of Kangro belongs can be called the literature of amnesia. No doubt the most initiatory work of Estonian literature in this field was the novel by Karl Ristikivi *All Souls’ Night* (“Hingede öö”, 1953), which appeared almost two decades before the publication of Kangro’s Jonathan-trilogy. *All Souls’ Night* is a core text of ‘amnesic literature’ in Estonian. The first-person narrator wanders about in a strange house in Stockholm, where the arrangement of rooms is unexpected; he meets seemingly strange people who are related to him from a long time ago, or seemingly familiar people, although he does not know when he made their acquaintance; he does not know where he is and why he is there, but he has a hunch that somehow it is necessary. Ristikivi (1996b: 56) explained the original idea of the novel later by saying: “The point is that the other people

are not bewildered, but the young man [the protagonist] himself is; although he does not seem to know anybody there, he himself is known, or even expected." The loss of memory is complete and the identity crisis resulting from it is very acute: the substance of memory – his memories – and the immediate reality do not connect, existence is extremely fragmentary, and time – the creation of continuity – is replaced by alternating spaces as he enters or leaves a succession of rooms. The inner continuity of a person, the individual narrative, the biographical ordering of events are lost. By using the philosophical language of Henri Bergson we can say that the novel testifies to an inability to perceive the person's internal, qualitative time, the temporal duration of existence, the melody of living; this has been almost completely replaced by spatial symbols, by the external succession or juxtaposition of rooms, situations, people and things, the quantitative measurable representations of time.⁴ *All Souls' Night* is the matrix for the literature on the loss of memory both in Ristikivi's work and in Estonian literature as a whole.

What concerns us is the place of *All Souls' Night* in Ristikivi's writing career. Born in 1912, Ristikivi published three realist novels in Estonia, the Tallinn-trilogy⁵, in 1938–1942 before he was 30. Ristikivi loved composing his works in trilogies and started writing his next three novels during the Second World War in Tartu. In the meantime, however, he fled Estonia and went to Finland in 1943, and from there to Sweden in 1944, where the two first novels of his second trilogy – *All That Ever Was* ("Kõik, mis kunagi oli") and *Nothing Happened* ("Ei juhtunud midagi") – were published in 1946 and 1947. These novels dealt with the final phase of the independent Republic of Estonia from the summer of 1939 to the spring of 1940, until the eve of the dramatic events, the Soviet occupation and annexation. Lehiste (1972) says that "all of Estonia shines in these two books with the radiance of this Sunday morning; or, rather, in afternoon sunshine, in the aura of the magic hour at which time seems to be holding its breath, lingering for still another moment before the calm is shattered". A more attractive summing up of the lost aura of the Republic of Estonia has probably never been given in literature. But the third novel, which was to strike right into the heart of the drama, and the trauma, never came out. Logically, Ristikivi's aim in this third volume was to depict the first Soviet year 1940–1941, which ended with the coming of German troops in summer 1941. After the Second World War and Germany's defeat, the Soviet occupation was restored. And at the end of the 1940s it still continued and suddenly it seemed that it lasted too long. Ristikivi was unable to write about the 'Soviet year' anymore because this year had no visible end now.

The titles of the novels themselves are significant: *All That Ever Was* is an expression used by a character, Tammik the Dean, and is interpreted by himself: all that has ever been will be again. In the second novel the Soviet military bases have already been established in Estonia, but the title is still *Nothing Happened*, which sounds a bit ironic; nevertheless, it must also have signified the reality of warding off a traumatic experience. These two titles together complement each other in their motherly ideology: all that has been will be again, as nothing (fatal) has happened. During the initial years

of exile there was a widespread belief that the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries would end quite soon and the refugees would be able to return home in the near future. Did not the Western world exist and was not Estonia part of it? And, of course, the Western world would not forget about Estonia and would force the Soviets to leave the country. Ristikivi, too, waited and postponed writing about the trauma, the era of the Soviet regime in Estonia. It seems that he postponed it for so long that it became more or less clear how deep the trauma really was. Actually, it turned out to be so deep that it thwarted any chance of returning home. The Russians were still there. When Ristikivi grasped the extent of his homeland's and his own trauma, he was never able to begin to write his third novel about the occupied Republic of Estonia, because the Republic of Estonia as a unit of memory became less verifiable as time went on. A pause followed, six years of silence and then *All Souls' Night* came out, the novel on the loss of memory in a surreal vein. It seems that the surreal way of depicting the disintegration of recollection was not a ready approach in this work. Rather the opposite, a natural process of recollecting turned out, as the story proceeded, to be a diagnosis of the loss of memory, and when written on paper, it left an impression of a surreal world. "Sometimes it is good to write about anything, in a surrealist manner, that is, to write about what just comes to mind," Ristikivi said on New Year's eve in 1948 when the idea for the novel *All Souls' Night* was maturing.⁶

All Souls' Night was a watershed. Before writing the novel Ristikivi was emphatically an Estonia-centred author. Then a six-year pause followed before the publication of *All Souls' Night*, which can be interpreted as a diagnosis of amnesia. Then there was another pause, of eight years, before historical novels began to appear in 1961, the first of which was *The Burning Banner* ("Põlev lipp"). By 1976 eleven of them had been published, plus a collection of historical short stories entitled *The Gates of Sigtuna* ("Sigtuna väravad", 1968). None of them were set in Estonia; Estonia had been completely forgotten, except for a few hints in some of the stories in *The Gates of Sigtuna*.⁷ The events in Ristikivi's eleven novels take place in many countries in Europe and the Middle East: France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Greece, Holland, Great Britain, Denmark, Palestine, and others. The characters are of foreign blood, and the expatriate Estonian reader may have felt betrayed. In the meanwhile, however, Ristikivi was pestered with questions about whether a book on Estonian history was ready, to which he answered only that it will be, expressing the hope in order to rid himself of those who were curious to know. "Perhaps I will return to our homeland one day. God knows – it may happen. It depends on so many things – how much strength I have and how many days I have left to live," he wrote in the early 1970s (Ristikivi 1996c: 63). Ristikivi never returned to the Baltic area, but it is not impossible that he was slowly beginning to embrace the idea of doing so; eventually, time was running out for him.

In Estonia, Ristikivi's devotion to European history, to the so-called big history, was seen as an aberration which, in itself, was exciting and innovatory. According to the canon established in the 1930s in Estonia, foreign and exotic countries were the subject of marginal literature, adventure books or popular fiction; a serious historical novel stood at the service of

Estonian national identity: it was not only one of the most important tools for spreading that identity, but also its source. The writer's task was to help the nation to create its own history; initially, this noble ideology inspired the writing of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1839 the call came from Georg Julius Schultz-Bertram (1808–1875), a Baltic German physician and literary figure, one of the initiators of *Kalevipoeg*: “Let us give the people an epic and history and we shall win all!” Tellingly, in his review in 1963 of *The Burning Banner*, the first historical novel by Ristikivi published in Sweden, Jaan Kross (1920–2007), the best-known Estonian writer internationally at the end of the twentieth century and the author-to-be of historical novels (see Kirss in the present volume), who had first made his name as an innovative poet, said: “It is a pity that this once hopeful Estonian author is wasting his talents on a dreamy trip to the Sicilian kingdom and is unable – in real life – to find his homeland” (Kross 1968: 130). But this was only the beginning, and during his subsequent literary trips Ristikivi sailed even further in his novels, voyaging with foreigners through the vast expanses of the “big and bigger” European history.⁸ The expatriate reader quite often felt the same as Kross said, but Ristikivi – the foremost author of a vigorous generation of prose writers in exile – stubbornly clung to his foreign subject matter and ignored the expectations of his compatriots. However, when Ristikivi was building up momentum in his writing between his Estonian novels and *All Souls' Night*, he had announced in the magazine for expatriates, *Sõna* (“Word”) in 1950 that he did not want to set pen on paper any longer as a poor writer in exile and move in the circle of prescribed themes and attitudes; his wish was to be a full-fledged Estonian writer or – which would be even better – simply a writer “without any excuse”, that is, not one “for home use only” (Ristikivi 1996d: 78–79). Playing with distant masks and costumes, Ristikivi was able to free himself from the constraints of ideology imposed by the Estonian reader and to awaken a wider interest.

He was not the first Estonian, nor the only one, to glance towards international history in exile. In the Estonian expatriate historical novel there was a turn in the 1950s–1960s, which foresaw the possibility of a respected national literature on the motifs of foreign and exotic histories. Estonian-language writing abroad was transformed into a world-wide phenomenon, at least when measured by certain formal characteristics; it was cultivated all over the world like an English or French-language literature, even though obviously on a much smaller scale. This led to novel initiatives. After living in Brazil for about 20 years, Karl Rumor-Ast (1886–1971) drew on his knowledge of the religious fanatics in Brazil to write his *Crucifix* (“Kruusifiks”, 1960), while US-based Ain Kalmus (1906–2001) wrote on biblical and Christian historical subjects. However, it was precisely Kalmus that Ristikivi mildly scolded in several reviews, amongst other things because Kalmus used a character called Marja, from the distant North, in his novel *Fierly Chariots* (“Tulised vankrid”, 1953), which is set in the context of the Mediterranean region in the first centuries of our era; Kalmus even let her marry a German soldier with the sole purpose, as Ristikivi stressed, of “achieving greater popularity” by writing a book “which appeals to a wide

range of readers” (Ristikivi 1996e: 409). Ristikivi was opposed to lapses of taste related to exaggerations of nationalist pathos in literature. Perhaps even more so, as he himself had once fallen into them at the beginning of his writing career.

This was in 1936 when the weekly *Perekonnaleht* (“Family Newspaper”) printed Ristikivi’s first and only historical novel on an Estonian subject, *On the Trail of the Vikings* (“Viikingite jälgedes”, not published in book form until 2003). This is the story of a voyage by ancient Estonian pagans to America, where the son of an Estonian elder Väino becomes a chief of a native tribe. The renewed interest in this work in the twenty-first century can be attributed to a recognition that it is an early example of an alternate history, a type of narrative ‘if things had happened otherwise’, a genre which became increasingly popular on an international scale in the 1930s (Sulbi 2007: 190; Org 2006: 530–531). In my opinion, this novel by Ristikivi, together with *A Roman Diary* and *The Last City* (“Viimne linn”, 1962), is among his most fascinating prose works, its flights of fancy and the purity of feeling being draped with a superb style of inner rhythm not found in his later works. Ristikivi was influenced by Friedebert Tuglas, a leading Estonian symbolist writer,⁹ and it is not difficult to detect that both the form and the ideas in this Viking-novel have drawn inspiration from Tuglas’ travel novella *At the End of the World* (“Maailma lõpus”, 1917). In addition, the reader is reminded of Hermann Hesse, probably one of the closest great Europeans in spirit to Ristikivi, whose playfulness and pathos when elaborating the theme of the self-quest in books like *The Journey to the East* (“Die Morgenlandfahrt”, 1932) are already inherent in this first historical novel by Ristikivi.

In the context of this discussion, *On the Trail of the Vikings* may be singled out as an early sign of Ristikivi’s urge to leave his native Estonian soil, even if at first together with the Estonians. If this is the case, this distant novel can be seen as a small counterargument to the logic developed above of a causal relationship between exile and amnesia. Whether Ristikivi as an author would have fled to Europe’s big history if he had stayed in Estonia without his physical experience of exile cannot be known.

Amnesiac literature after the Second World War was not exclusive to Estonian literature in exile, although the loss of memory was perhaps felt in a more straightforward manner there. The actual exile was undoubtedly a strengthening factor; however, writers working in the Soviet reality also had to develop strategies for an inner emigration, meaning they had to ignore or avoid certain things or use absurdist means (see Pilv’s chapter). When Ristikivi talked in 1976 about the dullness of Estonian prose in occupied Soviet Estonia, he cited as exceptions Jaan Kross above all, and also Arvo Valton (b. 1935), a short story writer in a grotesque and absurdist vein, but they, too, Ristikivi added, “have had to turn to history” (Ristikivi 1996f: 121).

All this points to the ideologically conditioned amnesia in which Ristikivi would have participated even had he stayed and written in Estonia. Even so, the resulting shift in remembering, in a country under Soviet occupation in 1961, could not have taken the shape of historical fiction set in Western Europe. But what if the Soviets had not occupied Estonia? Ristikivi reminisced that in the 1930s he had already planned a series of

historical novels in twelve volumes covering events from the Ice Age to the First World War (Kolk 1961: 154–155). This series would probably have included romantic adventure stories, but the tendency to look away from Estonia was undeniable in it. That Ristikivi observed Estonia and Estonians from the position of an outsider to a certain extent was already noticeable in the novel *On the Trail of the Vikings* where the first-person narrator is not an ethnic Estonian, but a Swede, a foreigner, raised amongst the Estonian people on the Estonian coast. Some have seen the causes of Ristikivi's desire to distance himself in his childhood, when he was fatherless and in poverty; his parents and his boyhood were taboo topics for him. He defies the idea of inherited roots in one of his poems: "Our roots are not in our childhood [---]. / Our roots are in all the places, / that we have passed by". It cannot be denied that Ristikivi's initial disposition included a drive for writing as a practice of national self-alienation, or self-estrangement.

To a lesser extent, Ristikivi's choice of international subjects can be explained by the fact that he wanted to be an internationally renowned writer, living in Sweden, in the free world, where, in principle, the channels of cross-cultural communication were all open. But the sad paradox of exile was that the big wide world did not take much interest in the Estonians who were in the big wide world. When any interest in Estonians was shown, it was, above all, shown in Estonians in Estonia, even if the latter was occupied. Ristikivi, who wrote on international topics more than any other Estonian author, found it difficult to have his books translated or his already translated books published; there were only two early translations into Finnish and they were of his earlier Estonia-centred novels.¹⁰ The translations of his historical novels into Russian¹¹ and into French¹² were achievements of later years, the 1990s and the 2000s. Also, from the early times in exile Ristikivi wanted to go beyond his mother tongue; it was a deliberate act, which is proven by his letters starting from 1945. In his diary he recorded his frequent attempts at writing a Swedish-language crime novel; one of them was translated from a Swedish manuscript into Estonian by Jaan Kross in 1992.¹³ Ristikivi also wrote novels, film scripts and radio plays in Swedish, one of which was broadcast on Swedish radio, and he himself tried translating parts of his works into Swedish, English and German.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the main reason for turning to European big history was perhaps still the politically coloured loss of memory – seemingly the last impulse in the search for a suitable international subject matter, which had already begun in his young adulthood. Although we tend to praise the form and content of Ristikivi's Estonian novels, they remained a continuation of the older realist novel tradition. The character of a thoughtful globetrotter appears for the first time in a later series of historical novels. This is the birth of a real protagonist, standing near to the author's own philosophical mood. This was to become Ristikivi's hallmark in Estonian literature.

The expatriates who simply ignored the attack of Soviet reality in Estonia probably did not suffer from these bouts of amnesia. They regarded Sovietisation in Estonia's life and mentality as mere appearances. Scores of memoirs were published in exile with the aim of conserving the country's image in the generally accepted form of the 1930s. They did not consider it

necessary to review, or even to verify, this image by taking account of the Soviet experience because – from their point of view – Soviet reality was not the real Estonia, but was only forcibly imposed on it from the outside. The major achievement in promoting such an image was Ristikivi's own work, namely the novels *All That Ever Was* and *Nothing Happened*. But as discussed above, the third book of the planned trilogy remained unwritten, and as testified by *All Souls' Night*, published six years later, the reason was amnesia – a conflict between memories and reality.

Ristikivi was obviously not one of those who would treat Estonia under the Soviet yoke as a completely unreal land, as some type of sleep-walking, a reality distorted 100 per cent. Perhaps in the depths of his heart he grasped it as one of Estonia's harsh historical realities, and thus, to a certain extent, historically justifiable – however painful this knowledge might be. And if this Estonia was real in some way, it was necessary to check the truth in his memories by taking this reality into account, by trying to integrate Soviet Estonia into the context of Estonian history and to understand that there was a certain logic in the Soviet occupation together with the system of repression triggered by it, although it was unacceptable as an infringement of basic constitutional guarantees and was emotionally disgusting. Apparently, Ristikivi was not able to embrace this view. The chasm between his personal memories and Soviet Estonian reality was too deep to be bridged in any reasonable way, by assimilating Soviet Estonia into his own historical experience of Estonia. This indicates a psychological trauma. Ristikivi decided that he was not able to cope with Estonia as mere Estonia and began writing about Europe as a much wider playground for Estonian history.

Displaced Memories

To interpret this decision as an escape from Estonia's dullness, as turning his back on the unattractive subject matter that his native country had become, would be wrong. If certain areas of remembering do not function because of a trauma, the reconstitution of the personal or national memory should start from another, perhaps a more distant place and go through the areas of memory that lie undamaged, gradually moving nearer to the heart of the trauma. If one part of the memories, such as Estonia, is blocked out, others and wider contexts, for example Europe, should be activated to create a definition of identity, gaining control step-by-step over the taboo area. Instead of a close-up view of Estonian history, a panoramic view was given of past European history, in which Estonia was contained, surreptitiously, like dark matter. This procedure can be called a shift in remembering, or a memory shift or a displacement of memory, which has connotations from recent history: displaced persons or DPs were groups of people in Europe after the Second World War who had been removed from their native land and could not or were not willing to return to it, a group that included the future Estonian exiles.¹⁵ The shifting of a person may have led to the shifting of memory.

When asked why he did not write on Estonian history, Ristikivi would answer in later years that Estonia was part of Europe, and that by writing on the history of Europe he was writing about Estonia at the same time. For example, in an interview in 1964 with Father Vello Salo (b. 1925), an active cultural and publishing figure in the expatriate community, he said: “I have even heard reproaches: why do I write about foreigners and not about our own people. But, in my opinion, our destiny is closely linked with that of the Occident, and the events which I have recounted have impacted our destiny as well.” (Ristikivi 1996g: 115.) Or another example, from the early 1970s:

(T)here is no Estonian history without the history of others, we depend on the history of all the others, especially, up to today, on the history of Europe. ... Whatever has come to us, be it good or evil, has come from somewhere else. We are part of the Occident ... and we have no reason to be ashamed of it. And that is why I can assure you that what I have written about is also our history. (Ristikivi 1996c: 63).

These parallels drawn between Estonian and European destinies may sound like mere slogans, tediously repeated in the semiosphere of Estonia of the past two decades. This probably did not apply to Ristikivi in the 1960s though. He wanted to circumvent Estonia by going through Europe and finally to reach a wider, trauma-free, transnational understanding of Estonian history. An open discussion of the traumatic experience, a shock suffered not so long ago, the extent of which was shown by memory loss, was often avoided by Ristikivi and many others in everyday practice, but it appears in artistic form in *All Souls' Night*. In his novel *Dragon's Teeth* (“Lohe hambad”, 1970) Ristikivi lets the Catalonian writer Joaquim Barrera tell his son Pablo: “If I have wandered far back into history, it is because I have been on a quest. So that I could find, out of pure luck, a path and by following this path I could better understand where we are now.”¹⁶ (Ristikivi 1970: 167). And in his letter to the expatriate Estonian psychologist Vello Sermat (1925–2005) in April 1976, Ristikivi (2002: 405) explains the same: “By going back into past history my books have reached far beyond the point where they would have reached if they dealt with our contemporary age.”

Consequently, you should start from a far-away place and walk the whole road to the modern age in order to see whether something happened in Estonia and Europe, and what actually happened. If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday. The answer given long ago that “nothing happened, really” was the first reaction to a trauma, which, when the times were settled, asked for a wider perspective.

Europe as Estonia: An Experiment with St. George's Night

The argument above may be illustrated with an example from Ristikivi's writing career. In February 1966 Ristikivi wrote from Stockholm to Kangro in Lund that he had “once” been on the verge of writing a novel about

the great Estonian uprising on St. George's Night in 1343, traditionally interpreted as the Estonians' last serious attempt to regain political freedom, wreaking destruction on the Germans in North Estonian areas. This "once" could have been in 1961 at the latest, when Ristikivi was writing *The Last City* and gave up on the idea.¹⁷ It is essential to note that Ristikivi planned not only to recount the revolt of St. George's Night from the local perspective, but to treat it as an event of international importance, comparing it with the Battle of Morgarten in Switzerland in 1315, where a peasant force defeated the army of knights led by Duke Leopold I of Austria, thus securing autonomy for the Forest Cantons (Kangro, Ristikivi 1985: 14). Whether Ristikivi had discovered the similarity between Morgarten and St. George's Night himself or in literature is not known, though we might assume the latter to be the case. As early as 1851 the German historian Kurd von Schlözer (1822–1894) had looked at the St. George's Night Uprising as a typical example of a popular movement in fourteenth-century Europe with national political aims. These popular uprisings had started with the Battle of Morgarten in the Swiss mountains and had continued in northern, western and southern Germany and in Flanders and France, before reaching their apogee in the Jacquerie in France in 1358. Even before that the wave of 'democratic unrest' had reached Estonia, and found its expression in the St. George's Night Uprising. Schlözer (1851: 106–110) looks at the St. George's Night Uprising as the continuation of the Estonian fight for freedom in the thirteenth century and as a more or less classic peasant rebellion.¹⁸ It was under the influence of his book that the connection between the Battle of Morgarten and the St. George's Night Uprising was assimilated in the history of ideas and accepted by Baltic German historiography in the late nineteenth century (Seraphim 1895: 126–127).

Ristikivi is interested first of all in the universals of European history, which can be applied to Estonia, because, as he himself said, "according to my 'plan', Estonia is part of Europe, and if it is suitable, I'll use that, too. And this was once quite close to starting St. George's Night." (Kangro, Ristikivi 1985: 17–18.) Further on Ristikivi explains: "I have made my own theory about the St. George's Night revolt, and it would be exciting to look at it in a different light than has been done before, since [Eduard Bornhöhe's] *The Avenger* ["Tasuja"] was published [in 1880]. What was the real aim of this revolt, who was behind it, and why did it fail?" And in one of his subsequent letters he follows the same thread:

This could not have been simply a peasant 'mahtra'¹⁹, where the monasteries were burned down accidentally and young boys killed, there must have been a more definite goal, there must have been leaders, who had ties to outside groups. And that the revolt failed because of internal conflicts – that one group acted of their own accord and the revolt was begun too early. ... The real headquarters of the revolt, which may as well have been in Tallinn, simply withdrew when they saw that things got out of hand.

And then the coda follows: "The fact that the Swedish fleet arrived at Tallinn too late has troubled me for many years." (Kangro, Ristikivi 1985: 14, 18.)

And so it actually was, the Swedes had promised to aid the rebels and ally with them, but they failed to arrive in Estonia until after the Teutonic Order had already annihilated the Estonian forces.

Ristikivi is far from the only one who has developed his 'own theory' for St. George's Night. Ever since the book entitled *The Estonian Fight for Freedom 1343–1345. Revolt in Harju County* ("Eesti vabadusvõitlus 1343–1345. Harju mäss", 1924) by Juhan Luiga (1873–1927), a psychiatrist and man of letters, sparked a heated debate, several historians, history lovers and writers have outlined their own visions of this crucial event in Estonian history. The majority of them tend towards the depiction of St. George's Night not as a spontaneous uprising, or as a massacre begun by the Estonian peasants during which the killers themselves were finally killed, but as a major military and diplomatic effort to gain the lost freedom, in which Estonian-born nobility also participated with its own political agenda.²⁰ The later historian Sulev Vahtre (1926–2007), in the summary of his balanced discussion, concludes that "the rebels formed alliances with foreign powers, and were a considerable force, as well as, so to speak, internationally recognised" (1982: 92). Ristikivi's 'own theory' – as far as it can be assessed – was most probably based on Luiga's book, although with the addition of features to it that were his own. For Luiga, the St. George's Night Uprising was mainly a national event, for Ristikivi it acquired an international dimension.

Ristikivi's discussion on the topic of St. George's Night may be compared with another historical argument from the same period. In his interview in 1964, Ristikivi talked about *The Last City*, his second book in the series of historical novels, which describes the tragic story of the defence of Acre, the last Christian stronghold against Muslims in Palestine in 1291. "Acre was the last city which was desperately defended. The defenders of the city were hoping to get aid from Europe," Ristikivi said, "but this aid did not arrive. There were no ships to help the inhabitants of the city escape. European rulers were involved in their own affairs and the defenders of the Holy Land had been forgotten." This is followed by a moral: "It is time that we see the common fate of Europe, so that we were more justified in our demand that Europe should not forget about us, as they forgot about the defenders of the last city" (Ristikivi 1996g: 114, 115–116.)

The similarities between Ristikivi's two arguments concerning St. George's Night and the Siege of Acre are evident. Tallinn as the major stronghold during St. George's Night and Acre as the last stronghold of the Christians are juxtaposed. Estonians were defeated in the battle at Tallinn in 1343, because the ships from Europe did not come. Christians were defeated at Acre in 1291 as there were no ships from Europe. The third – and actually the most important – parallel is the post-war experience of the expatriates, which partly reflected their naive hopes that Europe would not forget about the Baltic states, and that the Soviet occupation would not last. But the ships from Europe failed to come this time as well. In his review of *The Burning Banner*, Jaan Kross subtly alluded to this, although using the official jargon of the time; approximately forty years later he himself also described the European forgetting of Estonia in his book *Treading Air* ("Paigallend",

1998): “Perhaps Ristikivi thought that Konrad, who died *abandoned by the Germans, betrayed by the Italians, and murdered by the French*, will remind the readers of an Estonian ideal cherished by the philistine schoolboys in the 1930s, which contained a fair amount of childish idealism.” (Kross 1968: 158.) Such reflections show that when writing the big history of Europe, Ristikivi included the small history of Estonia in it as well in his quiet and furtive way, and he was understood. If the direct recollections of Estonia were blocked out for traumatic reasons, Estonian history should be started with recollections of Europe.

There is a catch in the whole story, which in principle opens up new artistic possibilities. Ristikivi told the story of the events at Acre in Palestine through the eyes of a Christian warrior, that is, a crusader. The enemies of the Estonians at Tallinn on St. George’s Night were also Christian warriors, virtually the same crusaders, knights of the Livonian Order. In this way, Ristikivi gave a picture of the big history of Europe from the point of view of the crusaders, who had been the historical enemies of the Estonian people. And Ristikivi’s attitude to these enemy figures, the crusaders, was generally sympathetic, so that they are tragic and idealistic figures in the pitiless arena of history. Readers of the high-spirited *Last City* are not at first even aware of this since they are accustomed to reading the ‘big’ history of Europe in a different key from the ‘small’ history of Estonia. In Estonian historical writing the portrayal of a crusader with an aura of heroism has not been popular, to put it mildly; the crusaders have always been depicted as bad and foreign, almost merciless, occupants. The conclusion that we can draw from this is bewildering: in the ‘big’ history of Europe we are able to accept ideological solutions that we cannot tolerate in the ‘small’ history of Estonia. In Europe, a crusader can be a noble man. This means that we do not read and speak of Estonian history in the same language that we read and speak of European history. We are accustomed to reading Estonian history in Estonian with the corresponding ideological bias. But this is probably not enough to teach other nations to read and understand Estonian history. In the Estonian language context the crusaders are more or less equated with criminals. Put in the broader context of European history, the same men often appear as essentially idealists, with their motto of *per aspera ad astra*, and their actions which had ambivalent effects. This was probably one of the arguments of Ristikivi when he turned to European history. The crusader in a broader European context was psychologically much more interesting than the crusader in the historical hot spot called St. Mary’s Land, or the north-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. In addition, the attempt to understand psychologically the figure of a crusader would help rethink Estonian history in less dramatic form. This was probably also important for Ristikivi in exile.

