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Editorial Note
This special issue of the Journal of Northern Studies is published in view of Umeå having been appointed the European Capital of Culture 2014. The editors would like to thank editorial board-member professor Annegret Heitmann for acting as guest-editor for the issue.

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Cover picture
Detail from the work of art *Lev!* ['Live!'] created by the artists FA+, namely Ingrid Falk and Gustavo Aguerre. *Lev!* is a glass tunnel in the centre of Umeå with pictures from the writer Sara Lidman's home area in Northern Västerbotten and with quotations from her authorship. In translation the text reads:

> '– And have you heard that in the south
> where they have
> **everything**
> and guzzle down
> **apples**
> and **wheat**
> and **rose flowers**
> they haven't got
> **cloudberries**!
> – It serves them right!'

The quotation is from Lidman's book *Hjortronlandet* ['Cloudberry country,' 1955].

Photo: Lotta Hortéll

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FOREWORD

Norrland with no Borders

A Västerbotten Wonder took place in 1953, for that was the year Sara Lidman published her first novel, *Tjärdalen*. A new region—one of the poorest and most inaccessible in the country —proudly presented itself as the stage for eternal existential questions. The Wonder also introduced a new language: for the first time, dialect was used as the basis for an artful, innovative prose, merging with the biblical language of the revivalist movement (Swedish *väckelserörelsen*) and the presence of an oral tradition.

Like Värmland at the turn of the last century, Västerbotten became the centre of the Art of Storytelling. Sara Lidman and her Missenträsk/Ecksträsk were followed by Torgny Lindgren's Raggsjö and Per Olov Enquist's Hjoggböle. Three of the great Swedish writers of the twentieth century all born in an area no larger than the territory of a brown bear. In one of her late novels, Sara Lidman observes: *Det finns en närvaro, en kännedom från födelseorten så oförneklig som den egna huden* ['There is a presence, a knowledge, from one's place of birth, as undeniable as one's own skin']. The phrase can now be found in an artwork at Umeå in the form of a glass tunnel decorated with quotations from her work. The Västerbotten Wonder bears witness to the truth of her claim.

A writer can also let herself be adopted by a place, as did Stina Aronson in *Hitom himlen* ['On this side of heaven'] (1946), a novel where Tornedalen in Norrbotten finds a voice as never before. The same is true of Kerstin Ekman, in the novels she wrote from the north of Jämtland. But more commonly we find a returning writer, who goes out into the world to see and experience, and comes back to discover her birth-place anew. So it is with the two Norrbotten writers, Eyvind Johnson of Björkelund near Boden and Mikael Niemi of Pajala in Tornedalen.

Most of the places where these writers were born and grew up still survive. I would like to welcome you to visit them—the trees, the marshes, the hills, the houses. They are all exceptional dwellings in exceptional districts—sweet and loving, cruel and vulnerable. Much has changed of course, but much will call forth a smile of recognition in the reader.

But more than that I wish to welcome you to the works. For the real Wonder is not what landscape gave rise to what in literature. The Great Wonder is the transformation. That a world so distant and specific is at the same time so close and human. That a world so local is at the same time so universal.

Literature knows no borders.

Birgitta Holm

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ANNEGRET HEITMANN

'A Window on the World'
Introduction

As European cultural capital in 2014, Umeå wants to present itself as 'a window on the world', as the programmatic Umeå2014-internetsite states. The ambition is not only to make the city and its cultural life better known in Europe, but also to show Umeå as the centre of a large, culturally creative and innovative Northern Swedish region. Among the lively cultural activities taking place in and around Umeå today and in the past—from food to fashion, from films to folklore, from fairy-tales to football—literature, as one of the very old, established and transnationally known forms of cultural expression, still plays a very important role, even in today's multi-media-world. The town of Umeå and the Northern Swedish provinces of Västerbotten and Norrbotten have produced many writers, who have placed the region on the literary map of Sweden and indeed, of Scandinavia. Authors as different as Eyvind Johnson, Gustav Hedenvind-Eriksson, Hilja Byström, Sara Lidman, Peter Englund, Gunnar Kieri, Olof Hederyd, Bengt Pohjanen, Bernhard Nordh, Torgny Lindgren, Stig Larsson, Frida Åslund, Göran Burén, Per Olof Enquist, Göran Lundin, Niclas Lundkvist, Mikael Niemi, Kerstin Ekman, Roger Fjellström, to name but a few, were either born in the area and/or worked for a large part of their lives in Umeå or the surrounding northern provinces. Even though some of them certainly are more widely known and read than others, all have—among many other aims and interests—drawn upon their experiences of the life and the people of the provinces of Northern Norrland, to describe traditions

and developments, or to depict the specific nature of the Northern North. Some of them have even acted as spokeswomen and -men of a specific Norrland-agenda.

