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What is Hidden in Västerbotten's Stomach?

On Augustine and Torgny Lindgren's
Minnen

ABSTRACT The article investigates the complex intertextual dialogue between Torgny Lindgren's *Minnen* (2010) and Augustine's *Confessions*, from which Lindgren has taken the motto of his autobiography. By using the patristic intertext as a starting point, the investigation intends to show how Lindgren has constructed his image of Västerbotten. The article is divided into four parts. The first part (I), establishes the heuristic principles of the investigation, which adhere to the recent tendency in patristic studies to observe the heterogeneous character of Augustine's world of thought. The second part of the article (II) charts parallels between text and intertext in their portrayal of grace, evil, and man. It emerges that those elements of Lindgren's world view which are particularly closely related to Augustinian theology are also the ones that possess a particularly strong Västerbottnian character. This intertextual affinity can be explained not only with reference to the Lutheran tradition of Västerbotten, but also has to be related to the text's specific structure of *memoria*, which is unravelled in the remaining parts (III–IV). On the basis of modern cultural anthropological theories of memory, the third part demonstrates that most of the differences between text and intertext can be linked to the cultural memory of modernity, and

document the rise and fall of industrial subjectivity. Lindgren embeds his autobiographical version of Västerbotten into the basic structure of modern memory, transforms it into a quasi-subject, and taints it with the symptoms of decay that plague the industrial 'I.' In the same as Western modernity, *Minnen* draws the majority of its metaphors of dissolution from Augustine's paradigmatic doctrine of sin. The fourth part of the article (IV) aims to analyse the autobiography's mechanisms of substitution. It is argued that these attempt—in analogy to many Western critics of modernity—to counteract the crisis of industrial cultural memory by reviving the Augustinian forms of *memoria* and creating a synthesis of pre-industrial and industrial. Within the quasi-subject of Västerbotten and its wealth of agrarian objects, Lindgren finds adequate metaphorical models for use in his compensatory project of counter-memory. The article concludes by observing that, just as *Minnen*'s productive dialogue with Augustine allows it to recapitulate the history of Western memory, Lindgren's Västerbotten is elevated to the status of a universal symbol of European consciousness and its fate.

KEYWORDS Torgny Lindgren, Augustine, theory of memory, modernity, Västerbotten

Torgny Lindgren's *Minnen* (2010) begins with a motto taken from Augustine's *Confessions* in which human memory is compared to a huge stomach, filled with man's sorrow and happiness.

Minnet är nog ett slags mage åt tanken,
den förgångna lyckan och glädjen och sorgen
liknar härskan eller surnad mat –
överlämnat åt minnet hamnar allt i ett slags mage,
maten bevaras men inte dess smaklighet.
Kanske är det narraktigt att säga att minnet och magen
har likheter.
Men alldeles olika är de ingalunda. (M 5)¹

['Nimirum ergo memoria quasi venter est animi, laetitia vero atque tristitia quasi cibus dulcis et amarus: cum memoriae commendantur quasi trajecta in ventrem recondi illic possunt, sapere non possunt. Ridiculum est haec illis similia putare, nec tamen sunt omnimodo dissimilia.']

['The memory doubtless is, so to say, the belly of the mind:
and joy and sadness
are like sweet and bitter food,
which when they are committed to the memory are, so to say, passed
into the belly

where they can be stored but no longer tasted.
It is ridiculous to consider this an analogy;
yet they are not utterly unlike.’²

The motto is one of the central intertextual signals of literary texts that directs the reader’s process of interpretation and singles out the motto’s work of origin as a particularly productive interpretative frame of reference, authorized by the author himself (cf. Karrer 1991: 122 ff.). In the reviews of *Minnen*, the quotation from Augustine is often quietly ignored. When Marianne Söderberg in *Norrbottnens-Kuriren* states that Lindgren has little faith in human memory, she does note that, “självaste Augustinus får efter titelbladet förmoda att minnet är ett slags mage åt tanken” (Söderberg 2010) [‘according to the motto-page, Augustine himself is made to suspect memory to be a kind of stomach for thought’], but she reads the Church Father’s statement as a confirmation of the unreliability of memory. In none of his works does Augustine raise doubts in principle about the epistemological capacity of memory. Quite the contrary: the *Confessions* clearly distances itself from the sceptics and their unceasing doubts concerning the cognitive functions of man. If Lindgren’s *Minnen* were to emphasize the fundamental incompetence of memory, this would thus happen in opposition to—and not with the aid of—Augustine’s motto.

This article aims to investigate the complex dialogue between *Minnen* and its patristic intertext. Since both texts possess great significance, each in their own way, this approach should produce results that far exceed this specific intertextual relationship. In the final chapter, Lindgren indicates that *Minnen* is to be his last work. Even though he later qualified this statement in interviews, *Minnen* does function as the quintessence of his literary “livsprogram” [‘life’s programme;’ M 213] and as a continuous commentary on his earlier books. Augustine is generally considered “der erste moderne Mensch” [‘the first modern man’] and his *Confessions* the fundamental text of Latin Western thought (Sell 1895: 45). In a letter to Franz Overbeck in March 1885, Nietzsche paraphrased Augustine’s stomach metaphor and stated that reading the *Confessions* is to look “dem Christenthum in den Bauch” (Nietzsche 1916: 292). Historian of philosophy Kurt Flasch has said that Nietzsche’s claim is an understatement:

Denn beim Lesen Augustins sieht man ebenso der europäischen Philosophie, der europäischen Wissenschaft und vielen Institutionen – von der Familie über den Staat zur Kirche – in den Bauch. Sofern jemand heute noch in den Bahnen der europäischen Tradition lebt und denkt, sieht er beim Studium Augustins sich selbst in den Bauch. (Flasch 1980: 9)

Augustine's conception of memory is thus of key importance, because it is "der historisch entscheidende Ausgangspunkt" (Haverkamp 1993: XIV; cf. Oexle 1995: 35) for Western reflections on human memory.

Due to its unique position in Western tradition, the motto in *Minnen* invites one to pursue yet another interesting question. Thanks to their wide significance, Augustine's ideas have been industriously exploited to define differences between Western principles of thought and other paradigms (cf. Evdokimov 1960: 40 ff., 58 ff.; Greshake 1977: 39 ff.; Siebeck 1888: 188 ff.). As an analogy, one can compare Augustine and the characteristics of Västerbotten in order to shed light on the relationship between the central and the provincial, between 'the West' and Västerbotten. Many reviewers have observed an unmistakably 'Västerbottnian' tone in *Minnen*, but without precisely identifying its exact characteristics (cf. Waern 2010; Sarrimo 2010; Schwartz 2010; Bergström 2010). In her essay "Orden dem hava stormvindens kraft" ['Words with the power of the gale'], the Lindgren-specialist Ingela Pehrson Berger investigates "den västerbottniska livshållningen i *Merabs skönhet*" ['the Västerbottnian attitude towards life in *Merabs skönhet*'] (Pehrson Berger 2001: 68). Her starting point is that the concept of Västerbottnian identity includes all the phenomena present in Lindgren's Västerbottnian short stories. According to Pehrson Berger, the Västerbottnian attitude towards life comprises laconic language, "mycket starka känslor inför livet, kärleken och döden" ['very strong emotions in the face of life, love and death'], as well as an interest in "stora existentiella och religiösa frågor" ['the great religious and existential questions'] (Pehrson Berger 2001: 78). Lindgren himself described the Västerbottnian traits far more precisely. In *Minnen* and other literary texts, in interviews, and especially in *Maten. Hunger och törst i Västerbotten* (2003) ['Food. Hunger and thirst in Västerbotten'], an epistolary cookbook that was written together with Ella Nilsson, an author of cookery books from Västerbotten, he continually grapples with the essence of Västerbottnian identity. It may be productive to relate these reflections on Västerbotten to Lindgren's dialogue with the spiritual father of Western thought. Can Lindgren's possible corrections of Augustine be explained on the basis of his loyalty to the Västerbottnians' local attitude to life? Or, to paraphrase Nietzsche and Flasch, what is, according to Lindgren, hiding in Västerbotten's stomach?

Before this gastroscopy can begin, it is necessary to touch upon a substantial methodological difficulty. Augustine's world of ideas is very hard to deal with intertextually. Unlike the great *summae* of the middle ages it is not "a finished product, a 'system' or at least a single complex of ideas," but "a remarkable amalgam" of loosely connected, often even contradictory complexes of thought (TeSelle 1970: 20; Rist 1994: 177). As recent research

in Augustine has shown, this heterogeneous character of his work has been systematically exploited by anachronistic readings. Where Augustine was reluctant to draw consequences from his premises, his later commentators continued his trains of thought and used harmonising mechanisms to reinterpret his work, to re-imagine him not only as an orthodox Catholic or Lutheran, but also as an existentialist, phenomenologist, personalist, or neo-thomist (cf. Flasch 1993: 15 ff., 48 ff., 220 ff. and passim; Flasch 1995a: 94; Flasch 1995c: 260 ff.; Flasch 1995b: 319 ff. and passim; Schmidt 1985: 11 ff.). In order to avoid this kind of hermeneutic flattening, modern researchers in Augustine recommend two main principles of interpretation: every complex of thought should be studied “in and for itself in the attempt to discover its exact pattern and framework” and that the patterns of meaning unearthed in this way should be stabilized by rooting them in their wider textual and theological contexts (TeSelle 1970: 20; cf. O’Daly 1987: 3 ff.).

II.

Augustine’s discussions of memory in the *Confessions* belong to a specific theological context. They are preceded by the autobiographical narrative that closes with the death of his mother Monnica and lead into a description of man’s state of sin, which is followed by considerations on the nature of time. The grand frame around these various themes is an extensive exegesis of the story of creation in Genesis which is based on the church father’s new conception of grace (cf. Flasch 1980: 255 ff.). In agreement with the hermeneutic principles of research in Augustine I introduce my intertextual analysis by going through these complexes of thought one by one and testing their relevance for Lindgren’s œuvre.

Augustine’s doctrine of grace is largely a product of his time. As especially Henri-Irénée Marrou has shown, the church father is “un lettré de la décadence,” who is confronted with the fall of Rome time and again: the crumbling state, the increasing rigidity of the education system, the withering intellectual life, the overrefinement of material culture, etc. (Marrou 1958: 85 ff., 337 and passim). In the year 410, Rome is sacked by the Visigoths, which further intensified Augustine’s feeling that he was living in *senectus mundi*, the old age of the world (cf. Brown 1967: 287 ff.; Markus 1970: 23). Lindgren’s perspective on his position in history is similar. He considers himself part of “en senmodernistisk generation” [‘a generation of late modernism;’ S 181] and believes that his norms and ideals are slowly being eroded. His recurring points of reference in *Minnen* are “kriget” [‘the war;’ M 47] on the one, and the cultural regression of the post-war period on the other hand. In *Maten* he explicitly shows how “modernitet och nihilism hänger samman” [‘modernity and nihilism are connected;’ N 53] and forge an absurd

combination of “dekadans och teknik” [‘decadence and technology;’ N 52]. Although he mainly observes this form of cultural desolation in the South, he is forced to state that even the Västerbottnians were not successful in defending themselves against “onaturliga, för att inte säga perversa” [‘unnatural, not to say perverse;’ N 108], habits. In his view, Västerbotten’s depopulation appears as a particularly obvious sign of modernity’s tendencies towards decadence. When in 2011 he agreed to perform a task he regarded as decadent, namely to inaugurate “Torgny Lindgrens litterära landskap” [‘Torgny Lindgren’s literary landscape’] in his place of birth, which includes a museum dedicated to his own, his motivation was to attract literary tourists and protect his home village from total collapse (cf. S 46 f., 56, 256 ff.).

Augustine’s negative experience of the world is closely connected to his strong emphasis on the transcendent importance of grace. Whereas Greek patristics did not develop an independent doctrine of grace, and preferred to emphasise the dynamics of salvation inherent in creation, Augustine—and after him the majority of Western theologians—creates a sharp divide between the world and divine grace, *civitas terrena* und *civitas Dei*. The church father paints the world in very dark colours. Irrespective of the paths Augustinian man walks, he cannot escape being bound by nature and being subject to the same unchanging evil. Augustine places *gratia Dei*—which is entirely undeserved and independent of the laws of the human world—in opposition to the world’s vale of tears. Its intervention in the world is often momentous, is entirely subject to the Lord’s will and is often experienced as cruel and agonizing by the recipients (cf. Greshake 1977: 39 ff.). A similarly polarising picture of existence is drawn by Lindgren. In his interview statements, he seems to almost automatically follow the basic principle of Augustine’s doctrine of grace (cf. Flasch 1995a: 48; Flasch 1995c: 264 ff.), namely that grace demands human misery as its fundamental precondition—as if God and man were engaged in a competition of sorts: “Bakom alla föreställningar om nåden finns egentligen en djup pessimism” [‘underneath all conceptions of grace lies a profound pessimism;’ S 160; cf. D]. The negative sides of mundane existence persistently recur as a topic in his interviews. Human life, the author believes, is “förfärligt” [‘dreadful;’ S 160]. Life is “något slags vandring på slak lina över en avgrund utan slut” [‘a kind of never-ending walk on a slackline across a chasm;’ G 91; cf. S 161]. Whatever man does results in “fiasko, fiasko” [‘failure, failure;’ S 181; cf. H 17 f.]. Lindgren contrasts this wasteland with undeserved grace. Just like Augustine’s grace it obeys its own rules, is “oberäknelig” [‘unpredictable;’ S 224], has “ingen lag” [‘no laws;’ S 223] and operates like “en grov näve” [‘a rough fist;’ G 99]. In *Minnen* the dichotomy between world and grace is one the fundamental principles of the author’s world view. Lindgren declares that

Ecclesiastes has become his “livets bok” [‘book of life;’ M 67] and he paints the world in the dark colours of the biblical text: everything is “fåfängt, livet är utan mening” [‘in vain, life is without meaning;’ M 24], the masses “river ner” [‘tear down;’ M 19] what the few have put up, there is too much suffering to “sätta några barn till världen” [‘bring children into this world;’ M 23] etc. Lindgren often illustrates the absurdity of life by stating that everything has the same end, irrespective of our existential choices. One is filled “med skam” [‘with shame;’ M 135], whether one lives right or wrong. Whether one dies “frälst” [‘redeemed;’] or “ofrälst” [‘unredeemed;’ M 53], whether one’s plans are “Gjort eller ogjort” [‘completed or not;’ M 19], whether one is called “Wirsén eller T S Eliot” [‘Wirsén or T S Eliot;’ M 197], has basically “ingen betydelse” [‘no meaning;’ M 53]. Grace is identified as the only chance at salvation: “Det är gott att få förtrösta på Nåden” [‘it is good to be allowed to trust in grace;’ M 23]. But the moments of grace are just as sudden and unpredictable as the “pauserna i kvävningen” [‘moments of respite from choking;’ M 63] during the author’s fits of tuberculosis. In its oppression man rarely experiences these moments as graceful. The author’s dying brother is not able to enjoy the music, because it feels “alldeles för smärtsam” [‘far too painful;’ M 15]. It is noteworthy that Lindgren links his conception of grace to Västerbotten in his interviews: “I det pietistiska västerbotten var nåden oerhört väsentlig. Nåden var i stort sett Guds närvaro. Det är naturligtvis därifrån jag har fått det.” [‘In pietistic Västerbotten grace was something incredibly crucial. In principle, grace was the presence of God. It is obvious that I got the idea from there;’ G 99; cf. S 160]. However Augustinian—and typically Western—Lindgren’s conception of grace may be, he experiences it as part of his Västerbottnian heritage.