In his letters to Kangro, Ristikivi writes in this connection of “light-heartedness”. He had chosen Europe instead of Estonia, as this enabled him to be more light-hearted in his writing, which was nothing other than creative freedom. “Lightness of spirit” is something that he wishes to see in other writers as well, the older he gets (Ristikivi 1996f: 120). Ristikivi asks himself: “Why did I borrow from Europe?” And he answers: “It was pure light-heartedness. There was simply more to borrow. [---] It meant getting

a little bit more freedom. [...] Being light-hearted – is to know your limits, then transcend them, which is fun.” (*Ibid.*) When moving in Estonian history, the Estonian writer has to deal with many considerations, some political or psychological, and with traditional German and Russian antipathies and more, and to ignore them would signal a desire to start a controversy for controversy’s sake or consciously to shock. For example a heroically depicted Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (1890–1986), the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, or a morally depraved Estonian liberal leader Jaan Tõnisson (1868–1941?), who was murdered by the Soviets, would not be perceived by the Estonian reader as a sign of artistic freedom, but as a simple political provocation. “In the end you will have to stick to the facts,” Ristikivi wrote to his friend Kangro. “Just as your story of Tartu will inevitably be run over by Soviet and German tanks. And all this lightness of spirit [read: creative freedom – J.U.], which started with the aroma of an invisible lilac bush one evening, rises, like smoke, to the sky.” (Kangro, Ristikivi 1985: 14.)

All this is already a commentary on the claim noted earlier by Ristikivi that “by going back into past history my books have reached far beyond the point where they would have reached if they dealt with our contemporary age”. In the early history of Europe there are neither Soviet tanks nor Nazi aeroplanes which should dutifully be fended off – there are not even any Teutonic knights who suffocate the longing for freedom of the heroic Estonian people. The writer may enjoy fleshing out the characters of a Christian, a Muslim or a pagan in a hundred different ways, without being damned as a provocateur.

An Excursus with Mika Waltari

This inevitably brings to mind Mika Waltari (1908–1979), a counterpart of Ristikivi in Finnish literature, a man a couple of years older with a somewhat faster reaction and with much more success. Waltari first plunged into recent history when he wrote his Helsinki-trilogy *From Father to Son* (“Isästä poikaan”, 1933–1935); Ristikivi’s Tallinn trilogy, begun a few years later, is a corresponding work in his bibliography. Immediately after the Second World War, Waltari published *The Egyptian* (“Sinuhe egyptiläinen”, 1945), the biggest international best-seller in twentieth-century Finnish literature, which has been translated into 40 languages and served as the basis for a Hollywood film (1954).²¹ The favourite location for both writers was the Mediterranean region, and their favourite stories were crime novels; Waltari in fact wrote several of them with great success, while Ristikivi mostly dreamed of writing them. Like Ristikivi, Waltari also proved that a historical novel with an exotic subject can have artistic value in his native language. Waltari had first become interested in Egyptian topics and especially in the character of Pharaoh Akhenaten in the 1930s when he first rendered him artistically in the play *Akhenaten, Born of the Sun* (“Akhnaton, auringosta syntynyt”, 1937). The choice of this subject may have been inspired by some sensational discoveries made by Egyptologists in his youth, notably the discovery of Tutankhamen’s tomb in 1922, and spurred by literature such as

Dmitry Merezhkovsky's *Akhenaten, King of Egypt* ("Мессия", 1926–1927), but Waltari himself considered his main focus to be pacifism – a response to the social situation in which the low-born authoritarian warmongers, Hitler and Stalin, played an important role. For him, *Akhenaten* was an example of a ruler who had enormous power but who preached perpetual peace.

The Egyptian also features the character of Akhenaten, but on a slightly different ideological plane. Waltari said that the Second World War and its aftermath completely changed his vision of history. The illusion that a small neutral state which focused on building up its economy may survive untouched was shattered. In a totalitarian war, each side swallows that which does not get stuck in the throat, without even asking why. The Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union gave ample evidence that a neutral state possessed zero potential under the circumstances. In Waltari's opinion, it was not only the ideology of German and Russian leaders which sowed the seeds of destruction, but also the famous English 'My country, right or wrong', which he condemned as the most pernicious idea in human history. This is all reflected in Sinuhe's background, but like Ristikivi, Waltari did not want to "get in the way of Soviet and German tanks". Both writers wanted to be rid of their emotional burdens and not to get stuck in their personal experience. Thus the monumental work on Egypt was written, in which the author attempted to rearrange his bitter experience of recent history as if soaring into the philosophical heights of life. The distant and fragmentary material finally allowed him "to give free rein to my imagination, free it from temporal constraint. It is evident that in my Helsinki-trilogy I was quite closely tied to the external reality, to real or possible events and characters. Now my imagination did not have such restraints." (Waltari 1980: 344–345.) This is definitely a similar story to that of Ristikivi, who, after being forced to flee his homeland, formulated the same credo, although it was more painstaking in his case and happened after a period of personal crisis. Incidentally, Waltari never visited Egypt, neither before nor after writing his *Egyptian*, and he did not even feel the need; this boosted his imagination, and reality was not allowed to interfere. Ristikivi, too, admitted that he had not visited all the places in which his works were set, taking the trip to the Acre of *The Last City* only after the completion of his novel for example (Ristikivi 1996g: 114; Ristikivi 1996f: 118). Whether Waltari's historical prose can – with reservations – be regarded as a creative product of his ideological amnesia, cannot be determined here. In any case it is clear that the writer's plunge into a distant past always expresses a certain boredom with his modern surroundings and a desire to go back to the sources of world's wisdom, which is cleansed of everyday grime and perhaps even "more light-hearted" as Ristikivi may put it.

Via Rome Back to Estonia

The last question to arise is: did Ristikivi ever intend to return from the "light-hearted" Europe? His third trilogy of historical novels *Noble Hearts* ("Õilsad südamed"), *Dragon's Teeth* ("Lohe hambad") and *A Double Game*

(“Kahekordne mäng”), published in 1970–1972, turned out to be a gallop through a great deal of European history in different periods, including Italy, Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Paris, Vienna, and Copenhagen in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and twentieth centuries. The periods of time and places sometimes even flash by too fast and this may seem too much like a technical tour de force. After this fireworks display Ristikivi paused to get his breath back, and then he continued writing at a much slower pace “with the main emphasis on mood and lyrical style”.²² This is shown by *A Roman Diary* (1976), which took a long time to come out. What is fascinating in this book, in spite of its impressionistic and almost plotless composition, is the complete concentration. First of all it has absolute unity of place: it is Rome – Ristikivi’s place of destiny. “Rome has everything, as Rome is the whole world,” (Ristikivi 1976: 27). This is a quotation from Ristikivi’s story set in 1765, in the spirit of old European poetry on Rome, as if echoing a stanza in a poem by the French Renaissance poet Joachim Du Bellay (1522–1560) (*Rome fut tout le monde, et tout le monde est Rome*), which by then was already two hundred years old. As a matter of fact, what happens in Ristikivi’s Rome can be understood along the lines of Du Bellay’s *The Antiquities of Rome* (“Les antiquités de Rome”, 1558): the city which once encompassed the whole world is laid waste and is in ruins, but the Roman spirit, hovering above the ruins, is still alive and even more condensed. In the slowly advancing Romantic era, the ruins became an important object of meditation. The air in Rome is magically pregnant with spirits, so that communications between people are wordless and faultless: finding without seeking, meeting without speaking, recognising a person without knowing them. Everything looks chaotic, because the most important things are left unsaid, but is also extraordinarily dense, as the invisible hand will organise the people’s unity of action.

It can even be said there is an absolute unity of time, although not in its usual sense. This seems to be the key to the whole situation. Whereas Ristikivi depicted events intermittently or in parallel in different historical periods in his third trilogy of historical novels, time does not change in *A Roman Diary*: the whole history of Rome is concentrated in one mythical moment. “We cannot go back into the past, and we cannot escape the past, the past is always with us.” (Ristikivi 1976: 59). The protagonist’s name is Kaspar von Schmerzberg, but at least three people in the novel bear this name, and they assume and act out the timeless role of Schmerzberg in different periods of time. The names are worth noting, as names contain a myth. What may seem to us to be an accident of fate is written in God’s mind from the very beginning. Is there anything more arbitrary than the name given to a newly-born human child? There are thousands of names to choose from for each nameless child, but the name which it finally receives is already given in a myth. The young man called Ottavio carries the spirit of the Holy Roman Emperor Otto III (r. 996–1002) in the ruins of the former imperial palace.

In other words, Ristikivi constructs the same situation on the Roman ruins that Carl Gustav Jung had earlier dreaded happening in Rome: although seen for the first time, everything is too familiar and the reality disintegrates into symptoms of amnesia. I do not know these people, but

they seem as if they were long-time acquaintances. I myself, who does not know them, I am their acquaintance from olden days. Where did we meet and at what time do we meet now? Driven by an irresistible urge, Kaspar von Schmerzburg comes to Rome because he knows that he will have to be there, but he cannot say why. The only answer prompted by fate at the end of the book is “in order to die here”. “It was as if someone else had answered instead of me. And now, at last, it became clear to me. Moreover, it seemed as if I had known about it for a long time, as if it had been put down in writing long before, but the seal was broken only now.” (Ristikivi 1976: 205.) We have reached the same type of amnesia which was diagnosed in the case of *All Souls’ Night*. The circle is complete. The strange-looking, but all too familiar house in Stockholm – the setting for *All Souls’ Night* – has become a strange-looking, but all too familiar Rome – the historically ‘central site of amnesia’ for all real Europeans.

However, Ristikivi has another surprise in store for us. The Rome he describes is characterised by an amazing concentration of Germans. The first account of the Germans’ historic longing for Italy was given in *The Burning Banner*, and in the same book a knight called Schmerzburg makes his first appearance. In *A Roman Diary* the German *Drang nach Rom* seems to be linked to the Emperor Otto III’s grand idea, the project for the restoration of the Roman empire (*Renovatio Imperii Romanorum*) by means of the German spirit, but this old play is acted out as a lyrical comedy of errors, where the characters are hidden behind the costumes of all kinds of secret allies, whether Freemasons, Rosicrucians, or Jesuits. For *A Roman Diary* is undoubtedly a lyrical comedy, in the centre of which is the slightly tragicomic figure of the renowned art historian and scholar Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who was murdered by a robber in 1768; or, to be more exact his cultural imperial name stands at the centre, because in Ristikivi’s book, Winckelmann is always present in an invisible form and seems to embody the silent intellectual German dominance of Rome. In 1764, a year before the arrival of Schmerzburg in Rome, Winckelmann had become the president of the antiquities of Rome and its surroundings, making him like a spiritual ruler of the Roman ruins. In the same year, 1764, his famous book *The History of Ancient Art* (“Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums”) was published, which lit the flame of the antique spirit with renewed energy. The pagan spirit inflamed by Germans is wandering around in Papal Rome trying to exhilarate the lifeless doctrine of Christianity again. All these Germans, including Schmerzburg, have been inspired by this new spirit, no doubt, as they gather in Rome, where they look like conspirators and their mission seems to be the restoration of a new spiritual Rome.

That this gang of Germans has something to do with Estonia is not revealed until the afterword to the novel, signed by K. R., perhaps Karl Ristikivi, who had Schmerzburg’s manuscript printed, or perhaps Kaspar von Revingen, which was the name given to Kaspar von Schmerzburg at his birth, as becomes clear in this afterword. This playful hint suggests the relationship between the first-person narrator and the author may be quite personal. The poems by Schmerzburg in *A Roman Diary* may as well have been published under the name of Karl Ristikivi.

But the most important thing is that the first-person narrator in *A Roman Diary* named Kaspar von Schmerzburg/Revingen was born at the manor of Tuivere in Estonia in 1718. The name of this manor cannot be found on any map of Estonia, but Schmerzburg's roots are in Estonia nevertheless. He left Estonia at the age of twenty, never to return, and as he was born before 1721, the year the Treaty of Nystad (Fi. Uusikaupunki) was signed between Russia and Sweden, ending the Great Northern War (1700–1721) and transferring Swedish Estonia and Livonia to Russia, he considered himself to be a Swedish subject even though he had never ever been to Sweden. In these records we can note the use of 'never' twice: Schmerzburg never returned to his Estonian *de facto* homeland, now controlled by Russia, and Schmerzburg never visited his Swedish *de jure* homeland. "What was the reason for this: didn't he want to be disappointed in his native land, or didn't he regard it as his legitimate homeland now that its heroic king [Charles XII of Sweden, r. 1697–1718 – J.U.] was dead? It was hard to say." (Ristikivi 1976: 229.) As can be seen in Ristikivi's last novel, we are dealing with the same exile's dilemma that we discussed in the beginning: is the native land that has been overrun by foreigners still a legitimate homeland? Is the Estonia which is occupied by the Soviets the same Estonia of before 1940? Does visiting occupied Estonia mean recognising the Soviet rule or denying it?

The last question divided the whole Estonian community in exile effectively into two camps from the late 1950s to the early 1980s. Kaspar von Schmerzburg, who wanders about Winckelmann's Rome, is also troubled by the latent problem of exile. But as he himself decided in favour of homelessness, Ristikivi calls him European by nationality in his afterword. This replacement is visible in other discussions by Ristikivi as well: homelessness is replaced by a more positive-sounding Europeanness. The same is true about his own life. "In my early childhood I was very fond of my home. But when I was forced to leave the place that I was accustomed to call home on three occasions consecutively, after a while, my sense of home disappeared."²³ These are Ristikivi's words less than four months before he died; in this, Kaspar von Schmerzburg's and his own longing for Europe, which he had learned since childhood, met. This is further evidence that before the major 'stroke' of the exile in 1944 Ristikivi had experienced several "micro strokes" of homelessness, trying to compensate for the emotional memory gaps with a creative function of Europeanness.

The afterword of *A Roman Diary* does not add much to the story; its presence is justified by the playful role of K. R., the publisher of the manuscript. The biographical data of Kaspar von Schmerzburg are presented as an appendix, as a calm and subdued fade-out to the story of a dream come true. What importance does it have that we know in retrospect that the protagonist was born in Estonia? This is not an explanation backwards, given in order to give a new meaning to the previous text; rather, this is a bridge thrown forward. Though, as an afterword, this text in italicised form is almost superfluous, it may serve as an introduction and a sign of a new direction. My assumption is that the afterword to *A Roman Diary* was some kind of preparation for the future. This is a gesture outside, a signal to be understood by the reader. It is a sign of things to come, and specifically it

seems that Ristikivi's glance, although distant and shy, was cautiously turning to Estonia. This was the first and the last such glance in his historical novels. However, the afterword to *A Roman Diary* announces that the text is only a fragment of Kaspar von Schmerzburg's collection of works under the general title *A Diary of Dreams* ("Tagebuch der Träume"), which should also include a fictional narrative in the first person from the period of the Great Northern War. In it, Schmerzburg imagines himself to be a military leader in King Charles XII's army. Assuming Ristikivi had continued to produce his historical novels in trilogies and had 'published' two more volumes of Schmerzburg's diaries, he would most probably have moved closer to his distant home, to its immediate vicinity, if not onto home soil itself.

We have no idea what home would have been like to Ristikivi, the obsessive traveller, after all his trips to Europe. We do not know what the recovery of memory would have been like after all these long years of amnesia. But this glance cast towards home at the end of the writer's career, and of his life, shows that his memory had retained the wish to be back home, and that the wish had been serious all the time. Although this glance was not cast earlier, we have to understand that some glances evidently take a long time to prepare. Even if they do not last.

NOTES

- 1 Jan Assmann (2001: 247), who analyses the concept of collective memory initiated by Maurice Halbwachs, comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to separate the individual from the social component of memory.
- 2 In late summer and autumn 1944, tens of thousands of Estonians fled from the second Soviet occupation (the first having been in 1940–1941), heading for the West, primarily for Sweden and Germany. Different sources have quoted the total number of refugees as being as many as 70,000, of whom a remarkably large number were intellectuals such as writers, artists, musicians and scientists. The role and status of literature were especially high in exile. In 1944–2000, slightly more than 4000 titles were published in exile, about half of them in Sweden. About one tenth of all titles appeared in foreign languages, mainly in English, with the aim of introducing Estonia to the world. Among all publications, there were 1476 literary titles, 60% of which were Estonian original works. Prose was dominant among the main types of literature, and was in turn, dominated by the novel; a remarkable feature of exile literature is also the abundance of novel sequences. The number of poetry collections and memoirs was large as well. See Kruuspere 2008.
- 3 *Jonathan, the Lost Brother* ("Joonatan, kadunud veli", 1971); *Night to the X Power* ("Õö astmes x", 1973); *A Tree on the Island Still Stands* ("Puu saarel on alles", 1973).
- 4 "There is a real duration, the heterogeneous moments of which permeate one another; each moment, however, can be brought into relation with a state of the external world which is contemporaneous with it, and can be separated from the other moments in consequence of this very process. The comparison of these two realities gives rise to a symbolical representation of duration, derived from space." Bergson 1910: 110.
- 5 *Fire and Iron* ("Tuli ja raud, 1938), *The House of a Righteous Man* ("Õige mehe koda", 1940; the original title was *In a Strange House* ["Võõras majas"]) and *The Garden* ("Rohtaed", 1942).
- 6 Ristikivi 2002: 247 (a letter to Lembit Muda 31 December 1948).

- 7 *The Gates of Sigtuna* (“Sigtuna väravad”), *A Faithful Servant* (“Truu sulane”), and *Swan Song* (“Luigelaul”).
- 8 A more cosmopolitan, or maybe compromise-seeking, line of development was also to be found, represented for example by Lydia Koidula’s anti-colonial historical stories set in exotic countries, such as *The Last Inca of Peru* (“Perùama viimne Inka”, 1865) and *Juudit, or the Last Maroons on the Island of Jamaica* (“Juudit ehk Jamaika saare viimsed Maroonlased”, 1870), or her more general stories of freedom, such as *Maria Groot* (1868, set in Holland), and *Johanna d’Ark* (1869, set in France). However, these works (apart from *Juudit*) were not reprinted until some years ago, obviously because they did not qualify from the point of view of the national literary canon, though now encouraged by postcolonial practices. See Koidula 2011. See also the contribution by Peiker.
- 9 Ristikivi 2002: 401 (a letter to Vello Sermat 28 July 1975).
- 10 *The Garden* in 1945, and *The House of a Righteous Man* in 1953. However, the Finnish translation of *The Last City* was rejected by the publishers. Ristikivi 2009: 466, 542.
- 11 Starting with *Dragon’s Teeth* (“Lohe hambad”, 1970) and *Hymn of Joy* (“Rõõmulaul”, 1966), both in 1997. During the last twelve years, starting from *The House of a Righteous Man* (2001), Ljudmila Simagina-Kokk has translated six other books by Ristikivi into Russian, and a number of short stories in the journal *Vyshgorod*. In addition, the manuscripts of several more books are publication-ready.
- 12 *The Burning Banner* in 2005.
- 13 *The Southern Cuckoo Spells Death* (“Hurmakägu on surma nägu”, the original title is “Södergök är dödergök”).
- 14 Including sections of *All Souls’ Night*, *The Burning Banner*, *Fire and Iron*, and others. See Hinrikus 2002: 24; Ristikivi 2009: 55, 57, 187, 190, 205–206, 579, 583, 822, 865, 868, 876, 936.
- 15 The word ‘displacement’ is used to translate the German *Verschiebung* into English; this a term in Sigmund Freud’s theory of dreams, but there is no direct connection with it here. Displacement is a polyfunctional term in psychology, which for example denotes “the transference of affects, wishes and desires from their original object or person to another object or person. In this sense it is seen as a defense mechanism”. Reber 1995: 217. The phrases ‘displacement of memory’ or ‘displaced memories’ are used, for example, when memories seem to go out of the control of the subjective mind and leave traces on certain things through which they are transmitted to other people. Vrettos 2007.
- 16 These words uttered by Barrera were later regarded by Ristikivi (2002: 402) as “a small key” to his historical novels; elsewhere he cites them as his creed. Ristikivi 1996c: 62.
- 17 Ristikivi 2009: 242 (entry in diary for 19th June 1961).
- 18 The Marxist history of the 1950s also gives a sweeping picture of the European background of the ‘Peasant War of 1343–1345’. Vassar 1955: 200.
- 19 This means a peasant rebellion. The term comes from the Mahtra War, the name given to an uprising of the peasantry in 1858. For the Mahtra War and the theme of the peasant revolt in Estonian fiction, see the contributions by Kirss and Laanes in the present volume.
- 20 A comprehensive overview of the reception of the St. George’s Night Uprising is given in Tamm 2008.
- 21 Whether Sofi Oksanen’s *The Purge* (“Puhdistus”, 2008), which has been translated into more than 40 languages, can compete with the impact of *The Egyptian*, remains to be seen.
- 22 Ristikivi 2002: 423 (a letter to Oskar Kruus 28th February 1977).
- 23 Ristikivi 2002: 424 (a letter to Vello Sermat from 30th March 1977).

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Balthasar Russow at Koluvere

Peasant Rebellion in Jaan Kross' *Between Three Plagues*

This same autumn, when the country was in chaos, a confrontation developed with the peasants in Harrien [Est. Harjumaa] and Wiek [Est. Läänemaa]. These peasants rose in rebellion against the nobility (200), claiming that although they paid the nobility heavy taxes and tribute, and were required to render extensive services, they received in return no protection from the noblemen in times of danger. The Muscovite had overrun them without any resistance whatsoever. Consequently, they intended to be obedient to the nobility no longer, nor to render any services. If they were not released from these obligations, they intended to wipe out and destroy the nobility. They carried out their plans and overran several estates and also killed a number of the noblemen whom they found on these estates, e.g. Jacob Uexkuell of Lummat, Otto Uexkull of Kircketa, Juergen Ryssbyter and Dietrich Lieven (Lyve). (Balthasar Russow, *Chronicle of the Livonian Province*.)¹

Jaan Kross' novel *Between Three Plagues* ("Kolme katku vahel")² is a *Bildungsroman* of the sixteenth-century chronicler Balthasar Russow, as well as the fictional narrative of the writing of his historical work *Chronicle of the Livonian Province*.³ The process of compiling, inscribing and publishing the *Chronicle* is shown taking place against the background of the colourful and perilous political circumstances of the Livonian War (1558–1583), while the problematics of accommodation and censorship are also foregrounded. The novel's title is a synecdoche for an era, the turbulent times of the mid-sixteenth century, as these were experienced from the vantage point of the Livonian towns, villages, and countryside, and in the city of Tallinn (Ger. Reval). Balthasar Russow's *Chronika der Provintz Lyffland*, written in Low German and first published in Rostock in 1578, was an immediate best-seller in Germany, and went through three printings. Its popularity was due in large part to its news value, its reportage on 'recent history' in the faraway Baltic provinces.⁴

On the largest scale, Kross' selection of Balthasar Russow as a protagonist for an epic novel about the 1500s is a self-declared pedagogical manoeuvre to awaken his Estonian readership in Soviet Estonia to the stores of their cultural memory; in the 1970s, the *Chronicle of the Livonian Provinces* was firmly lodged as part of a dusty but forgotten past. Specifically, Kross' project in *Between Three Plagues* and his subsequent novels was to read and write

petite histoire, thereby creating a gallery of educated Estonian heroes of whom there were at least some traces in archival sources, and who had risen above the mute mass of a toiling, enserfed peasantry to till the soil of culture. Kross' novels are thus about exceptional figures whose upward mobility implies the challenges of constructing new identities; their narrators always cast sideways glances at the 'recent history' of Kross' own time.

Historical novels create accessible exhibits of distant times. Unbounded by the procedures for establishing historical evidence, traditions of source criticism, or the laws of genre pertaining to *l'écriture de l'histoire*, a historical novelist is constrained by the more ambivalent forces of 'verisimilitude' (cf. Todorov 1977: 82), and the plausibilities of the historical imagination.⁵ Kross' novel is ostensibly about what happened in Livonia in a time bounded by "three plagues", an expression with at least double meaning. First, as reported in Russow's *Chronicle*, three epidemics of the dreaded bubonic plague ravaged Tallinn and the Livonian towns and villages (1566, 1571, 1577) while Russow was pastor of the Lutheran congregation of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn. In an allegorical sense, the three plagues represent a tragic triple march of calamities, in the pestilence, war, and famine that Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia* reports, without deploying it as a compositional pattern.⁶ The novel delves into what may have happened *besides*, and *in between* the events of *grande histoire* such as invasions, sieges, political negotiations and alliances, and grafts these events onto a fictional scaffolding of Russow's life.

In this chapter I will examine the process and strategies through which Jaan Kross' novel *Between Three Plagues* generates the historical fiction of Balthasar Russow and his chronicle, focusing on one episode, the Koluvere peasant rebellion in Volume II and its place in the novel's symbolic economy. Kross' reading of the *Chronicle of the Livonian Province* "between the lines" (interpolation) may seem to be, in keeping with Hayden White's understanding, a further narrativisation of a chronicle, but such an interpretation is deceptive. The *Chronicle* itself is subtly reinvented and peels out of and away from the novel's narrative. Kross' fictionalisation and metafictional interpretation of the 1560 rebellion particularly irritated historians in Estonia when Volume II of *Between Three Plagues* was published in 1972. The ensuing debate was not merely about factual accuracy and poetic licence, nor was it a turf war between practitioners of different arts, literature and scholarly history; rather, it concerned the openness of the aperture between history and ideology in the Soviet 1970s, and the validity of historical fiction as surrogate history.⁷ Implicitly the debates also showed a concern with readers, where and how they were learning history.

I will argue that situating Balthasar Russow as an eyewitness to the Koluvere rebellion patently serves the myth of origins that Kross adopts for the chronicler, and the identity struggles that ensue from there. The framing of the 1560 events as a dream sequence is a strategic retraction, conveniently situating the hero at a safe distance from full identificatory allegiance with a rebellious peasantry. My analysis will close by weighing Kross' fictional manoeuvre as a possible 'historiographic metafiction', and as an intervention in enlivening cultural memory that served his readership in Soviet Estonia in the 1970s with a colourfully illusionistic 'available past'.

Who Was Balthasar Russow? Biographical Hypotheses and Myths of Origin

Kross builds the protagonist of *Between Three Plagues* by harnessing a borrowed horse, an intriguing hypothesis about Balthasar Russow's genealogy in a 1964 article by historian Paul Johansen in the diaspora literary periodical *Tulimuld*.⁸ The article suggests that the chronicler Balthasar Russow might have been ethnically Estonian, the son of a teamster (*voorimees*) named Simon Rissa from Kurgla village who became a town tradesman in Tallinn. This hypothesis piqued Kross' interest intensely and was grist for his imaginative mill, first for the TV film script of *Between Three Plagues*, which was produced by Eesti Telefilm and was first screened in 1970, and later for the novel, born of the surplus of material gathered for writing the film script (Salokannel 2009: 192).⁹ Use of Johansen's hypothesis as a metahistorical lever has double significance for the novel. First, Kross can reclaim the chronicler, previously regarded as a highly literate German, as an originary figure for the Estonian literary tradition, and Russow's chronicle as a core text in the history of Estonian letters.¹⁰ Second, in the novelist's hands the hypothesis concerning Russow's origins becomes a fictional imperative, carrying with it a protocol for interpreting Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia* as an implicit history from below.