The aim of this volume is to take a fresh look at the six internationally best-known of these Norrland-authors. The writers chosen represent different generations, genres, interests and sexes; they range from the Nobel-prize winner Eyvind Johnson (1900–1976), who was born in Svartbjörnsbyn/Överluleå, as the oldest, to the topical bestseller-author Mikael Niemi (*1959) from Pajala, whose sudden international popularity following his novel *Populärmusik från Vittula* was even superseded by the film-version (2004). They include Sara Lidman (1923–2004), the great spokeswoman for the people of rural Västebotten, exemplified by the traditions and rapid changes of her home-village Missenträsk, and Kerstin Ekman (*1933), who was not born in Norrland, but lived in rural Jämtland and by highlighting the Northern Swedish landscape became an ambassador of an ecological understanding of nature. The two established Västerbotten-authors P.O. Enquist (*1934) (from Hjoggböle) and Torgny Lindgren (*1938) (from Raggsjö) are both nationally and internationally renowned and have been translated into a number of languages, thereby also transporting their Norrland-impressions into the world.

But the fact that they all can be identified with a place, a town or a province, does not mean that their works are restricted to regionalism or that the region in question is homogeneous, unchangeable, always the same (the contribution on Eyvind Johnson in this volume makes that especially clear). The literary representations of the Nordic North offer a varied picture, a generic and thematic plethora of impressions, some familiar and reassuring, some new and unsettling, even to a reader familiar with the region. Literature as a medium in general contributes to some form of border-crossing—thematically by depicting new insights and provoking new thoughts, linguistically by challenging our every-day use of language, and temporally by invoking memories, blending present and past or trangressing time-zones. And while its spatial construction highlights the Nordic North, it thereby implicitly challenges the (still dominant) national paradigm of literature and puts well-known dichotomies between centre and periphery to the test. In a globalised world, stress on the local is an important strategy for addressing lack of transparency, all-encompassing mobility and ever-increasing speed.

Their works are in the following explicitly addressed from a European and world-literary perspective. Some 200 years after the term was coined, world literature has again been put onto the academic agenda of literary studies (cf. e.g. Casanova 1999; Moretti 2000; Damrosch 2003; Prendergast

2004). It is not understood as a qualitative term denoting canonisation or distinction, but as a term that attempts to do justice to the rapidly expanding world-wide literary market, to the enhanced medial distribution and the geographical as well as typological diversification of texts. In accepting the heterogeneity of the literatures of the world and refusing to exclude any, it negates clear-cut dichotomies of important and unimportant, high and low, central and marginal. Literature is a global medium: international trade, translations and internet-presence help its world-wide circulation, but, as David Damrosch argues, "even a genuinely global perspective remains a perspective *from somewhere*" (Damrosch 2003: 27; italics in the original).

This 'somewhere' can be seen as a fixed point which all the texts discussed in this volume set out from. But literary texts not only represent a place and its people, depict a recognizable reality—traditions, customs, moods and movements—, they can at the same time generalise or even question and problematise these concrete phenomena. Novels and stories mirror experiences, they show nature or modernisation, people's emotions and relationships, their anxieties and their hopes for the future. But this specificity allows for and even invites abstractions. The same text can therefore be read in different ways: as affirming or challenging one's own experiences, as familiar or as strange. This difference in reception is not only due to the individual reader, but also to literature's inherent qualities. In spite of its mimetic ambitions, its formal construction may function like a secret chamber which opens up for very different and sometimes very personal approaches. In this way, this volume aims to present a fresh look at well-known Norrland authors by explicitly addressing them from an external perspective,[1] by confronting a region with the world, the familiar with the strange. And it intends to show how Umeå's claim to open a window upon the world is fulfilled in its own distinctive way by literature.

The most elementary methodological approach to literary texts is a hermeneutical one, that moves between an attempt to understand, to make sense, and the awareness of strangeness, trying to map the tension between understanding and distancing reflection. In this respect, the contributors are all hermeneuticists, they read literature in order to make sense, but never forget to allow for its alterity. They are both experts and strangers at the same time. The six authors are researchers and teachers of Swedish (and Scandinavian) literature, but they live and teach (mostly, or partly) outside Sweden, in universities in Canada, France, Germany, Poland and Great Britain. As it is often the case in modern academic life, their nationality is not necessarily identical with their place of work—they are used to transgressing the national paradigm both biographically and methodologically. And so they do not primarily see the œuvres in question as contributions to

a national literature, but as go-betweens and messengers between a region and world-literature, between the very specific and the general. This interrelation is made very explicit in Krzysztof Bak's article: by reading Torgny Lindgren's allegedly very personal autobiography against and with Augustine's *Confessions*, he is able to demonstrate Lindgren's equation between Västerbotten and 'the Western tradition' as a whole. Helena Forsås-Scott shows how Kerstin Ekman juxtaposes the remote Norrland forest with Western civilisation in order to question received categories and established hierarchies of power. Even Sara Lidman's 'hembygd,' an allegedly very specific place, appears in Wischmann's reading as a metaphorical place, which opens up for a sensory relationship not only to Missenträsk/Västerbotten but likewise to the world.

