

# Layering the Past, Framing History: Leena Lander's Historical Novel *Käsky* (2003) on the Finnish Civil War

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## Abstract

This article investigates the means used by one historical novel to embody, discuss and thematise diversity in the past and in history. Through an analysis of the Finnish historical novel *The Order* (*Käsky*, 2003) by Leena Lander, the article demonstrates how several embedded levels enable the author to present various competing interpretations of the historical events depicted. Lander's novel incorporates and utilises many narrative and intertextual levels in order to discuss the issues of representing reality and understanding the past. The discussion makes evident the relative and ideological nature of any historical representation, and encourages the reader to reflect on her historical understanding, as well. The article first looks at how the storyworld is mediated through the characters' experiences; second, analyses some of the most important intertexts of the novel; and third, discusses the role of photography as an intermedial allusion in the novel's storyworld. In its emphasis on repetition and modification, *The Order* suggests that the very acts of re-textualising and re-contextualising are essential to history and historical writing.

## Keywords

Historical fiction, historical representation, narrative embedding, intertextuality, experientiality, photography in literature

‘All historical events are past events but not all past events are historical events’ (Hyrkkänen 2009: 263). This quote from a historian, inspired by the philosophy of history of R. G. Collingwood, states a fact both self-evident and theoretically challenging. What parts of the past become history? And why does history change all the time, even though the past does not? The specific potentials of literary fiction to inform and modify our views on history have been acknowledged lately, even to the extent that using the arts to imagine the past has been considered to challenge historiographical practices (see Fay 2002: 1; Adhikari 2002: 43, 47; Demos 2005: 329-330; Harlan 2005: 143). When it comes to cultural memory and a shared understanding of the past, the creative reworking and crafting of artificial memories may prove more influential than representations that strictly follow the facts (see Rigney 2004).

This article emphasises the potential of fiction to adopt many-layered textual and narrative structures, a quality which enables a thematisation of the processes of history-writing in several ways. Standard definitions of fiction rely on the presence of several narrative layers to distinguish fiction from other genres. In fiction, the author and the narrator are separated (Genette 1993 [1991]: 69-78), and a narrator may have a privileged position, superior to that of the narrated characters in, for example, the representation of consciousness (Cohn 1978: 5, 112-113). For this reason, fiction may present human minds or the inner feelings and intentions of a character in ways unattainable in other media (Cohn 1999: 25-27, 123). Increased critical attention has also been paid in recent years to the use of fictionality as a rhetorical resource outside the generic boundaries of fiction (see Nielsen et al 2015, Hatavara forthcoming). Moreover, as David Herman (2011: 10) argues ‘the procedures used to engage with the minds evoked in fictional narratives necessarily piggyback on those used to interpret minds encountered in other contexts (and vice versa)’. This article puts the emphasis on the ‘vice versa’ and investigates how fictional techniques evident in narrative embeddedness facilitate the discussion of historical events and their interpretations.

In addition to the narrative levels of narrators and characters, fiction may use several textual levels – paratexts, frame narratives and

intertextual links – to make evident the constructed and perspectival nature of any representation of the past. As a system of quotations between both narrative and textual levels, fiction always calls into question the processes of modification (see Yacobi 2000: 713-718). This is even more so in the case of historical fiction, which takes previous historical representations as necessary subtexts (see Ankersmit 2001: 11, 29-30, 252; Rigney 1990: 12-13, 28-29). Therefore, historical fiction uses, modifies and contests the previous representations of the historical events portrayed (cf. Hatavara 2012).

This article studies the textual and narrative layers of a historical novel by Leena Lander called *The Order* (*Käsky* in the original Finnish, from 2003). The emphasis is on analyzing the ways the embedded levels enable the author to present various competing interpretations of the historical events depicted. The novel is set during the Finnish Civil War in 1918, and it focuses on the role and treatment of female soldiers. The two sides of the war roughly coincided with the lines between the higher and lower classes, between rich and poor, and between right-wing and left-wing: the former were called Whites and the latter Reds. The Reds had about 2000 female soldiers, and *The Order* is a fictional story of one of them right after the war was won by the Whites. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist, Miina Malin, is captured and taken to a prison camp, where famine, maltreatment and random executions prevail. The story of the novel begins with a depiction of Miina's brutal rape by a group of soldiers on the White side. In this way the theme of inequality between social classes and between genders is introduced immediately. The winners of the war, the Whites, use their position of power ruthlessly.