Its dichotomous nature forces Augustine’s theory to explain the relationship between grace and the world. The church father mainly solves this problem in two ways, metaphysically and morally. On the metaphysical level he follows the lines of thought established by ancient theodicy. On the one hand, he claims that evil is either an inversion of good order or a certain ontologically given deficiency that cannot exist without good. Pure evil does not exist (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 7, 12, 18 (PL 32,743); Billicsich 1952: 224 ff.). On the other hand, he highlights that the deficient nature of existence is required to emphasize good. Just like any well formed poem, Augustine writes, God’s creation is built upon antitheses (cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 11,18 (PL 41,332), 11,23 (PL 41,336 f.); Bettetini 1997: 141 ff.; Flasch 1993: 107). Finally, he admits that the problem of theodicy will never be satisfactorily answered. Creation is the unfathomable work of God and thus a mystery (cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 12,3 (PL, 41,350 f.), 12,6 (PL 41,353 ff.); *Enchiridion* 100 (PL 40,279); Billicsich 1952: 258 ff., 275). As Ingela Pehrson

has noted, Lindgren has a preference for questions of theodicy (cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 55 f.; Nilsson 2004: 140; Willén 2008: 165). As far as they are answered, they seem to adhere to Augustine's metaphysical solutions. In his interviews, he states that evil paradoxically contributes "till vår komplexitet" ['to our complexity; S 232]. The representatives of good—Franciscus or mother Theresa—"måste ha kontrapunkter, det måste finnas korrektiv till dem" ['need counterweights, they must have a corrective; S 232]. However damaging evil may be, it is equally useful, even "nödvändig" ['necessary; S 233], just like distorted perspectives in a work of art. If there were no lies, there would "inte finnas någon konst" ['simply be no art; S 233]. Questions similar to that of theodicy are also regularly found in *Minnen*. Even though they do not receive explicit answers, the implicit theodicy discourse of the memoir remains close to Augustine's considerations. There is no total desolation in Lindgren's memories. Misfortune is "bara en tillfällig svaghet, en svacka" ['only a coincidental weakness, a setback; M 97] that can pave the way for future success. Vanity hides "medmänsklighet" ['compassion; M 132], just as adverse actions imitate "byggandet" ['building] "så att säga i motsatt ordning" ['only in inverted order, so to speak; M 82]. Even the most "frånstötande" ['abominable; M 118] of the many characters encountered in the book—the Nazi leader Per Engdahl, a Soviet state functionary, the arch spy Wennerholm—are capable of evoking "djup sympati" ['deep sympathy; M 118] and express opinions that are confirmed by the narrator. In a very Augustinian manner, evil is thus presented as a necessary prerequisite for good. Not even Beethoven's Leonora overture, claims Lindgren, can manage without "åtskilliga falska toner" ['various wrong notes; M 134]. Irrespective of these positive attempts to shed light on the dilemma of theodicy, Lindgren emphatically states that evil is—and must remain—a mystery. "Honom kan vi aldrig genomskåda eller tolka" ['we can never read or interpret him; M 81], he writes about the despicable merchant who is the inspiration for Ol Karlsa in *Ormens väg på hälleberget* ['The Way of a Serpent'].

On the moral level, Augustine describes the relations between grace and the world in anthropological categories. Whereas Greek church fathers think cosmocentrically and survey the whole of creation from a bird's eye view, Augustine adopts an anthropocentric perspective and explains that there are two questions worth thinking about: "the one is the soul, the other God" (Augustinus, *De ordine* 2,18,47 [PL 32,1017]; cf. O'Daly 1987: 1 ff.; Greshake 1977: 41 ff.; Scheffczyk 1981: 105 ff., 123 ff.). Insofar as Eastern theologians take an interest in man, they follow ancient Greek philosophy and employ ontic categories (cf. Yannaras 1982: 250 ff., 271 ff. and *passim*). In Latin culture, on the other hand, reflections on man are dominated by two other principles: the pragmatism of the Romans and their legal conscience.

As a child of his Western Roman environment, Augustine defines man as a concrete agent who is actively engaged in his environment and bears the moral responsibility for his actions (cf. Arendt 1978: 85; Dihle 1982: 132 ff., 141 ff.; TeSelle 1970: 304; Rist 1994: 285). In *Minnen*, Lindgren explains to a foreign fellow author that he is not apt at describing nature: “I den svenska litteraturen finns naturen redan utförligt beskriven. Den föreligger och är färdig” [‘in Swedish literature, nature has already been fully described. It exists and is complete;’ M 169; cf. S 52]. The persistent topic of the memories is man.

The landscape is ethically charged and described only insofar as it provides a background for the human actors. There are no unwordly anachorites in *Minnen*. Lindgren’s humans have an overtly concrete quality; they grapple with reality and morally position themselves through their actions. A staccato passage describes the innumerable deeds his grandfather accomplished. Lindgren himself inherited much of his grandfather’s pragmatism. Although he did not “köra timret och bygga hus” [‘bring in firewood and build houses;’ M 209], he instead devoted his time to inventing memories, because people “tycks ha ett behov av historia” [‘seem to need history;’ M 9]. Not even the most intellectual character in *Minnen*, the academy member Erik Lönnroth, is satisfied with disinterested studies. Instead, he was “rådgivare åt de största politikerna i samtiden” [‘advisor to the greatest politicians of his time’] and developed “den svenska kulturpolitiken” [‘Swedish cultural policy;’ M 183] without further ado. Lindgren has repeatedly emphasized that this kind of human activism is a typically Västerbottnian trait. In the interview book entitled *Torgny om Lindgren*, he records that the Västerbottnians have always been practical, clearing fields, digging ditches, and building “nya lador” [‘new barns;’ S 26 f.]. In *Maten* he equates being “västerbottnisk” [‘Västerbottnian’] to being “självförverkligad som det heter numera” [‘having realised oneself, as it is called nowadays;’ N 75; cf. 73 ff., 127 ff.]. In *Minnen* he has his grandfather explain to the doctors in Stockholm that the people in the interior of Västerbotten “har kommit till jorden för att uträtta det ena och det andra” [‘have come to earth in order to get some things done;’ M 19].

In order to provide a solid base for the moral relations between the world and divine grace, Augustine develops his anthropology in two somewhat opposing directions. On the one hand, he moves inwards and grants man a complex and independent interior. When Heinrich Siebeck calls Augustine the first modern man, he is referencing this kind of psychological interest exhibited by the church father that differentiates him decidedly from Greek Antiquity (cf. Siebeck 1888: 188 ff.; TeSelle 1970: 92 ff.). On the other hand, Augustine moves outward and considers the individual as a part

of collective humanity. Despite the unmistakable personal tone of the *Confessions*, the pronoun 'I' is often largely synonymous with 'we.' Man is primarily treated as a bearer of the universal nature of man (cf. Flasch 1993: 137). Whereas the Greek church fathers use speculative iconic categories to describe the community of mankind, Augustine follows the concrete biological line of thought propounded by the Latin church and emphasizes the key importance of procreation. Man is part of mankind insofar as he is related to Adam (cf. Evdokimov 1960: 58, 66 ff.; Scheffczyk 1981: 213 ff.; Flasch 1980: 204). These two anthropological tendencies are also present in *Minnen*. On the one hand, Lindgren grants his characters an autonomous internal life and fills it with a whole range of emotions, thoughts, and impulses. On the other hand, he lets his individual characters embody both "mänskian" ['man; M 184] and "det mänskliga livet" ['human life; M 174] in general. On the level of language and narrative, this universalising tendency is expressed by the narrative voice that constantly oscillates between 'I' and 'we' and can include various collectives in its 'we': "vi barn" ['we children; M 69], we "cyklisterna" ['cyclists; M 86], "vi i min generation" ['we in my generation; M 116], we "socialdemokrater" ['social democrats; M 140], we "internationella författare" ['international authors; M 143], "vi alla" ['we all; M 153] etc. By far the most important among these groups is the author's family. *We* is equated to "vi i familjen" ['we in the family; M 67], "vi i släkten" ['we in the family; M 62], "alla våra släktingar" ['all our relatives; M 130] etc. Lindgren's family, fitted with a whole range of general human characteristics, emerges as the true hero of the memoir. The family is thematised in the large majority of the stories. It functions as a natural yardstick against which other characters are measured and even enters the book's typography—every new chapter begins with a picture of "författarens farfars farfars fars bomärke" ['the author's great-great-great-grandfather's bookmark; M 4]. Lindgren regards this fixation on the family as a typical Västerbottnian trait. In *Stor-Norrland och litteraturen* ['Greater Norrland and literature,' 1938] Thorsten Jonsson looks at Norrland from the perspective of industrialisation and sees "intresset för de sociala och ekonomiska förhållandena" ['the interest in the social and economic situation'] as the characteristic of Norrland literature (Jonsson 1938: 3). Lindgren feels more closely connected to the agrarian tradition of Norrland. He presents himself as one of the authors who has "bondeblod i sina ådror" ['peasant blood in his veins'] and has in mind his "utdikade myrar och hårdlandet och den skriva moränjorden" ['drained moors and the rough ground and the barren moraine soil'] when he cultivates his "figurer och ord och skiljetecken" ['figures and words and punctuation; M 141]. For him, the cultural tradition of Västerbotten is fundamentally connected to bloodlines and soil. Accordingly, he lets these two categories dominate being and

consciousness of the Västerbottnians. On the one hand, he declares both in *Maten* and in various interviews that most Västerbottnians are more or less closely related to one another. In the time of the settlement they split up into family groups who followed the tributaries to the rivers. Most of the important Västerbottnian authors are therefore descended from the peasant Zackris Nilsson who lived in Kvavisträsk in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the Västerbottnians have a strong sense of family. In a café in Stockholm Lindgren was once approached by a man who claimed to be a “västerbottning” [‘Västerbottnian’]. Even though the stranger was from Sorsele in Lapland, he turned out to be related to Lindgren “på modernet” [‘via his mother’s side’] and was thus accepted as “västerbottning” [‘Västerbottnian;’ N 154, 158; cf. S 44 f.] by the author. Family trumps place as the Västerbottnian *differentia specifica*. *Vi västerbottningar*—one of Lindgren’s favourite phrases—really means “vi släktingar” [‘we in the family’].

Augustine’s view of man’s inner workings is dominated by his desire to ensure that grace is not responsible for the human world in his theology. The moral inviolability of grace demands that the evil of creation is rooted in a mental activity that can be fully attributed to man. The problem is that none of church father’s philosophical teachers knows of such a capacity. In Greek tradition man is not treated as free. Augustine addresses this anthropological gap by making an invention that is of epochal significance in the history of Western thought: he develops the concept of human will and places it at the centre of man’s inner life. The evil of the world is deduced from the malevolence of man (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,22,32 ff. (PL 32,793 ff.); Dihle 1982: 123 ff.). In agreement with his stance on theodicy, the church father describes this evil will not as entirely tainted, but only as perverted by sin. A search for the cause of this sinful will, he reasons, produces nothing, (cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 12,6 (PL 41,353 ff.); Billiesich 1952: 260 f.). Lindgren has declared on various occasions that he regards questions on human will as the true “kärnan” [‘core;’ H 15; cf. S 174 ff.; G 97 f.] of his work (cf. Friberg 2000: 63 ff.; Pehrson Berger 1993: 57 ff., 138 ff.; Nilsson 2004: 147 f.). In *Minnen* he infuses his characters with a will that is reminiscent of the concept of spontaneity found in Augustine’s anthropology (cf. Horn 1996: 113 ff.). Whereas in Greek philosophy, man cannot oppose the council of reason by force of his own will, the narrator of the memoir ‘wills’ “egentligen mot bättre vetande” [‘against his better judgement;’ M 10]. Augustine assesses the moral quality of human will by relating it to the ontic order of being (cf. Holte 1958: 230 ff.). In *Minnen* people act correctly when they voluntarily embrace life. In Augustine, will is treated as an energy force (cf. Den Bok 1994: 240 ff.). Lindgren’s characters make their will manifest by exerting themselves and persisting, by experiencing lust and devotion. In a

fictitious speech in *Minnen*, love is praised as the only power that can resist death. Augustine attributes the weakness of will to an impotent will that succumbs to the body's pressure, or to a divided will that pushes man into different directions, or to a destructive will that is attracted by the void and death (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 8,9,21 ff. (PL 32,758 ff.); Saarinen 1993: 27 ff.). *Minnen* draws on all three of these explanations. The characters in the book lack "viljan och självövertinnelsen" ['will and self-conquest; M 21], they cannot "ropa ut ett försvar" ['cry out a defence; M 150], want to "bli mördare" ['become murderers; M 46 f.], and are simultaneously willing and unwilling in the same act of will [cf. M 139]. In a separate chapter, Lindgren mentions how the muscles in his "ben och armar" ['arms and legs'] revolt against the soul's control and perform "ofrivilliga rörelser" ['involuntary movements; M 121] all on their own. But just like Augustine, the Swedish author emphasizes that these kinds of movements do not imply that human will is corrupted in its entirety. Uncle Hjalmar's urge towards destruction is exposed as a hidden lack of love. In accordance with the same privative way of thinking, the evil will of Ol Karlsa's role model is attributed to a derailed sense of duty. Lindgren incorporates his fixation on human will into what he considers typical of Västerbotten. In his history, Västerbotten's strong-willed people maintain their willpower by encountering the untamed landscape of Västerbotten. In *Minnen*, the author's grandfather is made to express Västerbotten's voluntaristic creed: "Vi i Västerbottens inre vill fullgöra allt som är vår plikt" ['We in the interior of Västerbotten will perform everything that is our duty; M 19].

Although Augustine's will is autonomous, it does require a base for its undertakings. *Memoria* is identified by the church father as an adequate foundation for such action. Memory and remembrance are of course already discussed by Greek philosophy, but only Latin thought makes them into anthropological categories of central importance (cf. Arendt 1978: 117; Flasch 1993: 358 f.). In agreement with his ancient predecessors, Augustine describes memory in spatial terms as a field, a hall, a camp etc. (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,8,12 ff. (PL 32,784 ff.); *De trinitate* 12,14,23 (PL 42,1010 f.); O'Daly 1993: 31 ff.; Rist 1994: 74 f.; Flasch 1980: 344; Teske 2001: 151). *Memoria* stores not only what man experiences himself, but also what he is told by others. Even though the church father cannot actually remember his own childhood, he is able to describe it in the *Confessions*, because he trusts the information others have given him about it (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 1,7,12 (PL 32,666); 10,8,14 (PL 32,785); Rist 1994: 79). Besides empirical experiences, memory stores emotions, sentiments, and various types of abstract knowledge. Memory documents recurring processes, but is most strongly attracted by unique and unusual events (cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*

14,24,2 (PL 41,432 f.); Gilson 1929: 132 ff.; O'Daly 1987: 131 ff., 148 ff.; Marrou 1958: 143; Rist 1994: 75 f.; Teske 2001: 51 f.). Since it contains everything that is present in the soul, *memoria* forms man's identity. His self-image and his image of reality are shaped by what he remembers (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,17,26 (PL 32,790); O'Daly 1987: 148; Gilson 1929: 287 ff.; Flasch 1980: 343 ff.). But Augustine's *memoria* also has a dimension that exceeds the individual. As Jan Assmann's theory of memory has shown, Antiquity develops a kind of cultural memory that accumulates the knowledge that a specific social group regards as necessary, binds it to various institutionalised representational forms, and passes it from generation to generation in order to stabilize the group's self-image (cf. Assmann 1992: 21 och passim; Assmann 1988: 9 ff.). Working from Assmann, Otto Gerhard Oexle claims that *memoria* fulfils the same functions of group-consolidation and cultural preservation in the *Confessions*. The broad spectrum of knowledge that Augustine considers part of the collective *scientia* of mankind can be contained in memory (cf. Oexle 1995: 35 ff.; Gilson 1929: 132 ff.; Teske 2001: 151 f.).