With their different backgrounds and academic interests, the authors of this volume have chosen a variety of approaches to their topic: some concentrate on one work by an author (Krzysztof Bak, Thomas Mohnike), others offer a representative survey of a complete œuvre (Antje Wischmann, Elisabeth Herrmann), others again choose a thematic approach which they investigate in a selected number of relevant works (Bjarne Thorup Thomsen, Helena Forsås-Scott). They are all experts and 'insiders' insofar as they know their field and have already published on the topic of their articles, but here they add new insights to scholarship by relating the specifically regional aspects of their topic to some sort of 'outside'-perspective. Thematically and methodologically too their approaches show considerable variation: in the course of the anthology the relationship of "Norrland and abroad" is investigated by concentrating on the juxtaposition between "here" and "there," past and present in memory sketches and travel literature (Eyvind Johnson) or between identity and alterity in autobiography and novel writing (P.O. Enquist), by highlighting strangeness and familiarity in dialectal or regional language (Sara Lidman, also Kerstin Ekman and Mikael Niemi), by focussing intertextual relationships between Swedish and world literature (Torgny Lindgren), even by positioning the human in relation to nature and animals (Kerstin Ekman). In order to examine these productive tensions, the essays employ philosophical and philological methods, they choose ecological or post-colonial perspectives, they investigate language or identity, they focus on narratological, poetological or intertextual concerns. The mediality of literature, the materiality of language (Sara Lidman), the quality of the book or publication channels (Eyvind Johnson) and the quality of the narrative voice (Kerstin Ekman), are all shown to be important factors. It becomes clear how the literary texts in question invite a variety of approaches and readings, and that they are very rich sources for further imagination and reflexion.

Working on this volume has been an academic task, but also a personal experience for some of the contributors. Antje Wischmann took up the offer to spend a week in Sara Lidman's house in snowy Missenträsk and makes this experience the starting point of her investigation; photographs of her stay illustrate her article and her personal approach. Thomas Mohnike also went from his home university in Strasbourg to Sweden to write about Mikael Niemi and started his work by conducting small interviews. Elisabeth Herrmann, who lives and teaches in far-away Canada, involved her three children, who contributed the illustrations for her article on P.O. Enquist, in her research. And the starting point for the editor was a generous invitation by Lars-Erik Edlund to spend two months at the University of Umeå in the winter of 2011, when this project was first conceived. In this way, the volume is also a tribute to the city and the University of Umeå and the literature of Norrland by Scandinavianists who have tried to balance their academic interests with a personal commitment.

NOTES

[1] Obviously, there is an important Swedish research tradition on these authors which is both acknowledged and repeatedly referred to in the current volume. Apart from a great number of articles—both scholarly and critical ones—I am thinking of groundbreaking works like Birgitta Holm's and Annelie Bränström Öhman's studies on Sara Lidman (Holm 1998; Bränström Öhman 2008), Ingela Pehrson's and Magnus Nilsson's books about Torgny Lindgren (Pehrson 1993; Nilsson 2004) or Örjan Lindberger's book on Eyvind Johnson (Lindberger 1986).

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BJARNE THORUP THOMSEN

Eyvind Johnson's Hybrid North

Dynamics of Place and Time in Travelogues and Memory Sketches 1943–1963

ABSTRACT The article explores the depiction and understanding of the Swedish North in memory sketches and travelogues, published between 1943 and 1963, by the author Eyvind Johnson, who was born in 1900 in Svartbjörnsbyn in Sweden's northernmost county, Norrbotten, and went on to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1974. The overarching argument of the article is that a creative interplay between places, "traffic," time and memory in Johnson's writing shapes a hybrid picture of the Swedish North as a dynamic, inclusive and multidimensional domain, making Johnson's articulations of the North of heightened relevance today. While frequently preoccupied with the past, Johnson's representations of the North are always also, explicitly or implicitly, grounded in a contemporary political, economic or environmental context, be it world-war preparedness, welfare development, cold-war crisis, or increased utilisation of natural resources. The article begins by focusing on memory sketches that belong to official anthologies celebrating milestones in the history of administrative structures and demarcations in the North. In these contexts, Johnson operates as an ambassador for the North, while providing incisive, at times critical, perspectives on past and present in the region. Drawing on theories of travel writing as a hybrid and "freer" form of writing, the article goes on

to discuss how Johnson in travelogues such as *Winter Journey in Norrbotten* (1955) and "Summer Diary from Norrbotten" (1963) journeys into contemporary landscapes and townscapes that, at the same time, contain the traces or contours of his personal past. In these texts, Johnson acts both as a child of the North and as a special reporter approaching from the South in order to familiarise external audiences with the region. The article concludes by demonstrating how Johnson in *Winter Journey* uses contexts and concepts of travel to explore the relationship more broadly between his literary activity and the northern experience. In its finishing argument, the article suggests that notions of hybrid creativity and "transport" of motifs, material and perspectives are key to Johnson's literary practice and "programme" in relation to the Swedish North.