The first two volumes of *Between Three Plagues* are an imaginary reconstruction of Balthasar Russow's formation, his youth and adolescence spent in Tallinn, and his seminary education in Stettin (Pol. Szczecin), culminating in the brief trip to his native land in autumn 1560, where he witnesses a bloody peasant uprising at Koluvere. Russow's later career as pastor of the Lutheran congregation of the Church of the Holy Spirit and the composition of his chronicle are the focus of the third and fourth volumes of the novel; the ethical problematics of Russow's political compromises as a prominently-ranked resident of Tallinn¹¹ and a writer of history are played out against a constantly shifting historical canvas including two sieges of Tallinn (1561 and 1577) and political negotiations with the Swedish crown for its defence (Frost 2000: 25, 27). The protagonist Balthasar's self-inquisitions in the form of interior monologue carry increasing weight in the third and fourth volumes.

In the scant autobiographical notations left behind by the historical Balthasar Russow, the chronicler identified himself not by his ethnonym, but by patriotic affiliation to his city, describing himself as *ein Revaler (Revaliensis)*, and by his professional calling as the Lutheran pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit (Urban 1981: 161). Scholarly study by Baltic German local historians on Russow as a historical personage and author began in the early nineteenth century.¹² The modesty of Johansen's hypothesis, which he published rather reluctantly in 1964, can be seen in his disclaimers, as well as in the fact that he was working on a longer, scholarly book on the topic, which he did not live to finish, and which was published posthumously.¹³ Among Johansen's methods is a reading of the text of Russow's *Chronicle* for subtler signals, such as selection (omission as well as inclusion) of episodes and the riskier topic of tonality.

Johansen's hypothesis seems supported by the tone and rhetoric of the text of the *Chronicle of the Livonian Province*; when he reports on conditions in the countryside, Russow offers close ethnographic focus, which may suggest an empathic gaze or even *parti pris* with the plight of the common people (referred to at the time as either *Undeutsche* or *maarahvas*: 'people of the land' in Estonian).¹⁴ Such a bias, along with overt chastisement of German landlords for providing insufficient military protection for their peasants against the constant raids of the Livonian Wars did not escape the critics of the *Chronicle of Livonia* in its own time: Tönnies Maydell besmirched Russow with the epithet "peasant ox" (*unvernunftige Bauernochse*), deeming him too uncouth to write a serious account of events past and present.¹⁵

The Canvas and the Characters

The background history of the Russo-Livonian war in *Between Three Plagues* is distilled into representative or invented characters. As in Ann Rigney's intriguing analysis of Walter Scott's *Old Mortality* (1816), one option is to select these from among historical personages and transform them in a process that involves "not the invention of new story elements, but rather a reworking of historical particulars" (Rigney 2001: 22). Another is to use invented individuals who are "native to the story", a strategy Rigney (*ibid.*: 22, 23) calls "supplementation of the historical record". In Volume II several of these supplemented characters "native to the story" are peasants, or have village roots: Balthasar's uncle Jakob, his closest friend Märten, the villager Tödva Kulpsoo who later perishes in the onslaught at Koluvere, and Balthasar's first love, Epp. There is a colourful cast of *dramatis personae*, historical, semi-historical, and invented, spanning the social spectrum: Livonian traitor Elert Kruse, *voevod* Alexei Danilovich Basmanov, Doctor Friesen and his wife Katharina, Narva City Councillor and reputable merchant Joachin Krumhusen and his son Melchior, stift bailiff of Läänemaa Christoph Monninckhusen, the Tallinn merchant Jakob Kimmelpenning¹⁶, and the Tallinn blacksmith Leinhard Platensleger. *Between Three Plagues* also uses allegorical conventions to personify the city of Tallinn as a collective subject and historical actor; in Volume II, through the fictional Balthasar's eyes, his home city is a gigantic snapping turtle with a shell of stone. As in Kross' other novels, particularly *The Czar's Madman* ("Keisri hull", 1978), documents acquire lives of their own and destinies as complex as those of human characters. Thus a second allegorical figure in the novel is Balthasar Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia*, a living document, printed object, and contraband.¹⁷

What then does it mean for the symbolic economy of the novel *Between Three Plagues* that Jaan Kross situates his young hero, the future chronicler Balthasar Russow, as a literal eyewitness of a peasant rebellion that swept across the north and west of his native land in autumn 1560 to culminate at Koluvere castle (the fortress of Lode)? Further, why does Kross enlarge this particular episode, a peasant rebellion, to fill almost an entire volume of a four-volume work?

The Paradox of Presence: To Koluvere and Halfway Back

More than the other volumes of *Between Three Plagues*, Volume II initially presents itself as a pure adventure story, with a dose of the picaresque. Like Scott's *Waverley* and Stendhal's *Fabrice at Waterloo* in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, the young Balthasar stumbles onto a battlefield with no experience of war-making; Balthasar's soldiering is accomplished with the pen rather than the sword, leaving ink, not blood on his hands. Though the *fabula* of Volume II may be difficult to see at first reading due to the density of detail and the complexity of the subject, Volume II of *Between Three Plagues* is emplotted in the manner of a five-act drama with an epilogue.

In Act I the protagonist journeys from Stettin to Narva, where he hears rumours of a peasant uprising. In the second act, travelling under cover, he tries to see for himself what is happening in the countryside, traversing the east-west trajectory from Narva toward Tallinn; he is then recruited to accompany a delegation of peasants seeking arms and legitimation for their rebellious cause from the Tallinn *Rat*. Act III, set in Tallinn, is a formative scene of witnessing, writing, and translation, proleptic of Balthasar's later role as chronicler of the Livonian province. His 'civilised' knowledge proves useful to the band of peasant rebels in conjunction with their appeal for military aid to the Tallinn City Council, and in the writing scene where he is shown and asked to translate into Estonian (*maakeel*) the *Twelve Articles* from the 1525 German *Bauernkrieg*. This might be considered the climax of the volume from the point of the poetics of *Between Three Plagues* as a whole, and for the novel as a *Bildungsroman*. The action of Volume II culminates in Act IV, the clash and debacle at Koluvere, in which Balthasar is staged as an eyewitness, and then Act V frames Balthasar's disappearance from the scene, his return to Stettin, and his afterthoughts. The novel's frame closes in a chiasmic epilogue, which I will analyse more closely at the end of this chapter in connection with the formative scenes of writing and translation.

In terms of scale, mass and detail, the peasant rebellion in western and northern Estonia in the autumn months of 1560 that culminated at Koluvere is the largest narrative amplification in *Between Three Plagues* of an episode from Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia*. The historical sources concerning this event – a significant armed rebellion against the feudal landlords in north-western Estonia in autumn 1560 involving thousands of peasants – are scant; until a major article in 1955 by historian Sulev Vahtre, they had received little scholarly examination (Vahtre 1955: 624). Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia* only allots a brief, paragraph-length entry to the chaotic bursts of events that constituted the uprising, which culminated in brutal suppression by stift bailiff Christoph Monninckhusen's army and peasants from Läänemaa, who had been herded together to fight against their own kind under threat of torture or eviction from their cottager's dwellings. The *Chronicle* entry condenses a number of episodes of the assembly of the peasant army and the acts of violence and murder they commit into a short, coherent event; far from condoning it, which would violate the *Chronicle's* sacred historiography, it nevertheless grants the rebellion a moral rationale: peasants should receive protection from their lords. Johann Renner's *History*

of *Livonia 1556–1561* (see below) is secondary to *Russow's Chronicle*, in that it draws intertextually upon it, as well as on what he heard and observed while living in Uus-Pärnu up to 1560. The historical Russow's sources, oral or written, are unknown.

In terms of the main character's itinerary, the fictional Balthasar Russow makes the journey in the autumn of 1560 from Stettin to Narva, where he first hears of the uprising, after which he diverts his course to join the peasant rebels in his uncle's village of Kurgla and is drawn dangerously close to the action, and into a textual vortex as he translates a manifesto from the German *Bauernkrieg*; thereafter, he cleverly dodges a few overtly compromising public appearances in Tallinn, stands at the periphery of the peasant army at Koluvere, and disappears once again into obscurity. Let us now look at the emplotment of *Between Three Plagues, Volume II* in greater detail.

The novelist's first task is to manoeuvre his protagonist onto the chaotic scene of war and rebellion in his homeland. At the beginning of the third chapter of the novel, the Stettin Lutheran seminary Rector's friend, Narva merchant and City Councillor Joachim Krumhusen, commissions Balthasar to make the sea journey to Narva to instruct Krumhusen's son Melchior to sell the family's property.¹⁸ In view of the "complicated times", and the pressure of Ivan IV (r. 1533/1547–1584) on Narva's allegiance, it seemed wiser to send such directions via personal messenger, rather than in writing (*Between Three Plagues* II: 47). Balthasar's suitability for this assignment is a function of his education and manners: he has already received some civilising polish and can thus effectively pass for a young student from Stettin. In *Bildungsroman* terms, the framing of Balthasar's secretive visit via Narva to his homeland, the province of Livonia, and his involvement in the turbulent events seething up 'from below' casts these experiences schematically as an inverted *grand tour*. By placing Balthasar temporarily near a window that illuminates who makes and who is broken by history, the novelist plucks the string of the myth of origins, the Johansen hypothesis concerning Russow's ethnicity. Also significant to the emplotment of Volume II is the prolepsis to the peasant rebellion in Volume I of *Between Three Plagues*: there Balthasar witnessed the brutal drawing and quartering of recalcitrant peasants on Tallinn's Jerusalem Hill.

The novel's frame for the account of the Koluvere rebellion (Act I Scene 2) begins with a high-level dinner conversation in Narva. Having discharged his messenger's duties on behalf of Krumhusen senior, Balthasar sits at table with Melchior Krumhusen, the *voevod* of Narva Alexei Danilovich Basmanov, and his son, Fyodor; the table is entertained with the local news by the traitorous Livonian landlord Elert Kruse, whom Balthasar remembers in a flashback from a previous encounter in Tallinn (Volume I). Already quite tipsy, Kruse drops a piece of incendiary news into his rambling account: across the counties of Harjumaa and Läänemaa, but particularly in the immediate vicinity of Tallinn, peasants have been killing their landlords (*Between Three Plagues* II: 58). The ensuing conversation skirts the Muscovites' ambitions and war plans, with Basmanov suggesting that the landlords of Livonia swear allegiance to Ivan IV. In an effort to curry

favour with the *voevod*, Kruse insinuates that the *voevod* has done nothing to hinder the rebellious peasants' murderous intentions, and insists on the peasantry's inherent and incurable stupidity:

But I am the first nobleman in Livonia who caught on. While all the others were, in deed and thought, begging for help to fight the Muscovite – begging everywhere, all the way from the count of Prussia to the Pope himself, the Emperor of Germany to the Turkish sultan (of course, as we know, getting next to nothing for their troubles!) – I was already telling them all – in the Tartu bishop's council and the beer hall of the Livonian *Landtag*: My dear sirs, who share a common fate! Open your eyes and understand! Our future lies in Muscovy! But that our fate in fact does not await us in some deep wood in Pskov or Vyatka (where half of the unruly ones of Tartu have been deported by now by our merciful Tsar), but that it awaits us right here in Livonia, in our own lovely manors, for this nothing else is needed but to accommodate ourselves to our merciful Tsar. (*Between Three Plagues* II: 55.)

Kruse's words have a hard edge; overstatement signals their slipperiness and duplicity.

The narrator uses Kruse to manoeuvre the peasant uprising, and the difference between Muscovite and German landlords' attitudes toward the unrest into the centre of the conversation. His curiosity sparked by this new information, Balthasar tells Melchior Krumhusen the next morning that he will not board the "Seejunkfer" for its return voyage to Stettin, but will travel instead to Tallinn, asking Melchior to obtain from the *voevod* the requisite permit for safe conduct from Narva to Rakvere, and a set of peasant clothing.

In the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of Volume II of *Between Three Plagues* the protagonist travels fast in an area he knows well, giving a rapid overview of the rebellion's terrain in a litany of toponyms. Balthasar's first stop is his father's native village of Kurgla, where his uncle Jakob and other men are gathering up their scant arms, mostly farm tools, and assembling to "go to war", evacuating their women and children to the inaccessible marshes and caves of Hongasaare, a sanctuary from ancient times. From Kurgla Balthasar's trajectory moves rapidly across north-western Estonia, where he witnesses, without bloodying his own hands, the murder of landlord Hasse of Üksnurme manor; this episode is a synecdoche for what allegedly is happening simultaneously on many estates in the land.

The third act of the drama begins in the camp of the newly crowned "peasant king", who recruits Balthasar, who has arrived with magically accurate timing, to accompany a rebel delegation seeking arms and support from the Tallinn City Council. The young chronicler, deemed trustworthy because of his Kurgla roots, penetrates to the centre of power of the peasants' band; because of his educated, multilingual ear, he also has access to the whispered conversations of the inner circles of the City Council. This secret knowledge opens new dimensions of the formal communications that he is translating between the peasant delegation and members of the *Rat*. A romantic diversion spares Balthasar from attending the meeting of the St. Olaf's Guild that might have entailed him making an incriminating speech

on the peasants' behalf. Indeed, this interlude with Katharina Friesen, who, like Potiphar's wife, steals his clothing and prevents him from attending the meeting of the Guild, reinforces the conventions of the picaresque. There are deeper narrative agendas here as well, as will be explored later on.

Predictably, the peasant delegation's mission to seek weapons and reinforcements from the Tallinn *Rat* is doomed from the start. Any such material support would have constituted moral legitimation of the peasants' cause, which the Tallinn City Council could ill afford. Furthermore, international politics intervened dramatically with the delivery to the council chamber of a letter announcing the death of the Swedish king. Reval sought, and a year later achieved, the protection of the Swedish crown at the end of the Russo-Livonian War (1558–1561). Of the peasant delegation, Balthasar alone linguistically understands this information; it becomes part of his hoard of secret, supplementary knowledge. The City Council's refusal of the peasants' request is couched as a moral reprimand, an all-too-familiar refrain: peasants must not rise up against their lords, but should hope for the improvement of their lot by practising Christian patience and obedience. Developments in Sweden and prior knowledge of the Peasant Revolution of 1525 in Germany intensify the City Council's fear of making any wrong political moves, since the city's future protection is at stake.¹⁹

After the return of the delegation to its camp, the fatal onslaught of the peasants on the castle at Koluvere ensues, now charged with the energy of despair and the bitterness of betrayal by Monninckhusen's peasant soldiers. Balthasar escapes through the woods on horseback, unscathed, as if concealed by a fairy-tale cloak of invisibility. The sixth chapter of Volume II – and Act IV of the drama – ends with the narrator's laconic summary: "Balthasar rode into the underbrush and the branches, wet with blood, closed behind him. As if he had never been there at all" (*Between Three Plagues* II: 170).²⁰

Was all that transpired before and after Koluvere only an epic dream of the main character, or a fantasy of a somewhat more sophisticated order, for both the protagonist and the narrator? The Koluvere interpolation works in the novel in the status of a complex fantasy and a cautionary tale. This partially explains the texture of the narrative, which generates a particularly intense reality effect, a kind of 'hyperreality' consistent with a waking dream. The sequence of episodes is sensuously conjured with stunning descriptions of landscape and weather, ethnographic realia of clothing, weaponry, dwellings, and conveyances, rich both in the texture of the language and the scale of detail represented. And yet throughout the text there are frequent references to seeing events in an altered state: events are "dream-like", proceeding at "dream-like" pace, or seen "as if in a dream."

Witnessing Koluvere only becomes a cautionary tale for Balthasar upon his return to Stettin. Kross' fictional hero is given the privilege of a keyhole vision of what is happening in his homeland while he is still waiting to step on the stage of Tallinn formally and in clerical garb. More specifically, he has gained a glimpse of how *grande histoire* is shaped, both at the informal dinner table conversation in Narva and in the Tallinn City Council chambers. Through the framing of the Koluvere rebellion and Balthasar Russow's putative eyewitness presence the novel raises ethical

issues about the responsibility of the eye (and ear) witness, the risks of speech and the difficulties of strategic silence. All of these are emblematic dilemmas that are to accompany the clergyman-chronicler Balthasar Russow throughout his career. The ‘free-drawn’ interpolation of the 1560 rebellion, with its inset tales is held in suspension through italicised passages of narratorial commentary. Even as the protagonist processes and interiorises these events in the closing chapters of the novel, they continue to be marked intermittently as happening in a dream-like space.

These subjunctive signals by the narrator are coherent with the position the fictional Russow later assumes with respect to his journey. After safe passage back to his academic attic chamber in Stettin, he receives a letter from Tallinn from his sister Annika, giving him news of his father’s death, scolding him about his tuition debts in Stettin, and asking him whether the rumours of his being in his homeland in the autumn of 1560 are true. Ostensibly he has been in Germany since the autumn of 1558, attending with diligence to his theological studies. As the narrator watches, Balthasar answers his sister’s direct questions with flat-out denial – like St Peter, three times over. For the young and naive Russow, his adventures have given him crucial background information while teaching a cautionary lesson about strategic silence: keeping in the shadow of a blood-smirched tree, and keeping to Kimmelpenning’s back room instead of making a public appearance at the St. Olaf’s Guild House. However, this denial, which would bring a convenient kind of closure to the marvellous traveller’s tale of the young Balthasar, is not the end of the story told in Volume II of *Between Three Plagues*. Clinching the authority of the novel’s text, and the ‘fashionedness’ of its discourse (to borrow Hayden White’s term) is the crossing of paths of the fictional Balthasar Russow and the fictional Johann Renner that takes place in the novel’s final chapter and my own chapter’s final scene.

Reading Chronicles, Reading Balthasar Russow

Between Three Plagues may be regarded as an experimental narrativisation of Balthasar Russow’s *Chronicle of Livonia*, generating from it both a biographical and a historiographical fiction. These operations profit from the ‘open form’ of the chronicle, a mode of historical representation which Hayden White (1980) has provocatively located between the minimalist annals and fully ‘narrativised’ historical writing, in which events “seem to tell themselves”. In annals, a column of time markers runs parallel to a line of events (with gaps for less eventful years); in White’s interpretation, there is no distance between the recorder of the annals and the recorder’s own discourse, nor any moral context for narrative authority. In White’s (*ibid.*: 23) argument, “in order to qualify as ‘historical’ an event must be susceptible to at least two narrations of its occurrence”. The chronicle is an intermediate form, a mode of writing that aspires to narrativity, but fails to achieve narrative closure (*ibid.*: 20).

Between Three Plagues openly invites and sustains the ‘simple’ exercise of systematic cross-reading with its source, Russow’s *Chronicle of Livonia*, though this is perhaps a task that befits an ‘ideal’ reader. In the course

of such reading, interesting observations can be made about the novel's selection of events (exclusions as well as inclusions), the degree of detail of their elaboration and amplification, the texture and weight of episodic modulations (enlargements and condensations), and the marking of time. This contrapuntal reading exercise can be performed by shuttling back and forth from the *Chronicle* to the novel (looking for dramatisation), and from the novel to the *Chronicle* (as if checking and authenticating the novel's 'facts').

This game of plying intertexts between novel and chronicle is consonant with a feature Linda Hutcheon (1988: 105) attributes to a kind of postmodern fiction that she designates using the term 'historiographic metafiction'. For example, Hutcheon takes Christa Wolf's 1979 novel *No Place on Earth* ("Kein Ort. Nirgends"), built upon an imagined meeting between Heinrich von Kleist and Karoline von Günderrode, and states, "The metafictional and the historiographic also meet in the intertexts of the novel, for it is through them that Wolf fleshes out the cultural and historical context of this fictive meeting" (*ibid.*: 109).²¹ In Kross' *Between Three Plagues*, there is also a persistent and plural conjuncture of the metafictional and the historiographic, but I would stop short of subsuming the novel to Hutcheon's proposed category and would rather align Kross with models, not ironic parodies, of traditional historical fiction. While Hutcheon claims that "historiographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction", Jaan Kross as a 'public intellectual' in 1970s Soviet Estonia (a contextual marker that should not be elided) proclaimed not only the autonomy but also the sovereignty of fiction over history, reserving the irony for the historians.

In a 1987 speech, Kross barely conceals the barb when he voices the hope that his novel will accelerate completion of a new scholarly Estonian translation of Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia*, or, at the very least, prod his readers to tackle existent ones. For Estonian historians, particularly Sulev Vahtre, a serious and respected scholar of the 1343 St George's Night peasant uprising and author of the article mentioned above on the 1560 Koluvere rebellion, Kross' remark seemed a direct attack, not only on his person, but on the authority and craft of his profession. The novelist may claim to have had the last laugh, and his seductive fictions may have dazzled the reader, but historians' more ascetic arts of reading do not lack for charm and passion. Casaubon-in-the-archives vs the novelist as rogue is, in the end, a deceptive opposition set up and maintained over more than a decade by Kross in his public debates with Estonian historians.

It is indeed a fair question whether Kross is 'reading' Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia* at all, or simply raiding it imaginatively, as a schoolboy climbs over the fence into a garden by night to plunder the apple trees. As fodder for Kross' novel about Balthasar Russow, the chronicle is 'consumed' as it were, as source material in the service of writing a fictional life, and a fictionalised chronicle. The rhetorical structures and generic conventions of Russow's chronicle text are broken down or dissolved in the work of novel-making and thereby reframed completely, without the shadow of Hutcheon's "seriously ironic parody", but with the panache of rendering the past so 'available' as to stake a claim on all future readings of Russow's *Chronicle*.

In terms of the novel's poetics, the 1560 peasant rebellion, which includes the Koluvere battle episode, is, first, a bold interpolation in a particularly shadowy segment of the life-story of the chronicler as historical personage. Second, Volume II of *Between Three Plagues* can be regarded as a narrativised amplification of what is actually quite a skeletal entry in Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia* (quoted in the epigraph of this article). This amplification is firmly yoked to the biographical hypothesis of representing Russow as an ethnic Estonian, a member of an educated elite, and the future writer of a chronicle 'from below'.

On yet a third metahistorical level, Kross' novel inserts 1560 as a middle term in a foundational analogy between two other peasant rebellions more accessible to the cultural memory of Estonian readers in the 1970s: the St. George's Night rebellion of 1343 and the Mahtra War of 1858, one of the last widespread peasant uprisings in Estonia. Each of these events has warranted a longer treatment in fiction in Estonian literature; elsewhere in this book Eneken Laanes argues that they were actually "brought into history" by works of fiction: Eduard Bornhöhe's *The Avenger* ("Tasuja"), a novel about the 1343 rebellion, and Eduard Vilde's 1902 novel *The Mahtra War* ("Mahtra sõda"). As Kross' narrator's comments indicate, the placement of the 1560 rebellion in this series fills in the ellipsis between two better-known, and better culturally commemorated, rebellions. Aligned in this manner, the uprising of 1560 echoes its template event, 1343, and the 'future past' of recurring rebellions up to the Mahtra War in 1858.

Interestingly, in *Between Three Plagues* Volume II it is a different custom of measuring time, the Russian way that *voevod* Aleksei Danilovich Basmanov articulates in the Narva dinner scene, that alerts the fictional Balthasar to the connection between events past of 1343 and events present of 1560. When Balthasar asks whether there is "great rioting" in Livonia, the *voevod* replies, "It seems to be the largest since the year six thousand eight hundred and fifty two. When they struck down their Germans on St. George's Night" (*Between Three Plagues* II: 59). Balthasar realises that the "Russian way of reckoning time...counted years not since the birth of Christ, as did the rest of the Christian realm, but from the creation of the world", and that St George's Night thus refers to 1343.

By filling in the middle term, 1560, the narrator envisions a continuity between the founding event, St George's Night and all future rebellions through an ideologically powerful analogy. The relentless recurrence of peasant uprisings is a signal of the Estonian peasantry's strength and dignity, as well as a measure of their misfortune and oppression. It should not be forgotten, however, that the link between 1560 and 1343 had already been explicitly claimed in Sulev Vahtre's article (1955: 623), a reference of which Kross was clearly aware. Though the historical Balthasar Russow's composition of his *Chronicle* is not at stake in this chapter, a brief excursus into reading the *Chronicle of Livonia* is useful, with attention to its poetics, rhetorical art, and genre conventions, including the framing of episodes, the placement of synoptic and proleptic commentary, the situation of detail, and the use of proper names.²²

The narrative segment devoted to the peasant uprising of 1560 is located just before the end of Part II of Russow's chronicle, taut with decisions and imminent debacles; this highlights the novelist's embellishments and amplifications of the much sparer narrative texture of the chronicle genre. The city of Reval turns to Sweden for protection against the Muscovites, but *Heermeister* Gotthart Ketler turns the rest of Livonia over to the Polish King Sigismund II Augustus. As Robert Frost explains, this is the decisive loss for the already tottering Teutonic Order, whose castles had either been besieged and looted or abandoned in anticipation to the Muscovites in the spring and summer of 1560. Former *Heermeister* Wilhelm von Förstenberg had been captured at Viljandi, taken to Moscow, and spat upon by two imprisoned Tatar kings, reminding him of his previous refusal to ally himself with them against the Muscovites (Frost 2000: 24–25). Russow, who often marks time according to the season, the month, or a feast on the church calendar such as Epiphany, Easter or Pentecost, gives a precise date for the skirmish between residents of Tallinn and the Muscovites outside the city walls: "Happened in the year 1560 on the 11th of September" (Russow 1988: 131).

In the *Chronicle of Livonia*, the peasant uprising of the autumn of 1560 is briefly narrated against this chaotic background, as the landlords fear the loss of their lives and property: "This same autumn, when the country was in chaos..." Subtly, the point of view on the uprising is signalled by the passive voice, while agency is indicated by the order in which the partners in the confrontation are named: "...a confrontation arose *with* the peasants in Harrien and Wiek." In the spotlight are not the initiators of the conflict, the peasants, but those to whom it happened, those landlords who were still in residence at their estates. The chronicler's account continues with an explanation of the peasants' claims: their taxes, tributes, and labour services are too burdensome, and, in transgression of the tacit pact of master and serf, they have been given "no protection from the noblemen in time of danger. The Muscovite had overrun them without any resistance whatsoever" (Russow 1988: 89). This terse explanation contains no emotional language, nor is there any signal of a shift of point of view. The summary of the peasants' claims in four sentences is followed by a sentence with three active verbs indicating how the peasants acted on their claims (carried out their plans, overran and killed), and a partial list of the names of the landlords who were found on their estates and killed. In the *Chronicle*, the peasant uprising is a parenthetical occurrence in the larger drama of Tallinn and Livonia, the debacle of the Teutonic Order, and the subsequent political reorganisation of Livonia. The parentheses around the rebellion episode are closed with the laconic statement, "Thus did the rebellion come to an end" (Russow 1988: 90).

History, Dreaming

This brief examination of how Russow's *Chronicle* maps and parses the events of 1560 does not insist on a parallel reading of Russow's *Chronicle* and Kross' novel.²³ Indeed, the account given here has been limited to those events that

Russow includes in the *Chronicle* for the year 1560, not to those excluded, which is a source-critical task beyond the scope of this chapter. When approaching *Between Three Plagues* in light of the concept of ‘historiographic metafiction’, we should thus consider the consequence of the novel’s use of Russow’s *Chronicle*. Most radically, the novel becomes not a reading, but a simulacrum of a sixteenth-century chronicle, a palimpsest in the literal sense, which superimposes, obscures, and erases the layer of text below. The hypothesis that the novel is an expanded, episodically and interlinearly amplified chronicle, or an interpolated chronicle, is rather more modest. In neither case, however, does *Between Three Plagues* morph into a nineteenth century historical narrative that simply tells itself.