There are many parallels between Augustine's *memoria* and Lindgren's memory. Even though the author declares at the beginning of *Minnen* that he has no memories, this claim should not be taken too seriously. On various occasions he has emphasized that his texts should be considered as provisional hypotheses of the type "Låt oss tänka oss att det är så här" ['let us just imagine it like this;' G 95; cf. S 42; H 14]. As is common in his work, the basic premise of the book is later deconstructed by the book itself. In interviews, Lindgren has repeatedly stated that his memory is "bra" ['good;' S 14] and contains "tydliga minnen" ['clear recollections;' S 67] of many past events. In *Minnen* he recollects "klart" ['clearly;' M 177], "tydligt" ['distinctly;' M 15, 17], "särskilt" ['exactly;' M 17], "med absolut visshet" ['with absolute certainty;' M 31]. Also other characters in the book—his grandfather, the peasant Isak, Golo Mann and others—remember things. The spatial nature of memory is repeatedly mentioned in the book. Memory is compared to "en plats" ['a place;' M 143], "en resonanslåda" ['a resonating body;' M 116], and a "förråd" ['store;' D]. The author's memory not only stores things he came into contact with directly, but also things reported by others. "Tydligast" ['Most clearly;' M 17] he remembers his grandfather who died "sexton år" ['16 years;' M 22] before his birth. Lindgren's memories contain empirically verifiable facts, emotions, and abstract thoughts. A central part is played by spectacular events: aunt Hildur's adventure, a conversation at his publisher's that resulted in "en ny vändning" ['a turning point;' M 96] in the author's life, etc. But in the context of such exciting episodes he also thematises a large number of ordinary events. Throughout this long line of recollections, the author recapitulates his own world. "Verkligheten är bara

det som vi kan komma ihåg" ['Reality is only what we can remember;' M 64], is one of the book's key sentences. But it is equally obvious in *Minnen* that personal memories can also have general significance. From time to time, the memories in the book are introduced with remarks such as "Numera vet ingen" ['nowadays noone knows;' M 50]. By writing down his memories, Lindgren preserves a cultural tradition that is slowly disappearing. The true essence of this project of social memory lies in the author's connection to his Västerbottnian homeland. As a result of their continuous fight against nature and large corporations, he states in various interviews, the Västerbottnians have "en utpräglad känsla för släktgemenskapen bakåt" ['a strong feeling for the historical dimension of their family line;' S 44], have devoted themselves to genealogical research, and have founded local associations and museums. Just like all these memory-preserving activities *Minnen* can also be read as a manifestation of Västerbottnian cultural memory. The book's narrator works along the lines of Assmann's theories and looks back at the mythohistory of the landscape, mentions Västerbottnian cultural sites, customs, and values, and raises awareness of forms of collective memory: estate inventories, church registers, letters, and, last but not least, Västerbottnian literature. Even after he has moved out into the world, Västerbottnian experiences continue to dominate his narrative perspective. Interestingly enough, one of the first Stockholm chapters begins with the phrase "Vi invandrar från Västerbotten" ['we immigrants from Västerbotten;' M 112].

In his theory of memory, Augustine not only explains what is preserved by memory, but also discusses the rules this process obeys. He treats the processes of human memory in analogy to the process of visual perception (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,8,12 (PL 32,784); *De trinitate* 12,14,23 (PL 42,1010 f.); Flasch 1980: 344; O'Daly 1987: 131 ff.). Just as the body's eyes register material objects and transform them into sensory impressions, the mind's eye (*acies animi*) collects the material of memory, structures it into thoughts and shapes it into recollections (Augustinus, *De trinitate* 11,3,6 (PL 42,988); cf. *Confessiones* 10,14,21 (PL 32,788); Rist 1994: 75f; O'Daly 1987: 133 ff., 138 ff.; Gilson 1929: 283). According to Augustine, a mental force is required to assemble the form, that is thought, and the content, the memory-image, into a coherent recollection. This force he attributes to human will. Since he considers will the most important ethical authority of man there cannot possibly be any morally neutral memories. The human process of remembering is subject either to sin or to grace. Righteous recollection is thereby linked to humble will, sinful memory to pride (Augustinus, *De trinitate* 14,6,8 (PL 42,1041 f.); *Confessiones* 10,23,34 ff. (PL 32,794 ff.); O'Daly 1987: 133 ff.; Gilson 1929: 129, 162 ff.; Rist 1994: 77). Lindgren's concept of memory follows the church father's in many aspects. As in Augustine the spatial dimension of

memory in *Minnen* is closely linked to its visuality. Memory is “en plats” [‘a place’] where one “ser skuggor” [‘sees shades;’ M 143]. It is compared to a “filmprojektor” [‘film projector’] that makes the recollections “synlig” [‘visible;’ M 9]. The result of this visual process of remembering—our recollections—Lindgren understands as “tankar precis som resten av vårt intellektuella och andliga liv” [‘thoughts akin to the rest of our intellectual and mental life;’ S 246]. In line with this definition, most of the recollections in *Minnen* possess a highly reflected form. A number of chapters are introduced with considerations that are expanded into philosophical mini-essays. However, Lindgren’s recollections are also equally—if not more—influenced by the two basic forms of will: humility, which is linked to grace, and pride, which is coupled with “synd” [‘sin;’ M 16] and “skam” [‘shame;’ M 135]. Epithets such as *peculiar*, *modest*, *pretentious*, *bashful*, *self-satisfied*, *self-sufficient*, *self-confident* are continuously repeated in the text and used not only to describe the contents of a memory, but also the process of remembering itself, as well as the process of committing memory to paper. An ‘I’ that writes down its memories must “inte vara självutplånande” [‘not be self-erasing;’ M 117], but needs an “anspråksfull” [‘ambitious, even pretentious;’ M 128] voice. Distancing oneself from memory can, however, be a sign of differentiation and self-assertion, of making oneself “märkvärdig” [‘extraordinary;’ M 7]. Just like Augustine, the creator of the doctrine of original sin, *Minnen* treats pride as man’s inescapable fate. Various reviewers have noted that Lindgren’s memoir is the result of “falsk blygsamhet” [‘false modesty’], and that “självförhävelse” [‘hubris’] lurks behind his “självforminskelse” [‘self-humiliation’] (Gunnarsson 2010; Waern 2010). In various contexts, the author has stated that humility and pride are typical Västerbottnian traits. On occasion of the opening of “Raggsjöleden – Torgny Lindgrens litterära landskap” [‘Torgny Lindgren’s literary landscape’] he reports that “Den svåraste synd man kunde begå i min hembygd, det var att göra sig märkvärdig, och så är det” [‘the worst sin one could commit in my home village was to make oneself extraordinary, and so it is;’ S 257]. In *Maten*, he asks Ella Nilsson whether their cooking skills are “en aning för märkvärdig för Västerbotten” [‘not a little too out of the ordinary for Västerbotten;’ N 91]. At the same time, he understands Västerbottnian willpower as an object of justified pride. “Han var” [‘He was’], he writes about his relative from Sorsele “till och med stolt över att vara västerbottning. Och det kan man ju förstå” [‘even proud of being from Västerbotten. And that is of course understandable;’ N 154].

Although the memory theory of the *Confessions* is intended to solve theological problems and to underpin the new doctrine of grace, neither philosophy nor theology is the primary epistemological base of Augustine’s concept of memory. The church father develops his concept of *memoria*

with the help of Roman rhetoric: In *De Doctrina Christiana*, rhetoric serves as a base for the creation of the first homiletic doctrine of the Western world (cf. Auerbach 1958: 25 ff.; Pollmann 1996: 225). Many of its fundamental principles also play a part in the *Confessions*. The work has a dialogical base, is not only directed towards God, but also towards fellow human beings, and establishes its doctrine by employing a wide range of ancient rhetorical means (cf. Herzog 1984: 213 ff.). With their aid, Augustine makes theoretical points in his discussion of memory in the *Confessions*. He explains how memory functions by using the speaker's mnemonic technique as a model (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,10,17 ff. (PL 32,786 ff.), 11,6,8 (PL 32,812); O'Daly 1987: 143; Flasch 1993: 32, 147, 196 ff., 319 and passim; Schmidt 1985: 30 f.). In the autobiographical essay "På tal om att skriva" ['Speaking of writing'], Lindgren claims that his texts are "skrivna som predikningar och bör läsas som sådana" ['written as sermons and should be read as such'] (Lindgren 1978: 25; cf. Willén 2008: 29 ff., 41 ff., 65 ff. and passim; Tyrberg 2002: 346 ff.). In *Minnen* he describes how he witnessed the priest of a small Swedish town using one of his stories for his sermon during high mass. The author considered entering the pulpit and delivering a counter-sermon, but "förmådde inte" ['was not able to']. Instead, he put "allt det" ['everything'] he had wanted to "förkunna" ['proclaim; M 150] back then into *Minnen*. This rhetorical-homiletic strain is noticeable throughout the book. Lindgren applies a classic synthetic method of preaching with its varied and surprising move from theme to theme, simulates orality, constructs his chapters with the structure of classical speeches in mind, continuously re-addresses his recipient, and directs the process of reception by means of a number of tried and tested figures of speech: climax, hyperbole, litotes, anticlimax, digression etc. Just like the ancient orators, he knows many texts by heart and weaves them into his memoir as intertexts. In several passages, his discussion of memory directly links up with the frame of reference of Augustinian rhetoric. The church father declares that the characteristics of memory are analogous to those of language and claims that we remember in the same way as we know what words mean (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,20,29 (PL 32,792); O'Daly 1987: 141 ff., 147; Flasch 1980: 344 f.). *Minnen* explains that without memory one would not know that "blomman heter pelargon" ['the flower is called pelargonium; M 9]. Lindgren thus treats the rhetorical-homiletic tone of his texts as a typically Västerbottnian ingredient. In "På tal om att skriva" he describes itinerant Västerbottnian free church preachers and calls them his most important artistic "förebilder" ['source of inspiration'] (Lindgren 1978: 25).

Minnen and the *Confessions* obviously have numerous parallels. Although Lindgren often aims to create contrasts between periphery and cen-

tre, between Raggsjö and Paris, he fits Västerbotten with paradigmatically Western characteristics. It may be attractive to link the strong Augustinian element in *Minnen* with Västerbotten's Lutheran roots. But this kind of confessional affinity can not fully explain the numerous structural parallels between Augustine's and Lindgren's concept of memory. The function of Augustine's concept of *memoria* in *Minnen* can only be fully determined, if we also consider the differences between the Swedish memoir and its patristic intertext.

III.

There are also many differences between Augustine's theory of *memoria* and Torgny Lindgren's *Minnen*. It is hardly remarkable that most of them are the result of differences in the reader's horizons of expectations. In a nutshell, the hermeneutic distance between the church father and the Swedish author could be summarized in a single word: industrialisation. Augustine's arguments take place in a pre-industrial world, are based on the metaphysical objectivity of existence, and describe the human soul "als einen Schauplatz, den Ort der Selbstdarstellung der Ideen" (Flasch 1980: 351). Lindgren is part of the industrial era that is made manifest mainly by two pivotal events in the mental history of mankind. Speaking with Adorno, the first one is the "Erhöhung des befreiten Subjekts" in bourgeois society, which develops "reine Subjektivität" and emerges as "eines, das sich als dem Kollektiv, der Objektivität entgegengesetztes bestimmt und ausdrückt" (Adorno 1997b: 53 f.). The other epochal event is the "Erniedrigung zum Austauschbaren, zum bloßen Sein für anderes" (Adorno 1997b: 54) of the self-determined, triumphant I. If modern reception theory is right, the ups and downs of the industrial subject must have influenced Lindgren's intertextual dialogue with the church father. The changing fates of the bourgeois subject have been described with the aid of numerous conceptual models. My gastroskopic intentions are ideally served by a collection of categories that has been developed by historians, cultural anthropologists, and literary critics for the purpose of describing the evolution of memory in industrial society. The conception of memory is, they emphasize, inextricably linked with man's self-image and changes in accordance with the fluctuations of self-conception. Birth, expansion, and crisis of the concept of subject have directly affected the changes of industrial memory. One of the noblest goals of the memory researchers has been to chart these transformations and to extract the essence of modern cultural memory (cf. Oexle 1995: 57 ff., 69 ff.; Warning 1991: 356 ff., 380; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73 ff.). The theory of cultural memory of modernity can function as a profitable frame of reference for an evaluation of the differences between *Minnen* and its

patristic intertext. Can Lindgren's possible dissociation from ancient concepts of memory be related to Western—and Västerbottnian—industrialisation and his own origins in late modernity? When answering these kinds of questions, it would be wrong to consider Augustine's *memoria* and modern cultural memory as antithetical concepts (cf. Haverkamp 1993: XIII f.). The industrial concept of memory was not created *ex nihilo*, but developed from pre-industrial *memoria*, and is thus the result of a slow process of transformation. The mnemonic structure of modernity shows many Augustinian components, even though many have been placed in other theoretical contexts.

Augustine lacks a concept of the subject. When in a passage of *Minnen*, Lindgren supports his argument about the 'I' by referencing Augustine ("Och Augustinus påpekar" etc. ['And Augustine notes;' M 120]), he falls prone to an anachronistic misreading. The church father's constant oscillation between 'I' and 'We' indicate that he views man not as an individual 'I', distinct from the 'not-I' of the world, but as a bearer of the universal nature of man. Admittedly, Augustine does show early signs of developing a modern concept of subjectivity. In the *Confessions* he writes about memory that "this is my conscience, this is my 'I'" (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,17,26 (PL 32,790)). But all claims of this kind are ultimately neutralised by the mental supervision of *memoria* theory, by the doctrine of grace, which makes all human beings into copies of Adam and taints them all with undifferentiated guilt (cf. Flasch 1993: 137, 222; Flasch 1980: 350 ff.; Flasch 1995a: 95 f.; Horn 1997: 185). According to memory researcher Aleida Assmann, modernity with its strong awareness of subjectivity entails "die Heraufkunft der subjektiven Erinnerung." The central role of memory now lies in "Ich-Konstruktion" and "Selbst-Konstitution." By remembering oneself, one's fellow human beings, and one's world, the remembering 'I' fixates "die Selbigkeit der Person" (Assmann 1999: 94, 97; cf. Oexle 1995: 48 ff., 57 ff.; Siegmund 2001: 618 ff.). In various interview statements, Lindgren has noted that he belongs to the era of the subjectivist and existentialist thinking. He likes to reference existentialists and personalists—Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger, Mounier—and points out that he finds it "väldigt svårt att tänka mig en modern filosofi, en modern livsuppfattning som inte utgår" ['difficult to imagine a modern philosophy and way of life that is not derived;' S 176] from these thinkers. In agreement with his philosophical guides he views man as an "individ" ['individual'] that is "oskattbar" ['invaluable;' S 178], "helig" ['sacred;' H 15], and possesses irreducible "hållning och värdighet" ['composure and dignity;' S 178]. Only "Den enskilda människan" ['the individual'], he claims, can be "bärare av nåden" ['a bearer of grace;' S 159] (cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 140 ff., 223 ff.; Friberg 2000: 64, 90). In *Minnen* the concept of subjectivity is one of Lind-

gren's most productive categories. In the chapter on the animals in his life he employs an argument that directly references personalist ideas. Even though his dogs bore various names, they nevertheless simply "tjänstgjort som Hunden" ['served as the Dog;' M 101]. Lindgren sees himself as shielded from a world without distinctions between subject and object: "Hunden är ett sändebud från den barndom som vi glömt. En gång var vi alla hundar" ['dogs are messengers from our forgotten childhoods. Once upon a time, we were all dogs;' M 101]. Unlike the exchangeable animals, the human individuals in *Minnen* are "unik" ['unique;' M 40], "fri och suverän" ['free and independent;' M 202], experience themselves as "den ende" ['the only one;' M 42], claim "singulariteten" ['singularity;' M 171], expect "personligt" ['personal;' M 58] treatment, want to belong to "sig själv" ['themselves;' M 31]. The memories in the book document this "för mig"-perspective ['for me;' M 67] by means of long list of subjectivising techniques: the rendition of thoughts, value-judgements, personal metaphors, focalisation, and especially dialogue. In the discussion with his editor, the author argues in favour of "det evinnerliga pratet" ['endless chatting'] as an expression of the personal dimension of man. "Jaget blir uppenbart" ['The 'I' is made visible;' M 212]. According to memory theory, the invention of the concept of 'I' has had consequences not only for the person remembering, but also for his or her environment. Modern memory tends to project the category of subject onto any remembered space-time-period and thereby forcefully asserts its subjectivation (Siegmund 2001: 627; Lachmann 1993: 502 ff.; Witte 2003: 90 ff.; Assmann 1999: 337 ff.). Lindgren's Västerbotten is constructed in a similar way and thereby becomes a quasi-subject. The author contrasts Västerbotten with a non-Västerbotten consisting of the continent, Southern Sweden, Lappland, etc., provides it with a clear centre ("vårt innersta" ['our innermost core;' N 47], "våra rötter" ['our roots;' N 51] etc.), ascribes it inviolable integrity, and links it with a large number of individualising traits. Whereas the people from Göteborg have a preference for mackerel, as Lindgren says in *Maten*, "vi västerbottningar" ['we Västerbottnians;' N 168] hunger for "syltefläsket" ['salted bacon;' N 114]. In *Minnen*, the Västerbottnian chronotope is presented as just as "fri och suverän" ['free and independent;' M 202] as the author's own father. Memory researchers have observed that the subjectivising tendency of modernity has resulted in a radical shift in memory's epistemological home. As long as *memoria* manifested the general nature of mankind it remained part of the system of rhetoric. But as an individual manifestation of the 'I' memory has invalidated the universalising tool of rhetoric and has engendered the need for a new hermeneutic approach (cf. Oexle 1995: 62; Assmann 1993: 365 f.). In *Minnen*, Lindgren often follows in the footsteps of Schleiermacher. He relies on empathy, notes meaning-

ful details, draws synthetic conclusions, and corrects his interpretations by employing the logic of the philological circle. His ambition is to “förstå” [‘understand;’ M 82] even the most repelling of his contemporaries.