KEYWORDS Eyvind Johnson, Northern Swedish culture, travel writing, place and memory, cultural hybridity, working-class culture

Hybridity of belonging, ambiguity of home, fusion of local and further afield are notions that inform in fundamental ways the work and life story of Eyvind Johnson (1900–1976), Nobel Prize laureate in literature in 1974. In the following, we shall focus on a selection of Johnson's more factual conceptualisations, in memory sketches and travelogues,[1] of the Swedish North where he was born and spent his childhood and youth. These pieces provide us with a picture of a multidimensional place that radiates mobility, complexity and change. If representations of the northern "periphery" are sometimes prone to construct it as a static or slow antithesis to a dynamic "centre," this is not a criticism which can be fairly levelled against Johnson. Rather, Johnson's articulations of the North have "traffic" and (time) travel as some of their main tropes and tend to challenge, in a manner which makes them of heightened relevance today, concepts of clear-cut boundaries of communities, regions, even nations, while combining in inventive ways "insider" and "outsider" as well as "past" and "present" perspectives on the northern environments.

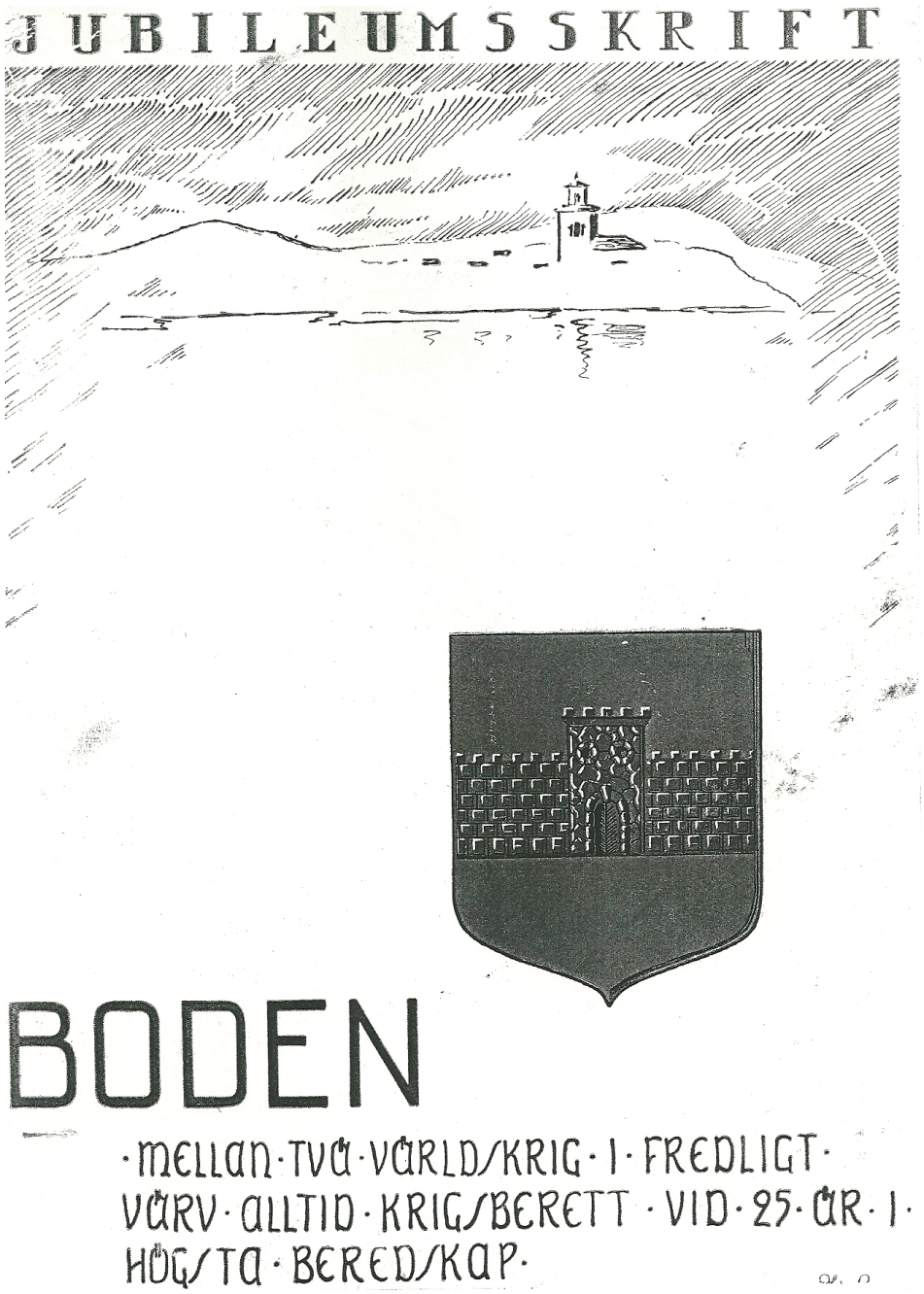
When Johnson in travel accounts such as *Vinterresa i Norrbotten* (1955) ['Winter journey in Norrbotten'] and "Sommardagbok från Norrbotten" (1963) ['Summer diary from Norrbotten'] journeys into contemporary landscapes and townscapes that, at the same time, contain the traces or contours of his personal past, he acts both as an ambassador for the North and as a special reporter approaching from the South in order to cover the region. He familiarises external audiences with the environment that shaped himself and his writing as well as with the continuities and changing conditions in the North. In memory sketches such as "Björkelund med omgivningar"