Lander's novel *The Order* has several narrative modes and focalisations, uses both past and present tense, and utilises prolepsis and analepsis. The many intertextual references further add to the textual and perspectival richness of the novel. The novel begins with an excerpt from a real historical source, then has a short chapter with a character as focaliser in the storyworld, followed by a frame story by an authorial narrator – all this before the main narrative. While the female protagonist, Miina Malin, is from the Red side, the White side is represented by two men: Aaro Harjula, a *jaeger* trained by the

German army, and Emil Hallenberg, the head of the prison camp. All the main characters suffer from traumatic events in their personal past: Miina was unable to protect her little sister from sexual assault and is herself attacked after her capture; Aaro has second thoughts about his ethics as a soldier due to the war descending into the killing of civilians and surrendered soldiers; and Emil, at first enthusiastic about what he sees as a just cause, is likewise disillusioned by the atrocities of the war. This triangle of characters compete over a secret of more general interest, involving the past of the prison camp. A former sanatorium for the mentally ill has been brutally taken by the Whites, the patients killed or left to starve, and, faced with this, the director has committed suicide. Emil wants to uphold the ideology of the Whites as saviours of the fatherland and protectors of justice, so he needs to conceal the brutalities of the White side. Aside from saving herself, Miina is determined to expose the brutalities to the public. Photographs become crucial evidence in the storyworld, whereas the intertexts document the hundred-year-old opinions and points of view for the reader of the novel.

In what follows, I will study the textual and narrative frames offered for past events in the novel. Historical intertexts and historically representative characters express competing interests, giving the reader multiple perspectives on the construction of history. By its nature, history is always framed by competing intentions, and contrasting interpretations are made evident in the novel. What is more, the personal experience of those involved in the events as they unfold is presented. This multiplicity of perspectives and intentions is represented through fictional embeddedness of narrative and textual layers. My article analyses the means and modes of fiction used to partake in the discussion of the writing of history. I will first look at how the storyworld is mediated through the characters' experiences; second, examine some of the most important intertexts and their interpretative importance; and third, discuss the role of photography in the storyworld. All these features of the novel together embody, discuss and thematise diversity in the past and in history.

## Experience in the Past

Recent cognitively inspired narratological theories have placed human experientiality at the core of narrative (Fludernik 1996: 12-13, 28-30; 2003: 244-247). The question of how it feels to live through events in a storyworld is understood to be uniquely highlighted in narratives (Herman 2009: 73-74). At the beginning of the novel, the reader of *The Order* is offered a view of the events through someone in the middle of them. After a peritextual quotation, the novel begins with the following chapter.

Mies nousee ylös. Napittaa housunsa ja vielä takkinsakin. Kaivaa esiin savukelaatikon.

Palaako?

Ei kiitos.

Mies sytyttää omansa, seisoo siinä hajareisin koko sotilaallisessa uljaudessaan. Ääni silti kuin uusinta piirustustaan esittelevän koulupojan.

No? Miltäs tuntui?

Nainen nousee istumaan, vetää hameenhelmat paljaitten sääriensä suojaksi, oikoo hiuksia mutta varoo pyyhkimästä silmiä.

Panolta pano tuntuu, hän sanoo ilmeettömästi.

Mies nyppii tupakanmursia kieleltään, vetää henkisauhut. Kulmakarvojen väliin on ilmestynyt ryppejä. Ryhdissä on tapahtunut hienoinen muutos.

Vai niin.

Ulkona on pimeää. Huoneessa hiljaista. Voi kuulla kellon tikityksen. On liian hiljaista.

*Vai niin.*

Mies menee ovelle, lähes marssii, avaa sen.

Miksi musiikki ei soi? Koska minä olen antanut luvan lopettaa?

Keltainen savu leijuu lampun yllä, miehen niska pisaroi hikeä.

Hän kutsuu – komentaa – muita miehiä, nimeltä mainiten.