Lest we read Hayden White’s progression of historical forms too simplistically, let us return to his more nuanced analysis of the *possibilities* of the chronicle form, which he elaborates polemically and extensively around Richerus of Reims’ *Histoire de France* (around 1000 AD), but which concludes with the *Cronica* of Dino Compagni (1310–1312): “The *Cronica* clearly displays the extent to which the chronicle must approach the form of an allegory, moral or anagogical as the case may be, in order to achieve both narrativity and historicity” (White 1980: 24–25). If we adopt the more modest hypothesis of interpolation, further analysis of Kross’ novel would lead to the question of whether the novelist reckons with the moral and anagogical codes already present in the text of Balthasar Russow’s *Chronicle of Livonia*, and if so, how.

By working over the ambiguous turf of the *Chronicle of Livonia* as a document, by interpolating or over-writing, Kross’ metahistorical operations in both biography and historiography are rendered more complex. In the emplotment of the whole four-volume novel *Between Three Plagues*, the myth of Balthasar Russow’s ethnicity (the Johansen hypothesis) and the ideological alignment of 1560 with its precursor, the St George’s Night rebellion, both presume that the protagonist Balthasar Russow must find out about the peasant rebellions of 1560 at close hand: for the imagination of the novelist, the possibility that Balthasar Russow would find out about 1560 indirectly through oral sources still circulating while he was composing his chronicle in the early 1580s was clearly not enough.

What would have changed for the fictional staging of Kross’ novel if the young Russow had only heard the story of the 1560 peasant rebellion second-hand from a survivor such as his uncle or his friend Mårten, instead of seeing it first-hand, magically transported into the thick of things? Kross (1987: 148) himself considers this alternative a wasted opportunity: “It seemed as if the indirectness of such a mode of presentation would have been in too troublesome an opposition to the pursuit of visuality that I have continually tried to maintain. The unmediated experience of Balthasar, as the novel’s central percipient seemed too valuable not to take such a risk.”

While Johann Renner, the author of *History of Livonia 1556–1561* – the other narrative source besides Russow’s chronicle to directly mention the peasant uprising of 1560 (Renner 1995: 159) – was living in Livonia at the time, there is no evidence from the scant biographical sources about Balthasar Russow to indicate that he had spent any time in Livonia in the

period 1559–1563. During this time he was at the Lutheran seminary in Stettin, where his studies were interrupted by financial difficulties, his tuition debts leaving traces in the archival records. It is known that Russow returned to his homeland in 1563, answering a call to the pulpit of Tallinn's Church of the Holy Spirit, where he served until his death in 1600.²⁴

The “Lutheran Murk”: Translating the 12 Articles of the German Bauernkrieg of 1525

Though Russow's chronicle is latent in the novel as an emergent form, the reader is the invisible witness of the acts and scenes through which it is written. Scenes of writing, which become more frequent in the third and fourth volumes of the novel, constitute a second chain of events that complements the march of *grande histoire* across Livonia. As early as Volume I of *Between Three Plagues*, Balthasar's irrepressible curiosity is the prime mover for observing, remembering, and ruminating. He becomes attuned to the power of the written word to unleash, accelerate, and give shape to events. The first writing scene occurs in Volume I of the novel when Balthasar writes his first political letter in Jakob Kimmelpenning's workshop. This convention is repeated with variation in Volume II around the more complex task of translating, again in Kimmelpenning's chambers, of the 1525 manifesto of the German peasant revolution.

At the dinner table in Narva where Balthasar first heard of the peasant rebellion, the Livonian traitor Elert Kruse referred to the mustering of the army of peasant rebels as the result of ‘contamination’ from Tallinn, what Kruse calls ‘Luther's murk’ (*Luteri sogu*). Clearly this is not only a general allusion to the spiritual teaching of Lutheranism, which was first spread in the towns of Livonia by itinerant artisan lay preachers and slowly seeped from the towns into the countryside, but a more specific reference to rumours of the peasant revolution some 35 years earlier in Upper Swabia. The ‘conceptual glue’ of the German *Bauernkrieg* was a manifesto, the “Twelve Articles”²⁵ formulated in late February or early March 1525 by two men from Memmingen, Christoph Schappeler and journeyman-furrier, writer and propagandist Sebastian Lotzer, and widely disseminated in subsequent months (Blickle 1981: 18, 58).

The conceptual justification of the Articles was drawn from the Gospel, with an argument that avoided anarchy but proclaimed the freedom of all believers to be treated justly. Thus the ideological authority of the Twelve Articles is grounded in the basic principle of Lutheran teaching, the superior authority of written Scriptures over the institutional church. For Luther and Zwingli, radical interpretations of the ‘social Gospel’ and impending peasant rebellion had proved troublesome and thorny issues of practical theology, leading to protracted debates and pastoral letters of admonition. But the exegetical cleverness of the Twelve Articles was impossible to ignore: “The Twelve Articles... were fully revolutionary in two respects: in practice, in the articles on serfdom, tithes, and the election of pastors; and in principle, in adopting the gospel as the norm of society and politics” (Blickle 1981: 21).

Jaan Kross brings the Twelve Articles into the pivotal writing scene at the midpoint of Volume II of *Between Three Plagues*, the climax of Act III of the drama. When Balthasar visits his old friend, the merchant Jakob Kimmelpenning he finds set before him a copy of the Twelve Articles with the request that he translate it into Estonian (*maakeel*). Kimmelpenning's hope is not that the Estonian peasant revolt will succeed by the provision of arms by the City Council, as this is unlikely in his view, but that the translated Twelve Articles would prove persuasive to the town's artisans and would elicit their support, as had happened thirty years earlier in Germany:

If they were so famous in Germany, then they can work just as well here in Mary's Land, to make a few things clear that have not been said before. So what if many decades have passed. At that time in Germany, plenty of towns made common cause with the peasants. The common people first and the city councillors after them. It must have been those Articles that pushed them. And so it could be here as well.... Let it be your business to choose – what might be fitting for our current predicament. (*Between Three Plagues* II: 180.)

The fictional scene in which Balthasar Russow ponders the task of translating an incitement to rebellion from the German, which was the landlords' language in Livonia, into the peasant vernacular is the elaboration of a slender thread of evidence: a hand-written transcript of the Twelve Articles from the 1530s was indeed to be found in the Tallinn City Archives. But there are important limitations to this burgeoning analogy. Though Livonian peasants' grievances may seem similar to those of their earlier German counterparts, the living conditions in Livonia are much starker, more labile, and almost apocalyptically chaotic, given the looting, pillaging, and ravaging of the countryside by Muscovite troops, and the seats of power left empty by landlords fleeing in panic.

The narrator voices Balthasar's thoughts about the strangeness of giving written form to the language he has spoken since his youth, and that he had first seen "crossing the threshold from speech into writing" when watching his brother-in-law Meus write his Sunday sermons. Balthasar also notices the rhetoric of the Twelve Articles: bold claims are made, then fearfully retracted, almost in the very next sentence after their formulation:

True, from time to time the tip of the iron pike makes itself visible between the words, but they do not thrust it into the flesh of the one toward which it is brandished; instead, they bend it crooked with their own bare hands, hide it, and then humbly ask for forgiveness. (*Between Three Plagues* II: 130.)

As his meditations alternate with quotations from the lines he is translating, Balthasar is reminded of stories heard from a salt hauler in Stettin about the cruel repression that had followed the Swabian revolts, with kilometre upon kilometre of roadside gibbets. As Kimmelpenning collects the translated pages and heads for the meeting of the St. Olaf's Guild, Balthasar lingers, either due to instinctive caution or cowardice, and he does not accompany Kimmelpenning to the meeting.

Balthasar's familiarity with the radical fringe of the corpus of texts connected with 'Luther's murk' through his intimate contact with the Twelve Articles does not 'contaminate' him, and recalling the Stettin salt-hauler's testimony holds him back. However, Kimmelpenning's challenge that Balthasar "make it his business" to urge the peasants' cause works its way under his skin and indelibly into his memory. Late in the novel 'memories' of Russow's involvement at Koluvere continue in the form of recurring dreams, holding up troubling mirrors to his professional activity as a clergyman in the city of Tallinn and to his writing, editing, and montage of the Koluvere episode in Part Two of his Chronicle.

Epilogue in Chiasmus: Crossing Renner

To answer the question of the kind of fantasy represented by the entire epic curve of Balthasar Russow's adventuresome visit to Livonia in the autumn of 1560, we must turn to the final framing device at the end of Volume II of *Between Three Plagues*, a chiasmus of emplotment. In the seventh chapter of the novel, as he struggles to answer his sister Annika's indicting letter, Balthasar's subsequent self-colloquy interweaves quotations from her letter, narratorial commentary, and interior monologue, much as in the translation scene of Chapter Five. After mentally signing his response to Annika, the fictional Balthasar rebuffs the offer of a position at St. Ansgar's Church in Bremen, with the justification that he must return home to attend to his father's inheritance.²⁶ His refusal is met with raised eyebrows from his seminary colleagues, who still regard him, despite his educational achievements, as a foreigner, clearly of modest birth.

At Bremen harbour, Balthasar boards the "Neptune" and notices one of his fellow passengers:

On deck, right under the cabin door a table with folding legs and a similar folding stool had been set up. Sitting at the table was a middle-aged man with his ash-coloured hair cut in the shape of a bowl, moving his quill across the page. 'Ahah, it's you, the pastor fellow,' grunted Kapten Holt, casting an inquisitive glance in Balthasar's direction... He continued: "The boatswain will show you your cot... while, you see, I have to contend with that *notarius* over there. To pay off an old debt. We have a long sail ahead of us..." At that the so-called "notary" lifted his head from his paper and looked directly at Balthasar. And Balthasar recognised him in the blink of an eye. With that sweet flash of memory that always gave him a little thrill of happiness. Perhaps also because of his observation that he was better than many others in precisely this respect (obviously better than Sir Notary himself). (*Between Three Plagues* II: 200.)

Balthasar remembers the notary's name, recalls that they have met before, in Tallinn, at the home of Doctor Friesner, and renews the acquaintance. Once again, Balthasar must face the fateful question on which his eyewitness status turns: "How long have you been away from Livonia?"

Balthasar answers the (still-unnamed) ‘Notary’ with a clever evasion, the silence and ellipsis in his utterance outweighing the words: “I...hmmm... have been away since the autumn of fifty-eight.” The notary lays his own cards out much more directly: “That means longer than I. I left in the autumn of ‘sixty. Before the great rebellion of the peasants. So you have nothing more recent to report?” Again, Balthasar denies his invisible, but heavy memory luggage: “Fresher news? No.” As the notary sprinkles sand to dry the ink of his completed document, Balthasar addresses him by name: “So *Sir Renner* is now a notary of this town?” (*Between Three Plagues* II: 200.)

What the reader witnesses in this scene is the meeting, on board the *Neptune*, of two Livonian chroniclers: Balthasar Russow and Johann Renner. As a notary by trade, Renner is in the act of legally authenticating Captain Holt’s document of indebtedness; Balthasar is keenly aware of the murky debts on his own conscience. The two men exchange news, but they also compare credentials – and they are headed in opposite directions. According to Kross’ staging of this closing scene of his novel, Balthasar is returning to Tallinn; the notary, having completed his official duties, leaves the ship, and a launch takes him back to Bremen harbour. His last words to Balthasar wish him Godspeed on his homeward journey, but with a brief addendum of the “freshest news”. He also issues a pessimistic forecast for Livonia’s foreseeable future:

And you are on your way back to Livonia, if I heard correctly? Well, I was only there for five or six years. But wave hello to the walls of Toompea for me. Even though the Swedes are in there now. And wave to the walls of Paide, too. If you happen to pass by there, that is, and if there are any walls left by then. (*Between Three Plagues* II: 200.)

As Renner’s boat pulls away, the narrator adds that despite the five or six years Renner spent in Livonia, he never found his fortune there. By contrast – and by implication – the narrator is sending his protagonist on his way to Livonia to do just that.

The closing scene of Volume II is a *mise-en-abîme* of the gaps and enmeshings between the two narrative sources on autumn 1560 in Livonia, Balthasar Russow’s *Chronicle* and Johann Renner’s *History*. For emphasis, Kross includes Renner’s name in the novel’s didactic paratext, a glossary:

Renner—most likely it will not be necessary to remind the reader at this point, who Johann Renner was and what Johann Renner meant for Baltic and Estonian historiography, nor why the meeting of Balthasar and Renner was symbolically so laden that it seems to be quite fitting to close this novel with. (*Between Three Plagues* II: 203.)

The glint in Kross’ eye could not be more sincere than this gloating reference to his own accomplishment and erudition.

Conclusion

In enlarging an episode from Russow's chronicle, the narrator of the historical novel *Between Three Plagues* reframes and remounts it, peopling the canvas and filling in the spaces within and between the spare sentences of the *Chronicle of Livonia* with micro-episodes, detail and colour, thus forming and reforming bridges and connections between events. As Kross has argued in several of his essays, the figure of interpolation (*vahelugemine*) means more than supplementation or annotation and has important pedagogical, even polemical dimensions. Modelling himself on the early nineteenth century clergyman-writer Otto Wilhelm Masing (1763–1832), who used the term to denote short Sunday didactic pieces in his short-lived newspaper *Ma-Rahwa Näddalaleht* (1820–1821), Kross made it his explicit project to teach Estonians lessons from *petite histoire*, seeking to enlarge their intellectual and imaginative horizons. If education is a means of activating cultural memory, then Kross seeks to educate, and not only to entertain, through historical fiction.²⁷

The failed peasant rebellion at Koluvere in 1560 is one of the longest amplifications in *Between Three Plagues* of an episode drawn from Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia*. We have observed and analysed the literary means by which this extraction and magnification are carried out in the poetics of Volume II of Kross' novel: the reconfiguration of connections between events into series and analogues, stylistic overplay (or 'hyperrealism'), and the suspension of the eyewitnessed reality in the rhetoric of dream and memory. Cleverly, the novelist makes maximal use of the lacunae in the sources for the corresponding period in Russow's biography and of the seductive possibilities of the chronicle as an 'open form' in White's terms. The fictional Balthasar's adventuresome journey to the scene of the 1560 peasant rebellion, his modulated identification with its collective protagonists, and the central scene of translating the Twelve Articles of the 1525 *Bauernkrieg* are all coherent with the metahistorical imperative to see history from below while also transcending the terms of historical chaos and living to write about it. "Seeing what happened at Koluvere in 1560" is a hologram of the professional hazards of Russow's life as a clergyman and chronicler, the spiritual, moral, and historiographical 'bundles' that he must continue to untangle. The entirety of protagonist Russow's participation in the Koluvere rebellion, from his magically well-timed landing near Narva to his equally magical removal from the ghastly consequences for its perpetrators takes place in a disturbing space between waking and fantasy, the anxiety of partially repressed memories. Whatever the implications of Kross' debates with professional historians over alleged transgressions of the boundaries between history and fiction and the validity of Paul Johansen's hypothetical reconstruction of Russow's genealogy and ethnic origins, *Between Three Plagues* artfully extends the narrativity, if not the historicity of Russow's *Chronicle of Livonia*.

NOTES

- 1 Russow 1988: 90.
- 2 *Between Three Plagues* was published first in the form of selections in the literary periodical *Looming*, then in separate volumes (I–1970; II–1972; III–1977; IV–1980); in a luxury one-volume history in 1985 with graphic drawings by Concordia Klar, and as Volumes I–III of Jaan Kross' *Collected Works* (1997–1998). Translations of all passages quoted from the novel are mine, paginated according to the first publication of Volume II as a separate volume in 1972.
- 3 Shortened here as the *Chronicle of Livonia*.
- 4 In his translator's afterword, Hermann Stock explains that the first and second editions of Russow's *Chronicle* were virtually identical; to the third edition, published in 1584, a section was added concerning the peace negotiations that ended the Livonian Wars in 1583 (Stock 1967: 358). As a historical source, Russow's *Chronicle* became a source for the chronicles of Franz Nyenstädt (Nyenstede), Dionysius Fabricius, Thomas Hiärn, Christian Kelch, and Johann Gottfried Arndt. Vööbus 1968–1975: 87.
- 5 Todorov examines several meanings of 'verisimilitude' in his brief essay on the topic, covering the naive meaning, that of Plato and Aristotle, and that of the French classics, ending with the following: "Finally, in our own day, another meaning has become predominant: we speak of a work's verisimilitude insofar as the work tries to convince us it conforms to reality and not to its own laws. In other words, verisimilitude is the mask which is assumed by the laws of the text and which we are meant to take for a relation with reality". Todorov 1977: 83.
- 6 However, the novel does not limit its chronological frame to the interval 1566–1577.
- 7 Discussion of this debate is beyond the scope of this paper.
- 8 Paul Johansen (transl. E. Blumfeldt, "Kronist Balthasar Russow: päritolu ja miljöö" *Tulimuld* (1) 1964: 252–260). On the source of critical problems concerning Balthasar Russow's genealogy, see Johansen (von zur Mühlen) 1996: 115–123. According to Juhani Salokannel, Kross said that this article had been mentioned to him by historian Hans Kruus, whom he had chanced to meet on Harju Street in Tallinn a few days after Kross had been asked to come up with a script for a historical film. Salokannel 2009: 191.
- 9 Analysis of the film in relation to the novel is beyond the scope of this paper, but deserves separate consideration for several reasons, principally the visual texture of the novel, the issue of censorship, the narrative strategy of interpolation, and questions of audience and readership.
- 10 It is necessary though not sufficient to map the chronicle onto the novel in this way: the *Chronicle* clearly calls to be read on its own terms as a text, not only as embedded in the novel through citation and paraphrase, but independent of it.
- 11 Balthasar Russow was not formally a citizen of Tallinn, as was proper in the case of clergymen. Urban 1981.
- 12 The first of these was Karl Wilhelm Cruse, who published an essay on the topic of Russow in 1816. Later studies included those of C. Russwurm, Theodor Schiemann, Fr. Amelung, O. Freymuth, J. Ruus, and, most importantly for Kross' historical fiction, historian Paul Johansen, the director of the Tallinn City Archives in the 1930s, who went into exile in 1939. Hermann Stock notes that while the first and second editions of Russow's chronicle were dedicated to the Bremen City Council (*Rat*), the third edition was dedicated to the Tallinn City Council. Stock suggests that during the Russo-Livonian War, the Tallinn authorities showed little interest in the chronicle, but after the conclusion of the peace treaty with Russia and Sweden,

- the local rulers had more of a stake in preserving the historical record of the heroic defence of Tallinn. Stock 1967: 359.
- 13 Johansen (von zur Mühlen) 1996.
 - 14 The origin and historicisation of these terms is a complex problematic. Paul Ariste claimed that Estonians' self-reference, extending back to the 'distant grey mists of the past' was not by ethnonym, but using the terms *maarahvas* ("people of the land") and *maakeel* (the spoken Estonian language) (Ariste 1956: 116, 117). In a recent article, Jürgen Beyer has argued that *maarahvas*, *maakeel* (as well as *maamees*: "man of the land") are translations from the Germanic languages spoken by the conquerors of the region (*Landvolk*, *Landsprache*, *Landsmann*) (Beyer 2007). Vello Paatsi comes to the conclusion that the term *maarahvas* prevailed in printed texts until the end of the 1840s. It was replaced among educated people by *eesti rahvas* (the Estonian people) in the 1860s, which was in common usage by the end of that decade (Paatsi 2012). The history of the term *Undeutsche* ("non-German") is too complex to be explained here. The reader is referred to Johansen (von zur Mühlen) 1973.
 - 15 See Stock 1967: 359. Maydell was an admiral of the Swedish crown, and also military head of the Koluvere castle. He wrote a letter of denunciation against Russow in 1588.
 - 16 A bowdlerisation of Schimmelpenni(ck). I am grateful to Jüri Kivimäe for this and many other corrections, helpful comments and suggestions in relation to this chapter.
 - 17 For an extended treatment of Tallinn in Jaan Kross' historical fiction, see Liivamets 1978.
 - 18 Subtextually available, or paratextually in a contrapuntal reading, is Balthasar Russow's account of the Lübeck merchants who begin to bypass Tallinn (in 1559?) in favour of Narva to continue their trade with the Muscovites unobstructed; the attempt by Tallinn merchants to interfere with their voyages to Narva; and the Lübeck merchants' printed self-justifications of their activities. Stock 1967: 122–123.
 - 19 This refusal reminds the reader of the peasant rebellion during the Lutheran Reformation (1525), the *Deutsches Bauernkrieg* 1525–1526, which was at its height with 300,000 participants. Its leader was Thomas Müntzer, but no such alliance was formed between peasants and city artisans in places like Tallinn, which may be part of the reason the rebellion failed. Russow, as a student in a Lutheran seminar, had the education to understand the subtexts in the Rat's refusal, thus his "double hearing" of the ironies between the lines.
 - 20 The Estonian wording in the last sentence is intriguing: "Nagu poleks teda *eluilmas* seal olnudki." The word *eluilmas* in common parlance is an emphatic way of saying "not at all".
 - 21 Interestingly, Wolf's *No Place on Earth* is not on Hutcheon's exemplary list of 'historiographic metafiction', which includes Gabriel Garcia Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), Günter Grass' *Tin Drum* (1959), and novels by John Fowles, Maxine Hong Kingston, Timothy Findlay, and Salman Rushdie.
 - 22 In the original text of the *Chronicle of Livonia* there are no numbers and headings for the subsections. Their inclusion may help the reader organise time and follow the text, but as paratexts the headings also precondition the reader's expectations about what follows, thus concealing the text's own laws of organisation. In the Estonian translation by Dagmar and Hermann Stock, the episodes are numbered and the headings are included; in Jerry C. Smith's translation in collaboration with Juergen Eichhoff and William L. Urban, they are (correctly) omitted.
 - 23 Historian Robert I. Frost summarises the context of the events from 1558–1561 as follows: "...when the Muscovites entered Livonia with a large siege-train in the summer of 1550, the Order was facing an enemy who conceded nothing to it

- in terms of military technology. The results were dramatic: fortress after fortress surrendered without a shot fired. Narva fell in May; Dorpat [Est. Tartu] in July. Despite the arrival of 1200 *Landsknechte* from Germany in September, together with 100 gunners and supplies of powder and shot, the recapture of Wesenberg [Est. Rakvere] in October by a force of Livonian nobles, and a retaliatory Livonian raid which burnt and harried round Krosnogora, the Muscovites retained Narva and Dorpat and many lesser strongpoints. Yet Ivan could not win the war, despite campaigns in 1559 and 1560 in which his armies devastated wide areas, capturing further important strongpoints, including Fellin [Est. Viljandi], thought to be impregnable. Despite the crushing victory at Ermes (August 1560), they failed to capture Riga, Reval or Pernau [Est. Pärnu], the most valuable prizes. Ivan could defeat the Order, but not the other powers who had become involved. Reval accepted Swedish overlordship in 1561; Riga was under Polish-Lithuanian protection from 1562...". Frost 2000: 24–25.
- 24 On Balthasar Russow's education and his biography in the period 1558–1562, see Johansen 1996: 154–163.
 - 25 Extended title *The Just and Fundamental Articles of All the Peasantry and Tenants of Spiritual and Temporal Powers, by Whom They Think Themselves Oppressed*.
 - 26 There is no evidence in the archives of the historical Balthasar Russow ever being offered the pulpit of St. Ansgar's.
 - 27 The term *vahelugemine* has other connotations as well, which Kross exploits playfully: *vahelugemine* is literally reading in between, either other texts or other activities. Interpolation is reading and writing 'between the lines'. On another, somewhat ironic, level, *vahelugemine* is leisure-time reading, a misnomer, since a peasant rarely if ever had time on his hands, and regarded it with moral suspicion as a lapse of work ethics. Finally, in one of Kross' favourite modes of word-play, the breaking apart of compound nouns to invest them with an invisible hyphen, *vahe-lugemine* would mean 'reading (for) the difference', a cognitive operation for recognising analogues and considering their meaning. (Instead of merely seeing 1343/1560 as an analogy, with 1560 as the historical echo of 1343, 1560 can be inserted into the "series" 1343....1858 so that the series is expanded from within, into a syncopated pattern of events, approaching, though not reaching, a continuity). That the intervening centuries included intermittent uprisings, referred to by the general term 'peasant unrest' (*talupojarahutused*) or in the 1840s by the term 'fermentation' (*käärimised*), may have been part of the readers' background knowledge. The year 1560 is a larger landmark for Kross' narrator, and, by implication, for his fictional chronicler.

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Women as Sites for the Contestation of Northern Memories of War

Historical Novels and the Lapland War

During the Second World War Finland went through three partly overlapping wars. In the Winter War (1939–1940) Finland fought against the Soviet Union, managing to sustain the country's independence but facing territorial losses. In the Continuation War (1941–1944) Finland allied with Germany against the Soviet Union in order to regain the lost territories. Finally, in 1944–1945 during the Lapland War the Finnish forces fought against their former brothers in arms, the Germans. While retreating from the northern parts of Finland, the German troops used scorched earth tactics, destroying the built environment, infrastructure and communication systems in many parts of Lapland.

Whereas the Winter War has provided the Finnish memory culture with heroic narratives of a small country struggling against the Soviet Union, the Continuation War has been an embarrassing affair in the national collective consciousness (Sundholm 2007: 111). As an example, the separate war thesis was developed during the post-war years to maintain the image of Finland fighting a separate war against the Soviet Union, independently of Germany. Debates over the fair representation of the course of events have continued until recently (see e.g. Kivimäki 2012).

Susan Rubin Suleiman (2006: 3) has remarked that even though the Holocaust has become a global site of memory for post-war Europe, each country involved in the Second World War has had its own crisis of memory giving rise to the question of how to remember the war. In the Finnish context the Continuation War and especially the alliance with Germany can be seen as such a crisis of memory provoking controversies and debates over the question of how to represent the war.

Against this background, this chapter will ask how the years of alliance between Finland and Germany, the subsequent Lapland War, and the aftermath of that war have been collectively remembered and how memories have travelled in the processes of producing cultural memory. Rather than providing an overview of all the varieties of literary responses to war or an all-embracing history of a literary topic, this question will be considered from two interrelating perspectives by focusing on a persistent theme in literature, namely the sexual relationships between Finnish women and members of the German army, and by situating the novels under scrutiny in the contexts of

both the local and the national memory cultures in Finland. The aim is to elucidate the role of historical fiction and other literary works in cases where there is a scarcity of representations of 'our past' available. However, as Aleida Assmann (2012: 55) has recently pointed out, remembering and forgetting do not always constitute absolute opposites, but rather they vary over time. As a result, there may be a shift from a scarcity of representations to an excess of representations or vice versa for certain aspects of the past.

By way of following a literary topic I aim to shed light on the dynamics of remembering and forgetting as mutually inclusive actions (see Ricoeur 2004; Erll & Rigney 2009: 2; Assmann 2012) in a circular process where a community draws its identity from the reception of the narratives it has created of itself for itself (Ricoeur 1988: 247–248; see also Hietasaari in this volume).¹

I will discuss three novels from the 1980s that depict the Lapland War and its consequences for the local community. All of these novels have remained more or less unrecognised at the national level, and they are certainly not examples of artistic innovation. It is, however, worth noting that literary works that can be categorised as " cliché-ridden texts of mass-produced genre literature" still deserve to be considered as valuable sources for the study of culture (Grabes 2007: 157). Furthermore, as pointed out in the introduction to the present volume, the division between 'low' and 'high' seems unhelpful when approaching literature from the point of view provided by cultural memory studies. Although these novels are representatives of a variety of literary genres, such as semi-autobiographical novels, war novels and trauma novels, all of them exemplify how a certain topic may become what has been described as "a self-perpetuating vortex of symbolic investment", or a powerful memory site (Rigney 2005: 18).