(1943) ['Björkelund and its surroundings'] and "Upplevelse av Norrbotten" (1962) ['Experiencing Norrbotten'], which belong to official anthologies celebrating milestones in the history of administrative structures and demarcations in the North, the ambassadorial role is particularly pronounced. It is clear to see how Johnson's growing cultural status or "capital" is employed to provide prestige—and incisive insights into now and then in the region—in connection with these celebrations. While frequently preoccupied with the past, Johnson's observations are always also, explicitly or implicitly, grounded in a contemporary political, economic or environmental context, be it world-war preparedness, welfare development, cold-war crisis, or increased utilisation of natural resources. Arresting metaphors, typically founded on, and thereby conveying, specific features of the local natural or socio-cultural landscapes, are used to interrogate these developments. Further common stylistic denominators of the pieces we shall consider in more detail below is their lightness of touch, entertainment value and readability, at times combined with a degree of ironic distance, perhaps aiming to avoid sentimentalism and one-dimensional "immersion." This lighter approach differs from the starker and more sombre register and the overt politicisation found in Johnson's perhaps best known and earlier memory piece, "Personligt dokument" ['Personal document'], published in 1932 in the seminal collection of self-portrayals by Swedish autodidactic authors, *Ansikten* ['Faces'].[2] This document will figure additionally in the following as a comparative point of reference.

Born in the Borderland. Björkelund, Boden, the World ...

In 1943, Johnson contributed to an official anthology designed to celebrate the twenty-fifth centenary of municipal status being granted to his home town of Boden in Sweden's northernmost region of Norrbotten. The context of the culmination of the World War confrontations provided the celebration of the strategically important town with special resonances and relevance, as evidenced by the emphasis on preparedness, and the value of peace, in the "motto lines" on the title page of the book: "Boden · mellan · två · världskrig · i · fredligt · värv · alltid · krigsberett · vid · 25 · år · i · högsta · beredskap ·" ['Boden · between · two · world wars · in · peaceful · pursuits · always · prepared for war · at · 25 · in a state of · the highest · preparedness'].[3] The weighty, cloth-bound and elaborately designed volume, published by the municipal council, in itself reads as a statement of solidity, steadfastness and significance (Fig. 1).

Johnson's contribution to the celebratory work is a childhood memory sketch, entitled "Björkelund med omgivningar," of the district or borderland of Boden in which he grew up. It opens by asking the apparently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VÄRV·ALLTID·KRIG/BERETT·VID·25·ÅR·I·
HÖG/TA·BERED/KAP·

Fig. 1

simple question "Hur långt sträcker sig Boden?" (Johnson 1943: 310) ['How far does Boden stretch?'], only to go on to answer it in ways which together cut against finite "us" and "them" territorial thinking (and thus implicitly challenge fundamental premises of the belligerent behaviour of aggressive states). Johnson's strategy could be said to be about globalising the local in a two-way process: first by experimentally stretching the outreach of "det bodensiska" to "världens yttersta gräns" (Johnson 1943: 310) ['the nature of Boden to the outermost limits of the world'] and then, complementarily, by seeing the northern town as a concentrate of global trends: "I ett nötskal—eller låt oss säga i ett mycket stort nötskal—återfann man världens allmänna utveckling" (Johnson 1943: 310) ['In a nutshell—or, shall we say, a very big nutshell—the development of the whole world was to be found [there]']. Johnson thus offers a spatial "definition" that is fluid and modern, conceptualising Boden in both centripetal and centrifugal terms. As for his own place in the town towards which the celebrations are directed, Johnson clearly, almost programmatically, identifies himself as an inhabitant of the margins and as originating at the crossroads. After a light-touch discourse on the difficulty, when he grew up, of drawing an exact boundary between the outlying area of Björkelund and Boden itself, Johnson concludes by asserting the indeterminate, the liminal and the "new settlement" dimensions of his childhood environment:

> Någon större klarhet om var gränsen verkligen gick kom jag emellertid aldrig till i min barndom; och jag minns att vi björkelundsungar under alla förhållanden betraktade oss som gränsbor, ofta som något vildavästernbetonde trappers och nybyggare [...]. (Johnson 1943: 312)
>
> ['I never did come to any real clarity during my childhood as to where our border actually ran; I do remember, however, that as Björkelund children we always thought of ourselves as borderers, frequently as trappers or settlers with a touch of the Wild West about us [...].']