Kun ne tulevat, nainen ajattelee tuulista jäätikköä, sillä kiitävää koiravaljakkoa. Kohman veriseksi repimiä jänteitä. Kipua ja

pimeyttä. Hän ajattelee kuun poikki kulkevia pilviä ja palelevan matkaajan ruoskaa. Seutua, jolla lumimies liikkuu. Maailman yksinäisintä olentoa. Järkälemäistä, tunnotonta ja aina nälkäistä. Ken häneen uskoo.

Ja kas, pianokin soi taas.

Ja se soi.

Se soi.

Se soi.

Se soi.

(Lander 2003: 7-8, emphasis in original.)

(A man gets up. Buttons up his trousers and his jacket, too. Digs up a box of cigarettes.

‘Want one?’

‘No thanks.’

The man lights his cigarette and stands there, legs akimbo, in all his military glory, his voice still like a schoolboy’s showing off his newest drawing.

‘Well? How was it for you?’

The woman sits up, draws the hem of her skirt down to cover her bare legs and straightens her hair, but is careful not to wipe her eyes.

‘A fuck feels like a fuck,’ she says blankly.

Man picks flecks of tobacco off his tongue, draws on the cigarette and inhales. Wrinkles have appeared between his eyebrows. A slight change has taken place in his demeanour.

‘I see.’

It’s dark outside. It’s quiet in the room. You can hear the clock ticking. It’s too quiet.

*I see.*

The man goes to the door, almost marches, opens it.

‘Why isn’t the music playing? When did I give permission for it to stop?’

Yellow smoke hovers above the lamp; the man’s neck is beaded with sweat.

He calls – orders – other men, by their names.

When they come, woman thinks of a windy glacier, a dog sled speeding on it. Sinews torn bloody by the freeze. Pain and darkness. She thinks about clouds travelling across the moon and the freezing traveller's whip. The country where the snowman travels. The world's loneliest being. Ponderous, numb and always hungry.

If you believe in him.

And look, the piano is playing again.

And it plays.

It plays.

It plays.

It plays.)

This extract indirectly describes a rape by a group of soldiers. The tense is the present, which pinpoints the time of telling to the time of experiencing. The reader, becoming immersed in the storyworld, is partly transported into the story time, at the moment of the events unraveling. Two sentences in the perfect tense also fit this effect: they report changes (wrinkles between the eyebrows, the change in posture) when they are noticed, even though it may not be at the exact same time as it happens. Thus the perceiving remains in the immediate moment throughout.

The illusion of simultaneous experiencing and telling is further intensified by the order of telling, which follows the temporal order of events. This illusion of telling at the present moment is broken only in the sentence introducing the second line by the man: 'his voice still like a schoolboy's showing off his newest drawing'. In the text, this description is before the line where this tone of voice is used and could therefore be heard. This deviation from the simultaneous experiencing and telling in the storyworld helps the reader, however, better immerse herself in the events portrayed: since the reader knows the tone used in saying the quote, she may test the tone in her mind while reading the line.

In addition to this information on the tone of voice, the characters' sensations of sounds are frequently described. Particularly expressive is the repetition of 'It plays' at the end of the quotation. It highlights

the being in the moment, as the words may be interpreted to resound the whole time when repeated in the text. Since this is the end of the short chapter, the ending of the text may not be the ending of the sound in the storyworld. The sound, like most of the things perceived and described, is experienced by the woman under assault. The beginning of the last longer paragraph ('When they come, woman thinks of') brings together what happens and what the woman is thinking. Her thoughts do not directly link with the events, but analogical relationships between the woman's experience and the dog sled she thinks about are apparent (torn sinews, pain and darkness). Additionally, the repetition of the same two words at the end may be interpreted to imitate the rape as a physical movement. The end of the text leaves the reader in the ongoing situation just as the woman in the storyworld is left in it. For all these reasons, this short chapter between the peritextual quotation and the frame story strongly communicates the experience – suffering – of the female protagonist, both via direct access to her sensory experience and thought and with the use of analogies.

For the aims of this article, it is important to notice that the emphasis on and access to the experiencing subject is connected with the indirect portrayal of the rape. This indirectness strikes the reader strongly, since it forces her to picture the events herself and make sense of what in particular happens. Because the text lacks an agent who would name the happenings and give them a rationale, this is left for the reader to do. The third person narrator outside the storyworld uses only general nominators of the persons involved: the man, the woman and they (the other men). The rather loose description with details (the yellow smoke, the man's neck beading with sweat) is more expressive than a precise call for the reader to incorporate her own cognitive scripts to a great extent in making sense of the text.