As an introduction, I will begin with Kaarlo Haapanen's semi-autobiographical novel *And Lapland Was Formless and Empty* ("Ja Lappi oli autio ja tyhjä", 1989). Thereafter I will present a reading of Ritva-Kaija Laitinen's trauma novel *The Bride of Evil* ("Pahan morsian", 1986). Some references will also be made to Leevi Mikkola's war novel *The North is on Fire* ("Pohjoinen palaa", 1987), which is from the genre of realistic military fiction based on first-hand experience (on this genre in Finland see Niemi 1988, e.g. 183–184).² After pursuing a reading of the novels from the 1980s I will also sketch out some of the traits of the historical fiction from the 2000s covering the same topic.

Kaarlo Haapanen (1918–1999) was an Ostrobothnian journalist and novelist who spent part of his working career in Lapland. Ritva-Kaija Laitinen is a northern novelist born in 1935. Her novel *The Bride of Evil* has been described as being mostly based on a true story.³ Leevi Mikkola, also a novelist living in the north of Finland, was born in 1925. Mikkola has written several novels depicting the history of north-east Finland, thus providing institutionalised cultural memory for a readership accustomed to a small number of historiographies touching on their environment. In this respect, Mikkola's realistic narratives correspond to a certain extent to other peripheral attempts, for example those African historical novels that similarly aim to provide their audience with a usable past upon which to

build a viable present and future (Booker & Juraga 2006: 85). Let me first take up the prologue to Kaarlo Haapanen's novel, which frames it as an act of remembrance.

Remembering in the Margins

The topic of Kaarlo Haapanen's novel *And Lapland Was Formless and Empty* is the war-torn landscape and the survival of those who encounter it when they are returning home after the war. In the prologue to his novel Haapanen describes his work as being based on real events. The story is set in Rovaniemi, a town the Finnish-German alliance had turned into 'the city of Germans' after the 20th Mountain Army had chosen it as their base in Finland. After the Germans retreated, the town went through another transformation: following the scorched earth policy of the German troops, it turned into a destroyed landscape of charred remains of houses with only the chimneys left standing. The novel narrates the later stage of the town as an evolving post-war reconstruction process. It is told from the point of view of the protagonist, Matti Hokka, an Ostrobothnian who lives in Rovaniemi and returns there after the war. The novel begins with the following prologue:

To the reader

The destroyed Lapland was rebuilt after the autumn of 1944 in a decade to be as it was – or even better. Extensive, thorough, document-based memoirs, compilations, and municipal stories have been written about this building work. Here is one angle. The present writer was there from the beginning. He saw how the builders constructed their homes step by step, starting from holes in the ground and outside saunas, and on the side, rebuilt their home town and province so that the evacuated people could return when their homes were ready. The writer can give assurance that every event is true and that he didn't have to invent anything. He can't guarantee that all those events happened exactly during those months the book covers. Everything has been experienced there, at ground level. The writer doesn't apologise that the events are told in this way or for touching on these things. Let those apologise who let Lapland be destroyed – and particularly those who destroyed it. If the destroyers knew their job – after all, they were members of one of the most civilised nations in Europe – so did the rebuilders. It is them the present writer respects for the rest of his life, and lauds their endurance. (*And Lapland Was Formless and Empty*: 5.)⁴

Haapanen's novel, it is stated, is based on the past as remembered by the author himself. But what does his act of remembering actually consist of? His individual memories seem to be pregnant with ethical judgments. In effect, Haapanen situates his act of remembering in the field of ethical and moral aspects of memory. The relationship between the past (those historical events the novel recounts) and the present (the moment of the writing of the prologue) is constructed through questions of guilt, responsibility, apology, and respect for the memory of the rebuilders.

Moreover, when facing the pressing past with its demands for remembrance, the author himself seems to feel the need to consider whether he should make an apology as well. Kaarlo Haapanen states that he is not going to apologise for “telling this way about these things”. Thereby he implies that there might be something to apologise for not only in the recounted events, but also in the act of recounting. But what should Haapanen apologise for, and to whom? Perhaps he is alluding with this reversed apology to the breaking of the silence surrounding certain aspects of the war.

The wave of novels dealing with the Second World War and its after-effects at the end of the 1980s, including those by Haapanen, Laitinen and Mikkola, signalled that a long enough interval of time had passed for a wider discussion of the northern memories of war to emerge. This time lag corresponds to the belatedness of the ‘second memory boom’, identified by Jay Winter (2006: 26-28) as having emerged only after several decades had passed since the Second World War.

As a part of the recovery from war, the novels by Haapanen, Mikkola and Laitinen exemplify the efforts of those generations who had witnessed the war years themselves to come to terms with the past. Thus acts of remembering such as Kaarlo Haapanen’s novel and the public discussion of these novels in the north at the end of the 1980s can be seen as a means of responding to and working through what Paul Ricoeur (2004: 78-79) terms collective traumatism, “symbolic wounds calling for healing” and the pathological aspects of collective memory. The contemporary reception in the 1980s of Laitinen’s novel *The Bride of Evil*, which discusses a love affair between a Finnish woman and a German soldier, stressed exactly the significance of the novel for the community’s self-understanding. The reviews (Harjumaa 1986; Vainikkala 1987) noted that there was a “social need” for the novel in the north, where the relationships between German soldiers and Finnish women still remained a taboo topic.

On the other hand, at the time these novels were published – and even thereafter – the Lapland War and its after-effects were marginal issues outside Lapland as topics of research and of public debate (see Tuominen e.g. 2005). For the nation as a whole, it seems that the destruction of Lapland and other traumatic events in the north related to the war did not constitute a cultural trauma, that is a “cultural process where trauma is mediated through various forms of representation and linked to the reformation of collective identity and the reworking of collective memory” (Eyerman 2001: 1). As said, the Lapland War has not had a similar symbolic value for the nation to that which, for instance, the Winter War has (Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 272). Moreover, only a few historians have been interested in discussing the Lapland War or the northern memories of war in general.

In the context of this post-war institutional forgetting, historical fiction has played a significant role in contributing to the production of cultural memory at the local level. As Ann Rigney (2005: 22) has remarked, “the desire to recall, the availability of information, and the availability of suitable models of remembrance do not always coincide”. As a result, the novels depicting the war years and their after-effects let those generations who

have not experienced war themselves but who live among the aftermath of war, imagine the past, thus triggering mnemonic identifications (see also Erll 2009; Lachmann 2004: 173; Lachmann 2008: 306; Leerssen 2010: 242).

In cases where there is a scarcity of representations of the past, the act of reading historical fiction may thus play a central role in the post-memorial work of the subsequent generations. If it is true that in the memorial activities of those generations the relationship to the past is formed not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation (Hirsch 2012: 5), then the imaginative potential of fiction to shape a persuasive image of the past may surely have a crucial role in post-memorial work (see also Rigney, in this volume).

Another noteworthy aspect of the historicity of memory is that, paraphrasing Birgit Neumann (2008: 131, 137), memorial activities and the judgments of memory are always rooted in the present and therefore permeated with present desires. Further, the literary representations of a certain historical era relate in a circular manner to the pre-existing literary representations and other pre-figurations (see Erll 2009). With these starting points, my objective in the following is to discuss how the depictions of the sexual relationships between Finnish women and members of the German army have constituted a powerful memory site for processing the past.

The Dirt of War

Kaarlo Haapanen's novel *And Lapland Was Formless and Empty* begins with an encounter with the war-wracked landscape and ends as the protagonist's family is informed they will be given a plot of land and can begin building their new home. Reminiscent of some other optimistic post-war survival stories (see the introduction of the present volume), Haapanen's novel depicts how life is begun anew, people leaning on their own resourcefulness and the help of others. In the first place, the novel produces a survival story narrated from the male point of view. It constructs the survival from war as a rebuilding based on expertise, masculine toil, resourcefulness, skill, and comradeship. The lot of women as the fulfillers of daily domestic tasks is, on the other hand, side-lined.

In the following the protagonist of the novel, Matti Hokka, goes to take a look at the houses that had survived but were empty because of the evacuations in order to find a place to stay for his family. He also visits his home yard, finding only a few objects intact, including some iron tools and a pot:

Matti gave credit to the Germans in that at least they hadn't touched anything. Everything had been destroyed where it had stood. They wanted to respect people's property by just burning it down – or else they thought that the transportation of stolen goods to Norway and from there to Germany would be too cumbersome. But the frame of the iron bed, the springs of the chair and the pot were still there, they'd been satisfied by just burning down the house.

At the other end of the barn there had been a woodshed and the apple of Matti's eye, his carpenter's tools and the whole space filled up to the rafters with cut pine ... Only the ashes remained of 15 cubic metres of firewood – and of course the metal from the tools. Matti rummaged in the ashes of the tools and found three axe blades, a hammer, mallets, and the blades of the chisels. Those could still be made useful with new handles. (*And Lapland Was Formless and Empty*: 329.)

Coping from the destruction of war, the material reconstruction process begins with the finding of the remains of the tools. Mental recovery begins, symbolically, when Matti gets the idea to boil soap. He finds a wagon full of cow carcasses at the railway yard, and a merchant he knows sells Matti all the other things he needs for soap-making. Matti and his comrades then sell the soap to the female cleaners of hospitals and other public buildings that the Germans had not destroyed. The women are cleaning away the signs of destruction: the soot and dirt of war. They scrub all they can, clear up living spaces for families, and clean buildings even when they do not have soap.

However, making soap is perhaps not only a way to make money. The protagonist of the novel is also working to clean away the mental dirt of war. The reader is taken along with Matti who is seeking dirt. But where can the mental dirt of war be found exactly? Matti has become a member of a group that maintains lawful and moral order in his hometown, now in a state of moral disarray, and makes his rounds with the police in the streets and barracks. In this capacity he discusses the same topic as Kaarlo Haapanen: the nature of the community's moral order in the mentally and physically collapsed landscape.

The uncertainty of the time has lured card sharks and petty criminals to the devastated town, along with prostitutes who have come to town to earn some money. Furthermore, there is a certain group of women Matti Hokka seems to be interested in; subsequently, he tells an acquaintance about a local girl, Aino, who has been “going with” a German soldier (*ibid.*, 132). During the alliance with the Germans she had been telling Matti how great it was that a simple accountant from a common co-op can welcome the Germans to Finland and to the Arctic Circle. “I'm a bit bitter about the war years as well”, Matti remarks, referring to his experiences with Aino:

And that hook-nosed cow was nagging on and on about the smelly and sweaty and ill-bred Finnish soldiers, who were envious of the Germans. ... And she said at Pirskanen's house that she's got her third air force Sergeant Major now. The first fell in an air battle, the second didn't come back from a vacation in Germany, and the third always lets her in at his barracks. And then she scratched her hooked nose and said that Aino Lipateus Virsu is extremely proud about the happiness she's found with the Germans... (*And Lapland Was Formless and Empty*: 132.)

As a part of his cleansing after the war, Matti goes to meet Aino. Her house is not clean; it is also – in the mentally and materially destroyed town – dirtied by the war:

Usually a room inhabited by women is clean and well-ordered. Women know how to take care of their environment. They often say that it's not about cleaning, it's about keeping things in order. Miss Virsu's corner was in disarray. All her things had been tipped on the bed. ... Virsu is going through her things and says: What an awful time this is. To have to wipe out four years and all the Germans out of one's life just like that... – How many were they? Miss Virsu didn't answer Matti, but said to the girls, – You can choose anything out of that pile, any old thing at all. (*And Lapland Was Formless and Empty*: 132–133.)

Matti, like everyone in the town, suffers from the shortage of all everyday things, even the most essential ones. Aino's disarrayed home, however, is full of luxury items. The narrator states that the things Aino received from the Germans are dear to her, but she has to give them away. Not because Aino now hates the Germans but because she is getting engaged. In their exchange, Matti takes his revenge on Aino for her previous statements about the dirtiness of Finnish soldiers: it is Aino's turn to become stained by war:

I feel pity to think that you have now snared a Finn, to be the end of your queue, Miss Virsu. I pity the lad. To get the leavings of three Sergeant Majors. We've been talking here about the material things the German soldiers left behind, that we should found a company called Lapland's Waste. It's a good name, and it doesn't need to refer only to those goods stored behind the fence. (*And Lapland Was Formless and Empty*: 133.)

Matti declares that even if Miss Virsu is trying to forget her past by getting rid of all her junk, he will remember. With this speech, he transfers the acclaimed dirtiness of the Finnish soldiers to Aino, a character who now was through her own actions and choices war-contaminated as "Lapland's waste". However, Aino defends herself by implying that she had not been the only one socialising with the Germans: "I was free to go with them. All the others weren't." (*ibid.*: 134).

However, the dirtiness of the girls who "went with the German soldiers" is not the kind that can be washed away; rather it is mental contamination, guilt and shame, which the community attaches to those women who consorted with the German soldiers. Anyone, perhaps the whole female sex may have been contaminated. Suspicion and sexual grudges are directed at women and Matti has to turn his evaluating gaze even to his own wife. Besides dealing with the soot of the ruins, the mental and material pile of waste the German soldiers left behind, the women also have to face the grudges, bitterness and suspicion of the men returning from the front to their hometown.

Woman as the Embodiment of the Forgettable Past

Like Haapanen's novel, another book published in the 1980s on the Lapland War and its aftermath, Leevi Mikkola's *The North is on Fire*, discusses the war through the character of an unreliable woman. The point of view of Mikkola's

novel is that of a northern infantryman whose fiancée leaves him for a German soldier. The woman of the novel, the soldier's betrothed Helena, is sexually alluring and always willing to satisfy male needs – including, as it seems due to her deceitfulness, those of the Germans. The figure of Helena, a sexually active but untrustworthy woman, is a familiar figure in war propaganda. From war propaganda it has travelled to Mikkola's novel as it did to many post-war novels and other media of cultural memory.⁵

In Mikkola's novel, being cheated on by one's fiancée parallels the disappointments of the Finnish soldiers who gave their youth and innocence for their homeland. In the final act of the tragedy, when the German soldiers are retreating, the Finnish infantry soldiers have to witness the destruction of their home region. It will be revealed that their love and protectiveness towards their fiancées and their homeland were not enough to prevent the intrusion into these spheres in the end. The protagonist's survival from the war begins, therefore, with the finding of a new partner, more sexually reserved but also more trustworthy.

As a contrast to Haapanen and Mikkola's novels, Ritva-Kaija Laitinen's novel *The Bride of Evil* presented a nuanced view of the women who had consorted with the German soldiers. *The Bride of Evil* is a trauma novel depicting the war years from a female point of view. At the beginning of the novel the protagonist Laura is being treated in a mental hospital. She has recently made a journey to her father's funeral where she has had to face her painful war-related experiences that she has lived with for 20 years. The process of healing begins when the mentally collapsed Laura is asked to write down her private memories. Laura's struggle against her inability to recount her memories is, pointedly, analogous to her community's efforts to come to terms with its past.

Laura's haunting past is introduced to the reader through an impressive description of a home birth in a sauna. The birth-scene takes place in a northern village near Kemijärvi in 1945. Into the scene enters Akseli, the violent father of the protagonist giving birth, and his sister Kaisa-Reeta:

He probably wouldn't have done anything to me as he entered the sauna, had not Kaisa-Reeta provoked him into a fury. –Look at the German whore pushing out her brat. That opened up the dark depths in Akseli and took his last remaining sense. I don't know how it all happened, because I was just experiencing one of the most painful contractions. At that point the pain my father was causing me felt like nothing at all. He must have dragged me down to the floor, because that's where my son was born. My father was kicking me with his field boots, holding onto my hair with his two hands, and so my upper body was arched and this must have made it easier for the baby to come out. By all accounts he might have killed me there had not the shouting and the racket brought in the neighbour. (*The Bride of Evil*: 15.)

The combination of birth and violence as a simultaneous event experienced by the protagonist exceeds the reader's tolerance. The reader most likely condemns the father for both unethical and morally inhumane behaviour, for adding to the physical pain experienced by his daughter, for putting both

the baby and the mother in danger, and for the unforgivable way of receiving the future member of his family. However, the scene does not only negotiate the relationships between the father, the daughter, and the new-born child, in which violence seems to be the ruling factor. It also introduces the reader to the collective traumatizations of the post-war community as a whole.

The witnesses of the homebirth have just returned to their home village from a hard journey as evacuees. It is time for a post-mortem of the situation. The village community sets up a tribunal to examine the guilt of those women who kept company with the Germans. The protagonist, Laura, is also being questioned: she is called to give evidence against the village teacher who organised the socialising with the German soldiers.

Laitinen's novel enquires into the moral basis of Laura's individual actions and the collective's responses to them. During the years of the German-Finnish alliance Laura had made one crucial choice that led her to this situation. She fell in love with a young German soldier, Klaus. When an order came to pick the best milk cows, to gather all essential things and leave home, Laura also prepares for the evacuation. However, Kaisa-Reeta, the malevolent sister of her violent father, begins to chide her at that crucial moment of distress and despair about fraternising with the Germans. Thus Laura turns back towards the emptying village and the Germans living there. She chooses love for the German soldier over her family and her loyalty to it, which, however, was not based on reciprocity, as her bond to her family was already weak because of her judgmental aunt.

Later Laura follows the retreating German column that is being bombed by the Russians; she also witnesses the cruelties the Germans commit against their own people as well as the locals in northern Norway. The position of women amid the Germans is revealed when a barracks roommate dies of a botched abortion, and after the Germans have left, the remaining Finnish girls are questioned, shaved, and paraded through the Norwegian town. Laura has helped the Norwegians who flee their villages, which have been set on fire by the Germans, but the Norwegian authorities do not acknowledge this; instead they judge Laura for fraternising with the Germans. After being transferred to Finland, Laura is medically subordinated, examined for STDs at a hospital in Kemi, and finally has to face the village community she had chosen to leave behind, and the birth of the German soldier's child in her sauna.

Laura's father seems to consider the violence she is subjected to as justified: Laura is obviously guilty. But what has Laura, whom her father and aunt call "a German whore", done wrong? She has worked for the German army, and later takes care of wounded German soldiers as the column withdraws towards Norway. But being in the service of the Nazi German army seems not to be problematic in the same way, however, as having a relationship with a German soldier. The northern community, conversely, seems not to be interested in discussing the guilt of the German soldiers themselves. The crucial thing is that Laura broke her commitment to the local community, its present and future. She abandons the behavioural norms and morals of her surroundings by assuming the customs of her future home country, Germany:

And I drank with them, sometimes I drank more than a young girl should, but after finishing my matriculation exam I got a job at their garrison, and was set free of the morals of my home village and wanted to identify with the Germans as they were my future people. (*The Bride of Evil*: 65.)

Furthermore, through her choices, Laura breaks her bond with the destiny of her community: it is obvious that she will not take part in its post-war future. Failing to represent the steadfastness and the moral purity of the home front (see Kinnunen 2008, 26 on these ideals), she has also destroyed the symbolic relationship between women, home and the nation. In addition, girls who had relationships with Germans broke the community's biological chain of continuity. Laura recounts her choices in the following way:

Our youth coincided with a time and place where there was even too much choice. And we naturally picked the best ones, or should we have settled for the short, stout men of our tribe, when there were such dashing specimens to be found? (*The Bride of Evil*: 63.)

In *The Bride of Evil* the author guides readers to go through the experiences of love, destruction, shame, and violence through Laura's eyes. Crucial for Laura and other women who had affairs with German soldiers is that the community that seeks culprits does not consider these relationships from the points of view of the women who had committed themselves to their German lovers. Loving someone equals making a promise about the future. Laura, acting ethically, remembers Klaus and the promise she has given and waits for him until she receives the news of his death.

On the other hand, the reader is persuaded to evaluate Laura's choices from another perspective as well. Laura seems to justify the superiority of German men by referring to their outer characteristics; the short, stout Finns are members of an inferior race compared to the Aryans. Thus the reader is informed that Laura has also assumed the ideological basics of the race theory of the Nazis.

The reader also finds out that during her time in Norway, Laura used to comfort herself with copious amounts of alcohol. Neglecting all the warnings Klaus gives her concerning the negative effects of drinking during pregnancy, Laura is depicted as having behaved in an immoral way towards her unborn child. After two decades, returning home for her father's funeral, Laura meets her estranged son whom she treats coldly. As during her pregnancy, so later on the mentally collapsed Laura has not had the strength to be interested in the fate of the "German bastard" who stands out in the community and is bullied at school. Thus she has violated the demands of biological continuity. All in all, what is being negotiated through Laura's character is the community's involvement with Nazi Germany. Consequently, Laura's conflicted character is the embodiment of the ethical, moral and political aspects of remembering the war.

From Amnesia to the Circulation of Memories

The female character consorting with members of the German army has served as a usable site for processing the dirt of war, or the contested and traumatic past of a wounded community. Ritva-Kaija Laitinen's *The Bride of Evil* discussed above, and its stage version (1986), gave a voice to the women who had had affairs with German soldiers, and provided the northern community with a discussion of the controversial wartime memories from different angles. The literary works discussing the legacy of the Second World War and its after-effects have had special value for the northern communities' recovery from the war as they have provided an arena for contesting the poignant memories of the war.

It was specifically in fiction that the relationships between German soldiers and Finnish women were first dealt with, at a time when historical research was still silent about the matter (Westerlund 2011: 193). However, the novels from the 1980s had predecessors as well. Before the wave of literary works in the 1980s, Paavo Rintala's (1930–1999) novel *The Boys* ("Pojat", 1958)⁶ gave a depiction of the relationships between the Finns and the men of the German army on the home front. The title of the novel suggests that the era of the alliance between Finland and Germany is depicted from the vantage point of the young boys, but an important theme running through the novel is the depiction of Finnish women seeking love affairs with the soldiers of the German army.

After Rintala, the 1970s witnessed a series of novels by the northern novelist Annikki Kariniemi (1913–1984) which dealt with the sexual relationships between the Finns and Germans. Giving a female point of view, Kariniemi set an example for the women writers who followed her later. At a time when the Holocaust had appeared only seldom in Finnish memory culture (see Holmila 2012: 540–541), Kariniemi discussed the northern memories of war as a confusing combination of conflicting elements, so for example her *Blood's Despair* ("Veren ikävä", 1977) covers the gradual revelation of the Holocaust, the painstaking journeys experienced by the Finnish evacuees living in the north, and the tragically ending love affairs between soldiers of the German army and Finnish women.

Lately, the 2000s have witnessed the emergence of new interest in the northern memories of war. The marginalisation of the women who consorted with German soldiers has been raised by historians (Junila e.g. 2008; Heiskanen e.g. 2008; Westerlund 2011), film directors (Suutari 2010) and journalists (Wendisch 2006). In the 2000s, the northern memories of war have become ever more popular as a topic of historical fiction as well, especially among those novelists with a northern Finnish background.⁷

As said, what nearly all these recent historical novels have in common is their interest in the sexual relationships between Finnish women and German soldiers. The flourishing of interest means we can no longer talk about "a hidden subject". On the contrary, this topic has become a powerful memory site and almost an iconic image of the northern memories of war. But why has this topic become such an emblematic one?

First of all, these representations of the past are a paramount example of how memories are circulated through intertextual borrowing, the linking of fictional texts to each other and to other textual sources and other media in the processes of mediating cultural memory⁸ and through a continuous circulation of images and narratives in the recursive, repetitive and enforcing practices of the production of cultural memory (Rigney 2005). Examples of circulating female representations to be found in historical fiction are the figures of the inexperienced abortionist, the woman looking for solace in German cognac, the woman easily bribed into sexual intercourse, and the frivolous hussy aiming at upward social mobility. The woman constructed through these qualities is a character who experiences both the sexual intoxication and the cruelty of war, and who is thus potentially more intriguing than the female character who experiences only the traumatising effects of war.

It appears that what once was a part of a collective traumatism has now become a marketable trait for historical fiction in the ever growing markets of war novels and other books about the war, where eroticised representations of the past easily become bestsellers. However, the iconic sexual woman consorting with the German soldier would arguably not persist in the gallery of culturally meaningful characters in historical fiction, were she not still an efficient and symbolically meaningful medium for the processing and production of the cultural memory of the war. The repetitious elements that have become emblematic have strong symbolic value, which explains their potentiality for processing the past.

Friendship, Love, Violence, Destruction

As an example of the depictions of the relationships between the Finns and Germans during and after the alliance,⁹ Leevi Mikkola's *The North is on Fire* discusses the conflicted feelings of Finnish soldiers fighting in the Lapland War against the Germans after the alliance with Germany turned into enmity. In the following extract the Finnish patrol shoots into a randomly chosen car in the retreating German column in order to find food for the famished Finnish soldiers:

The bullets had killed the driver, who slumped against the door and dropped limply onto the road. Erkki shone the flashlight in his face.

–What the hell!

He'd seen that blotchy blue face before. It was a round face, the hair was dark and wavy. The man was also stout. It wasn't long since we said goodbye to each other, said Erkki. The dead man was Hans, the accordionist. –How skilfully he had played... a true master. Oh bloody hell how life is awful! Erkki swore. Three times I met him, and every time he remembered to play *Lili Marleen* and *Pohjolan heinäkuun yö*. Swiftly and lightly he played Bohemian polkas, too. He was a true friend of the Finns, helped the people of the borderland and slept with Bertta Mäkelä...

Hans had told Erkki about the destruction of his home, the death of his mother and father, about his brother dying in the steppes of Russia. Only one sister had been alive then. (*The North is on Fire*: 128–129.)

In this passage the “blotchy blue face” and the body of a “stout” person are not a face and a body of the other who has no name. Generally, in war the enemy is anonymous, and it is only through anonymity that state-run violence can be possible. Hence the depictions of the animal-like enemy have often served as a useful vehicle for encouraging rage and violence against the one who is named ‘an enemy’ (see Gaston 2009: 148–150 on Derrida and anonymity). In this passage the enemy who has been killed is anything but nameless: he is Hans, a man with a name and a biography filled with painful wartime experiences comparable to those of the Finnish soldiers. Furthermore, the Hans that the Finnish soldiers had known had been a “true friend of the Finns” during the years of alliance. The memory of Hans, paradoxically, is not narrated as a memory of those guilty of the destruction of Lapland or of the cruellest act in European history, the Holocaust. Hans is both an enemy and a former ally, even a friend.

In contrast to Mikkola’s novel, the cultural memory tends to avoid such ambiguities and prefers antagonisms like black and white, good and evil (Torgovnick 2005: 68; see also Erll 2008: 2009). Among the variety of antagonistic frameworks for remembering the Second World War, resistance narratives have been particularly useful (on resistance literature, see e.g. Westerfield 2004; Fuchs 2008). They have been an essential part of the European post-war reconstruction process where reinvention of the national identities demanded a distancing from the guilty party, Germany, and the forgetting of the economic and ideological collaboration with Germany (Lagrou 1999; Judt 2004: 163).

The female figure has often acted as a usable symbolic site for managing contested war memories. As an example of the transnational quality of this site of memory, French wartime literature depicted the domestic sphere as a site of eroticised resistance, collaboration, or accommodation with the enemy (Sanyal 2009: 84–85). It has also been pointed out (Moeller 2001: 58) that in the German memory contests, women’s bodies have been symbolically and emotionally significant in processing the troublesome past. The suffering of those women who were raped by Red Army soldiers came to symbolise the victimisation of all Germans. In the same vein, the northern novelists have also worked on the crisis of memory caused by the alliance, by focusing on the intimate fraternising between the Finns and Germans.