As Augustine’s anthropology rests on a metaphysical foundation, his *memoria* is reproductive in nature. Memory is of secondary importance to the ontological order. All impressions stored by memory are derived from objective reality. Although the church father does occasionally link *memoria* and imagination, and claims that man is capable of creating images of non-existent things with his memory, he simultaneously states that even our wildest *phantasmata* merely combine elements derived from empirical experience (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* 11,10,17 (PL 42,997 f.); *Confessiones* 10,8,12 ff. (PL 32,784 ff.); O’Daly 1987: 106 ff., 131 ff., 138 ff.; Gilson 1929: 163 ff.). The subject-focus of modernity invalidates the ancient conception of memory as storage. Once memory is linked to an independent ‘I’ it immediately loses its mimetic character and becomes a productive force. Significantly enough, Giambattista Vico, one of the founders of the modern paradigm, equates *memoria* and *fantasia* (cf. Oexle 1995: 62; Siegmund 2001: 612 ff., 620 f.; Assmann 1999: 91 ff., 103 ff.; Lachmann 1993: 514 ff.; Haeffner 2003: 34 ff.). In his interview statements, Lindgren claims that memory is not a documenting “arkiv” [‘archive;’ S 247], but a “del av vår hjärna som producerar ganska fritt” [‘part of our brain that freely produces;’ S 246]. During the process of remembering we enjoy “en alldeles speciell frihet” [‘an extraordinary kind of freedom;’ S 246] and “konstruerar minnen i mycket stor omfattning” [‘construct the memories to a large extent;’ S 247]. The author realises that he tends to invent his own memories in the same way as he plays with fictional objects (cf. G 94 ff.; S 246 ff.). Various characters in *Minnen* show creativity in their relations with the past: his mother “hittar opp minnen” [‘invents memories;’ M 107], the Soviet state functionary attributes claims to Thomas Mann that are not recognised by his son Golo [M 175], the author Sladkovský collates past events according to his own gusto [M 167], and Lindgren himself used to invent the “levnadsöden” [‘fates of family members;’ M 54] when he was a little boy. The memories recorded in the book are accorded the same fantastic status. They are nothing but “inbillningar” [‘imagination;’ M 7] that “vi uppfunnit” [‘we have invented;’ M 9] and live in “diktens värld” [‘the world of fiction;’ M 10]. In a conversation with Kaj Schueler, Lindgren develops the idea that this kind of creativity might be a typical Västerbottnian trait. In dealing with their barren natural environment, the Västerbottnians have learned to “förhålla sig skapande” [‘be creative’], which “kanske inte har varit lika självklart här nere” [‘is probably not a given down here;’ S 26 f.]. In *Maten*, he applies this thought to his own image of Västerbotten and states that everything he has written about

his area of origin is only a construction, a “förbannad dikt” [‘damn poem;’ N 156].

Augustine’s theory of *memoria* rests on a metaphysical foundation and thus continuously operates with the classic instrument/material scheme. His optical model of memory and his storage metaphors indicate that there is an active organ of memory, the eye of memory, that processes passive mnemonic matter. Although the church father does develop the idea of *memoria interior*, a form of interior memory that remembers itself, he does not draw extensive conclusions from this embryo of Kantian transcendental philosophy. The fact that he never problematises self-reflexivity is a clear sign that he considers it along traditional, pre-Kantian lines (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* 14,6,8 (PL 42,1041 f.); O’Daly 1987: 131 ff., 147; Flasch 1980: 344 ff., 350 ff.; Gilson 1929: 285 ff.). Once modernity links memory to the individual subject, the meta-perspective is privileged as the omnipresent base of memory. Modern cultural memory becomes a productive “*Reflexivität, Selbst-Beobachtung*” that continuously dwells on its form and structure (Assmann 1999: 101; cf. Oexle 1995: 63, 78). Self-reflexivity plays a similarly prominent role in *Minnen*, especially due to its connection with the author’s processes of remembering and writing: He critically explores his ability to remember, explains the background of the book, thematises “det här manuskriptet” [‘this manuscript;’ M 208], defends his choice of form, laments that he cannot “skriva det här på tyska” [‘write this in German;’ M 160], etc. The meta-fictional technique that critics have identified in Lindgren’s early work (cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 273 ff.; Nilsson 2004: 243 ff., 257 and passim) is back in force in the memoir. In a typical *mise-en-abyme*, he reports that he dressed up as a child: “För idag skulle jag skrivas om i mina Minnen” [‘because this was a day I was going to write about in my memoir;’ M 36]. The quasi-subject Västerbotten is granted a similarly self-reflexive gaze. Both in *Maten* and *Minnen*, the Västerbottnians usually assemble to “prata Västerbotten” [‘talk Västerbotten;’ N 154]. By cumulating the life experiences of the Västerbottnians, the memoir emerges as a place where Västerbotten develops self-consciousness.

Subjectivity, creativity, and self-reflexivity are characteristic especially of the first, heroic phase of the history of the industrial subject. But it is a dialectic necessity that the triumph of subjectivity must produce the collapse of the subject, as for example Lukács has shown in his analysis of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. According to Lukács, the same forces and institutions that made possible the subject’s development of personality, enslave the human subject and “zerstückel[n] seine Persönlichkeit zu einem leblosen Spezialistentum” (Lukács 1964: 58). Modern memory theory analyses the influence that the collapse of the subject has on industrial memory

and describes the symptoms suffered by modern memory (cf. Oexle 1995: 63 ff.; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73 ff.; Assmann 1993: 359 ff.; Siegmund 2001: 623 ff.; Neumann 1993: 433 ff.; Lachmann 1993: 492 ff.). In various contexts, Lindgren has shown that he is sensitive towards the signs of the crisis of modernity. In *Maten* he admits that he despises “moderniteten i de flesta former” [‘most forms of modernity;’ N 51] and claims that it threatens not only the individual, but also the entire construction of the Västerbottnian subject. In *Minnen* he thematises most modern ailments of subjectivity: depersonalisation, reification, stereotypisation, commercialisation, collectivisation, etc. It may thus be justified to trace the symptoms of the disease of industrial memory in his memoir. It is important to note in this context that one should not treat modern cultural memory and Augustine’s *memoria* as opposites. Western arguments concerning the decay of the subject consistently reference Augustinian anthropology. Kierkegaard’s description of the subject’s constitution in crisis rests on the Augustinian doctrine of the fall from grace. Marx compares private property to hereditary sin. Parallels between hereditary sin and oedipal anxiety are drawn by Freud (cf. Marx, 1962: 741 f.; Freud 1950: 192; Dietz 1993: 255, 294 f.). It is thus not surprising that the narrative produced by memory theorists about the decay of modern memory contains various Augustinian components—but these are fitted into contexts far beyond the church father’s intellectual horizon.

Both Augustine’s sinful *memoria* and modern memory are thus in crisis that can be diagnosed with the help of psycho-analytic neurosis theory, but at the same time, both are afflicted with different symptoms. Rooted in objective existence, the church father can describe the decay of memory and will in terms of positive, almost physical forces: energy, weakness, strength, dominance, coercion, power, etc. As research in Augustine has noted, Augustinian sin is strongly compulsive in nature (cf. Müller 2009: 370; Paffenroth 2003: 145; Delumeau 1983: 333; Achelis 1921: 19 ff.). The autonomous ‘I’ of industrialism, shielded from the not-‘I’ of reality, does not open itself up to this kind of metaphysical terminology, but suffers from a fault that is entirely due to the internal logic of subjectivity. As the memory theorists note, the free ‘I’, endlessly striving for new goals, can neither develop all its inherent possibilities, nor rejoin the objective world. Its sheer subjectivity condemns it to a state permanent discontentedness and creates recollections that are inevitably characterised by a “Verlusterfahrung” (Siegmund 2001: 623; cf. Assmann 1999: 94, 101 ff.; Warning 1993: 177 ff.; Kany 1987: 208 ff., 237). Whereas the Augustinian sinner is plagued by a compulsive disorder, the industrialised individual falls prey to a structural depression which appears to be the common ailment not only of modern society but also of modern cultural memory. It is entirely possible to iden-

tify clearly compulsive symptoms in Lindgren's memoir (cf. Fenichel 1946: 268 ff.). The author strives for "ordning" ['order; M 152], has a "böjelse för fullständig kontroll" ['tendency towards complete control; M 152], occupies himself with "kartor" ['maps; M 77], has difficulties with "känslsamhet" ['sentimentality; M 29], honours traditions and his duties, experiences himself as "skrattretande obeslutsam" ['ridiculously indecisive; M 89], likes saying no, etc. But in *Minnen* all these indicators of a compulsive disorder yield to an experience of shortage: shortage of air, shortage of suffering, shortage of courage, shortage of consistency, shortage of subjectivity, shortage of meaning, shortage of words, etc. Whenever Augustine remarks on shortage, absence, or loss, he explains it in terms of compulsion. As soon as Adam and Eve lose their blissful original state, they look at their body parts, the church father argues, and begin to feel desire (cf. Augustinus, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11,32,42 (PL 34,417); Scheff-czyk 1981: 211). *Minnen* inverts Augustine's explanatory model. Desires and urges are featured, but treated as the result of a concealed experience of loss. Uncle Hjalmar's destructive and murderous desires are exposed as the result of an insatiable need for love. The melancholic-depressive type of neurosis dominates the memories recorded in Lindgren's memoir. In interviews, the author has stated that he felt "satans melankolisk för att uttrycka det mildt" ['damn melancholy, to put it mildly'] (Ullberg 2010) during his work on *Minnen*. In the book's final chapter, he admits to his editor that he "varit förbålt nedstämd. Egentligen oavbrutet" ['was confoundedly depressed. All the time, in fact; M 212]. In principle, *Minnen* shows all major indicators which psychoanalysts consider typical of a depressive "existensform" ['form of existence'] (Frankl 1990: 213; cf. Fenichel 1946: 387 ff.). The author shows a pessimistic outlook, tends to complain, is fascinated by death, suffers from a lack of self-confidence, subjects himself to excessive self-criticism, thinks he lives a wrong life, develops strong object relations, etc. The greatest disaster he can imagine is that "hädanefter skulle ingen älska mig" ['henceforth no-one should love me; M 165]. In the memoir, Lindgren explains his "livsleda" ['world-weariness'] by saying that he feels old and probably "inte ska skriva just något mer" ['will not write any more; M 212]. In a conversation with Kaj Schueler, he develops an aetiology that reaches back into his earliest childhood. In psychoanalysis, depression is usually ascribed to a primal childhood experience of injured narcissism (cf. Abraham 1969: 147 f.). Lindgren describes a comparable experience: "Urupplevelsen är för mig att det var bestämt att jag skulle dö som barn" ['The primal experience for me was that I was destined to die as a child; S 77]. On the one hand, he came close to being aborted [cf. S 70 f.], on the other, he suffered from Tuberculosis as a child: "Att vara ett sjukt, döende barn går djupt in i ens väsen, färgar alla upplevelser av livet, färgar

än idag min förnimmelse av tillvaron" ['Being a sick and dying child goes deep inside one's being, colours all experiences of life, and even continues to colour my experience of existence to the present day; S 77]. In *Maten*, Lindgren leaves the sphere of individual experience and views his depression as a more general phenomenon. All Västerbottnians share, he claims, a specific notion of "ett tomrum som man har inom sig" ['a void one has inside oneself; N 112, cf. 114]. Melancholia is integrated into the characteristics of the Västerbottnian quasi-subject. At the same time, the author is aware that other nations have their "egna tomrum" ['own voids; N 114] and that such "svalg" ['chasms; N 112] can never be completely filled. Just like modern memory theorists, he treats melancholia as something that is woven into the underlying structures of the 'I.'

Memory theorists have thoroughly analysed the structural void in modern memory. According to Aleida Assmann, one of the most important deficiencies of industrial cultural memory is "die Wunde der Zeit" (Assmann 1993: 359, 374, 378 f.). Although Augustine is aware of the continuous passing of time, he fits it into a metaphysical-cosmological system. He laments that "the hour passes away" and his "early childhood" is long "dead," but knows that in the Lord "nothing dies" (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 1,6,9 (PL 32,664), 11,15,20 (PL 32,817); cf. *De trinitate* 4,16,21 (PL 42,902); Flasch 1993: 214, 299 f., 364 and passim; Teske 2001: 154 f.). In *Minnen* it is only the subhuman sphere that is "oförstörbar" ['indestructible; M 103]. Even if the individual dogs grow old and die, they still serve as the "oförgängliga" ['eternal; M 101] Dog. In the sense that publishers are "förbrukningsartiklar" ['consumables; M 7], they embody an extension of the same enduring animal world. In the human world, on the other hand, everything is "förgängligt" ['perishable; M 101]. The author makes the "tidens föränderlighet" ['changeability of time; M 129] into a core motif of his memoir. Humans are, he points out, "underkastade tiden" ['subjected to time; M 132] and "förändras" ['change; M 64], decay [M 15], "utplånas" ['are extinguished; M 64], get "åldrade, tärda, vissnade" ['aged, haggard, and faded; M 54] faces, fall "i förfall" ['into decay; M 163]. The lives that have been lived "kommer aldrig att levas igen" ['cannot be lived again; M 174]. With unyielding consequence, Lindgren lists words that describe the relentless speed of time's passage: *nyligen, snart, förbi, över, för sent* ['recently, soon, past, over, too late']. The book deals with the "sista" ['last; M 13] meetings, "den sista i familjen" ['the last in the family; M 62], "mitt sista kvävningsanfall" ['my last bout of suffocation; M 63], "den siste levande nazistledaren" ['the last living Nazi leader; M 114], and, finally, the last book [M 212]. By coupling it with modernity, the quasi-subject of Västerbotten becomes part of the same inevitable process of decay; although "det moderna Västerbotten" ['modern Västerbotten; N 108] certainly exists,

it perverts the “rötter” [‘roots;’ N 51] of the Västerbottnians and is thus no sign of “framsteg” [‘progress;’ N 108], but of the incurable wounds of time. Modern memory theory treats this kind of omnipresent experience of the transitory nature of existence as a central component of industrial cultural memory and as a direct consequence of the subjectivisation of memory. As soon as memory became a manifestation of a unique ‘I,’ Aleida Assmann argues, it was no longer linked to cyclical nature, but to the individual, unique, and unrepeatable actions of the ‘I.’ Remembered time becomes “als ein immer tieferer Abgrund sichtbar” and accumulates the temporal “Abstandserfahrung” of the individual (Assmann 1993: 364 f.; cf. Siegmund 2001: 619).