The generalising yet emotional description of the events in the quotation provokes the reader's basic level schemata – those based on real world knowledge of sexual violence – and at the same time suggests the perspectival schema of experiencing from the woman's personal point of view (cf. Fludernik 2003: 144). It is her sensory experience through which the world is mediated. However, even though the telling

temporarily coincides with the experiencing, the experiencer is not the teller: the novel has a third-person narrator outside the storyworld who can take liberties with the characters. Parts of the narrative may be interpreted not only to follow the woman's character focalisation but also to quote her words. Particularly interesting is the italicised "I see." It repeats the words uttered by the man and is followed by the woman's uneasy observation of the awkward, threatening darkness and silence. The last words of the man echo in the mind of the woman as she is trying to make sense of them and of the situation in general. Even though the words remain the same, they carry different meanings when they become part of, and the object of, the woman's thoughts. The layers to be considered in the interpretation include 1) the man, who first spoke the words, 2) the woman, in whose mind the words are repeated, 3) the narrator, who quotes the woman's thoughts and 4) the implied author, who has selected everything in the text. In the interpretative process, the man's irritation signals danger to the woman and evokes more general frames of reference – for example, the use of rape as a weapon of war – in the reader's mind.

This portrayal of the rape through embedded voices and intentions suggests that an individual experience is already saturated with conflicting frames of reference. With several agents and their intentions embedded in the first chapter, *The Order* both offers the experience of a subject in the past for the reader and indicates the reader must interpret the experience while taking all the textual and narrative layers into account. Besides the basic-level schemata, the perspectival schemata are highly activated in the text and are most important for readers to take into account when making sense of the text – narrativising it, in Fludernik's (1996: 31-15; 2012) terms. In an earlier theoretisation, Yacobi (1981: 114-119) names five principles for interpreting a text: the genetic, the generic, the existential, the functional and the perspectival. The perspectival (depending on the observer of the fictive world) is important in an analysis of *The Order*, but most important of all is the master principle of the functional (pertaining to the aesthetic or formal motivation). As Yacobi maintains, the reader must take into account the work's aesthetic, thematic and persuasive goals in her interpretation. In Lander's novel, the

perspectival becomes vital for interpretation, with the extension of including the perspectives offered by intertextuality. This argument is in line with Yacobi's (2000: 713-714) suggestion that we regard fiction as a system of quotations both within a work and in its narrative levels, but also between texts and media.

The intermedial allusions like ekphrasis accentuate the process of modification involved in all quoting: when a pictorial representation is rendered verbally, a change in media inevitably brings along changes in expression. I have studied ekphrasis in *The Order* in another article (Hatavara 2011), and will therefore concentrate here on the narrative and intertextual levels of the novel. The narrative is rife with examples like the one quoted above, where characters and the narrator quote each other. Intertextual allusions abound as well. In what follows, I will concentrate especially on the first intertextual quote, the opening text of the novel, and the imagery it evokes.

## Intertextuality and Historical Layers

Regardless of the present tense used, *The Order* is set in the past, during the events of Spring 1918, right after the battles of the civil war have come to an end. The very first text of the novel is a peritextual quotation and gives the reader the exact time. It is markedly a quotation from a real historical document: an excerpt from the newspaper *Keskisuomalainen* from April 12, 1918:

*'Eikö olisi oikeaa tuomiotaktiikkaa ottaa joku prosentti vihollisen toisestakin sukupuolesta – siten siveellisesti varoittaakseen niiden kurjia ammattisisaria. Sudenjahdissa kelpaa maalitauluksi juuri naarassusi ehkä enemmän kuin uros, sillä metsästäjä tietää, että naarassusi synnyttää pahoja penikoita, joista on oleva ikuinen vastus. Todistettu on, että Suomen kansalaissodassa punakaartilaiset ovat petoja, monet heidän naisistaan – susinarttuja, vieläpä naarastiikereitä. Eikö ole hulluutta olla ampumatta petoja, jotka meitä ahdistavat.'*

*Ilmari Kianto,*

KESKISUOMALAINEN 12.4.1918

(Lander 2003: 5 [not numbered], emphasis in original.)