In addition, what has been seen as characteristic of the Finnish memory culture is the paradoxical manner in which it has separated ‘the good Germans’ the Finns had known from ‘the evil ones’ guilty of the Holocaust and other atrocities (see Kivimäki 2012b: 492). Again, an illuminating example of this peculiar way of remembering the war is to be found in *The Bride of Evil*, where the narrator touches on the question of who exactly was responsible for the vast destruction of Lapland by referring to the head of German troops, Colonel General Lothar Rendulic:

We had to stay until the last possible transport, and therefore I had to see the burning of my hometown. A special group of military engineers was ordered for this job, because Rendulic doubted the willingness of those troops who had stayed in the area for years to vandalise the place. (*The Bride of Evil*: 80.)

In this passage the narrator repeats what has been defined as one of the most persistent misconceptions to be found in oral history concerning the devastation of Lapland: that those responsible for the terror were different from those the locals had become acquainted with during the years of the Finnish-German alliance (Junila 2000: 202; see also Virolainen 1999: 85).

The recent historical fiction has investigated these ambiguities of remembering the war further. In these novels the reconciliation of the ethically and morally opposed actions – friendly contact and love on one hand, and cruelty and violence on the other – has formed a site for negotiating the uneasy memories of the Finnish-German alliance. As an example, Finnish soldiers in Pekka Jaatinen's war novel *Sacrificial Fires: A Novel about the Destruction and the Conquest of Rovaniemi* ("Uhrivalkeat: Romaani Rovaniemen tuhosta ja valtauksesta", 2005) follow the retreating Germans and witness their cruelty towards buildings and livestock. A German soldier abuses an unconscious drunken woman, who has followed the German column. At the same time, however, German officer Max tries to take care of Sylvi, his Finnish fiancée who has been left in the middle of the destruction.

Paula Havaste's novel *The Road of a Sole Hope* ("Yhden toivon tie", 2012) provides the reader with an insight into the rapidly changing interpretations of the love affairs between the Finnish women and German soldiers during the Lapland War. An honourable Finnish nurse working in a German hospital in the north of Finland finds out she has become a completely disgraceful person practically overnight as a result of the breakdown of the Finnish-German alliance. She has had a fulfilling and promising relationship with a German soldier, but when the Lapland War begins, she is sexually abused; not by the German soldiers but the Finnish soldiers following the German troops.

In Enni Mustonen's *Mountain Avens* ("Lapinvuokko", 2010) the affair between Annikki Hallavaara and the German Heinrich Salzmeyer is a momentary obstacle for Annikki's later relationship. However, the central theme of the novel is that of the friendship and the gradual love affair between Annikki and Heinrich. Both Annikki and Heinrich are depicted as victims of the war as both have lost their partners during it. In Katja Kettu's novel *The Midwife* ("Kättilö", 2011) the collective traumatizations of the local community are placed in the context of the transnational cultural memory of the Second World War. Kettu discusses the northern memories of war entangled with Nazi sexual and racial politics by stirring up the biological background of the story's lovers, the Finnish midwife and a German officer burdened with memories of Nazi atrocities. The soldier is half northern Finnish. The midwife, conversely, is not always a paragon of virtue. She is prepared to kill the foetuses of the woman who pursues the same German soldier and is pregnant by him, just for the sake of herself and her love. As

an employee of the German army, the Finnish midwife has to search for the Jews among the Soviet prisoners-of-war without herself fully understanding the consequences of this activity.

Concluding Remarks

The recent historical fiction shortly discussed above is part of the well-established tradition of processing the legacy of the Continuation War and the Lapland War with the focus on those women who consorted with soldiers of the German army. Early novelists like Annikki Kariniemi and Ritva-Kaija Laitinen presented the points of views of those women who had affairs with the Germans, a standpoint marginalised in post-war Finland. In the same vein, the recent historical fiction with its insights into the controversial memories of war surely has a role in moulding the Finnish memory culture of the war in general.

The Finnish memory culture, especially in the 1990s, has been described as being dominated by neo-patriotic interpretations of the war revolving around the Winter War, a war that is devoid of those disturbing elements that surround the memories of the Continuation War (Jokisipilä & Kinnunen 2012). Elena Lamberti (2009: 12) has suggested that even though the filmic and literary representations of the Second World War have contributed to shaping a common framework for appropriating this historical event, at times they have also managed to explore what have been termed as 'uneasy topics and unmasked contested memories'. When juxtaposed against the neo-patriotic tendencies of the Finnish memory culture, this seems to be the case with the historical fiction contesting the northern memories of war.

On the other hand, as a part of the processually evolving dynamics of cultural memory – the emergence, disappearance and re-emergence of memories – what may seem like a 'forgotten' topic may actually become emblematic as a result of the circulation of images, memories and narratives. Hence the depictions of Finnish-German relationships are examples of travelling memory (see Erll 2011) circulating diachronically and synchronically from one medium to another, from war propaganda to literary works, oral history and films. Perhaps it is the next wave of historical fiction that will discuss the legacies of the alliance with Germany by focusing on other forms of interaction than just sexual fraternization.

NOTES

- 1 On the principle of the imperfection of historical representation in connection to scarcity of representations of the past, see Rigney (2001). Also, the point of departure for Ricoeur (2004: xv) is that there seems to be "an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere", in other words too much memory in a certain region and too little in another.
- 2 Other books with a similar theme published in the 1980s include Kauko Röyhkä's *Magnet: A Novel* ("Magneetti: romaani") which has been described as a parodic war novel; a series of war novels by Leevi Mikkola; and Ritva Kariniemi's *Bitter Smoke*:

- A Novel (“Katkeraa savua: romaani”). Kaarlo Haapanen also published the Pietarsaari trilogy, and the book *The Bluster of General Kainulainen: Short Stories about a Long War* (“Kenraali Kainulaisen uho: lyhyitä kertomuksia pitkästä sodasta”). Ritva-Kaija Laitinen also published a novel called *The Book of Job* (“Jobin kirja”).
- 3 See lapinkirjailijat.rovaniemi.fi/laitinen.htm
 - 4 All citations translated by Anne Karppinen.
 - 5 Similarly, in Finnish post-war films this representation was adopted for processing the frustrations of a lost war, a masculine loss, and the inability to defend the mother’s body in the homeland. Koivunen 1995: 127–129. In war propaganda women have commonly been represented either as ideal mothers and housekeepers or as betrayers. Gubar 1987: 240.
 - 6 The full name of the novel is *The Boys: Images about the Relationships of the Boys of Oulu to the Great Ideal of the Time, War and its Representatives, the Alpine Light Infantrymen of the 20th Mountain Army in 1941–1944* (“Pojat. Kuvia vuosina 1941–1944 Oulun poikien suhteesta ajan suureen ihanteeseen, sotaan ja sen edustajiin, saksalaisen vuoristoarmeijan alppijääkäreihin”). The film adaptation of the novel (1962) directed by Mikko Niskanen has, perhaps, been even more influential than the novel.
 - 7 Ahti Taponen published the autobiographical novel *Messiah* (“Messias”) in 2004, Bengt Pohjanen the novel *German Flames Burning: a Story about the Lapland War* (“Saksan tuli polttaa: kertomus Lapin sodasta”) in 2004, Erkki Vittaniemi the novel *Night in Väinölä* (“Väinölään yö”) in 2005 and Mauri Paasilinna a series of novels (e.g. *War bride* [“Sotamorsian”] 2004; *The Road to the Arctic Ocean* [Jäämerentie], 2007). Furthermore, Pekka Jaatinen has published a series of war novels on this topic, Enni Mustonen the novel *Mountain Avens* (“Lapinvuokko”, 2010), Katja Kettu the prize winning novel *The Midwife* (“Kättilö”, 2011) and Paula Havaste the novel *The Road of a Sole Hope* (“Yhden toivon tie”, 2012). I will discuss Mustonen’s, Kettu’s and Havaste’s novels in the final part of my chapter.
 - 8 On intertextuality see Lachmann 2004: 173; Lachmann 2008; on transmedial remediation, see Erl 2008.
 - 9 On the Finnish-German co-existence on the home front, see Marianne Junila’s (2000) seminal historical study. Junila (2004: 154–157) describes the Finnish-German relationships, from the Finnish point of view, as neutral collaboration aiming at surveillance and adjustment. The Finns living in the north had no other choice than to adjust to the presence of the German army. At the same time, the economic profit from the German army staying in the area was considerable for the locals. The depictions of visits, shared fishing, hunting and skiing trips, evening gatherings, cultural events, barter with the Germans, work for the German army, and unofficial aid from the Germans in, for instance, farm work or health care – and also witness of the cruelties against the Soviet prisoners-of-war the Germans used as their labour force – form a part of the local oral history in northern Finland. See Arrela & Rännäli 1991; Hiilivirta 1999; Junila 2000; Virolainen 1999; Ylimartimo 2001). On Nazi sexual and racial politics, see Westerlund 2011, Beck 2005 and Mühlhäuser 2009.

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Postmodernist Warfare

Lars Sund's *Siklax* Trilogy

Finland, like many other European countries, was deeply affected by the wars of the twentieth century. As a nation, Finland still identifies itself through wars, which can be both nationally significant events and, at the same time, the most distressing times in a nation's history. According to Astrid Erll (2009: 214), important and especially traumatic events “tend to be remembered in a ‘repeating’ way”. The Finnish Civil War of 1918¹ and the battles of the Second World War – the Winter War, the Continuation War and the Lapland War² – are still, after the turn of the millennium, avidly interpreted in studies, novels, films and plays. National self-esteem has always been reasserted with stories about ‘victories over oppression’ and ‘heroic deeds’ (Smart 1983: 19–20). Consequently, in Finland the histories about honourably lost wars and defensive victories have moulded individual identities as well as national identity. These stories, repeatedly recounted by historians and novelists, do not convey events as such; rather they describe events ‘charged with meaning’ (Smart 1983: 19).³

In this chapter, I will approach these issues by analysing the descriptions of war in Lars Sund's historical novels *Colorado Avenue* (1991), *The Shopkeeper's Son* (“Lanhandlerskans son”, 1997) and *Erik's Book* (“Eriks bok”, 2003), also known as the *Siklax* trilogy. Sund represents the wars with postmodern irony and fantasy. With rich textual allusions to earlier literary, visual and musical traditions, these novels enter into a dialogue about the images of the wars that are still powerfully present in our society. Sund has on various occasions referred to the difficulty of discussing the wars: so much has been written about them that it is challenging to find a new perspective (Sund 2000), or to write without heroicising (Stenwall 2006: 269). As Sund is a Finland-Swedish writer (i.e. he writes in Swedish), he describes the events from the viewpoint of this minority group. Consequently, one of the questions this chapter deals with is how does Sund represent the wars in the *Siklax* trilogy? Do the representations continue or break away from the traditions of earlier literary works? The theoretical framework consists of cultural narratology and cultural memory studies combined with an intertextual approach. Renate Lachmann's (1997: 15; quoted in Erll 2011: 73) phrasing “the memory of a text is its intertextuality” accentuates the diachronic dimension of literature as recording memories, but she also sees texts as suppliers of memory. In this study, intertextuality is perceived as Sund's way of engaging in a conversation

on topical issues, as he discusses the significance of the wars and heroism by referring to images (whether they belong to other texts or other media) that are still influential in Finnish cultural and political life.

Finland has a rich tradition of both fictional and documentary war literature, in addition to historical novels that address the subject. After a long period of peace, the future of the war novels, published in large numbers up to now, seems questionable; in fact, the historical novel has been seen as a possible carrier of the genre.⁴ Although influenced by western literature, the descriptions of war have arguably been more realistic and included more pacifist traits in Finland due to its historical background as a battlefield of different cultural and political forces, and to the fact that Finland was not directly involved in the First World War, but instead suffered a disastrous Civil War (Niemi 1999: 118, 121).

As mentioned above, the descriptions of events such as wars have a tendency to repeat former patterns. For example, during the First World War both British literature and the letters and poems of common soldiers reflected the influence of the classics, such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the poetry of William Shakespeare and John Milton (Fussell 2000: 170–178, 193–207, *passim*). This is the focal point of cultural memory studies: literature and other cultural practices shape the way we recall and interpret our life experiences (Erll 2009: 168–169 and *passim*). The same phenomenon has been noticed in Finnish war literature: the novels written after the Winter War referred diligently to the characters in *The Tales of Ensign Stål* (“Fänrik Ståls sägner”, 1848, 1860) written by Johan Ludvig Runeberg, who is considered the national poet of Finland (Niemi 1988: 15, 59–60). Representing the idealistic-epic tradition of National Romanticism, Runeberg's poems describe the Finnish War of 1808–09 during which Finland was separated from Sweden and became an autonomous part of Russia as the Grand Duchy of Finland. That copies of *The Tales* were distributed to Finnish soldiers during the Second World War reveals the trust invested in its nationalistic ethos (Lyytikäinen 2012: 141). Another novel that has greatly influenced subsequent writers is Väinö Linna's *The Unknown Soldier* (“Tuntematon sotilas”, 1954) which represents the still-dominant realistic tradition. Linna's novel is a description of the Continuation War as experienced by a machine gun company made up of men who represent not only several regions and dialects, but also different political views (see also the introduction of the present volume).

In Sund's novels, there are allusions to both Runeberg and Linna, as will be discussed below. In addition, parallels will be drawn between Sund's novels and an early, critical representation of the Civil War, Jarl Hemmer's (1893–1944) novel *Onni Kokko* from 1920, which Sund seems to bring in as an intertextual reference to earlier depictions of disillusioned individuals in the middle of a war. However, perhaps the most important stylistic forerunner for Sund's depictions of war is the novelist Henrik Tikkanen, an initiator of the postmodern tradition in Finnish war literature, whose pacifist novels from the 1970s render the irrationalities of the war ridiculous.⁵ The character building in Sund's historical oeuvre analysed here contains traces of all these earlier layers of literary cultural memory.

I will begin by presenting the style and content of Sund's historical novels. In the analysis, I will depend on Astrid Erll's views about literature as a medium of cultural memory. She has studied the war novels of the 1920s and distinguished different modes of remembering the wars. Erll (2009: 219) speaks for the narratological approach, because of its capacity to reveal how "versions of the past are created, how concepts of identity are conveyed, and how values and norms are inscribed into these 'cultural texts'". This section is followed by the narratological analysis of the *Siklax* trilogy, in which the emphasis will be on *Erik's Book* as this novel depicts Finland in the Second World War and also as it shows the traumatic aftermath of the Civil War described in the first two volumes. First, I will focus on the pre-war mentalities by describing Erik Smeds' experiences in his military service and his later thoughts about the wars. His disillusionment is partly due to the heroicising of the memory of his namesake uncle, who died during the Civil War. I will discuss this episode quite extensively as Sund refers to it in all three novels. In the next subchapters, I will concentrate on the depictions of the Winter War, the Continuation War and the Lapland War, seen respectively through the eyes of young Margareta, Charles and Rurik. To conclude, I will consider the possible effects of these representations of wars by way of reviews.

Lars Sund's Siklax Trilogy – Historical Novels as a Vehicle of Memory

Lars Sund's *Siklax* novels describe the fate of the boarding house owner and shopkeeper Hanna Näs and her progeny from the 1890s to the 1950s. The majority of the events take place in a fictive community called Siklax situated in Ostrobothnia on the western coast of Finland, although each volume includes stories of a character or characters that have emigrated to North America.⁶ Occasionally, the narration concentrates at length on the diegetic level, the level of the narrated time, but it is the extra-diegetic level, the time of the narrating, that dominates. Hanna's great grandson Carl-Johan Holm is the intrusive and talkative narrator of the trilogy. In an attempt to reconstruct his own family history, Carl-Johan is obliged to resort to visual and written documents, but he also uses methods that are more unorthodox, for example he constantly transgresses the narrative levels in order to interview the deceased inhabitants of Siklax. Consequently, Sund's novels can be defined as postmodern historical novels or, to use Linda Hutcheon's (1988: 4) term, historiographic metafiction, as they are "fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political".⁷

In the first volume, *Colorado Avenue* (1991), Hanna emigrates to America where she becomes the owner of a boarding house. After her husband dies, she returns home with her two children and starts a new career as a shopkeeper. The protagonist of the last part of the novel is Hanna's son Otto, who becomes a famous smuggler. The time of Russification in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Civil War and the time of prohibition⁸ constitute

the historical background. In the sequel, *The Shopkeeper's Son* (1997) the main theme is the right-wing extremism of the 1930s embodied by the Lapua Movement. *The Shopkeeper's Son* has two narrators: Carl Johan and his grandfather Otto, who, after being wrongly accused of murder, flees to North America, hooks up with the noted con artist Viktor Lustig and later joins a flying circus. The last part of the trilogy, *Erik's Book* describes the Winter War, the Continuation War and the time of the post-war reconstruction. The novel's protagonist Erik Smeds, Hanna's grandson, acts as an intelligence agent during the wars and later on as a CIA-agent, and Sund describes the Cold War through his experiences. Events on the home front and at the front are depicted via Charles (the narrator's father), Rurik (Charles' father and the grandfather of the narrator) and Margareta (Charles' wife-to-be). In every volume, the narrator has opponents who question both the style and contents of his narration. In *Colorado Avenue* the twin sisters who operate the telephone exchange comment on the narration. In the frame story of *The Shopkeeper's Son*, Otto tells about his adventures in America and criticises Carl-Johan's presentation of the Lapua Movement. He also contradicts the narrator's version of the fate of Erik Smeds the first (to distinguish him from his namesake nephew; I will be returning to these two Eriks later). In *Erik's Book* the opposing side is represented by the past generation, the already dead inhabitants of Siklax.⁹

Colorado Avenue, *The Shopkeeper's Son* and *Erik's Book* have been translated into Finnish,¹⁰ they have been reviewed and discussed widely in the press, and each novel was nominated for the Finlandia Prize for Fiction, Finland's most prestigious literary prize. *Erik's Book* was nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize in 2004, the same year Sund received the State Prize for Literature. Each novel has been turned into a play, and the two first volumes into a film and a three-part television series.¹¹ The novels have been read and discussed at school¹² and analysed in studies.¹³ In other words, these novels fulfil Erll's (2011: 155) two conditions for a novel to influence cultural memory: they have been "received as media of memory" and they have been read "in a broad swathe across society". Sund himself is a socially engaged writer whose columns range over such topics as neo-Nazism and xenophobia in Europe and the dangers of nuclear power. In consequence, Sund's novels have all the premises to affect our cultural memory.

Erll accentuates literature as an active force, which *can* influence our perception and even be actualised in political activity or otherwise:

With their narrative structure, literary stories shape our understanding of the sequence and meaning of events, and of the relation between the past, present and future. Literature moulds memory culture thus through its structure and forms, but of course, and more obviously so, also through its contents: Representations of historical events (such as wars and revolutions) and characters (such as kings and explorers), of myths and imagined memories *can* have an impact on readers and *can* re-enter ... the world of action, shaping, for example, perception, knowledge and everyday communication, leading to political action – or prefiguring further representation ... (Erll 2011: 155, emphasis in original.)

The possibility that literature may have an impact on readers and their opinions is also stressed by Ansgar Nünning (2004: 358), who finds that narrative fictions both reflect and influence the social and cultural environment. Cultural narratology, combining structural and contextual approaches, sees narrative “involved in the actual generation of ways of thinking and of attitudes and, thus, of something that stands behind historical developments” (*ibid.*). The narratological analysis may be applied to the textual level, but we can only draw hypotheses about the forces that prevailed during the production and about the effects of the work on the cultural memory.¹⁴

Using a narratological analysis of war novels, Erll distinguishes five different modes of remembering, which can appear in different combinations: experiential (the past presented “as lived-through experience”), monumental (the past seen as mythical), historicising (the past seen through scholarly historiography), antagonistic (promotion of one version and rejection of the other), and reflexive (accentuating the processes and problems of remembering) (Erll 2011: 157–159). The reflexive mode, the category to which Sund’s historical novels and most historiographic metafiction belong, is characterised by “the juxtaposition of different versions of the past” and by “explicit narratorial comments on the workings of memory” (*ibid.* 159). Sund’s novels abound in metareferential comments as the narrator reflects on the narrative structure, the genre, the fictionality of the characters, the possibility of historiography, and above all, on the unreliability of memory. The capacity of literature to represent and, at the same time, question the representation (see Veivo 2010: 157),¹⁵ or to build and observe memory, as Erll phrases it, is essential when addressing past events and our recollections of them.

When it comes to history writing and remembrance of wars, the first pages of *Erik’s Book* are especially inspiring. The novel opens with the welcome speech from the departed of Siklax: “Welcome. We have been waiting for you. We are the dead of Siklax.” (*Erik’s Book*: 5).¹⁶ The reader is invited in and seated on a rocking chair. The dead introduce the characters of the story by showing the reader their photographs on the wall. Before the dead ask the narrator Carl-Johan to enter, they have a warning to the reader: “He is a windbag and a shameless liar” (*Erik’s Book*: 9). Nevertheless, the reader need not worry; the dead will make sure that morality and decency will not be offended:

We do not intend under any circumstances to tolerate ... Communist or other left-wing propaganda, derogatory statements about war veterans, mockery of patriotic values, profanity or other such stylistic devices, which unfortunately are all too common in modern literature. (*Ibid.*)

Thereafter the story begins, and we are told how Erik Smeds, after receiving an order via television from Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of the Soviet Union,¹⁷ returns to Finland having spent half a century away from home. The narrator comes to the fore only after some fifty pages, and he, in turn,

“as a serious and responsible narrator”, summons the departed of Siklax to ensure that his presentation of the wars is “as accurate and objective as possible” (*Erik’s Book*: 69). The dead represent the collective memory. Their knowledge is subjective, and thus their opinions are disharmonious. The logical paradox of the beginning – the narrator and the dead figuring in each other’s stories – accentuates the rivalry between them, between two different modes of knowledge, between the subjective, experience-based knowledge of the dead and the objective, research-based knowledge of the narrator (Malmio 2005: 279–281 and passim; 2008: 164–165). This metaleptic opening also undermines the authority of the narrator from the very beginning. Together with the warnings uttered by the dead, it startles the reader to contemplate the trustworthiness of the narrator. The overlapping of the narrative levels, a strategy favoured by postmodern authors, makes it problematic, if not impossible, for the reader to decide which level is superior and who is responsible for the story (McHale 1987: 115–121; see also Malmio 2008: 169). In *Erik’s Book* both the departed of Siklax and the narrator seem to claim authority and to subordinate other stories to their own.

The relationship between the narrator Carl-Johan and his father Charles also reflects the adversarial narrative method. The narrator, born in 1953, is a typical representative of the post-war generation: he admires Che Guevara, espouses left-wing ideas and protests against the war. “I know plenty about the war, as I am a pacifist” (*Erik’s Book*: 67), he asserts. Charles reproaches Carl-Johan for not appreciating enough the sacrifices of those involved in the battles against Russia. “Do not say anything you, for you were not there!” (*ibid.*: 69), Charles repeatedly ends his argument, thus characterising the opinions of those who had experienced the war. Just like the arguments between the narrator and the dead, the debate between Charles and his son highlights the opposing types of knowledge. The narrator, who has familiarised himself with the war literature in order to know his enemy, represents the objective research information based on sources, and his father Charles represents the subjective knowledge that has its foundation in personal experiences.

Historical novels as a genre are already received as vehicles of cultural memory; additionally, they fulfil one significant condition: they are read referentially.¹⁸ This does not mean that the readers confuse fiction with historiography. Instead of being directed towards reality itself, the referentiality seems to fall upon “the horizons of meaning that are produced by cultural memory – and thus to a ‘reality’ which is already profoundly symbolically condensed, narratively structured, and transformed by genre patterns. What is at stake when reading literature as collective texts is thus ‘truth’ according to memory” (Erl 2011: 164–165). This is exactly the issue in Sund’s war descriptions: they do not refer to the events as such – according to postmodernists that would be impossible – rather, they comment on the previous interpretations and narratives.

Disillusioned War Heroes

In Sund's novels, there are two characters named Erik Smeds. To avoid confusion, the narrator occasionally refers to them with ordinal numbers: Erik the first was a Jaegar Captain and a 'hero' of the Civil War and Erik the second, his nephew, also pursued a military career. To provide a background to the issues discussed in this chapter, I must return to the events of the Civil War described in the first two volumes of the trilogy. However, I will begin by presenting the mentalities of the interwar period and taking a look at Erik the second's experiences of military service and at his later thoughts about heroism in war.

After the Civil War, compulsory military service was regarded as a way of bringing together the divided nation. The recruits were exposed to patriotic instruction and the military service was expected to turn the boys into men. It was considered shameful not to qualify for conscription (Ahlbäck 2006: 110, 112). This is also noted by Sund's narrator in *Erik's Book* (135): "In the Republic of Finland, a young man was not to evade his military service if he wanted to count himself as a real man." To improve his language skills in a bilingual country, Erik decides to apply for a Finnish-speaking artillery regiment to perform his military training. During the first weeks, he is bullied because of his mother tongue: "In Finland you speak Finnish!" (*Erik's Book*: 111). Soon enough Erik masters the Finnish language from military slang to profanities and is not pestered more than the others. In August 1939, Erik continues his studies in the Reserve Officer School of Hamina, where good language skills are not enough to turn him into a proper Finn. To his parents, Erik writes in a light tone about his life at school, but

[h]e does not write about the members of the Academic Karelian Society, who speechify at length and in depth about the upcoming Greater Finland and whip up a hatred for the Russkis that is completely incomprehensible to him: *Ryssästä saa puhua vain hammasta purren* – speak of the Russkis only through gritted teeth. Neither does he write about the Nazi sympathies and pronounced anti-Semitism. (*Erik's Book*: 114–115, emphasis in original.)

The Academic Karelian Society (AKS) was an influential organisation during the interwar period, whose members were mainly university students. The slogan in the quotation, "Speak of the Russkis only through gritted teeth", refers to one of the propaganda pamphlets published by the AKS. The society pursued national unity and the idea of a Greater Finland by inciting hatred against Russians and Finland-Swedish, and by promoting the unity of kindred nations, that is, those Finnic nations living in such places as Eastern Karelia. One of their goals was to fennicise the University of Helsinki by minimising the instruction given in Swedish¹⁹ (Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi 1999: 146). The hatred towards Russians incited by the AKS is inconceivable to Erik who is, even to his own surprise, fascinated by the Russian language and is planning to study it at the university. Erik gets his share of the hatred when an on-duty cadet conducts a barracks inspection with his friends. Erik is forced to read aloud the letter he is writing to his mother; the cadets

feign horror when they hear the Swedish language. “No, Erik does not write home about what it’s like to be humiliated because of your language, again and again” (*Erik’s Book*: 117). The events mentioned in *Erik’s Book*, especially the wars, are highly relevant to identity formation, and they have been addressed by numerous novelists, but Sund describes them from the viewpoint of the Finland-Swedish minority. Erik’s experiences demonstrate the mentalities preceding the Winter War, that groups existed who propagated hatred towards Russians and Swedish-speaking Finns and to whom national unity meant excluding some sections of the population outside the community.

Erik was named after his uncle, who died during the Civil War, an uncle who was presented as a role model for him. On Erik’s seventh birthday, his father Gustav takes him to visit his uncle’s grave. Gustav describes poetically how Erik the first led the troops of Siklaxians during the Civil War in the conquest of Tampere: “In accordance with the demands of the genre, Gustav embellished history, and deleted and added what was appropriate” (*Erik’s Book*: 311). Gustav is so eloquent that young Erik bursts into tears touched by “his uncle’s courage and willingness to sacrifice himself” (*ibid.*) – or at least so Gustav believes. The real reason for Erik’s tears is quite different, as the seven-year old boy was not expecting to get a visit to the cemetery as a birthday surprise.