Another essential element of the structural void in modern cultural memory that memory theorists have identified is its fragmentation. Augustine’s metaphysical perspective understands *memoria* as a guarantee of the unity and totality of man. In his teachings of sin, he employs many metaphors of divergence, dissolution, and dissection, and laments, among other things, that he is “splintered into times” (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 11,29,39 (PL 32,825); cf. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 95,15 (PL 37,1236); Flasch 1993: 397 ff.; de Lubac 1938: 10). But at the same time, he emphasizes that the acts of remembering are independent of the dissolving consequences of sin and “order” what is stored in one’s memory and “collect it together from dispersion” (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,11,18 (PL 32,787); cf. O’Daly 1987: 136, 142). The unification of memory, knowledge, and will in the process of remembering is rooted in the consubstantiality of the trinity (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* 10,12,19 (PL 42,984); Flasch 1980: 342 ff.; Gilson 1929: 282 ff.). As a representative of the first optimistic phase of industrialisation, Kant declares this kind of metaphysical hypostases of unity for invalid, but replaces them with the unity of a transcendental conscience (cf. Flasch 1980: 350 ff.). In Lindgren’s *Minnen* the transcendental identity of the ‘I’ is similarly deactivated. The ‘I’ is, he writes, “inte enhetligt och sammanhållet” [‘not consistent and unified’], but a conglomerate of disparate “delar” [‘parts;’ M 120]. The quasi-subject Västerbotten tends to fragment in the same way as the human ‘I.’ In *Maten* the author reveals that there is not “ett Västerbotten utan ett otal. Det rätta ordet vore Västerbottnarna!” [‘one Västerbotten, but a plurality of Västerbottens. The correct word would be the Västerbottens!;’ N 156]. An ‘I’ of this kind cannot avoid producing a “osammanhängande” [‘fragmented;’ M 118] life and “regellöst” [‘disorderly;’ M 38] volatile memories. In the first chapter of the book, Lindgren compares the activity of his memory to that of an old broken projector that runs and rattles without actually succeeding in showing a film. However, “för något flyktigt ögonblick fungerar allt som det ska och en bildruta, en enda, blir synlig” [‘for a brief moment, everything works as it should and a single frame becomes visible;’

M 9]. In agreement with its core metaphor, *Minnen* gives up all claims to totality, exposes no consistent lines of development, and negates the search for any coherent “mening” [‘meaning;’ M 209]. The book smashes memory into “miljarder” [‘billions;’ M 11] of shards, freely moves between episodes, and fixates on momentary glances, gestures, and utterances. The author’s close allies are “uppehåll och avbrott” [‘pauses and breaks;’ M 107]. Summaries that could generate coherence are replaced with atomising ellipses. Not the genre of “roman” [‘novel’], but the “novellsamling” [‘collection of short stories;’ M 208] is identified as the architextual model. Georg Simmel has claimed that the epistemological expansion of the subject irrevocably ends the totalitarian aspirations of pre-industrial memory. Confronted with innumerable components of reality, perspectives and hierarchies of values, Simmel claims, the free ‘I’ is forced to distance itself from general “Einheitsbegriffe” and to content itself with remembering “das Einzelne” (Simmel 1905: 46). Modern memory theorists argue along similar lines, point to the decentring of the late-modern subject, and make memory’s “Partikularität, ihre Bezogenheit auf das Einzelne, auf das Fragment” one of the typical signs of modernity (Oexle 1995: 57, cf. Siegmund 2001: 610 f., 623 ff.; Assmann 1993: 365 f., 371 f.; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73 f.; Neumann 1993: 437, 454; Lachmann 1993: 518; Witte 2003: 90 ff.; Lindner 1984: 28 f.).

The fragmentation of modern cultural memory is usually manifested in its oscillation between entropy and hypertrophy. In Augustine’s anthropology, reality, *memoria*, and recollections are directed by the same set of rules. Through being part of this cosmic system, the memories and their volume are naturally adapted both to the order of the cosmos and the individual’s capacity for thought. On the other hand, the empirically oriented church father does admit that memory can be affected by both an overflow and a lack of information. In the *Confessions*, he is particularly interested in the slow erosion of memory and shows how easily oblivion can devour memory-images and thoughts (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,8,12 (PL 32,784), 10,16,24 ff. (PL 32,789 ff.); O’Daly 1993: 36 ff.). Directed by his metaphysical approach, he describes these kinds of mnemonic dysfunctions in analogy to the loss or over-extensive storage of items. Augustine claims that, just as a lost coin does not actually disappear, but patiently waits for its rediscovery, nothing can be completely forgotten (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,18,27 (PL 32,791); Gilson 1929: 129 f.). Both entropy and hypertrophy of memory are considered to be coincidental deviations and are thus described as consistent with normal mnemonic activity (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* 10,10,13 ff. (PL 42,980 ff.); O’Daly 1987: 134, 146 ff.; Flasch 1980: 338, 344, 348; TeSelle 1970: 305). In *Minnen*, the perspective is inverted. In the chapter on his journalistic career in Umeå, Lindgren is bombarded with innumerable items of

Västerbottnian news that slowly but surely exceed the limited capacity of his memory. Even more common in the book is forgetting. It is presented as normal, whereas remembering is treated as an exceptional miracle. “Jag har inga minnen” [‘I have no memories;’ M 7], the author says to his editor, and transforms his book into a catalogue of everything that has vanished from his memory. Gaps in his memory affect the author’s brother [M 14], his childhood friend [M 37], his mother [M 107], Göran Tunström [M 144], and Golo Mann [M 175]. A place of honour among these victims of forgetting is accorded to the quasi-subject of Västerbotten. The grandfather’s cultivating activities have been forgotten not only by the author himself and by other Västerbottnians, but also by “hela världen” [‘the whole world;’ M 18]. The Västerbottnians forget the true core of their Västerbottnian subjectivity—“receptet på långfilet” [‘the recipe for a kind of fermented viscous milk;’ M 57] and “kornmjölsgröten” [‘barley porridge;’ N 190]. The capacity for forgetting in *Minnen* is so absolute that the author can—unlike Augustine—occasionally forget even his own forgetting. Based on Simmel’s theory of the expansion of modern memory, memory theorists observe that the over-abundance of memories has a paradoxical spin-off effect and causes things to be forgotten with increasing speed. Gerald Siegmund points out that “das Problem des Vergessens und Nicht-Mehr-Erinnern-Könnens” is the fundamental flaw of industrial memory (Siegmund 2001: 623; cf. Oexle 1995: 18, 61; Assmann 1999: 94; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73; Neumann 1993: 440 f.; Witte 2003: 95).

Another prominent element of the structural void of modern cultural memory is the lack of consciousness. Augustine develops his theory of *memoria* with consciousness as the inevitable starting point. Although he admits that consciousness is “too narrow to contain” his great wealth of memory-images (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,8,15 (PL 32,785); cf. O’Daly 1987: 150), the picture he paints of the unconscious regions of memory is consistent with the privative-metaphysical model of his general theory. Unconscious memory-images rest peacefully in the “innumerable caves” that form the store of memory and the mind’s eye can retrieve them at any time. Augustine’s unconsciousness is passive, reflects the natural goodness of creation, and is entirely described in analogy to consciousness (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,17,26 (PL 32,790); cf. *De trinitate* 10,2,4 ff. (PL 42,974 ff.); TeSelle 1970: 303 ff.; Gilson 1929: 127 ff.; Flasch 1980: 338). The industrial ‘I’ does not consider the meaning of its unconscious with the same confidence. With reference to psychoanalysis, memory theorists claim that industrial cultural memory considers itself a stage for supremely powerful mechanisms of repression that flattens unpleasant events and simultaneously retains them (cf. Neumann 1993: 440 f.; Siegmund 2001: 627 ff.; Lachmann 1993:

500; Kittsteiner 1984: 171 ff.; Warning 1993: 160 ff.). In a previously quoted, meta-fictional passage in *Minnen*, a young Torgny combs his hair, brushes “framtänderna med saltlösning” [‘his front teeth with saline solution’] and dresses himself “så gott” [‘as well’] as he can, in order to have his portrait taken for “mina Minnen” [‘my *Minnen*;’ M 36]. Many of the events in the book are similarly scrubbed clean. His place of origin is “oskuldskraft” [‘innocent;’ M 75], life obeys a “rättsordning” [‘just order’], people want to do “väl” [‘good;’ M 35]. However, Lindgren burdens all these claims with a heavy dose of irony. When asked by a psychiatrist whether he is trying to repress “något svårt och traumatiskt” [‘something difficult and traumatic’], he answers negatively, but accompanied with “ofrivilliga huvudskakningar” [‘an involuntary shake of his head;’ M 126]. In his reports of other individuals, Lindgren clearly notes the powers of the unconscious. Thomas Mann is controlled by his urge to see “vackra, nakna pojköverkroppar” [‘pretty, naked torsos of boys;’ M 168]. The only thing that the author’s mother remembers about her father is a traumatic childhood incident. Concerning his own unconscious, Lindgren is remarkably less explicit. He does, however, leave enough traces to inspire a number of psychoanalytic readings. Noticeable in *Minnen* is for example a strong homo-social sub-current. In line with a typical symptom of depression (cf. Abraham 1969: 140; Riemann 1961: 64; Fenichel 1946: 390), the authorial ‘I’ largely treats women as mother figures. During a visit to a female fortune teller, a former high-class prostitute, Lindgren has to sit “vid hennes fötter” [‘at her feet’] and she treats him “som om hon tröstade ett gråtande barn” [‘as if she were consoling a crying child;’ M 159]. Libidinous energy is attached to male objects instead. Lindgren is attracted by male friends, declares his “kärlek” [‘love;’ M 152] for male deeds, is fascinated by bisexual authors, describes “härliga” [‘lovely;’ M 206] male bodies, thematises male sexual organs etc. Theorists of memory point out that the industrial lack of consciousness applies not only to the individual libidinous level, but also the sociopolitical self-image of society. Many modern memory gaps are created by state-controlled mechanisms of power that aim to keep industrial memory free of ideologically unpleasant tendencies (cf. Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73, 76; Oexle 1995: 17 f.; Wolfrum 2003: 22 ff.). In *Minnen* and elsewhere, Lindgren describes the Västerbottnians as bold settlers who have successfully conquered the inhospitable landscape [cf. N 154 f.; S 25 f.; M 75]. The original inhabitants are mentioned only very rarely. In one of the final chapters of the memoir, the author’s father is able to develop a vision of a free world without “lappvatten, allt vatten var i vår ägo sedan urminnes tider” [‘the waters of the Laplanders, all water was in our possession since the beginning of time;’ M 202]. The mystical-ecological concept of freedom in *Minnen* is designed according to the demands of the colonisers.

But the lack of consciousness is linked by memory theorists to yet another crucial component of the structural void of modern cultural memory: lost authenticity. Since Augustine inscribes both man and the world into the same stable metaphysical context, he can define *memoria* as a place where the soul comes closest to itself (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,16,25 (PL 32,789 f.). Although the church father describes the sinful nature of man as a *natura aliena* and the earthly life of the sinner in terms of otherness (Augustinus, *De libero arbitrio* 3,13,38 (PL 32,1290); cf. Schmidt 1985: 84 ff.; Brown 1967: 323 f.), he does not allow any of these negative phenomena to dull the immediacy of *memoria* (cf. O'Daly 1987: 148 ff.; Gilson 1929: 127 ff., 287 ff.). Modern 'I', being in perpetual crisis, cannot attain the same degree of authenticity. Memory theorists claim that due to its attachment to the autonomous subject, industrial cultural memory loses its sense of belonging in the world and is damned to being perpetually uprooted. Its fragmenting and repressing mechanisms cause it to become alienated from itself (cf. Oexle 1995: 65; Lachmann 1993: 504, 519 and passim). In an interview, Lindgren notes that on train-journeys he is often asked by curious fellow passengers whether this is the author Torgny Lindgren. His answer is usually: "Nej, det är det inte. Jag skriver bara hans böcker" ['No, it isn't. I only write his books;' D]. In *Minnen* he presents his cogito as an alien "icke-existens" ['non-existence'] that evokes "förnimmelsen att falla ner i ett oändligt schakt av dunkel, att redan från begynnelsen vara räddningslöst förlorad" ['a feeling of falling down an endless dark pit, of being irredeemably lost from the beginning;' M 120]. Such a self-alienated 'I' can produce only alienated memories. Lindgren remembers innumerable people, places, and events, but feels equally "främmande överallt" ['alien everywhere;' M 107], encounters everything with the same flavour of distanced "likgiltighet" ['indifference;' M 163], and believes to "ha genomfört fel liv" ['have led a wrong life;' D]. Asked by Erik Lönnroth as to what he represents, Lindgren answered: "Jag representerar alla författare som egentligen inte alls hör hemma i Svenska Akademien" ['I represent all authors who don't really belong in the Swedish Academy at all;' M 186]. Since Lindgren's natural state of existence is non-existence, he considers all attempts at complete presence as tainted with lies and falsehood. He experiences Paris as "en förfärlig stad" ['a terrible place;' M 144], because it seeks at all costs to convey that it is "närvarande" ['present;' M 145], "i centrum" ['in the centre;' M 145], in the right "plats" ['place;' M 145]. In a separate treatise [M 134 ff.] falsehood is presented as an inevitable component of all life. The author integrates the phenomenon of alienation into the quasi-subject of Västerbotten. The Västerbottnian emigrants live, he notes, with a feeling of being perpetually "utifrån" ['foreign;' S 49], "främlingar" ['strangers'], and "invandrare" ['im-

migrants;' S 48] in a South filled with surrogates and falsification. Insofar as the Västerbotten they yearn for begins to imitate Paris, it becomes a "lögn" ['lie;' N 156] in itself.