*(‘Wouldn’t it be the right judgment tactics to take a percentage of the enemy’s other gender – to warn their wretched professional sisters in their virtue? When hunting wolves, the bitch may be an even better target than the dog, because the hunter knows that it’s the female who gives birth to the nasty pups that will forever be trouble. It has been proved that in the Finnish civil war the Reds were beasts; many of their women, bitches – tigresses, even. Isn’t it craziness not to shoot the beasts who pursue us?’)*

This text above, which is the first one in the novel after the title page and dedication, is a historical document written by Ilmari Kianto (1874-1970), an author who wanted to make it clear he was on the White side of the war. He was suspected of leaning to the left-wing Red side because of his earlier writings against the church and his liberal personal life.

The two texts at the beginning of the novel, tackled in this article in reverse order for the purposes of my argument, present the past and write history in very different manners. The fictional chapter about the woman attacked would not have a temporal indication without Kianto’s text preceding it. Its fictionality is marked by the representation of the woman’s mind and by the simultaneity of experiencing and telling (see Cohn 1999: 104-105). The text quoted above, the first one to appear in the novel, is a historical document. Still, the message of the document becomes more nuanced as part of a novel, placed beside other types of texts in the continuum of the novel. The text by Kianto addresses the reader directly, but, in the context of the novel, becomes embedded in other communicative layers. The authorial audience of the novel interprets the text as part of the novel, taking into account its twofold ontological status: a nonfictional historical document by its author and a text quoted in Lander’s novel.

The content and the questionable ethical stance of the newspaper text are understood in the context of Kianto and historical time. Whereas the first fictional chapter of the novel forces the reader close to the moment of the events and the experience of the woman

represented, this peritextual quotation clearly has both temporal and textual distance from the reader of the novel. The fictional chapter depicts an individual – even if unnamed – as she experiences the events, but the newspaper quotation talks about a group of people labeled as enemies in hindsight. The reader soon understands that both to refer to the same type: a female soldier of the Reds, which Kianto writes about and Miina is representative of.

The temporality of the two texts that form the beginning of *The Order* is reversed in the novel in two ways: first, the one treating the events with hindsight is given before the one transporting the reader into the middle of the happenings; second, both the hindsight and the simultaneousness is but an illusion. Kianto's text is from the middle of the action – and actually was intended to prompt people into action – even though it tries to claim that the verdict over the events would already have been cast. The fictional chapter, for its part, uses focalisation to visit a time past through a fictional character.

These two quotations show opposite ends of the spectrum of possibilities open to a historical novel in its representation of the past. The temporal distance between the time of the writing and the story time may, on one hand, be bridged with different narrative means, such as using a character point of view and the present tense, and, on the other hand, be highlighted using historical documents. In Lander's novel, the quoted passage from Kianto becomes thematically central, since both sexual violence and the treatment of the losing side in the war are discussed in many ways. What is more, the quote openly shows that history consists of textual representations like Kianto's writing – or Lander's novel itself.

This kind of textual organisation, and perhaps even the crafted and emplotted nature of all historiography, has been strongly emphasised by Hayden White. According to his most radical claims, history is a textual and narrative construction based on fictional plots and scripts (White 1978: 85-87 and *passim*). In some more recent writings he, in a less strict manner, agrees history is at least somewhat referential – and so may fiction be, for its part (White 1999: 10; 2005: 148-149; 2006: 32-33). At any rate, historiography is commonly understood to be intertextual, whether the historical representation is understood to

replace an original (Ankersmit 2001: 11) or to form a dual construction (Rigney 1990: 12-13, 28-29). Similarly, and moreover, historical fiction is always referring to and commenting on the previous representations of the past (Humphrey 1986: 18).

In *The Order*, the placement of Kianto's historical text makes it almost a motto for the contemporary novel. The opinions expressed in this text – about the need to kill female soldiers as a lesson and for eugenic reasons – are contested in the novel. This is achieved by ridiculing Kianto's use of the wolf figure, and by the representation of Miina, who is one of the female soldiers Kianto affronts.