Years later, having made a career as a CIA agent, this episode comes back to Erik, who, while almost as idealistic as his uncle, is disappointed in his fight against communism.

[H]e once again hears his father tell him about Eric the first’s beautiful death at the storming of Tampere. Then he is suddenly overwhelmed by anger.

He is furious with Erik the first. And with his father, who did not dare tell him the way things are: that a young man’s death can never be made beautiful and meaningful. (*Erik’s Book*: 516.)

To explain the full meaning of this episode I now return to the two first volumes of the trilogy, where the fate of Erik the first is recounted. In *The Shopkeeper’s Son* and in *Erik’s Book* Sund repeats and modifies his description of the events of 1918 narrated in *Colorado Avenue*, as if to underline the traumatising effect of the Civil War. The childhood friends Otto and Erik both participate in the taking of Tampere, an industrial city, where the decisive battles of the Civil War were fought: Erik is the company commander on the White side and Otto and Rurik, the grandfathers of the narrator, are Erik’s couriers. Before the war, Erik had trained as a light infantryman in the Lockstedt camp in Germany, and in March 1918, he and one thousand other Jaegers return to Finland to fight against the Reds.

The narrator bases his stories about Erik the first on his letters and diaries, extracts of which are presented to the reader. Since his childhood, Erik’s hero has been Johan Ludvig Runeberg and he knows *The Tales of Ensign Stål* by heart, and the first letters sent from the Lockstedt camp are full of patriotic ideals á la Runeberg. Erik sees it as his duty to respect the laws of Finland by actively resisting Russification, in contrast to the passive resistance endorsed

by his father and others. Gradually, Erik's thoughts become darker. The night before the conquest of Tampere, Erik, who has been suffering from insomnia, goes for a walk, falls asleep in the snow and dreams about meeting General Mannerheim, the White hero of the Civil War and the future president of Finland. The General shows Erik the corps of the Reds and reflects on the absurdity of war:

Is there anything worse than a fratricidal war? Both the Reds and we call it the struggle for liberation. On both sides, the ideals are high and noble. We all want to create a new and bright future for mankind. And what do we do? We fight about which ideals are the noblest and highest. We kill each other for freedom and a future of which we know nothing. Maybe there is only emptiness behind. (*Colorado Avenue*: 249.)

The General reveals that he had overestimated the Red forces and that Tampere should have been seized earlier. His strategic error means he is now obliged to sacrifice his men as they have to achieve the decisive victory before the arrival of the German troops that have been called to help the Whites. According to Mannerheim, it is the realists and the flexible who will govern after the war, and there will be no room for idealistic nationalism like Erik's. Erik's character is anachronistic, and two different eras collide in this scene where Mannerheim, the practical hero of the twentieth century, meets the 'Runebergian' Erik Smeds (Saranpa 1998: 276–277). The encounter makes Erik the first see the discrepancy between his idealism and the reality of the war, and shatters his worldview into pieces.

The scene where Mannerheim and Erik meet and the general delivers his speech is an intertextual reference to Jarl Hemmer's novel *Onni Kokko* (1920), published only two years after the Civil War. The Finland-Swedish author of the novel had written poems exalting the White army during the war; however, just a few years later he published *Onni Kokko*, which exposes the wretchedness of the war and questions its legitimacy. The novel tells of a 14-year-old boy's participation in the Civil War: a Russian soldier has killed the protagonist's father, which leads him to join the Whites. Onni starts to reflect on the legitimacy of his actions when he is ordered to guard the prisoners that are to be shot, among whom is his uncle, the only person who has treated him well. He also happens to hear Jaegar Captain Karr's doubts about the war:

Was it really this miserable slaughter we had dreamed of? We shoot down our own men like dogs. ... [T]his satanic war. Both white and red call it the same way: the struggle for liberation. And he is a cretin who does not realise that on both sides there is the same stupid and beautiful seriousness behind that word. (*Onni Kokko*: 176, 187–188.)

A shot through the window interrupts the debate between Karr and his friend, and they both rush to the porch. Karr is hit in the chest, but it is too dark and the bleeding is too heavy to see whether there are scorch marks around the edge of the bullet hole. In other words, the narrator suggests that Karr

may have taken advantage of the situation and shot himself.²⁰ In the passage above, Captain Karr unburdens himself intoxicated to his friend, whereas in Sund's novel the – ironic and yet imposing – anti-war speech is put into the mouth of General Mannerheim, the man also known as the Butcher of the Reds (see e.g. Karkulehto 2010). Onni's figure has been compared with the idealistic youngster in Runeberg's poem "The Soldier Boy" ("Soldatgossen") in *The Tales of Ensign Stål*. Whereas Runeberg's young boy eagerly waits to follow in his dead father's footsteps to the battle, starvation and death, Hemmer's Onni is more of a pathetic figure than a heroic one (Kirstinä 2007: 46–47). In Sund's novel, the intertextual transition from Runeberg's *Tales* to Hemmer's *Onni Kokko* reflects Erik's change of heart and thus a shift from heroism and glorification of the war to challenging its meaning.

In *Colorado Avenue*, the narrator briefly mentions that Erik was killed during the conquest of Tampere. In *The Shopkeeper's Son* Otto tells the truth: Erik did not die as a hero but committed suicide:

It was a fucking satanic sight. We had to scrape his brain from the ceiling with *puukko* knives. The other officers and non-commissioned officers also came there and it was decided then that we'd say nothing about how he had taken his own life. ... The officers said that there was no need to trumpet the fact that Erik had shot himself. He was a Jaegar officer and everything, and the Jaegars' glory should not be tainted by his suicide. No one should believe that an officer had been a coward and hadn't taken the pressure. (*The Shopkeepers Son*: 227.)

The real cause of death is concealed to protect the reputation of the army and the Jaegars: the coffin is closed firmly before it is sent home, so that no one would find out the truth. Despite the disheartening meeting with Mannerheim, Erik had decided to fulfil his duty as a company commander. Nevertheless, his diaries disclose the change from an idealistic young man to a disillusioned soldier. One incident is especially revealing. During the fights in Tampere, Erik orders Otto and Rurik to shoot a Red found hiding in a building. Rurik opposes the order, which is against Mannerheim's commands, but Erik gets into a rage and exclaims that Rurik "just had to choose, either he held the rifle or he could stand at the wall with the Red guard". Nevertheless, Otto and Rurik allow the Red to escape. Years later, Otto meets the man he saved. To his question as to why they had not shot him, Otto replies that it felt wrong to kill an unarmed and defeated man. "Good", says the man and continues:

Everyone knows deep down what is right and proper, that insight makes us human. But just too few have the courage to live by that knowledge. Most follow orders and go along. It took a lot of courage to do as I [Otto] did. To dare to obey your conscience and not the orders you get. (*The Shopkeeper's Son*: 409.)

The answer Otto gets captures one of the main themes in Sund's novels: whatever the external circumstances, everyone can make personal decisions. "No one can escape History", reminds the narrator time and again, "we are all involved" (*Colorado Avenue*: 178).²¹ The narrator compares history to

a ship that has no captain, while his narratives foreground the responsibility of each individual.

The main questions raised by the postmodern historical novel are “*whose* history survives” and “*whose* truth gets told” (Hutcheon 1988: 120, 123, emphasis in original). As mentioned above, the reader is confronted in Sund’s novels with different kinds of information: subjective, based on experience, and seemingly objective, based on research, both narrated and equally detached from the original event. The narrator Carl-Johan represents the latter type: he is a typical postmodernist character, whom the reader sees collecting the historical facts and trying to make sense of them (cf. Hutcheon 1988: 114; see also Nünning 2004: 364–367). Yet despite his thorough investigations, the narrator draws the wrong conclusions. Having read Erik’s diaries and letters Carl-Johan concludes that he was killed in a combat in Tampere. When Otto contradicts his story, the narrator’s first reaction is that Otto, too, may have reasons to lie. Carl-Johan has to admit that his “authority as a narrator has been thoroughly dented” (*The Shopkeeper’s Son*: 228).

The conflicting narratives about Erik’s death underline the perennial problem of history writing: the sources are always imperfect and partial and may lead to incorrect interpretations. The decision to conceal the real cause of Erik’s death is an example of how those in power may want to shape history to protect their interests. This kind of criticism of historiography is typical of the postmodern historical novel. The cover-up of the suicide and Gustav’s efforts to fulfil “the demands of the genre” demonstrate the underlying ideological reasons: the national self-esteem is built with heroic stories, while others are silenced or embellished. Both Erik the first and the second try to influence history, but end up as its victims: they sacrifice their personal life and happiness to a greater cause, the fight against communism, but their idealistic worldviews become shattered in the process. The fate of Erik the first seems especially to criticise the long tradition of honouring the sacrificial death of a soldier (Stenwall 2006: 268–270). Otto’s grotesque story collides with Gustav’s version of Erik’s “beautiful death” in a compelling way, thus opposing the hero myth.

Drama and Trauma on the First Day of the Winter War

On the 30 November 1939, the Soviets began hostilities without a declaration of war by crossing the Finnish frontier and bombing Helsinki. In the *Siklax* trilogy, this first day of the Winter War turns out to be dramatic at an individual level too for Hanna, because her son Otto returns home having been missing for a decade. To ten-year-old Margareta, who acts as a focaliser in the passage, the day will be not only dramatic but also traumatic. Margareta has considered Hanna’s daughter Ida and her husband Gustav as her parents, but now she finds out that she is the adulterine child of Otto and Anna Boström, the headmaster’s wife, who died in childbirth. *The Shopkeeper’s Son* ends with this story, which is then repeated in *Erik’s Book*. Margareta remembers with shame the day she meets her real father for the first time, as she nearly wets herself and has to rush out of the room, while the radio on the

shelf of Hanna's shop continues to play Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia*. This solemn hymn has been attached to the crucial moments of the Finnish nation since its first performance in 1899, the same year that Russification began, and thus it has become a symbol of Finnishness, patriotism and independence (Välimäki 2008: 67).²² Margareta marries Charles, the father of the narrator, and successfully takes charge of the family's bus company, yet even as a dignified adult woman, she is still haunted by the memory. As a result, events in which Sibelius' hymn plays a significant role – the Independence Day, Edvin Laine's screen adaptation of Väinö Linna's *The Unknown Soldier* and the funerals of war veterans – cause her physical pain, as the first notes of *Finlandia* bring on a "Pavlovian reaction": "Have to go pee. Quick!" (*Erik's Book*: 145–146).

Laine's film has been considered a founding trauma²³, that is, "a more or less mythologising narrative used to unite a group and give it effective, functional, and meaningful recollections of the past" (Sundholm 2007: 118). The film, released a year after Linna's novel in 1955, turned into a dominant narrative that absorbed the individual narratives of the novel and Sibelius' hymn. The film lacks the ironic narratorial comments that open and end Linna's novel; instead it is framed with "bombastic *Finlandia*" (*ibid.*: 123, 126).²⁴ Similarly, Margareta's encounter with her father on the first day of the war is framed with *Finlandia* (see especially *The Shopkeeper's Son*: 430–431); the event, solemn both nationally and individually, is described from the viewpoint of a little girl desperately needing to go, and is thus flattened. The scene could also be interpreted using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Grotesque Realism. Eating, drinking, sexual activity and other bodily functions are all part of the Grotesque Realism, the essential principle of which is "degradation, the lowering of all that is abstract, spiritual, noble, and ideal to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body" (Bakhtin 1984: 18–19). The grotesque is used in abundance in Sund's novels, especially as a device for debasing and degrading totalitarian ideologies, for example, in the descriptions of the dictators. In the specific case of Margareta's reaction, the episode ridicules the ideological tendencies attached to the remembrance of the war.

Charles – the Unknown Sniper

The first day of the hundred and five days of the Winter War is described from the viewpoint of a young Margareta; the rest of the war, and later the Continuation War, is seen through the experiences of Charles, who serves as a sharpshooter. Charles' shooting accuracy first attracts attention when he is doing his compulsory military service. Supervising officer Sergeant Duva cannot believe his eyes when Charles hits the centre of the target time after time. Ensign Stål, Lieutenant Zidén, Captain Duncker, Major von Törne and Colonel von Fieandt are summoned to witness Charles' phenomenal shooting skills. These officers march into *Erik's Book* directly from the pages of Runeberg's *The Tales of Ensign Stål*. Even though the Finnish War of 1808–1809 was bitterly lost, Runeberg managed to create heroes that would stand

as examples for several generations. Sund does not construct his characters after Runeberg, but instead the protagonists of Runeberg's tales are ironically placed to admire Sund's own hero, who will develop an original fighting technique during the Continuation War.

The nationalistic warrior ethos presented by Runeberg's characters has naturally been criticised long before Sund. One of the most influential war novels in Finland, Väinö Linna's *The Unknown Soldier* mentioned earlier, aimed to give a realistic and critical picture of war. Linna wrote it "in opposition to romantic and idealising descriptions of war such as those composed by Finland's Poet Laureate J. L. Runeberg and presented in school for learning by heart" (Sundholm 2007: 122). Though it has been argued that Linna "only updated rather than destroyed the basic ethos of national heroism" (Lyytikäinen 2012: 154), his characters and satirical style have, in turn, influenced the war novels ever since, and also serve as a subtext to the descriptions of war in *Erik's Book*.

Charles' experiences in the Winter War are recounted in one paragraph. Charles fulfils his duty but has no further ambitions: "he was satisfied to remain an unknown soldier" (*Erik's Book*: 135). During the fights on the Karelian Isthmus Charles had no qualms about shooting Russians: "The mighty Soviet Union had without any valid reason attacked little Finland, which was forced into a legitimate defensive struggle" (*ibid.*: 162). In this sentence, Sund summarises the notion disseminated by the war literature that Finland justly defended herself against the unreasonable claims of a superpower. The "mighty Soviet Union" and the "little Finland" may also be reminiscent of the last pages of Linna's *The Unknown Soldier*. The soldiers – the few that survived – are listening to the declaration of the end of the war from the radio and the corporal Vanhala comments ironically: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics won, but the feisty little Finland finished a good second" (Linna 1972: 444).²⁵

Unlike the Winter War, which brought plenty of foreign sympathy to Finland, the Continuation War has been more troublesome for Finnish historians – and for the collective memory – because of the collaboration with the Germans and the offensive nature of the war. The epigraph of the chapter describing Charles' two wars comes from Mannerheim's Order of the Day on the tenth of July 1941 where he – to the annoyance of the other leaders – speaks openly about the liberation of Karelia instead of a defensive war (see e.g. Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi 1999: 201). Mannerheim revealed the true objective of the war, although after the defeat, historians and politicians preferred an interpretation by which Finland had no option but to enter the war.²⁶

In Charles's opinion, the Continuation War is going to end badly; nevertheless, he marches with his regiment towards the east. During the war, Charles still uses his skills as a sharpshooter, only this time against orders. Charles disapproves of the new war and does not dream of a 'Greater Finland', and as a result, he decides to shoot only to wound, not to kill. In this way, he can alleviate his scruples about killing. Charles' character embodies the inborn reluctance of a man to kill another human being, which has especially interested those who study the art of warfare. According to Dave Grossman,

an American researcher who specialises in the psychological impacts of killing, it is easy to avoid killing on the battlefield: you can deliberately miss or not shoot at all. Grossman (1996: 9–16) sees this as “a very subtle form of disobedience”. This is exactly what Charles does as he aims as near as possible without killing the enemy. Charles’ reputation spreads rapidly among the Russians, who suspect Finland’s army of psychological warfare. Consequently, Stalin himself sends Colonel Luminarskij to find out what is happening. Charles frightens the colonel to death by shooting the red star off his hat. The colonel starts to drink and shoots himself a few days later, and as a result, the whole regiment is moved away from the eastern front. Charles, who couldn’t refrain from testing his skills, “shall never find out that with one single shot he had managed to put the Soviet regiment out of fighting condition” (*Erik’s Book*: 170).

There are several practical reasons for Charles’ tactics: he despises the revenge war and the idea of a Greater Finland and has doubts about Germany’s success (Kirstinä 2007: 233). Charles’ action has, however, an ethical base too. The narrator compares him with historical Simo Häyhä, a legendary sharpshooter called the ‘White Death’ who had over five hundred marks on the stock of his rifle.²⁷ Instead of marking those he kills, Charles marks those he slightly misses. After the war, he estimates to have saved over two hundred Russians. Of course, it is not much among the more than 50 millions victims of the Second World War, but it must mean something that “more than 200 Russians survived, perhaps got married and had children and, at best, aged and died of natural causes when their time had come” (*Erik’s Book*: 165). The Luminarskij episode with the banishing of the regiment can be seen as a kind of a legitimisation of Charles’ unorthodox fighting tactics, as he in fact succeeds with one shot even better than Häyhä. Instead of dehumanising enemy soldiers, which is common practice during the war, as it is easier to kill the enemy if he is seen as a cruel and dirty animal (see e.g. Kivimäki 2006: 195–197), Charles considers the enemy to be similar to him, a human being who wants to live. In Charles’ character, the historical war hero depicted in numerous novels meets an individualistic dissident. Soldiers are expected to forget themselves and obey the orders of their superior officers without questioning,²⁸ and Charles risks his own life as he obeys his conscience and saves enemy soldiers, just like Otto, who, against the orders of his superior, allows the Red to escape during the Civil War.

Rurik’s Sacrifice and the Destruction of Rovaniemi

Charles’ war has a bizarre ending as he suddenly becomes deaf and is sent to a military hospital in August 1944. He writes to his parents, but the letter gets lost. The narrator explains in detail how a bad phone connection, language difficulties between Finnish and Swedish-speaking authorities and other mishaps mean that instead of receiving a message of their son being deaf and hospitalised, Charles’ parents are notified of him being dead. Historiography is full of intentional and unintentional errors, and this episode is only one example from *Erik’s Book* of how a rumour or wrong piece of information

turns into documented truth – a typical feature of the postmodern historical novel (see Hutcheon 1988: 114).

Rurik, Charles' father, refuses to believe that his son was dead, and finally, to his great joy, Charles returns home. Naturally, the inhabitants of Siklax begin to wonder whether Charles has actually died when in October 1944 there is a piece of cardboard attached to the door of the cinema owned by Rurik saying, "Closed due to death" (*Erik's Book*: 254). The reason for the closure of the cinema is, however, quite different. Rurik owns a flourishing bus company, and when the Continuation War begins, Rurik is once again obliged to turn over some of his buses to the army. The most modern bus, named Selma after Rurik's wife, is returned in a terrible state, because it has served as an ambulance at the front. Rurik reacts to the destruction of Selma like a man "whose wife has been violated, children killed and farm burnt down" (*ibid.*: 260). He refuses to eat but remains seated by his bus. Eventually, Rurik is no longer able to control his pain:

Then there arose a terrible howl from Knyppekknösen.

It sounded like an air raid warning siren being cranked; it grew in volume, rose against the cloud-covered sky, echoed across the plain, and faded slowly away. ...

Rurik! 'Ave you gone mad? shouted Selma.

Auuoooo! howled Rurik like a doomsday trumpet. (*Erik's Book*: 261.)

During the war, the Finnish people were supposed to cherish patriotic feelings, which were supported by propaganda. A mother was expected to mourn her fallen son with restraint, and, at the same time, remember to be proud of the sacrifice she had given to her home country. Unrestrained displays of grief and loud crying were considered inappropriate as they were characteristic of the enemy, and thus unpatriotic (Kemppainen 2006: 235, 244, 256–257).²⁹ Rurik does not grieve over his loss discreetly, but howls the pain for all to hear. He also breaks with the conventions by closing the cinema 'due to death', when in fact he only mourns his damaged property. Once again, the nationalistic pathos ascribed to wars and sacrificial deaths is banalised.

Rurik's behaviour has disastrous consequences. Thousands of dogs join Rurik's heartbreaking howling: Max and Moritz, the dachshunds of the communal doctor, familiar and unknown hounds and countless stray dogs. The message is carried along the coast to the north: "The chain is not broken although it occasionally, so to say, was hanging by a whisker" (*Erik's Book*: 262). In accordance with the Moscow armistice, Finland has begun to drive the German troops from the country. The frontline is on the south side of Rovaniemi, and the howling of the dogs unnerves the commander of the German division.

The SS troops were in a tactically disadvantageous position and threatened with encirclement, and now it seemed as if the Fenris wolf himself and his bloodthirsty wolf flocks were collaborating with the damned Finns. ... The Finnish dogs were inspired by the responses they were getting from their German kinsmen. They began to howl with redoubled force. (*Erik's Book*: 263.)

The officers suspect the Finns of covering a surprise attack with this strange intrigue and ask the headquarters for permission to leave Rovaniemi. The answer comes immediately: "EXECUTE THE WITHDRAWAL. BURN ROVANIEMI" (*Erik's Book*: 264).

Sund follows the path marked out by the postmodernist war novels of Henrik Tikkanen and Kurt Vonnegut³⁰, in whose novels absurd plot twists and black humour with grotesque scenes reveal the irrationalities of war. For example, Tikkanen's novel *The Thirty Years' War* ("30-åriga kriget", 1979) is a satirical anti-war description of a soldier who is forgotten in the woods of Karelia, where he continues the war, remaining faithful to his superior officer despite the people who try to convince him that the war is over. It is typical of the postmodern historical novel to question the historical teleology by presenting senseless cause-effect relationships (Hutcheon 1988: 121; Wesseling 1991: 128–129).³¹ In the scene under discussion, Rurik indirectly causes the destruction of Rovaniemi with his unmanly and inappropriate behaviour. The absurd consequences of Rurik's behaviour emphasise the randomness of events and put in ironic perspective the way historical research brings meaning and causal relationships to the events afterwards.

Conclusion

The descriptions of the wars in the *Siklax* trilogy both continue a tradition and detach themselves from it. Sund's stylistic device is parody: his protagonists – Charles and Rurik – represent postmodern anti-heroism. In place of the traditional war hero, depicted for example in Runeberg's poems, stands an obstinate individual who questions the legitimacy of the war and retains his own standpoint. Ironically, the heroes of Runeberg's *The Tales of Ensign Stål* march to admire Charles, who later, during the Continuation War, saves enemy soldiers rather than killing them. Charles and Otto both defy the orders of their superiors and instead obey their conscience. The contrast between the Jaegar Captain Erik Smeds and Otto is strikingly ironic, because it is Otto, a smuggler, who acts ethically. Sund does not even hold back from ridiculing the nationalistic traits linked to the remembrance of the wars; this is instantiated especially in the experiences of Margareta, whose encounter with Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia* leaves a lasting impression on her.

A Finnish literary scholar Pirjo Lyytikäinen (2012: 155) ends her study on Runeberg's *Tales* stating that the "efforts to see the horrors of war instead of its glory, would be the ethically better choice and would, hopefully, help to influence the choices real people make ...". Sund's weapons in this war on readers' attitudes are mainly parody and the grotesque. With the intertextual allusions to the familiar images and symbols of Finnishness – Runeberg's heroes, *The Unknown Soldier* who fights in both Linna's novel and Laine's film, Sibelius' *Finlandia* – Sund seems to wish to startle the currently prevailing neo-patriotic discussion about the wars.

The subsequent question is of the extent to which Sund's satirical war descriptions were acknowledged in the reviews.³² The Civil War depicted in *Colorado Avenue* and in *The Shopkeeper's son* was hardly mentioned by

the critics who concentrated on Sund's postmodern and at the same time epic style. The war descriptions of *Erik's Book* received a bit more attention. After *The Shopkeeper's Son* some reviewers expected the third volume to be 'a great Finnish war novel' perhaps following in the footsteps of Linna's *The Unknown Soldier* (Kononen 1997), and Otto, who returned home just the day the war broke out, to be an ace fighter pilot³³ (Tarkka 1997). Instead, *Erik's Book* turned out to cover not only the wars, but also the mentalities preceding the wars, the experiences of children and women, and the difficult mental and material recovery afterwards. The outcome is not surprising: First, as mentioned earlier, Sund was sceptical about the descriptions of war, and wished to come up with something new and to depict the wars without heroicising them. Second, in contrast to the traditional war history that concentrates on the actions of the high command or on operations, the themes discussed above are at present emphasised by the so-called new military history, which studies, for example, the influence of the war on civilians and the experiences of different ethnic or sexual minorities.³⁴ Nevertheless, one of the reviewers ended her critique, in itself very positive, by wondering how many times the wars have to be covered in literature before the trauma abates (Salakka-Kontunen 2003).

Sund (2008) has playfully admitted to having been disappointed at the fact that satirical descriptions of war and war heroism in *Erik's Book* did not attract more attention.³⁵ The reviews of *Erik's Book* were mainly very positive, and some even brought up the satirical war scenes. For example, the title of the review in the leading newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* referred to the absurd consequences of Rurik's howling ("History is born when the dogs bark") and the reviewer began by summarising that episode quite extensively. The same reviewer also mentioned Charles' peculiar fighting tactics briefly (Hämäläinen 2003). Young Margalæta's hardships on the first day of the Winter War were referred to in passing in some reviews of *The Shopkeeper's Son* (Snickars 1997; Kononen 1997). Overall, Sund's satirical anti-war descriptions were noted, but at the same time, they were dismissed rather lightly. What would have been required from the descriptions to catch the reviewer's full attention? In fact, a critic in the periodical *Ny tid*, who was not overwhelmingly taken by Sund's playful style, contends that Sund could have made more use of the postmodern narrative strategies, by, for example, allowing the dead to express theories and notions about the war (Groth 2003).

When Sund received the state prize for literature in 2004, The State Literature Committee praised *Erik's Book* by saying that Sund "shows with impressive power that literature can be serious and playful at the same time" and "that books can change and shape us and our lives". The thought of history as an interpretation process was considered a core message of the novel (*Kirjallisuuden valtionpalkinnot* 2004). Although it is impossible to analyse what the actual effect of the novels is and how they may change readers' attitudes, at least the Committee considered Sund's novel to have the potential to influence readers, and thus the way we interpret our national past. Eventually, it seems that the departed of Siklax got "the constructive and ethically irrefragable" (*Erik's Book*: 9) narrative they desired.³⁶

NOTES

- 1 The Civil War that lasted from January to May 1918 right after Finland gained her independence was fought between the socialist ‘Reds’ supported by Russia and the non-socialist ‘Whites’ led by General Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim. Both sides committed illegal executions and other atrocities. The war resulted in over 36,000 dead, most of whom were defeated Reds who died of hunger and disease in the prison camps after the war. The Civil War left bitterness and scars and divided the nation for decades. The “War victims in Finland 1914–22” project that ended in 2003 was a recent attempt to address the national trauma of the war: <http://vesta.narc.fi/cgi-bin/db2www/sotasurmaetusivu/main?lang=en> [Last accessed 3rd March 2015.]
- 2 The Winter War (30.11.1939–13.3.1940) began after Finland had refused to concede to the demands for territorial cessions made by the Soviet Union. Although popular opinion expected the Soviets to gain a swift victory, the poorly equipped Finnish forces were able to resist the invasion despite the superior manpower and weaponry of the Soviets. Nevertheless, in March 1940 Finland had to sue for peace. The Moscow Peace Treaty forced Finland to cede large territories to the Soviet Union. The inhabitants of the ceded territories, who numbered over 400,000 or almost 12% of the entire population, were evacuated and resettled in other regions of the country. The harsh peace terms and the chance to get help from Germany led to the Continuation War (25.6.1941–19.9.1944). During the summer and the autumn of 1941, the Finnish troops advanced rapidly and took back the ceded regions and even conquered new territories, after which the war turned into a static war and finally into a defensive war as the Soviets launched a major offensive on the Karelian Isthmus in June 1944. Finland was forced to accept armistice terms that included territorial cessions and the payment of substantial war reparations. Under the peace terms, Finland had to expel German troops from the country. During the resultant Lapland War, the Germans caused major damage to Lapland by bombing buildings and using a scorched earth policy as they retreated to Norway. Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi 1999: 436–456. For the shifting interpretations of the wars, see Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012.
- 3 The distinction made by Ninian Smart between ‘flat events’ and events ‘charged with meaning’ recalls the postmodernists’ way of stressing the difference between events and facts, that is, *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*, to quote Elisabeth Wesseling (1991: 82–83). See also Hutcheon 1988: 89, 122.
- 4 During the last decade, the wars have also been addressed by such award-winning and widely-read Finnish and Finland-Swedish writers of historical novels as Katja Kettu, Sirpa Kähkönen, Leena Lander, Asko Sahlberg, Ulla-Lena Lundberg and Kjell Westö. Their novels challenge the neo-patriotic “idealized and romanticized” (Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 451) discourse of the war that began to dominate the Finnish memory culture after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Among the themes discussed are the alliance with the Germans (see also Nina Säaskilahti’s contribution in this volume), the mistreatment of Soviet prisoners of war and the experiences of the communists, not to mention the children and women, whose fate many of these novelists describe.
- 5 Besides the idealistic-epic, realistic and postmodernist traditions mentioned above, other, partly overlapping, traditions can be distinguished in Finnish war literature. These are the mythologic-lyric tradition represented for example by Yrjö Jylhä’s poems written during the Winter War (*The Purgatory* [“Kiirastuli”], 1941), the still popular documentary tradition, modernists headed by Veijo Meri with his somewhat grotesque narratives, and the new-mythologising tradition, in which the national tendencies are once again foregrounded. Niemi 1999: 118–121.