According to memory theory, the disappearing immediacy of industrial memory possesses an epistemological quality. Since Augustine integrates spiritual life into the metaphysical order of the world, he never has to call the reliability of *memoria* into question. Memory and acts of recollections are generally considered a reliable source for human knowledge of existence. Although the practical church father admits that certain memory-images can resist the mind and persist in the darkness of non-awareness (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 4,14,22 (PL 32,702), 10,8,13 (PL 32,784); O'Daly 1987: 3, 148 ff.), he also emphasises that all such epistemological problems should rather be considered as temporary exceptions. In the *Confessions* he thus successfully resolves even the most difficult issues of memory theory (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,19,28 (PL 32,791); *De trinitate* 10,2,4 ff. (PL 42,974 ff.); O'Daly 1987: 138 ff., 148 ff.; Flasch 1980: 338; Gilson 1929: 127 ff., 287 ff.; TeSelle 1970: 303 ff.). Industrial cultural memory lacks this kind of obvious and self-consistent clarity. According to memory theory, subjectivisation, particularisation, and repressing censorship have forced it to surrender before the "Unverständlichkeit" of things (Oexle 1995: 65; cf. Siegmund 2001: 627 ff. and passim). The conviction that the world is incomprehensible is also one of the cornerstones of Lindgren's view of life (cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 55, 171 ff.; Nilsson 2004: 257 and passim). In interviews he repeatedly recurs to the fact that reality is "osäker" ['insecure;' G 97], that "vi kan aldrig begripa tillvaron" ['we can never comprehend existence;' S 186], that one "i grunden inte vet någonting" ['basically knows nothing at all;' S 201], that it is not possible to "hitta den absolut sanna" ['find absolutely true;' G 100; H 14] story. In *Minnen*, ignorance is an essential human experience. "Det sunda förnuftet kan egentligen inte besvara en enda fråga" ['Common sense can't really answer a single question;' M 84], notes Isak, the model for Jani in *Ormens väg på hälleberget*. The author himself has stated that he "vet praktiskt taget ingenting om själen" ['knows practically nothing about the soul;' M 125]. In line with this epistemological attitude he indicates the dubious truthfulness of recollections by means of—to mention but a few of his numerous markers of unreliability—frequent modal adverbs (*förmodligen*, *antagligen*, *kanske*, *möjligen* etc. [probably, presumably, perhaps, possibly]), epistemic verbal expressions (*tyckas*, *böra*, *måste* etc. [it seems, ought to, should]), qualifying verbs of cognition (*tro*, *misstänka*, *inbilla sig* etc. [believe, suspect, imagine]), as well as conditional clauses (*om*, *såvitt* etc. [if, as far as]), apophatic adjectives and adverbs (*obegriplig*, *okänd*, *oåtkomligt*, *ovetbar* etc. [incomprehensible, unknown, unattainable, unknowable]), rhe-

torical questions and negations with the verb *veta* [to know] (“Ingen vet” [‘no one knows;’ M 203], “Vi visste praktisk taget ingenting” [‘we knew practically nothing;’ M 72], “Det kan ingen veta” [‘no one can know this;’ M 53] etc.). In many cases, the unreliability of the recollections only becomes apparent when the memoir is intertextually confronted with Lindgren’s other biographical texts. In *Minnen*, *Maten*, and interviews the author repeatedly re-tells the fate of aunt Hildur, but the stories differ quite substantially—which of them is true? Memory researchers point out that the epistemological crisis of modern memory has caused recollections to be regarded with scepticism. Whereas memories were usually met with sympathetic strategies of comprehension during the first heroic phase of industrialisation, the disintegrated late modern ‘I’ considers the hermeneutics of suspicion as its best epistemological tool in its interactions with memory (cf. Oexle 1995: 17 f.; Siegmund, 2001: 627 ff.; Wolfrum 2003: 22 ff.; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 73, 76; Kittsteiner 1984: 171 ff.; Lindner 1984: 29). In *Minnen* all truths are methodically x-rayed and unveiled. Lindgren guards himself against “Alla världsåskådningar” [‘all ideologies;’ M 115], constantly reconsiders and re-evaluates obvious value-judgements, unmasks the manipulations of power. His memoir can be read as a self-investigating criticism of illusions about the ‘I’ and its recollections. The quasi-subject Västerbotten is not exempt from the author’s all-encompassing agnosticism. In an open letter to Svante Weyler, head of his publishing firm, Lindgren writes: “jag vet för lite om i stort sett allting. Det vore lika svårt för mig att säga något väsentligt om exempelvis Västerbotten som om Afrika.” [‘I know too little about practically everything. It would be just as hard for me to say anything worthwhile about Västerbotten as it would be about Africa, for example.’] (Lindgren 2005: 68). In *Maten*, the author equates being “västerbottnisk” [‘Västerbottnian;’] and being “innesluten i sin egen gåta” [‘locked inside one’s own mysteriousness;’ N 75]. As a response to this epistemological insecurity, the Västerbottnian Lindgren adopts a suspicious attitude towards his Västerbottnian self-portrait. In *Maten* he completes his praise of the activities of the Västerbottnian settlers by adding an ecological correction: “I min barndom var älgen i stort sett utrotad i det innersta av Västerbotten, sannolikt av mina förfäder” [‘in my childhood, elks were all but extinct in Västerbotten, presumably due to my ancestors;’ N 45]. In *Minnen*, his father’s postcolonial vision of a free world without ‘the waters of the Laplanders’ leads to a radical deconstruction of the concept of ownership:

Och han slog ut med armarna för att visa huru allt från begynnelsen hade tillhört oss, eller rättare sagt huru ingenting hade tillhört någon överhuvudtaget, att ägandet var en löjlig modernitet, att vem som öns-

kade borde få besitta jorden och sjöarna och morasen och Åmans vattensystem.

[‘And he spread out his arms to show how everything had belonged to us from the beginning or rather, how nothing had belonged to anyone at all, that personal property was a ridiculous feature of modernity, that one ought to be able to possess whatever one wished, the lakes and swamps and the Åman-river-system;’ M 202]

The lack of immediacy that characterises industrial cultural memory ultimately manifests itself on the level of expression. As an organic element of the metaphysical order of creation, Augustine’s *memoria* does not raise any principal problems in communication. The church father presupposes a natural correspondence between memory and sign and describes the cognitive content of recollections in analogy to the meaning of words (cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 2,1,1 ff. (PL 34,35 ff.); O’Daly 1987: 141 ff., 147; Rist 1994: 23 ff.; Pollmann 1996: 147 ff., 184 ff.). As an experienced orator he was surely aware that some words are polysemous, but he pays no heed to them in his memory theory (cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 3,25,35 ff. (PL 34,78 ff.); O’Daly 1987: 143; Pollmann 1996: 155 ff.). He further emphasises that the God whom man encounters in his *memoria* answers questions “clearly.” The fact that many fail to “clearly” hear the word of the Lord, is the fault neither of God, nor of language, but of their sinful will (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,26,37 (PL 32,795)). The recollections of modernity lack this immediate relationship with their medium. As soon as industrial cultural memory leaves the safety of metaphysical-rhetorical totality, it becomes, memory researchers argue, “auf ‘abstrakte Zeichen’ verwiesen” and dissolved “in vielfältige und vieldeutige Bewusstseinspiegelungen” (Assmann 1993: 367; Auerbach 1959: 512; cf. Siegmund 2001: 610, 625 and passim; Lachmann 1993: 504 ff.). The breach of contact between *res* and *verba* gives rise to the need for an active reader who can fill the semantic gaps of memory with his own newly produced meaning (cf. Oexle 1995: 62 ff.). That *Minnen* adheres to the model of modernity also in this respect is not least due to the fact that it is conceived as a written text. One of the fundamental requirements for Augustine’s natural link between *res* and *verba* is that he, following rhetorical tradition, considers signs as sounds (cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4,3,4 (PL 34,90 f.); *Principia dialecticae* 5 (PL 32,1410 f.); Pollmann 1996: 170 ff., 176 ff. and passim). Lindgren on the other hand fundamentally differentiates between writing and writing down. Whereas writing takes place organically “i hans huvud” [‘inside his head’], writing down entails that the story leaves the subjective sphere and becomes objectivised text [G 86]. The dissolved unity of thought and expression creates a semantic middle ground which accords the textualised memories a connotative char-

acter. In interviews, Lindgren has indicated that his description of memory as an old film projector is intended as a signal for the semantic instability of recollections. Our memories are, he explains, “i själva verket flimrande, snabbt försvunna bilder” [‘really just flickering, ephemeral images’] without a stable “samband” [‘coherence’], and “för att förstå det här som rasslar till inne i oss” [‘in order to understand what rattles around inside us;’ S 247] we try to “Fylla i det som fattas” [‘supplement what is missing;’ D] and to create “en sammanhängande enhet” [‘coherent unity;’ S 249]. When he paints the individual frames of his memory in *Minnen*, he chooses to preserve much of their original porous nature. His decision is not only due to the semantic distress of language and memory, but also due to the insight that the loosened connection between *res* and *verba* holds enormous artistic potential. As he has stated in interviews, the loose relationship between signs and things opens up a free space that every artist can productively exploit [cf. G 98]. He himself has discovered at least two productive areas where he can apply the autonomy of verbal expression, with the first being epistemological and the second receptive-existential. In various contexts Lindgren has noted that we tend to defend ourselves against the inherent ambiguity of existence by “rationalisera våra upplevelser” [‘rationalising our experiences’] by means of our “utomordentliga” [‘extraordinary’] mental capacity and thereby “göra verkligheten begriplig” [‘make reality comprehensible;’ S 248 f.]. As the most effective weapon against this form of self-deception he identifies “ett ironiskt förhållningssätt” [‘an ironic attitude;’ G 95], which he locates in the gap between *res* and *verba*:

Ironin är konsten att säga det ena och mena det andra. Och att säga det därför att man insett att det verkligen förhåller sig så, både på det ena och det andra sättet, samtidigt och överallt.

[‘Irony is the art of saying one thing and meaning something else. And one does that because one has realised that it is really that way, that both are real, simultaneously and everywhere.’] (Lindgren 1982)

As Magnus Nilsson and others have shown, Lindgren transforms his ironical attitude towards life into a complex “mångtydighetspoetik” [‘poetics of ambiguity’], which he consistently employs throughout his oeuvre (Nilsson 2004: 196; cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 165 ff., 181 f., 263 ff.; Willén 2008: 29, 34, 146; Tyrberg 2002: 300 ff.). Among his most commonly used figures of ambiguity are, besides irony in the strict sense, paradox, antithesis, katachresis, grotesque, paronomasia, metalepsis, variable focalisation, etc. Since it contrasts two meanings without resolving their inner conflict, Lindgren’s irony is reminiscent of the broad metaphor-based concept of irony employed by

the new critics, which envelops modernism's aesthetics of "ambiguity" in its entirety (Wellek 1986: 203). In *Minnen*, this ironical attitude manifests itself not least in the basic conception of the book. The author's starting point is the paradoxical statement that he has no memories [cf. S 42]. The ironical structure is then filled with innumerable ironical and paradoxical figures, some of which become visible only in a greater context, whereas others are more direct and stand-alone. The author's oscillation between humility and hybris is concretely exemplified in the metaphor of his "vildaste, men ändå anspråkslösa, högmodsdrommar" ['wildest, and yet modest, haughty dreams;' M 89]. Secondly, Lindgren also exploits the openness of signs by means of the ambiguity of reception. As he notes in interviews, a text with a lot of semantic gaps fills him "med en viss glädje" ['with a certain joy'], because it "kan tolkas på många olika sätt" ['can be interpreted in many different ways;' G 89]. When it comes to the reception of memories, this co-creative form of reading acquires a certain existential character. According to the author, being confronted with one's former existence in one's memories makes one realise that "man ständigt måste nytolka det som hänt" ['one has to continuously reinterpret what has happened']. What one first experienced "för tjugo år sedan" ['twenty years ago'], one interpreted "för tio år sedan på ett helt annat sätt" ['completely differently ten years ago;' G 91] from how one sees it now. Due to their diffuse character, memories acquire the rare ability to accumulate the on-going life experience of the 'I.' In *Minnen*, the Czech fortune teller sees "ett par bokstäver, uppenbarligen initialer" ['a couple of letters, obviously initials;' M 160], which are hard to interpret. But as the years pass, the bare signs are filled with new meanings which are produced by the changeability of life. In a similar way, the author charges the fragments of his memories with new meanings and thereby invites his readers to participate in the book's creation of existential meaning. In line with the other components of Lindgren's concept of memory, his ironical attitude also becomes relevant to his construction of the quasi-subject of Västerbotten. The author conceives "den typiske svensken" ['the typical Swede;' G 90] as a person who is unable to bear the dualities of existence. Västerbotten, on the other hand, he describes as a hotbed of ironists. A typical Västerbottnian views himself as such, Lindgren claims, even if he "hade lämnat Bottn bakom sig" ['has left 'Bothnia' behind;' N 155]. He stands out due to his modesty, is pensive in his foolishness, is rooted in the earth of his home but directs his gaze towards "de himmelska landen" ['the heavenly lands;' N 155], is "övermätt och hungrig på samma gång" ['overly full and hungry at the same time;' N 55]. In the vision of freedom expounded in the memoir, with its dissolution of borders and consolidation of oppositions, irony emerges as the basic ontological principle of Västerbotten. "Väster-

botten – Torgnys hemtrakt – är en paradox” [‘Västerbotten—Torgny’s home region—is a paradox;’ S 24] is Schueler’s summary of his impressions of the landscape, and it earns the author’s silent approval.

The analysis of the differences between Lindgren’s *Minnen* and its patristic intertext has led to two conclusions, both of which are more suited to lessen than to produce conflict. First, the fact that Lindgren distances himself from Augustine does not mean that he also dissociates himself from Western heritage. Even where the memoir deviates from the church father, it still follows patterns of thoughts that are part of the mainstream of European tradition. The opposition pre-modern—modern is what guides this part of the intertextual dialogue. Secondly, the memoir’s reservations against Augustinian thought do not entail a radical breach with the church father’s anthropology. In line with the entirety of Western modernity, *Minnen* picks up Augustine’s narrative of the corruption of sin and reformulates it into a diagnosis of the fragmentation of the industrial ‘I.’

IV.

From the intertextual dialogue between Lindgren and Augustine in *Minnen* two forms of memory emerge: the pre-modern one, with its roots in the church father’s late-antique concept of *memoria*, and the modern one. One may well ask how these two formations relate to one another. In my view, one of the central components of depressive neurosis seems to be a good starting point for a discussion of the relations between the pre-industrial and the industrial mnemonic structures in Lindgren’s *Minnen*. According to psychoanalysis, depression includes “an oral fixation”, which manifests itself in fantasies revolving around hunger and food (Fenichel 1946: 389; cf. Abraham 1969: 134 ff.). In Augustine’s memory theory, this oral aspect is only marginally present. The church father does mention hunger, food, swallowing, rumination, sweetness, bitterness, etc., but usually develops his oral images along the lines of an anal power-metaphor of compulsion (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,9,16 (PL 32,786), 10,14,21 ff. (PL 32,788 ff.); *De trinitate* 12,14,23 (PL 42,1011); O’Daly 1987: 133, 138, 146; Rist 1994: 175; Assmann 1999: 166 ff.; Fenichel 1946: 273 ff., 278 ff.). Lindgren argues the other way. Insofar as he mentions “oanständighet” [‘indecenty;’ N 168] and “pornografiska verk” [‘pornography;’ N 19], these are often temptations taken from the oral sphere. In interview statements and in *Maten*, he notes that the colon and other intestines can be advantageously transformed into delicious meals [cf. N 69, 174]. In an analogous statement, he describes the basic ingredients of Västerbottnian *pölsa*—a kind of hash made of offal and grain, quite similar to Scottish haggis—in explicitly anal terms: repulsive “smet” [‘batter’], “gyttja i en pöl” [‘mud in a slough’], “geggamoja” [‘muck’], “dy” [‘sludge;’