*The Order* includes other quoted texts about wolves besides Kianto's, taken from two nonfiction books: one about nature, and one about hunting, both written decades after the 1918 events (*Eläinten maailma I*, 1930 and *Suomen metsästys*, 1950). The first of these quotations in *The Order* begins with:

*Monet niistä lukijoista, jotka ovat nyt jo päässeet keski-ikään tai sen yli, muistavat miten he olivat pieninä paitaressuina äksyilleet ja ällistelleet, niin he silloin tällöin saivat sisunpurkaustensa johdosta uhkaavan ennustuksen: 'Susi tulee ja vie!'*

(Lander 2003: 11, emphasis in original.)

*(Many of the readers who have now reached middle age or beyond remember how, as young mites throwing temper tantrums, they heard the threatening prediction: 'The wolf will come and get you!')*

The quotation starts with a direct address to the readers and a reference to culturally shared memories. Readers are assumed to once have been misbehaving little children, and to have been threatened with wolves if they didn't behave. This quotation, only six pages after Kianto's text, makes the reader associate threats of wolves with misbehaving children. With this parallel, Kianto is put in the role of a child who has taken the threats too seriously. The intention of Kianto's text might have been to persuade the Whites to see the Red female soldiers as dangerous enough to be punished. The second quote in

the novel involving wolves suggests Kianto would have needed an audience that was childish and scared enough to fall for that allusion. The authorial audience of the novel certainly does not buy Kianto's words, but compares them with other texts in the novel. What is more, the reader knows that between 300 to 600 female soldiers are estimated to have been executed during and shortly after the war. This knowledge, together with the two texts, suggests Kianto's alarmism found a responsive audience. The second wolf-related quotation in *The Order* suggests, then, that the Whites acted like frightened children.

Kianto's text brings with it another intertextual link, besides the one to a historical document: the same text is quoted in Väinö Linna's *Under the North Star* (*Täällä Pohjantähden alla I-II*, 1959-1962). This novel by Linna was, at the time it was published, at the turn of the 1960s, an important contribution to the discussion on the civil war, emphatically for the Red side and exposing some of the cruelties by the Whites. This intra-literary intertext further highlights the importance of the quotation in Lander's recent novel: not only does *The Order* refer to Kianto's text, but also to this previous fictional representation of the same events quoting the same text. Linna's and Lander's novels share an understanding of the losing side of the war. A resemblance can also be found between the structuring principles of the two novels: *Under the North Star* is rich with references to previous works of Finnish fiction, especially those thematising nationality and the role of war in building nationality (see Nummi 1993, 2005). With the indirect allusion to Linna's novel, *The Order* takes its place in the continuum of Finnish prose discussing these central issues of history.

The opportunities to represent history are openly reflected by the narrator of the frame narrative, which in the novel follows Kianto's text and the first chapter quoted earlier. The narrator of the frame narrative takes an authorial position, posing as the writer of the novel. After her grandfather's death, she is faced with an item of memorabilia left for her that puzzles her and makes her rethink her family history. This further thematises the questions of understanding the past and writing history in *The Order*. The Finnish civil war has long been one of the most difficult subjects in Finnish history writing, and the truth of the winner suppressed other points of view for a long time (Peltonen 2007:

230-238). Fiction has for decades presented alternative interpretations, and *The Order* both does that and discusses the process of writing and rewriting history. Overlooked and suppressed history emerges in the novel especially through and in the form of photographs.

### **Photographic Framing and Exposing**

The theme of photographs and photography is introduced in *The Order* at the beginning of the frame narrative, when the narrator is reminiscing over an event from the time when she was a child. She had seen a picture fall out of her grandfather's photo album, exposing another photo kept under it. The photograph on top was a studio photo with an artificial studio background, portraying four women in summer dresses and a young man dressed as a soldier. The one hidden beneath is unclear and torn, presenting a tall, dark bundle hanging from a snowy tree. It has the year 1918 written on it. There emerges no more information about the photo on top: it remains a general frame, where the status of a soldier is something to be proud of for a young man and those closest to him, and something to immortalise in a photograph. The setting of this photo is extremely artificial: it is taken on stage at a photographer's studio by a professional and in front of a canvas picturing a waterfall and verdant green foliage. This suggests by analogy that the content, the pride of serving the army, is as artificial as the stage setting.