- 6 Emigration from Finland and especially from southern Ostrobothnia to North America was large in the end of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century for economic and political reasons.
- 7 Reviewers have used such terms as Magical Realism and Postmodernism to characterise Sund's style, and he has been compared with internationally well-known writers, such as Salman Rushdie, Gabriel García Márquez, Kurt Vonnegut and Günter Grass. See e.g. Hämäläinen 1997; Rantanen 2003; Ingström 2004.
- 8 In Finland, the law against the production and sale of alcohol was in force between 1919 and 1932. The law was not accepted by the public, and hence smuggling was a widespread practice.
- 9 The postmodern historical novel "uses and abuses" the conventions of earlier literary genres. Hutcheon 1988. Sund's repertoire includes such devices as footnotes, addressing the reader, and a frame narrative with audience, which were avidly used in the classical historical novel, by the founding father of the genre in Finland Zacharias Topelius among others (see also Hatavara's contribution in the present volume).
- 10 The first two volumes have also been translated into German and *Erik's Book* into Danish and Estonian.
- 11 The film was premiered in September 2007. The central themes of the film are shame, bitterness and reconciliation. Instead of the Magical Realism of the novels, the director Claes Olsson decided to use a classic, epic style without irony. Aihonen 2007.
- 12 In the matriculation examination of 2007, the students had to analyse the concept of the narrator in an extract taken from Sund's *The Shopkeeper's Son*. The task was difficult and provoked discussion. Elina Kouki (2009) focused on the matriculation examination of 2007 in her dissertation, which examined how literary terms are taught in textbooks. She criticised the teaching of literary concepts in upper secondary school and the Matriculation Examination Board, which caused complaints especially from those in charge of the examination. Additionally, many secondary schools and upper secondary schools have included Sund's novels in the reading lists, and there was, for example, a large project in the upper secondary school in Pyhäjoki in 2002, where students produced texts, drawings and other visualisations based on Sund's *Colorado Avenue*.
- 13 The postmodernism and metafictionality of the Siklax trilogy have been addressed in articles: e.g. Malmio 2005 and 2008 and Ojajärvi 2005. Åsa Stenwall (2006) has studied the migration and the rootlessness of the characters.
- 14 Astrid Erll bases her concept of literature as a medium of cultural memory on Paul Ricoeur's tripartite mimesis model, where "the literary world-making rests on ... the interaction among the 'prefiguration' of the text, that is, its reference to the already existent extratextual world (mimesis₁); the 'textual' configuration, with its major operation of emplotment, which creates a fictional world (mimesis₂); and the 'refiguration' by the reader (mimesis₃). In this approach, literature appears as an active, constructive process, in which cultural systems of meaning, narrative operations, and reception participate equally ...". Erll 2011: 152.
- 15 In his article about the possibilities of representation in literature, Harri Veivo (2010: 151–153) refers to Jean Bessière (1999) and Jørgen Diner Johansen (2002). The former sees literature as a metarepresentation because of its habit of using existing representations and its ability to analyse and question the material used; the latter thinks that literature emulates the discourses of society, but is not obliged to comply with their rules.
- 16 All citations are translated by the author unless otherwise noted.
- 17 This scene is one example of Sund's postmodern style of using metalepsis: the transgression of narrative and ontological boundaries is frequent in all three novels. In the Siklax trilogy, metalepsis is used on several occasions to enable

- figures from different times or ontological levels to enter into dialogue, as in the episode mentioned, where Gorbachev addresses Erik Smeds after announcing his resignation from the presidency. On metalepsis as a postmodern device, see McHale 1987: 119–130.
- 18 The duality of the historical novel that has troubled both writers and scholars since the very beginning of the genre also rears its head regarding referentiality. The fictionality of the historical novel, e.g. the appearance of fictive characters, cannot be judged for being inaccurate or incomplete, but when it comes to the historical side, they are, to quote Ann Rigney, “theoretically open to scrutiny, supplementation, and correction”. Readers react differently to those facts they consider historical, that is, to the information of which they have prior knowledge. Readers supplement or contradict the description of the novel; they also eagerly find real life counterparts for the fictive characters and locations. Rigney 2001: 39–41.
 - 19 For the background of the AKS and the heated language conflict, see e.g. Jussila, Hentilä & Nevakivi 1999: 143–147, and 165–168. For the mentalities of the interwar period and the stereotyping of ethnic groups, see also Ilona Pikkanen’s contribution in this volume.
 - 20 There is also a character called Karr in Sund’s *Colorado Avenue*. Lieutenant Karr is Erik’s close friend and he is also trained in Locksted camp. Karr shoots himself in March 1918 just as it is implied that Hemmer’s character does.
 - 21 This idea is repeated several times; see also *Colorado Avenue*: 59, 167 and *Erik’s Book*: 25, 491.
 - 22 *Finlandia* has been compared to the national flag as both symbolise the sacrifices of the nation. Välimäki 2008: 84–86.
 - 23 The term ‘founding trauma’ was coined by Dominic LaCapra, who uses it to refer to the social and historical aspects of a traumatic event. A founding trauma typically has “a tendentious ideological role” and relates, for example, to a nation’s self-image. LaCapra 1999: 724, quoted in Sundholm 2007: 118–119. John Sundholm (2007: 125–126) argues for Laine’s film to be the founding trauma due to its National Romantic interpretation of Linna’s novel. Additionally, the film (released in December 1955) coincided with the war-related political events of 1956; one of these was the publication of General K. L. Oesch’s account of the battles on the Karelian Isthmus in 1944. He interpreted the end of the war as a defensive victory, in which Finland had lost the war and yet had won itself independence. Thus, both the film and the new interpretation endowed the bitterly lost war with some collective meaning.
 - 24 Laine’s version of *The Unknown Soldier* has become a ritualised event as the national television broadcasting company has decided to show the film every Independence Day since the 1990s. Sundholm 2007: 135.
 - 25 According to Sundholm (2007: 121, 124) even this sarcastic remark was turned “into a melodramatic truism” in the film.
 - 26 Shortly after the war, the debate on Finland’s role in relation to Nazi Germany began: Finnish historians stressed the separate war thesis, whereas the foreign scholars saw Finland knowingly allied with Germany. The so-called driftwood-theory, according to which Finland involuntarily became involved in the war, has been refuted during recent decades; it is now conceded that Finland allied with Germany to regain the territories lost in the Winter War. The nationalistic dreams about Greater Finland endorsed especially by the Academic Karelian Society between the wars were also regenerated. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 442; Kivimäki & Tepora 2012: 249–252.
 - 27 The legend of Simo Häyhä is very much alive as there have been several books about his life since 1998, including a comic book. In the titles, he is referred to as the ‘White Death’ or the war hero.

- 28 Military training invests in conditioning techniques for the purpose that soldiers would “overcome their innate resistance to killing their fellow human beings”. According to Grossman (1996: 4, 13) with the proper conditioning almost anyone can kill.
- 29 Disguising one’s emotions has long traditions; it is characteristic e.g. of Runeberg’s poems. Kempainen 2006: 257.
- 30 Sund himself has mentioned Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-five, or the children’s crusade: a duty-dance with death* (1968) as one example for his style. Ingström 2003. In *The Shopkeeper’s Son* (see pp. 25–26) the bloody history of the twentieth century is described by winding a videotape backwards, which recalls the scene in Vonnegut’s novel where Billy Pilgrim watches a war film.
- 31 The placement of random events successively is often enough to build a connection between them, and, as Wesseling (1991: 133) says, “teleological continuity is a property of narrative rather than of the object that narrative aims to represent”.
- 32 The best way to catch the attention of the critics (and readers) is to get the historical facts wrong. Ulla-Lena Lundberg received harsh criticism as reviewers pointed out several lapses in her war novel *The Marzipan Soldier* (“Marsipansoldaten”, 2001; for the criticism see e.g. Karonen 2001). The novel was nominated for the Finlandia Prize for Fiction and for the Nordic Council Literature Prize, and in the reviews it was praised for its description of the home front. The interpretation as a whole is rarely challenged, but by refuting the details, the critics may undermine the writer’s authority (Rigney 2001: 50–52). In the case of *The Marzipan Soldier*, the writer was a Finland-Swedish woman, thus representing two minority groups among the authors of Finnish war history. In his column on *The Marzipan Soldier* Lars Sund questions the stubborn way of reading historical novels referentially, which he sees as a manifestation of the fact that the wars are still fundamentally important to our self-image as a nation. Instead of hunting for factual errors, we should “discuss how our collective memory works and what we try to tell ourselves about history”. Sund 2001.
- 33 True to his nature, Otto, the famous smuggler of the prohibition era, does not become an ace pilot during the wars but a black market dealer.
- 34 On the new military history, see e.g. Joanna Bourke’s article (2006). In recent years, some studies that discuss the wars from this new perspective have been published in Finland, for example *The Ugly War. The Silenced History of The Winter and The Continuation Wars* (“Ruma sota. Talvi- ja jatkosodan vaiettu historia”, 2008) which addresses drug abuse among soldiers, the cruelty at the front and homosexuality. *Human being at war. The Winter and Continuation Wars in the Finnish experience* (“Ihminen sodassa. Suomalaisten kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodasta”, 2006) also focuses on previously neglected themes.
- 35 Sund (2008) mentions his expectations in a column that discusses the sensation caused by Katariina Lillqvist’s puppet animation *The Butterfly of the Urals* (“Uralin perhonen”, 2008). The film was condemned fiercely, because it represented C. G. E. Mannerheim, still a highly revered national hero, as a homosexual dressed in a purple corset. Sanna Karkulehto (2011: 178–179, 183, 189–190), a Finnish scholar specialising in queer and gender studies, has analysed the reception of the film, and she sees the focus on sexuality shutting out the discussion of a more painful issue, the Civil War. Mannerheim, the commander of the Whites, is usually represented as a righteous officer, who didn’t permit field executions, whereas in Lillqvist’s film he is depicted as a butcher of the Reds, the losing party of the war. Lillqvist defended herself and tried to lead the discussion to historically relevant issues, but those involved in the debate avoided addressing this side of the film and changed the topic back to sexuality. Instead of homosexuality “[p]olitics and history were closeted”, writes Karkulehto, “the painful, wilfully forgotten Civil War history, which has remained a silenced topic in Finland’s national discourses and

- narratives”. One reason to avoid discussion about the Civil War that divided the nation is “the mythical conception of a unified nation without inner differences” cherished by the neo-patriotic narrative. Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 470.
- 36 This article is partly based on an article published in the journal *Ennen ja nyt* (see Hietasaari 2010). The writing of this article was supported by the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation.

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Postface

Multidirectional Fictions

Critical surveys of the historical novel have tended to follow one of two paths. On the one hand, there have been studies of the rise and fall of historical fiction throughout Europe in the nineteenth century: focusing on a canon of exemplary practitioners such as Scott, Manzoni, Hugo, Tolstoy, and so on, these describe the extraordinary popularity of the genre for a large part of the nineteenth century, sketch its shifting relation to an increasingly professionalised historiography, and describe its gradual 'descent' into the realm of boy's books and ladies' romances (Maxwell 2009; Hamnett 2011). On the other hand, there have been studies whose main emphasis is on the post-Second World War period: referring to an emerging canon of writers, these studies relate historical fiction to traumatic experience (Elias 2001; Suleiman 2006) and to an increasing reflexivity regarding the very possibility of historical truth (Hutcheon 1988). From this bifurcating scholarship, it would appear that the historical novel is either a phenomenon particular to the nineteenth century or a contemporary one; at the very last, that it is a genre with a discontinuous history (see most recently, de Groot 2010), with each phase in its development demanding a different set of analytical tools.

Novels, Histories, Novel Nations convincingly breaks through this ingrained mould, by taking as its point of departure not literary highpoints or the literary genre as such, but the evolution of the genre within a particular cultural context over a longer period of time. *In der Beschränkung zeigt Sich erst der Meister*, Goethe once wrote with reference to poetry, but the same might be said of scholarship. By focusing on a smaller geographical area, rather than the European arena as a whole, the present volume can afford to treat its subject in depth and over a longer period, including the inter-war years, which turn out to have been productive in Finland and Estonia. As important is the fact that by adopting the framework of cultural memory studies rather than literary history as such, it is able to transcend a purely aesthetic approach and go beyond the methodological textualism (the idea that individual texts are the natural unit of analysis) that has long held literary criticism in its grip. While not ignoring the particular qualities of individual works, this collection's overall concern is with traditions of writing rather than with isolated highpoints, and with the cultural work they performed in the two countries in the ongoing articulation of national identities.

For the reader unfamiliar with Estonian and Finnish writing, *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations* provides a first introduction to a rich array of writers and historical novels and a rich and vital literary tradition (we learn among other things that no fewer than 25 new historical novels were published in Finland in the first eight months of 2013). There are none of the usual suspects from the international canon here, although there are several writers who would seem to deserve a wider international audience. The English reader will repeatedly encounter themes which are regionally specific as well as themes that resonate with those preoccupying writers elsewhere in Europe. The immediate result is an expansion of the archive of European literature, and the realisation that the frame of reference offered in previous studies is actually limited. The sheer range of the materials offered here 'queers' the canon as it were, and challenges us to think again about the representativity of the frame of reference employed in even the most comparative and wide-ranging views of European literature and of the historical novel (Pittock 2006; Maxwell 2009).

There is even more at stake, however, than expanding the international archive of historical fiction. The view from the perspective of what on the basis of scale and international salience one could call a 'minority literature' is not just a matter of adding new names like Zacharias Topelius, Lydia Koidula, Rudolf Sirge, and Lars Sund to the international repertoire. More importantly, the view from this small corner of North-East Europe provides the basis for new theoretical perspectives on the role of the historical novel in nation building, both past and present. And the key to its value lies in the fact that the editors have not just taken a single country or two single countries, but the entangled histories of Estonia, Finland and the wider region as the starting point for in-depth investigation. In this case one plus one does not just make two tiny nations.

For even as it focuses on nation building, the volume's scope is regional and transnational. Throughout we see the mutual mirroring of these two countries, who shared a common fate as subalterns vis-à-vis their imperial neighbour until their separation through the years of communist rule, followed by their recent convergence again within the framework of the EU. The nation state provides a working framework in which to study cultural memory, then, but as these chapters demonstrate wonderfully, the categories of 'Finland' and 'Estonia' are anything but fixed or discrete. The useful survey of the history of both countries offered at the beginning of the volume makes clear just how complicated the history of the present-day countries has been, how deeply involved they were with their neighbours in the wider region, how deeply scarred by different forms of colonialism and occupation, and how fraught by different ethnic and linguistic fault-lines. Nation building in the two countries was linked, as it was elsewhere in Europe, to the cultivation of a privileged national language; the cases here show how behind this there often lay the reality of people converting from one language to another and changing their name in the process (from Swedish to Finnish, German to Estonian, or Estonian to Russian as the case may be), or of people writing about one culture in the language of another. In short, present-day Finland-Estonia offers a deeply complicated arena in which to study the complex

processes whereby groups have historically shaped their identity in relation to multiple others; this applies down to the fraught issue, discussed here in a subtle chapter by Aare Pilv, of how to re-interpret works of Estonian-inflected Soviet Realism and give these works a place in the cultural memory of independent Estonia with its still significant Russian minority.

This entangled arena also provided an ideal breeding ground for the historical novel. In order to see why this should have been the case, however, we need to turn to the beginnings of the historical novel in another periphery on the North-West corner of Europe and to Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814), often taken as the prototype for the nineteenth-century avatars of the genre. In his refreshing discussion of *Waverley* (1814), Ian Duncan has identified the core of Scott's work in terms that help move characterisations of the genre away from the traditional preoccupation with its epistemologically hybrid mixing of fact and fiction. Locating the key to Scott's legacy in a preoccupation with 'borders', Duncan argues that the core of the *Waverley* narrative is in "the location of history as the site of cultural difference and transitions, where identities and languages collide, mix and exchange properties, as they define, transform, absorb, or dissolve one another" (Duncan 2006: 172). Seen from this perspective, the historical novel becomes much more than an epistemological misfit that descended into costume drama and rose again after the Second World War, and comes into visibility as a resource for dealing imaginatively with cultural, social, and ethnic differences. And indeed borderlands and other liminal sites where inter-cultural encounters, negotiations, and conflicts occur have been key locations for many high-profile historical novels (see also Moretti 1998), from Scott's *Waverley* and Balzac's *Chouans* (1829) to Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter* (1836) and Tolstoy's *Cossacks* (1863), and more recently, Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011). This thematic continuity indicates that historical fiction has been an important site for narrativising and dramatising social life in terms of border conflicts, its dramas located at the interfaces between different groups rather than within the experiences of any single group (Lukács had already noted this basic principle, albeit from within a Marxist framework which saw class struggle as key to everything else; Lukács 1965). A new way to look at the history of the genre, then, would be in terms of this privileged relationship to the depiction of conflict, be this an international conflict (across state boundaries) or an intra-national one (across localities and classes), and be it in the form of outright warfare or in the less overt form of the negotiation of cultural differences. Perpetual Peace appears particularly inimical to the historical novel and, in this light, there may be more continuity between the nineteenth century and the meta-fictions of the post-war period than first meets the eye.

This conclusion began to impose itself as I read *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations* about so many stories about so many wars. Conflict, oppression, struggle: these provided a sad but undeniable continuity between the nineteenth-century 'classical form,' when the oppression of Estonians and Finns by their imperial rulers was paramount, and its post-Second World War analogues when the legacy of Sovietisation, Civil War, and the Second World War took centre stage. Seen in this way as a site where conflict

is continuously depicted and retrospectively interpreted, the historical novel has a particular role to play in memory cultures in the imaginative negotiation of ‘difference and transition’, to recall Duncan’s terms. This applies as much to the realist novels of Bornhöhe and Rudolf Sirge as it does to the postmodern fictions of Lars Sund.

Since cultural memory, as recent theorists have insisted, is necessarily ‘relational’ (Olick 2007) and identity is dialogic (Ricoeur 1990), and since the heart of strong stories is a clash of some sort between two parties, creative story-telling is an important resource in the production of cultural memory and collective identity. Even if it doesn’t stick to the facts, and perhaps precisely because it doesn’t, historical fiction helps provide new models for social relations in the present. Certainly this collection of essays provides many examples to support such a view: in one novel after another, we encounter stories in which a central subject, inflected as Estonian or Finnish as the case may be, struggles for dominion with some ‘Other’. That Other may be socially, ethnically or politically defined, and often involves the intersection between all three fault-lines, which is not surprising given the tendency within nineteenth-century nationalist thought to locate the essence of the nation in the peasantry. A good example of such intersectionality can be found in Mari Hatavara’s discussion of *The Surgeon’s Stories* (1853–1867) by the Swedish-Finnish author Topelius. This major work of fiction embeds in a multi-layered fictional text an account of the historical struggle between Finns and Swedes, which also coincides with that between the peasants and the nobility: the story ends with a newly imagined national unity based on reconciliation between former antagonists, which is strongly reminiscent of *Ivanhoe*’s reconciliation between Normans and Saxons in Scott’s international bestseller from 1819. In the later novels discussed here, the conflicts run along different lines (as in Aarno Karimo’s short stories about the Civil War in Finland), but the basic principle of using fiction to depict and reconcile divisions in the body politic, sometimes through the mediation of a romance, remains the same, even if the tone is less celebratory.

The real surprise in all of this, however, is not the depiction of conflict as such, but the workings of multidirectionality in the choice of topic and narrative model. I use ‘multidirectionality’ here following Michael Rothberg’s discussion of the ways in which the cultural memory of the Holocaust and that of colonialism have hit off each other in mutually productive ways, with one case being used *mutatis mutandis* as a screen for narrating the story of the other (Rothberg 2009). The evidence presented in *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations* indicates that the principle of multidirectionality is not limited to the extreme cases central to Rothberg’s model, but is structurally at work along multiple lines in the fiction under review here. Particularly striking in this regard are the writings of Lydia Koidula, the pen-name for Lydia Jannsen, a German-educated Estonian writer and a key figure in the Estonian ‘National Awakening’, who wrote historical fiction in Tartu and later in Kronstadt in Russia. As Piret Peiker explains here, her novella *Juudit, or the Last Maroons of Jamaica* (1870) does not deal with Estonian history in any direct way, but narrates instead the story of runaway slaves fighting the British in the Caribbean. In a fascinatingly indirect genealogy, this story about Jamaica,

inspired by German literary models, was read in Estonia as being relevant to that subaltern nation's struggle for independence vis-à-vis both a German elite and the Russian empire. In other words, the memory of a group located elsewhere, as mediated by literary models from yet somewhere else, worked multidirectionally as a projection screen for contemporary anti-colonialist concerns at home. While *Juudit* and other works by Koidula are particularly remarkable for taking their inspiration from off-shore European colonialism, they are not the only examples of historical fiction written in one country that depict events occurring at a distant location. If we take it that this historical fiction was helping to build up national memory using the prosthesis of fiction (Landsberg 2004), we have also to admit that this prosthetic national memory included many extraterritorial events and characters – including ancient Egyptians and Crusaders at Acre – that were significant only in indirect ways or by way of analogy for Estonia and Finland.

The multidirectional workings of memory are most obvious when foreign groups located elsewhere are used to address issues at home. But the more one reads about the enduring fascination with stories about the Middle Ages (including the Estonian Viking novels of the 1930s, discussed here by Linda Kaljundi), the more it becomes apparent that multidirectionality is also at work along a diachronic axis. We could call this 'diachronic multidirectionality'. How else can we explain the recurring depictions of Viking incursions, medieval serfdom, and the Baltic Crusades of the Teutonic Knights (as in Bornhöhe's *The Avenger* (1880)), than through the fact that the lives of peoples at other times and often other places were somehow considered relevant *mutatis mutandis* to the present? Particularly striking in this regard is the recurrence of the 1343 St. George's Night uprising of peasants against their Danish and German overlords as a memory site in Estonian fiction, figuring in novels right up to recent work (1970–1980) by Jaan Kross.

This phenomenon of 'diachronic multidirectionality' serves as a reminder that cultural memory can involve an imagined relation to a distant and remote past, as much as to the experiences of previous generations. This bears some emphasis in view of the recent tendency to privilege the autobiographical and the familial as paradigmatic for memory at large: one of the consequences of the emergence of 'testimony' as a dominant cultural form in the post-Second World War era is that theories of cultural memory have become increasingly dominated by ideas of postmemory (Hirsch 1997) and the question of how experience can be carried over from one generation to the next along filiative lines. The result has not only been a growing interest in the family, rather than the nation, as the social frame par excellence for cultural memory, but also a temporal foreshortening to the span of one or two generations. However important personal testimonies and familial relations are, however, they should not be seen as exhausting the phenomenon of cultural memory, which works as much along lines of voluntary affiliation as of direct descent (Said 1984). Indeed Renan's famous definition of nationality in 1882 specifically included the idea of voluntary association in a common cause (Renan 1947: 61), while the idea of voluntary affiliation is also key to more recent discussions of transnational memory (Rigney 2012).

The concept of ‘prosthetic memory’, mentioned earlier, fulfils in part the need for a vocabulary with which to describe the ‘artificial’ forms of memory whereby people affiliate themselves with the experiences of other groups with the help of media. Landsberg’s emphasis, however, is on engagements with the recent past linked to the sense of being contemporaries in a common world. ‘Diachronic multidirectionality’ draws attention instead to the power of prosthetic memory to make great leaps across time to events and experiences that are apparently not connected in any direct, linear or biological way with the present (as in postmemory), but which may nevertheless be relevant for contemporary subjects. In such cases, the more or less distant past works as a screen with which to tell the story of the present in an indirect or deflected way. The many examples of medieval-themed novels written in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries bear this out. Perhaps the best and most poignant illustration of this principle would be Kippel’s *Meelis* (1941), published shortly before the author’s death during the siege of Leningrad, which depicts the joint struggle of an Estonian boy and a Russian prince against the German crusaders during the siege of Tartu in 1224.

With some notable exceptions, most of the novels discussed here were written by people who firmly believed in the unique identity and destiny of Estonia or Finland, and were committed to advancing the cause of national sovereignty. What emerges from the presentation of these two ‘Novel Nations’, however, is not only the complexity of this nation-building process but above all its paradoxically transnational character. This is evident in the common emergence of the historical novel in the two countries and indeed across Europe, but also in the ways in which, through the influence of literature, models of remembrance and stories circulated across the shifting and contested borders of states and cultures. Above all it shows how historical fiction, by making deviations into the past, produces screen memories that work multidirectionally in negotiating dilemmas in the present. Even the national past is another country.

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Abstract

Novels, Histories, Novel Nations

Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia

Edited by Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes & Ilona Pikkanen

This volume addresses the prominent, and in many ways highly similar, role that historical fiction has played in the formation of the two neighbouring 'young nations', Finland and Estonia. It gives a multi-sided overview of the function of the historical novel during different periods of Finnish and Estonian history from the 1800s until the present day, and it provides detailed close-readings of selected authors and literary trends in their social, political and cultural contexts. This book addresses nineteenth-century 'fictional foundations', historical fiction of the new nation states in the interwar period as well as post-Second World War Soviet Estonian novels and modern historiographic metafiction.

The overall focus is on traditions of writing rather than on isolated highpoints; on chains of transnational influences and on narrative elements that recur both synchronically and diachronically. The volume shows historical fiction prefigured many narratives, tropes, heroes and events that academic history writing later adopted. The comparison of the two literary traditions also opens up a much broader view of how historical novels narrate the nation. While existing explorations of historical fiction have mostly been written from the perspective of the old and great nations, this book shows that the traditions of the young nations 'without history' often challenge many mainstream views on the genre.

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