S 241], etc. But the cook's efforts transform anal into oral: one should cut the *pölsa* "i kraftiga skivor att äta på ett grovt bröd" ['into thick slices and eat it on rough bread; N 174]. This oralising tendency is similarly prominent in *Minnen*. The book's Augustinian motto that describes the souring food in the stomach of memory follows the line from oral to anal. *Minnen* re-oralises Augustine's food metaphors. The book thematises innumerable dishes, describes them with colour, taste, and fragrance, and repeatedly recurs to images of eating and drinking. In the same way as Lindgren divides reality up into modernity and nature, he dichotomises also the oral world of his memoir. At the one end of the spectrum he places the delicacies of the industrial sphere: "ostron" ['oysters; M 144], "Nougat" ['nougat; M 180], "smörgåstårta" ['sandwich layer-cake; M 9]. These are located in modern environments, are greasy and sticky, overdecorated, "giftiga" ['poisonous; M 144], associated with mass production and plastic cutlery. The opposite pole is formed by the dishes of the pre-industrial world: fried "fläsk" ['pork'] with "våfflor" ['waffles; M 202], "fårfootsoppa" ['sheep's foot soup; M 155], "Tafelspitz med färskpotatis" ['Tafelspitz with new potatoes; M 210], etc. These are associated with human environments, are made from pure ingredients, smell and taste good. It is hardly surprising that specialities of Västerbottnian cuisine play a central role among these agrarian dishes: oven-dried "renkött" ['reindeer meat; M 110], "köttkok" ['meat boiled in broth'] with "kålrot" ['Swedish turnips; M 83], "vintertunnbröd" ['thin, flat, unleavened bread; M 21], "Västerbottensost" ['Västerbottnian cheese'], "hjortronsylt" ['cloudberry jam; M 210], etc. With the aid of these gastronomical props, Lindgren stages a complex compensatory psychological drama. In line with the oral fixation of depression, he burdens the Västerbottnian melancholic in *Maten* with perpetual hunger, which he defines in terms of wish-fulfillment, as "föreställningar om sådant som skulle kunna fylla det tomrum som man föreställer sig" ['notions of something that should be able to fill the void that one imagines']. It is not surprising that the fantasies of the depressed Västerbottnian yearn for Västerbottnian food: "kålrötter, kalvar, rovor, blodkorvar och kornmjölsgröt" ['Swedish turnips, veal, turnips, black pudding, and barley porridge; N 112]. The author combats his own nostalgic "längtan hem till Västerbotten" ['home-sickness for Västerbotten; N 55] with dreams of "mandelpotatis med vad som helst" ['almond potatoes with whatever; N 112]. On the basis of the classic image of literature as nourishment and reading as an act of eating, Lindgren describes his writing on "maten i 'sig'" ['food-in-itself; N 200, cf. 17, 33, 55 and passim] as substitute satisfaction. His literary fixation on eating is presented as an attempt to sublimate and counter the depression of modernity. The substitute function that is performed by the Västerbottnian dishes on the thematic level

is fulfilled by pre-modern memory on the structural level. It is striking that Lindgren usually remembers the agrarian dishes of his childhood according to the patterns of pre-industrial *memoria*, whereas his memories of the culinary extravagance of modernity obey the rules of industrial memory. The author's intertextual recycling of Augustine's concept of *memoria* thus plays a double role in his memoir. In the same way as it constitutes an act of protest against the depersonalising memory mechanisms of modernity it also compensates for the fragmentation of the subject and the depressive loss by employing a positive and unifying mnemonic logic. Västerbotten is assigned a role of strategic importance in Lindgren's acts of protest and generates fixed points of reference for this alternative mnemonic structure.

Lindgren is not the only one who has attempted to remedy industrial depression with the aid of pre-industrial *memoria*. As memory theorists have shown, the use of old forms of memory as substitutes is a common strategy among post-Kantian philosophers and authors: Wordsworth, Nietzsche, Bergson, Benjamin, Cassirer, Auerbach, Curtius, Borges manifest their discomfort by either implicitly or explicitly engaging in an intertextual dialogue with Augustine. Their acts of protest do not constitute an antiquarian return to the church father's concept of *memoria*—none of these discontent men can or even wants to abandon his modern cognitive horizon. Instead, this type of "Gegen-Erinnerung" or "Gegen-Gedächtnis" which they construct is a synthesis of old and new (Assmann 1999: 94; Siegmund 2001: 611; cf. Oexle 1995: 17 f., 64, 73 ff. and passim; Neumann 1993: 434 ff.; Lachmann 1993: 517 ff.; Witte 2003: 96 f.; Flasch 1993: 30 ff.). Irrespective of how different the individual counter-memories have become, they all show a number of common features which can be merged into a theoretical model of sorts. It may be productive to take this thought experiment as a starting point and to describe how *Minnen* merges modern and pre-modern components of memory and which role is assigned to the Västerbottnian element in the book's dialectic synthesis.

The opponents of industrial memory accept that the fixation on the subject, the alpha and omega of modern cultural memory, has had devastating consequences: solipsism, self-centredness, isolation. As an antidote to the self-centredness of modern memory they search for a form of memory that is based on the concept of the "Nicht-Selbst" (Assmann 1999: 110). Although Augustine's concept of *memoria* is super-individual in nature, its base in a depersonalised concept of human nature excludes it from being a serious alternative for humanist memory critics (cf. Flasch 1980: 352). The counter-memory they construct is thus no mere imitation of the *memoria* concept of the pre-Kantian era, but rather a dialectic synthesis of pre-industrial collectivism and industrial subjectivism. The humanity of

the pre-modern era and the 'I' of modernity are united in the intersubjective formula 'I-Thou.' Memory becomes the locus of a responsible dialogue between independent individuals who cannot develop their personalities without engaging in social relationships with their peers (cf. Witte 2003: 92 ff., 96; Lachmann 1993: 504 ff.; Oexle 1995: 13, 17 f.; Assmann 1999: 97 f., 110 f.; Assmann & Assmann 2003: 76; Kany 1987: 222 f., 227). Lindgren has singled out one of the fathers of intersubjectivity theory, the personalist Emmanuel Mounier, as an important source of philosophical inspiration [cf. S 176]. In *Maten* he uses Mounier's concept of interpersonality when he reassembles "alla min barndoms släktingar och vänner och grannar" ['all the relatives and friends and neighbours of my childhood;' N 57] at a meal composed of Västerbottnian delicacies. The diners are presented as a community of independent individuals. Even the animals consumed at the feast have "namn" ['names'] and are treated as "individer" ['individuals;' N 72]. *Minnen* transforms this Västerbottnian intersubjectivity into a consistently applied and differentiated principle of diegesis. In one of the key scenes, the author is asked by his dying mother, whether "ordet jag" ['the word I'] that he writes also encompasses her and "alla förfäderna" ['all his ancestors']. He answers that he "aldrig inbillat mig att jag är jag. Jag är naturligtvis vi" ['never imagined that I am I. I am of course we;' M 108]. The fact that this 'we' bears intersubjective meaning is confirmed by the entire memoir. During a fishing trip in his Västerbottnian homeland, the author and his father express a strong sense of family unity that is based on common "gener" ['genes'], "kromosomer" ['chromosomes'] and "ribonukleinsyror" ['ribonucleic acids;' M 203]. But these biological links do not prevent father and son from experiencing themselves as autonomous individuals. Their relationship is based not only on genetics, but also on an interpersonal, ethically charged 'I-Thou' dialogue. It is striking that the author considers "den nästan outhärdliga pratsamheten" ['the almost unbearable talkativeness;' S 29] to be a Västerbottnian character trait that preserves memory.

One of the results of the concept of the subject and of industrial memory is the academic discipline of history. The opponents of modern memory criticise history for its zealous accumulation of minute factographic data. Nothing, Nietzsche argues, can be more "feindlich und gefährlich" for mankind than its memory fetishism (Nietzsche 1980: 279). Paralysed by its compulsion to remember, man loses the ability to live in the now. As an antidote to this "historische Krankheit," Nietzsche proposes the blessings of voluntary forgetting (Nietzsche 1980: 329; cf. Oexle 1995: 20; Steinmann 2003: 11 ff.). Already Augustine claimed that the soul can make its way to the eternal God most easily not if it remembers its past, but if it "forgets what is in its past" (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 13,13,14 (PL 32,850); cf. Flasch 1993: 98, 222).

Memory critics implant the church father's pre-industrial and metaphysically formulated skepticism of *memoria* into the industrial subject. According to Nietzsche, forgetting is just as important to mankind as digestion is. With the help of both, man can address the past without being burdened by its weight: "es ist aber ganz und gar unmöglich, ohne Vergessen überhaupt zu leben" (Nietzsche 1980: 250; cf. Oexle 1995: 20, 64 ff.; Assmann 1999: 109 f.). By means of his ironical portrayal of Erik Lönnroth, a polyhistor who "mindes allt och glömde ingenting" ['remembered everything and forgot nothing;' M 183], *Minnen* displays a clear disapproval of historicism's claims to totality. It is no coincidence that Lönnroth's stronghold is Stockholm and the Swedish Academy. According to the geographical logic of the memoir Västerbotten is capable of providing ways to escape the enslaving past. In *Maten*, Lindgren describes a Västerbottnian drink made of juniper berries that offers a form of oblivion that is "världsfrånväänd" ['detached from the world'] and "filosofisk" ['philosophical;' N 92]. In *Minnen*, the advantages of philosophical forgetting are exemplified by various colourful Västerbottnians. As a result of an accident, aunt Hildur loses her memory and lived for many years "lycklig fast det visste hon inte" ['happily, but without knowing it']. After her memory is restored, she observes that consciousness "det kan man både ha och mista" ['can be both possessed and lost;' M 57]. In an interview, Lindgren identified Hildur's line as the "budskap" ['message;' S 157] of the memoir. As a recorder of recollections he appropriates the aunt's principle in practise and keeps factography out of *Minnen*. Documentary remains are referenced only in exceptional cases. World history becomes visible only in the background and is represented by a small number of isolated events. Long passages of the author's life are excluded; others are touched upon only via discrete allusions.

The historicism of modern cultural memory is to a large extent a product of positivism that claims to be able to describe past events as an objectivised and coherent sequence. Memory critics argue that this scientific approach prevents man from directly experiencing his existence (cf. Nietzsche 1980: 243 ff.; Steinmann 2003: 11 ff.; Oexle 1995: 20, 64 ff.) and identify the temporal openness of pre-modern memory as an alternative to the distancing perspective of the positivists. In Augustine's theory, *memoria* includes both the past and the future and merges them in the present of the mind (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 11,20,26 (PL 32,819); Flasch 1993: 18 ff., 80 ff.; Schmidt 1985: 26 ff.). The memory sceptics implant this Augustinian synthesis of time into the post-Kantian subject. In a protest against the atomisation of industrial time, their counter-memory contains a durativity that lets past, present, and future interpenetrate each other in a joint experience of the present (cf. Siegmund 2001: 626 f.; Flasch 1993: 27 ff.; Lach-

mann 1993: 499 f., 518). Lindgren mentions the most prominent proponent of the idea of durativity, Henri Bergson, as a philosophical authority [cf. G 92]. In *Minnen*, he extensively employs the principle of *durée réelle*. The book's polyhistor, Erik Lönnroth, is constantly engaged in periodisation, typification, and classification. In the memoir, this algebraic view of the past is contrasted with the spontaneous continuum of memory. *Minnen* oscillates between various temporal perspectives and continuously generates new prolepses and analepses, the dizzying complexity of which annihilates the normal feeling of the physical passage of time. In place of historical conceptual labels, Lindgren uses words closer to existential reality: "under kriget" ['during the war;' M 79], "femtitalets varma somrar" ['the warm summers of the 50s;' M 15], "skräcken för ryssarna och atombomben" ['fear of the Russians and the atomic bomb;' M 39], etc. The definitive adverbial *slutligen* ['finally'] is dethroned and gives way to the durative *nu*, *fortfarande*, *kvar* etc. ['now, ongoing, still'], which refer to changing temporal dimensions. This border-dissolving durability of counter-memory is accorded many concretizing fixpoints in the book's Västerbottnian reality. One of the most vivid is the father's image of circling genes and chromosomes that are compared to the circulating waters of Västerbotten.

By arguing for community, continuity, and ignorance, the opponents of industrial memory believe to create good preconditions for the extinction of the melancholic blackness of modernity. In Augustine's anthropology, Adam is presented as a sanguinarian before his fall, living a peaceful life free of fear and cares. He does not eat "out of need", but solely because he enjoys the food (Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 13,22 (PL 41,395); cf. 11,12 (PL 41,328), 14,10 (PL 41,417 f.), 14,26 (PL 41,434 f.); *De Genesi ad litteram* 8,8,15 (PL 32,379), 11,18,24 (PL 34,438 f.); Scheffczyk 1981: 206). According to the church father, every benevolent soul is an echo of the peaceful sentiment of the first human being (Augustinus, *De Genesi ad litteram* 12,34,67 (PL PL 34,483)). Memory sceptics transfer this carefree nature of pre-industrial *memoria* into the industrial 'I.' The counter-memory that is thereby constructed keeps modern depression at bay by reviving the basic traits of the sanguinarian temperament (cf. Assmann 1999: 94; Lachmann 1993: 512). In various interviews, Lindgren has stated that he is "kolossalt förtjust" ['immensely fond'] of the German word *Heiterkeit*: "Det betyder dels ljus livshållning men också munterhet" ['it means both a light attitude towards life, and also cheerfulness;' S 252]. In *Minnen*, this lively atmosphere is present on various levels. The author describes a long row of merry creatures—both people and animals—and their light way of life. He praises Mann's, Lagerlöf's and Laxness' "skakande munterhet" ['rousing cheerfulness;' M 153] and states that almost "allt jag har skrivit, har jag skrivit i munterhet" ['everything I have written

I wrote cheerfully;’ M 212 f.]. He employs methods such as humour, caricature, burlesque, and grotesque etc. in order to distill “munterhet” [‘cheerfulness;’ M 156] from all kinds of situations of every-day life. Even though Lindgren has noted on numerous occasions that “fröjder” [‘pleasures;’ M 22] were considered “en svår synd” [‘a burdensome sin;’ M 16, S 252] in his childhood, he paints his Västerbotten as an archetypal scene of cheerfulness. The sanguinarian temperament of the Västerbottnians is made quite literally manifest in the fact that calf blood, “det ljusaste och klart rödaste av allt blod” [‘the lightest and clearly also the reddest blood’], becomes part of Västerbottnian cuisine: “Det var milt i smaken som nyskummad grädde, där fanns ingenting av det vuxna livets mörker och bitterhet” [‘it was mild to taste, like freshly skimmed cream, there was nothing of the darkness and bitterness of grown-up life in it;’ N 73]. These cheery traits of calf blood are applied to many Västerbottnians: the author’s story-telling grandmother, aunt Hildur, who “vinkar åt alltihop” [‘waves at everything and everyone;’ M 61], his brother Göran who is convinced that life is “sådant att man egentligen borde ha dansat” [‘so that one should in fact have been dancing;’ M 16]. Despite the melancholy of waste the haunts of the Västerbottnian immigrants in the South become powerful centres of merriness.