The photograph that had been hidden is later revealed to represent the director of the sanatorium just after it had been turned into a prison camp. The director has hanged himself in a tree in his horror at seeing patients mistreated by the Whites. Without anyone being aware of this, one of the patients, by the name of Konsta, has taken a picture of him still hanging from the tree. Konsta is the only patient remaining in the prison camp, since he is well enough to perform little chores. He keeps a camera with him at all times, but the authorities assume it is not functional. Miina, who has worked as an assistant to a photographer, is the only one to realise that Konsta is documenting everything.

The photographs Konsta has taken bring about a major shift in the plot, when Miina talks about them while being interrogated. Emil, who

is in charge, is terrified that the White terror might be exposed. When he had entered the prison camp he had seen it as a pure place with all traces of the past gone:

Hän seiso i yksin aution parantolan pihalla, kaiken peittävän lumilakanan laskoksilla ja ajatteli, että koko paikan menneisyys tuntui täydellisen epätodelliselta. Ei enää merkkiäkään potilaista. Ei hylättyjä lepotuoleja, ei tyhjiä lääkepurkkeja, ei edes pyörätuolien renkaiden painautumia pihateillä. (Lander 2003: 14-15)

(He stood alone in the yard of the deserted sanatorium, on the folds of a sheet of snow that covered everything, and thought that the past of the whole place seemed perfectly unreal. No more sign of patients. No deserted easy chairs, no empty pill bottles, not even a trace of wheelchair wheel tracks on the drive.)

Emil's thoughts here imply he is concerned with the past but believes it to be hidden under the white cover of snow – just as the White version of the war event tried to cover anything unfavourable to their cause and aims.

Konsta's photographs prove Emil wrong, and the past returns to threaten the present. Photographs have been regarded as a means to overcome the boundary between death and life, since they are traces left behind even after death (Horstkotte and Pedri 2008: 15; Sontag 1979: 15). As a photograph, the dead director becomes part of the present and a symbol of the impossibility of really erasing the past. Miina claims that Konsta possesses pictures even more incriminating to the Whites, ones featuring the haphazard executions of captured Reds. Miina describes some of the photos as she explains why she believes Konsta's story about the terrible end of the sanatorium: 'Ja kun vielä näin niitä kuviakin. Kuten sen janoisen aaveen joka sänkyynsä kahlehdittuna turhaan rukoili vettävodaavettävodaavettävodaav' (Lander 2003: 304) (And I saw those pictures, too. Like the thirsty ghost who, chained in his bed, prayed in vain for waterwaterwaterwaterwaterwater).

This quotation openly states the documentary value commonly

attached to photographs (see Horstkotte and Pedri 2008: 13-15). What is more, this description seems to break with the assumption that photographs and, more generally, pictorial representations are silent (Louvel 2008: 34; Yacobi 1995: 645). 'Waterwater' is something Konsta keeps repeating in every situation. Miina's description of the photo reveals that Konsta has heard this from a patient left tied up to die of dehydration. Konsta is a vehicle enabling the killed patients not only to live on in the photographs but also to be heard via repetition of the words of (at least) one of them.

The relationship between reality and photographs has often been regarded paradoxical: in one sense, photographs are machine-produced imitations of reality, but in the other sense they are produced as results of framing and staging, perhaps even manipulating events and objects in reality (Horstkotte and Pedri 2008: 13-15). Roland Barthes (1985 [1981]: 82-83, 86) and Susan Sontag (2003: 26) emphasise the documentary value of a photograph: it forces the viewer to agree with the existence of the object pictured. Furthermore, it indicates the presence of a witness: the one operating the camera. In *The Order*, Konsta is not a reliable witness himself – and therefore has been allowed to stay in place, even when it was turned into the prison camp – but the photographs he has taken serve as documentation.

The figure of Konsta, as the one taking the pictures, alludes to theories that link photography as an action to trauma as a phenomenon. Greg Forster (2007: 259) understands both trauma and photography to be repetitive actions signalling a past that has not been dealt with. Events that overwhelm the subject at the moment of experiencing, rendering it impossible to make sense of them, return as symptoms. In a manner similar to photography, trauma involves a trace which keeps repeating the original object or event without the means to understand or make sense of it (see Baer 2002: 7-8; Duttlinger 2004: 155). Konsta's physical and mental trauma, problems that caused him to have been a patient at the sanatorium, link with the act of photography as well: during his honeymoon, just as he was about to take a picture of his new wife, he suffered a stroke, resulting in his impairment.