This uncertain but dynamic localisation is bound up with mobility, incorporating routes and traffic that lead south as well as north, and breeds its own type of patriotism, which Johnson in his piece in a typical play with scale and time gives overtones of both the New World "right or wrong, my country" and of nations fighting for their freedom in the context of world war and occupation: "utåt var vi en tämligen enig front och på så vis en vacker förebild för just nu för sin frihet kämpande små nationer" (Johnson 1943: 313) ['to the outside world we showed a fairly united front, thus setting a fine example for the small nations fighting for their freedom just now'].

Thus, the local environment, and indeed the region, in which Johnson

grew up was far from a static entity; instead, it was a community of change, growth and immigration from the national South.[4] Johnson's family story is closely connected with the northbound expansion of the national railway network, with his father, from Värmland, arriving in the North as a navvy, while his mother, from Blekinge, followed a similar trajectory, employed in an ambulant bakery catering for the construction workers. The opening statement of "Personligt dokument" puts emphasis on routes as much as roots and simply reads: "Vi kom söder ifrån, från Blekinge och Värmland" (Johnson 1932: 185) ['We came from the South, from Blekinge and Värmland'].[5] Trains, stations, tracks, and the possibilities they offer, remain recurrent preoccupations in Johnson's work, not least in *Vinterresa*, as we shall see below.

Growth in the North

The theme of growth in the North, in this instance in the post-war period, fully frames the second example of Johnson's contributions to celebratory publications which we shall consider. The anthology *Norrbotten kommer*

Fig. 2

['Norrbotten is coming'] was published in 1962, in connection with a major industry and trade exhibition held in Luleå, the regional capital, in 1960 to mark the one hundred-fiftieth anniversary of Norrbotten as an administrative entity (*län*). The square and sleek volume, richly illustrated with contemporary photographs documenting the exhibition, its pavilions and its visitors, oozes, as the title suggests, regional self-confidence and sense of belonging in modernity (Fig. 2). The introduction, written by the head, *landshövding*, of the regional administration, Manfred Näslund, is a celebration of size and scale—"Norrbotten [...] rymmer ledigt 34 län av Blekinges format" (Näslund 1962: no pagination) ['Norrbotten [...] has more than enough room for 34 counties the size of Blekinge']—composed with the aim of creating a national opinion for promoting structural progress in the economy of the North. It identifies four cornerstones of the regional economy—iron ore, forestry, hydro-electric power and agriculture—adds a fifth, tourism, and argues for extended traffic networks and further differentiation of employment and enterprise as the key to achieving "en rationell utveckling" ['a rational development'] (Näslund 1962) of the regional economy.

Positioned prominently in the volume immediately after the introduction, Johnson's autobiographical piece, "Upplevelse av Norrbotten", displays loyalty to the themes of expansion, size and dynamics in the North, while also, however, providing striking ecologically informed counter-perspectives to the agenda of economic and environmental rationalisation. An alternative notion of (threatened) "growth" in the North is in play in Johnson's contribution in the shape of precious dimensions of nature which are displaced or overpowered by the forces of economic progress and technological development. The global political context of nuclear armament and cold-war confrontation is, of course, an important additional backdrop to the tensions articulated in Johnson's text.

After affirming the affinity between place and people by connecting his own child perspective with the young, administrative, age of the surroundings—"När det här länet var ett ungt län, nästen ett barn som län betraktat, [...] och jag själv hade nått den beaktansvärda åldern av 4 eller 5 år" (Johnson 1962) ['When this county was a young county, almost a child as counties go, [...] and I myself had reached the considerable age of four or five']—Johnson's main compositional device in "Upplevelse av Norrbotten" is to set this child and, gradually, youth on a journey of discovery, adventure and "conquest" in the vastness and variation of the Norrbotten region. The journey takes in both the city and the country, both nature and technology (primarily the wonder of the railway). In framing, moreover, the child perspective by adult memory, Johnson obtains a reflective position from which he can comment on the conditions in the region with contemporary

implications. Deconstructing notions of "empty," lifeless, wildernesses and static segments of the region, the sum of Johnson's portrayal of Norrbotten seems to be that of a "vittutgrenat företag" (Johnson 1962) ['enterprise with many branches'], combining organic and entrepreneurial features, human as well as animal activities, into a complex network. This is, however, a delicate balance, and Johnson's contribution also reads as a warning against unsettling the natural environment in the quest for economic growth. In a striking meditation on the enforced "exile" or withdrawal of the *rubus arcticus*, a world sensation among berries and an emblem of the North, the reservations against overexploitation are unmistakable:

> Man njöt av en av världens allra finaste dofter och en smak, som ingenting sedan har kunnat tränga bort ur minnet, även om åkerbären i den skygghet, som naturen ofta visar inför rationaliseringen, numera har dragit sig längre och längre undan, ja, förskräckta har rymt från vissa av sina gamla hemorter. (Johnson 1962)
>
> ['We enjoyed one of the most wonderful scents in the world and a taste that nothing could ever dislodge from the memory, even though the arctic bramble—with the shyness nature often shows when faced with rationalisation—has now retreated farther and farther, actually fleeing in terror from some of its old habitats.']

This position is reinforced overtly in the conclusion of the contribution, voicing concerns that the cult of technology and rationality can lead to the forgetting of important spiritual and bodily dimensions of being.[6]

Building the North in Travel Writing. From the Forefathers' Foundations to the Timber of Welfare

The method of combining memory sketch and travelogue as found in "Upplevelse av Norrbotten" can be recognised in the two more overt cases of Johnson's travel writing focused on the North, *Vinterresa i Norrbotten* and "Sommardagbok från Norrbotten," which we shall reflect on as the next stage of our discussion. In a recent exploration of travel writing, its definitions and developments, Carl Thompson underlines the hybrid nature of the form:

> The term is a very loose generic label, and has always embraced a bewilderingly diverse range of material. [...] Simultaneously, and partly as a result of this intrinsic heterogeneity, travel writing has always maintained a complex and confusing relationship with any number of closely related (indeed, often overlapping) genres. (Thompson 2011: 11)

Similarly, Susan L. Roberson in *Defining Travel* (2001) presents the argument, of clear relevance to Johnson's practice as a travel writer, that although travel writing is typically categorised as non-fiction, its "play of memory, ideology, and imagination suggests that it is also 'creative' writing" (Roberson 2001: 61). In a related analysis, Paul Fussell distinguishes travel books from guide books with reference to the former being autobiographical and "sustained by a narrative exploiting the devices of fiction", whereas they differ from fiction in claiming "literal validity by constant reference to actuality" (Fussell 2001: 105, 106). Arne Melberg, in his "guide" to modern travel literature *Resa och skriva* (2005) ['Travelling and writing'], understands travel literature as a "nomadic" form of writing which borrows freely from journalistic reportage, testimony, biography and from forms of fiction such as the short story, the novel and poetry (Melberg 2005: 32). Although it has often been marginalised by criticism and in cultural institutions, he sees it as a freer form of writing and a "joker" in the literary game, offering the writer room for innovation and experimentation (Melberg 2005: 9, 13).

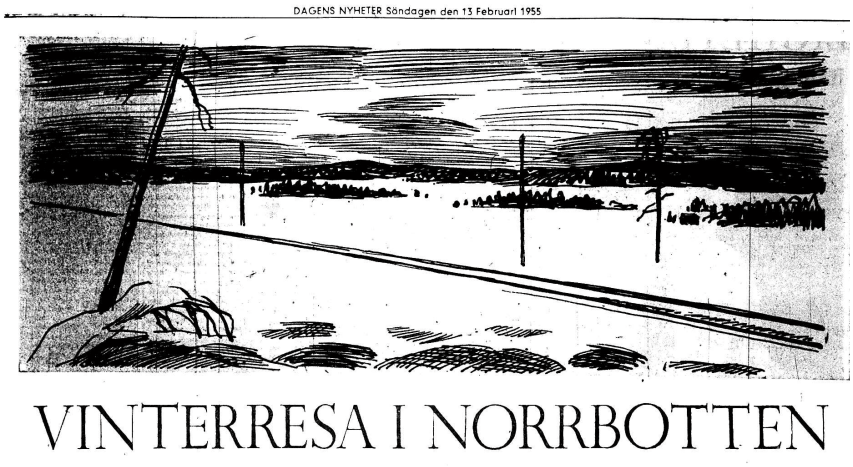
The argument could be made that the composite, complex and also liberating nature of travel writing which the above analysts seem to agree on would offer Johnson a very appropriate cultural environment in which to explore and represent the multidimensionality of the North. Carl Thompson goes on to provide the following minimal definition of travel writing:

> If all travel involves an encounter between self and other that is brought about by movement through space, all travel writing is at some level a record or product of this encounter, and of the negotiation between similarity and difference that is entailed. (Thompson 2011: 10)

In the case of Johnson, the negotiation between similarity and alterity is made further complex, and fascinating, by the fact that he records and explores a region that contains (the remnants of) his personal foundations, a place that is already in itself a palimpsest of the familiar and the "foreign" or new. Thompson argues that all travel writing has a two-fold aspect: it is a report on the wider world, yet also "revelatory to a greater or lesser degree of the traveller who produced that report" (Thompson 2011: 10). In Johnson's case, this two-fold dimension is less of a duality between place and mind than a coalescence: geography and psychology, landscape and mindscape converge to an extent in his reports from the North.