In their criticism of industrial cultural memory, memory sceptics investigate the side-effects of imagination. They have observed that an imaginative memory tends to lose ontological dignity and result in empty abstractions (cf. Oexle 1995: 56 f., 74 ff.). Although Augustine’s concept of memory is empirical in nature, it is also embedded in a system of religious totality; for the memory critics it can thus never be an acceptable alternative for modern man, enmeshed as he is in a fragmented world (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,8,14 (PL 32,785); Flasch 1993: 294, 359; O’Daly 1987: 250; Marrou 1958: 125 ff.; Kany 1987: 187 ff.; Siegmund 2001: 623 ff.; Oexle 1995: 67 ff., 74 ff.). Their proposed solution is to bracket the church father’s metaphysical context and to transform his concreteness into a nominalistic perspective. Their counter-memory regains the roots in reality that characterised pre-industrial memory by refuting all claims to totality, by showing “Andacht zum Unbedeutenden,” and by embracing “das mikrologische Verfahren” (Benjamin 1972b: 366; Adorno 1997a: 577; cf. Kany 1987: 214 ff., 233 ff.; Lindner 1984: 27 ff.; Witte 2003: 90 ff.; Lachmann 1993: 506 f., 515). On numerous occasions, Lindgren has expressed his scepticism of the “i-sig-liga” [‘in-oneself-ness;’ N 200] perspective and has sympathised with authors who make efforts to lend substance to “ett vardagligt liv” [‘an every-day life’] with its “kläder och mat” [‘clothes and food;’ S 86]. For him, memory stores specific “retningar” [‘impulses;’ S 248], both important items and “struntsaker” [‘vanities;’ S 64]. In line with this understanding of memory he often em-

ploys a microscopic method in *Minnen*. He minutely describes impressions, fragrances, and sounds, and thereby revels in the wealth of material detail typical of every-day life: the wooden blocks that he and his brother used to cut were “exakt en meter lång” [‘exactly a metre long;’ M 15] and the “sågblad” [‘saw blade’] was “lika lång” [‘just as long’]. It is hardly surprising that Västerbotten is the model for the author’s micro-nominalism. Just as there is no Västerbotten “i sig” [‘in and of itself;’ N 200], there is, he claims in *Maten*, no single “riktig pölsa” [‘real pölsa (i.e. hash)’], but rather a “lidmanpölsa från Missenträsk” [‘Lidman-hash from Missenträsk’], an “enquistpölsa från Hjoggböle” [‘Enquist-hash from Hjoggböle’], a “lindgrenpölsa från Raggsjö” [‘Lindgren-hash from Raggsjö;’ N 156]. When he describes the recipe for the latter, every detail is absolutely crucial: “blanda ner ett par nävar skuren lök just i serveringsögonblicket. Det får Du inte glömma!” [‘add a couple of fistfuls of chopped onions just at the moment of serving. You must not forget!;’ N 175]. The nominalism in *Minnen* is given the same Västerbottnian twist. When speaking of his homeland, the author rejects geographical simplifications and prefers to list “Norsjö och Lycksele och Malå och Jörns och Burträsk och Vindelns och Skellefteå landsförsamlings socknar” [‘the chapelries of the parishes of Norsjö and Lycksele and Malå and Jörn and Burträsk and Vindelns and Skellefteå;’ M 205] in the same meticulous way in which he lists the bounty of items found on his grandfather’s farm.

The opponents of industrial memory are particularly critical of the consequences of the collapse of *ars memorativa*. They argue that the anti-rhetorical tendencies of modernity have deprived memory of its stabilizing base which had previously consolidated truth, affect, and style into an agent intent on preserving tradition. In their counter-memory, they exchange the hermeneutic elements of industrial memory with their older rhetorical equivalents. But since subjectivity is an essential part of their mental framework, they cannot possibly revive rhetoric in its original, universal function. Memory sceptics accept that the tools of rhetoric can only be embedded into the structures of memory if they are deinstrumentalised, imbued with autonomy, and are made purposive without purpose (cf. Oexle 1995: 175 ff.; Kany 1987: 189 ff.; Siegmund 2001: 628). Already Augustine describes *memoria* in terms taken from art and music. As a typical pre-Kantian thinker, however, he makes them subordinate to the pragmatic intentions of rhetoric (cf. Augustinus, *De trinitate* 12,14,23 (PL 42,1011); O’Daly 1987: 137 f.; Flasch 1993: 30 ff., 387 f.; 391 f.; Flasch 1980: 343; Schmidt 1985: 30 f.). In alternative counter-memory, they are now reinstated in their function as cohesive glue, but their unifying activity is given new aesthetic legitimacy (cf. Neumann 1993: 434 ff.; Lachmann 1993: 502 ff.). In interviews, Lindgren has stated that neither uninhibited imagination nor noble ideas

are enough to create literature. All artistic activity, he emphasises, is founded on “någon sorts pervers drift att skapa form” [‘a kind of perverse urge to create form;’ S 189]. He describes his own “formsträvan” [‘striving for form’] as “en drift till ordning” [‘an urge towards order’], which encompasses “förvirringens rikedom och glädje” [‘the wealth and joy of confusion;’ S 167]. As an auditively gifted author, he claims to realise the dialectics of form and formlessness mainly by means of musical tools [cf. H 14; S 19, 157, 189, 193, 234 f.] (cf. Pehrson Berger 1993: 295 ff.; Willén 2008: 34, 91, 156 f. and passim; Nilsson 2004: 151; Tyrberg 2002: 330 ff.) *Minnen* manifests Lindgren’s aesthetic agenda both explicitly and via its literary form. Ironically, the book’s great frauds are the ones allowed to spout pompous ideological slogans such as “Fred mellan folken” [‘peace among nations’] or “Kamp mot imperialismen” [‘Down with imperialism;’ M 137 f.]. When defending himself against being reduced to exponent of such clichés, Lindgren declares that the content of his books is “en bisak, en nullitet” [‘of minor importance, a non-entity’]. As his artistic “huvudsak” [‘main concern’] and his “evighetslängtan” [‘striving for eternity’] he identifies “Formen” [‘the form;’ M 150], which he describes as “ordning och kaos i förening” [‘order and chaos combined’]. That this “formstränga formlöshet” [‘formally strict formlessness;’ M 153] is to a large extent realised by means of the formal language of music is also shown by the Augustinian motto of the autobiography, which emphasises the rhythm inherent in the Latin prose original by adding line breaks. To name but a few of his musical means: Lindgren introduces his motifs and submotifs according to the rules of counterpoint, plays variations on them, recombines repeated themes and intermediate episodes as in a classical rondo, builds his chapters around the sonata form pattern of exposition–development–recapitulation, formulates cadence-like highlights, and ends the book with a downright coda, picking up and modulating the theme of the introductory chapter. The author’s ironical attitude which entails that “allting har två sidor” [‘everything has two sides;’ Lindgren 1982] invites the use of a polyphonic vocal technique. Two separate voices—the grandfather’s and his daughter’s, Golo Mann’s and the Sovjet party functionary’s, the narrative ‘I’s and the Nazi leader’s—are joined either consonantly or dissonantly to form a linear quasi-musical sequence. The archetypal representation of this formal ideal Lindgren finds in Västerbotten. Even though he mentions Västerbottnian music in various passages of his works, the perfect realisation of form derives not from the sphere of sounds, but—and this is perfectly in line with the surrogate character of the counter-memory—from the sphere of oral wish-fulfillment. According to Lindgren, a *pölsa* is the ideal embodiment of a form that is simultaneously characterised by “formlöshet” [‘formlessness’] and

firm “sammanhang” [‘coherence;’ S 241]. In one way or another, other Västerbottnian dishes also represent this form of order in disorder. The author characterises *svantekakun* as “bröd med ett hål i mitten, nej inte i mitten men nästan i mitten” [‘bread with a hole in the middle, no, not quite in the middle, but almost in the middle;’ N 31]. With the aid of the dissonant *nästan* [‘almost’] the idealistic symmetry is supplemented with “något slags impressionistisk lätthet” [‘a kind of impressionistic lightness;’ S 162].

As their final point the advocates of counter-memory aim to correct the loosened relationship between *res* and *verba* that characterises industrial cultural memory. They observe that the semantic lability of modernity threatens to make memory completely redundant. At the same time, they admit that the subjective roots of modern man make a simple resurgence of pre-industrial unity of things and signs impossible. Their solution to this problem consists in providing the weakened link between reality and words with a different, metaphorical form of legitimacy (cf. Kany 1987: 142 ff., 174 ff. and passim; Oexle 1995: 67 f., 73 ff.). As a teacher of rhetoric, Augustine is fully aware of the existence of figurative language. In his *Confessions* he clearly notes that *memoria* is not a stomach in the literal sense, but rather as a “quasi venter” [‘sort of stomach’] (Augustinus, *Confessiones* 10,14,21 (PL 32,788); cf. *De doctrina christiana* 2,16,23 ff. (PL 34,46 ff.); Pollmann 1996: 154 f.). But due to his metaphysical approach to signs, he sees no difference in quality between the figurative and the literal mode of expression (cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 2,1,1 ff. (PL 34,35 ff.); Pollmann 1996: 159 ff.; O’Daly 1987: 143; Rist 1994: 23 ff.). Memory sceptics are aware of the semantic risks of the symbolic level, but nevertheless identify figurative thinking as the best strategy to counteract the crisis of meaning that plagues industrial cultural memory. Their ambition is to use metaphor to embed the microscopic level into a larger, macroscopic context and to find a broader “Ordnung und Deutung des Lebens” (Auerbach 1959: 510; cf. Oexle 1995: 73 ff.; Kany 1987: 195 ff., 236 f.; Lachmann 1993: 504) within the contingent details of memory. On various occasions, Lindgren has claimed that it is easiest to come to terms with the puzzling nature of reality by means of “liknelser” [‘parables’] (Lindgren 1978: 25; Pehrson Berger 1993: 174 ff.; Willén 2008: 136, 142; Nilsson 2004: 255), “analogier, metaforer” [‘analogies, metaphors’], and “paralleller” [‘parallels;’ S 18]. In *Minnen* he employs the metaphorical principle both as a theme and as a versatile method. Even though he ironises the overdimensioned “representativitet” [‘representativity;’ M 173] of Thomas Mann’s funeral in his narrative, he still defends “allegoriens princip” [‘the allegorical principle’] as “helig” [‘sacred;’ M 96] in conversation with his editor. This conviction is indirectly supported by many of the characters in the autobiography who communicate with the

aid of parables, produce their own allegories, and interpret one another as symbols. Their diegesis is filled with symbolical spaces and objects. As Nils Schwartz has observed in his review, many of the reminiscences described function as parables for stages of the author's life (cf. Schwartz 2010). Västerbotten and its objects thus form the raw material for Lindgren's method that consists in transforming reality into parables. In his view, the *pölsa* is "en symbol" ['a symbol;' S 240], not only for the form he strives for, but also for life in general: "allt hänger ihop och bildar ... en pölsa" ['everything is connected and forms ... a *pölsa*;' S 179]. In accordance with this same universalising tendency, the Västerbottnian can encompass "Goethe, Shakespeare och Mozart" ['Goethe, Shakespeare, and Mozart;' N 47] within himself and become a symbol of Western man in general.

The author's principle of parable-creation is particularly easy to trace in the memoir's representation of death. As Oexle and others have shown, the structure and the history of cultural memory are a function of the relationship between a society and its dead. In pre-industrial reality, the relationship between the living and the dead is analogous to the organic correlation between *res* and *verba* in pre-modern memory. The dead are buried among the living, enjoy legal protection and are ontologically present in the activities of society (cf. Oexle 1983: 19 ff.; Oexle 1995: 53 ff.). By relating the story of the removal of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius to a newly built basilica at Milan, Augustine demonstrates that he belongs to the same pre-industrial tradition of death (cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones* 9,7,16 (PL 32,770); Oexle 1995: 36). Industrialism loosens this relationship between the living and the dead. The dead are desocialised, bereaved of their legal rights, and referred to subjective memory (cf. Oexle 1995: 54 ff.; Oexle 1983: 65 ff.). As a reaction to the sheer number of deaths brought about by the wars of the twentieth century, late and post-modern societies tend to borrow select elements from the material memory reservoir of pre-industrial death cult and incorporate them into modern cultural memory by according them symbolic status (cf. Oexle 1995: 56 f.; Koselleck 2003: 58 ff.). Similarly, modern memory sceptics want to re-create a close "Dialog mit den Toten", and to carry it on by means of metaphorically understood spatial forms, traces, objects, etc. (Witte 2003: 92; cf. Benjamin 1972a: 489 f.; Kany 1987: 227). Also in this respect does Lindgren adhere to the principles of counter-memory. The memoir clearly shows the desire to return to the materiality of death characteristic of pre-modern cultural memory. The author records his encounters with dying people, narrates funerals, describes corpses, etc. During his work on *Minnen*, he even undertook a journey back home solely for the purpose of measuring the distance between the two graveyards in his home district [cf. S 42 f.]. However, these

manifestations of death-related literality are incorporated into the industrial paradigm of death and thus attain metaphorical significance. Even when Lindgren's parents find "en benbit" ['a piece of bone;' M 24] on the old graveyard that probably belonged to his deceased grandfather, this relic is then accorded symbolic status in the narrative, is incorporated into the author's subjective memory, and thus becomes part of mnemonic literature.

The various forms of remembering death found in the memoir are explicitly commented upon in the author's retelling of his encounter with a sculptor who works with plaster and makes a living by casting death masks. In line with Lindgren's technique of polyphonic disputation, the book's dialectic understanding of death is expressed by two voices, with the modeller and the author/arch spy Wennerholm representing two different approaches to death: pre-modern and (late-)modern. In her review, Sara Danius takes the sculptor's side and attempts to read *Minnen* as a sequence of "dödsmasker" ['death masks'] (Danius 2010). She is right insofar as the memoir borrows elements of pre-industrial *memoria* and thereby also incorporates their verbatim relationship with death. However, the modeller emphatically declares that he cannot at all understand the *as-if* approach of metaphorical thought: "som är värre än om. Som är det mest missbrukade ordet i det svenska språket" ['as is worse than if. As is the most abused word in the Swedish language;' M 192]. In an interview with Lennart Göth, Lindgren makes the subjunction *as* "ett raison d'être" ['a raison d'être;' G 98] of his entire oeuvre and identifies it as a necessary foundation for his literary "tankeexperiment" ['thought experiments;' G 94]. In *Minnen*, the aesthetics of *as-if* gives the author/spy a feeling of primal human freedom and the power to cheerfully defeat and decry death as "ett bedrägeri! Ett skälmstycke! Ett diktverk!" ['a fraud! A roguish trick! A literary work!;' M 194]. That the *as-if* perspective ultimately triumphs over the sculptor's literal approach is shown not only by the finale of the narrative, which presents Verner von Heidenstam's death mask as that of a "NAMNLÖS AFGHANSK KLANHÖVDING" ['nameless Afghan chieftain;' M 199], but also by the chapter as a whole, which is consistently written in the figurative style of the parable.

In an article on Proust, Rainer Warning observes that *A la recherche du temps perdu* combines "alle wichtigen Positionen abendländischen Nachdenkens über die Erinnerung" (Warning 1993: 160; cf. Oexle 1995: 67 f.). This claim also applies to Lindgren's *Minnen*. While reporting both his own life and those of his relatives, he simultaneously expounds the history of Western memory. The motto introduces an intertextual dialogue with the father of Western memory theory, Augustine, which forms the hub of this history of memory. Just like many other critics of modernity, Lindgren draws on

the church father's pre-industrial concept of *memoria* to counteract the de-humanising crisis of modern memory. The author accords Västerbotten a central place in this compensatory project, elevating it above all particularisms and transforming it into a universal symbol of European consciousness and its fate. Or to put it gastroscopically: Lindgren's Västerbotten holds the entirety of Western tradition in the stomach of its memory.

Translation: Henry Heitmann-Gordon and Annegret Heitmann

NOTES

- ¹ The quotation is a revised variant of Bengt Ellenberg's translation of *Confessiones* 10,14,21 (PL 32,788), cf. Augustinus, *Bekännelser*, Skellefteå 2003, p. 245. References to Augustine's works follow the standards of Classics. Capitals in brackets in the main text of the article refer to the following publications: M = Torgny Lindgren, *Minnen*, Stockholm 2010; N = Torgny Lindgren & Ella Nilsson, *Maten. Hunger och törst i Västerbotten*, Stockholm 2003; S = Kaj Schueler, *Torgny om Lindgren*, Stockholm 2013; H = Kaj Schueler, "Hurudan är Herren? Ett samtal med Torgny Lindgren", *Ord och Bild* 1984:3, pp. 12–21; G = Lennart Göth, "Nåden har ingen lag. Ett samtal med Torgny Lindgren", in *De tre tornrummen. Samtal om skrivande och tro*, Örebro 2008, pp. 83–105; D = Carin Ståhlberg, "Gäckande minnen", *Dagens Nyheter* 2.10.2010.
- ² As the Swedish translation is somewhat poetical, both the Latin original and a more literal English translation are added here.

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