Photography has a special relationship to time and place, which enriches historical fiction and its representation of history. As Barthes

(1977: 44) understands it, a photograph links together 'the here and now' and 'the here and then' as a physical representation of the past that remains in the present. The past moment exists in the photograph, which as an object also exists in the present of viewing (Louvel 2008: 32-33). For Konsta, the former patients he has photographed still exist: he constantly talks about ghosts that appear in his photos. He is unable to distinguish between 'the here and now' and 'the here and then,' but superimposes one onto the other. For this reason, he is – in the storyworld – able figuratively (and literally in the expression 'vettävoodaa') to speak for those who are gone.

Besides presenting and storing the past, the photographs in *The Order* have other functions. The act and mechanics of photography may in fiction be used metaphorically (see Louvel 2008: 34-35). In *The Order*, a significant technical detail is that Konsta's camera operates with glass plates, not with film. For one thing, this makes Emil misunderstand the situation: he believes Konsta cannot actually take pictures, since he does not have any film. What is more, plates signify ruptures between single representations, not a constant flow of pictures following each other as they do on a film roll. This is analogical to how Lander's novel is structured: short chapters jump from one story situation to another, from one textual level to another. This suggests history is composed of series of significant moments which must be linked together by the writer of history, since they do not naturally form a coherent whole.

The fictive make of Konsta's camera is 'Eclipse Apparatus', which roughly means a machine to eclipse or darken. Technically, a camera is a box sealed off from light, into which a regulated amount of light is directed through a lens onto a light-sensitive film or plate. The juxtaposition of light and darkness is overruled, and their mutual interdependence is revealed: the inner darkness of the camera is a presupposition for the light coming through the lens to result in a picture. This technical feature of photography gains metaphorical significance in *The Order*, pointing to the mixture of light and dark and good and bad in the world and in people. The novel presents questions of truth, justice and morals to be relational and changing – but nonetheless crucially important.

Linda Hutcheon (1999 [1988]: 120; cf. McHale 1987: 90) has emphasised the postmodern historical novel's interest in the question of whose history remains and is told. In *The Order*, the photographs Konsta has taken suggest the possibility that the point of view of those marginalised could be heard. They represent the losing side and the oppressed, and such photos would be taken by a person considered unimportant and harmless. The fate of the photographs is left open in the novel: Konsta is told to embark on a journey to take the photos to a famous photographer Miina knows, but the novel does not reveal whether Konsta makes it there or whether anyone takes an interest in his photos. The novel suggests possibilities for the alternative points of view to emerge, but comes to no conclusive end. Besides this thematic importance, the allusions to the photographs add yet another representative layer to the novel, the fictional photographs with their technical and ideological perspectives.

### **In the End**

Lander's novel *The Order* has proved to incorporate and to utilise many narrative and intertextual levels, and to discuss the issue of representing reality and understanding the past. Linda Hutcheon (1991: 75, 115) maintains that postmodern historical novels, with their reflective take on historiography, partake in writing history. She emphasises the need to interpret the text in multiple historical, social, political and intertextual contexts. In *The Order*, this need for contextualising and re-contextualising is addressed and practiced. Yet, the novel does not radically revise history (cf. McHale 1987: 96), but rather shows the persistence of past documents and representations in the process of writing history.

I have referred to Tamar Yacobi's model, in which fiction as a system of quotations (hence a system open to modification and unreliability) is connected with the semiotic layers involved in multimedial representation. She stresses that to quote is to re-contextualise, possibly also to re-textualise. In intermedial quotations such as a description of a photograph, a change in code entails a change in text. Also in the case of intertextual quotations like Kianto's text, re-

contextualising changes the meaning of the quote even if the text is kept intact. The same applies to lines of the characters quoted by other characters and the narrator. Every layer of quotation brings about the question of intentionality and reliability.

Quite the contrary: trauma is a repetitive act in which the subject is unable to evolve or change the trace left by the trauma. In its emphasis on repetition and modification, *The Order* suggests that the very act of re-textualising and re-contextualising is essential to history. Signs of the past cannot be erased, but must be incorporated into the present. This does not, however, suggest that a shared coherent narrative of the past can be formed. What the novel forces its reader to do is to imagine, reflect and re-contextualise the past, its documents and representations. It is not only the novel but the reader who rethinks her view on, and understanding of, history.

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