The publication channels of both *Vinterresa* and "Sommardagbok" reveal high degrees of dissemination and impact and signal the growth in touristic interest in the North that we touched upon above. While the latter featured in the influential and long-standing Yearbook of the Swedish Tourist Association (*Svenska Turistföreningens Årsskrift*, first issued in 1886), *Vin-*

terresa was initially published as a series of travel letters in the newspapers *Dagens Nyheter*, with nation-wide circulation, and *Stockholms-Tidningen*. These media outlets would have framed both publications with a sense of presentating the fascinations of the northern "periphery" to the national "centre" and a national readership. The first instalment of *Vinterresa* appeared on 13 February 1955 in the Sunday edition of *Dagens Nyheter*. It was


DAGENS NYHETER Söndagen den 13 Februari 1955

VINTERRESA I NORRBOTTEN

Fig. 3

displayed prominently over eight columns on page 3 of the paper, with illustration by Lennart Gram (Fig. 3). Later the same year, the *Vinterresa* reports were published together in book form by Bonniers. The pocket-sized, hardbound volume seems to echo the portability and durability of the traditional travel guide. Its grey-blue coloured cover connotes winter sky and ice, while two black and white vignette drawings, one front and one back, capture in a stylised and economical way the twin themes of travel and dwelling in the North: in the front vignette, the narrow and arrowed angle of railway tracks leading towards the horizon and lined by electrical pylons states the lure and pull of long-distance transportation, while the back vignette provides a tranquil image of timbered houses positioned between the whiteness of the snow and the darkness of the sky (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).

"Sommardagbok" and *Vinterresa* begin in parallel fashion with the approaching of the North, both suggesting the dynamic encounter between place and traveller that is to be played out in their continuations. In "Sommardagbok" the approach is by aeroplane. As the narrator descends towards the Luleå archipelago and Kalax airport, it is as much the landscape that reaches out towards the homebound traveller as the reverse: "Planet sänker sig, vi närmar oss Luleå. Nakna skär, sandstränder, klippor, skogiga öar höjer sig med sitt hav, den just nu metallblå ytan, upp mot oss" (Johnson 1963: 55)

['The plane descends and we are approaching Luleå. Naked skerries, sandy beaches, cliffs, wooded islands rise to meet us, along with the sea that contains them, just now a sheet of metallic blue']. In *Vinterresa* the approach is by railway. As the train passes the Pite river at Älsbyn and draws closer to Boden, the journey transforms into a type of time travel, with a complex sense of direction: "Känslan av att åka ett stycke baklänges i tiden finns,

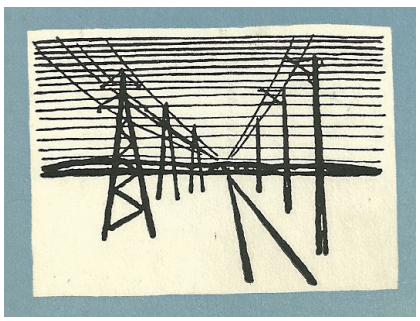


Fig. 4

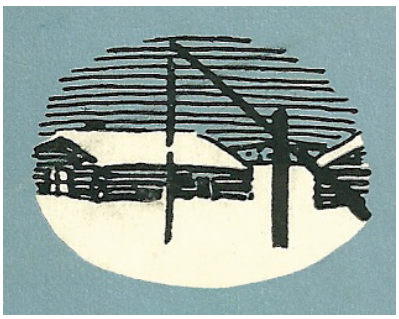


Fig. 5

flyktig, i den exakta förnimmelsen av att åka in i något ganska nytt" (Johnson 1955: 11) ['There is the sense of travelling back in time a little, a fleeting sense, with precisely the sensation of travelling into something quite new']. This passage would seem to bear out Paul Fussell's assertion in "Travel Books as Literary Phenomena" that travel can be an adventure in time as well as distance and that travel books "manipulate the whole alliance between temporal and spatial" (Fussell 2001: 112). As the train rolls into Boden itself and towards the railway station, the objective and subjective dimensions of the travel experience become inseparable, establishing an important overriding insight in *Vinterresa*. We see how the traveller very literally proceeds on the infrastructural foundations and material culture created by the hard labour of his father, foster father and others decades earlier:

> Tåget svänger in i den långa, mjuka kurvan over Bodån, runt Sanden. Jag vet att vi strax är på något som hette *glacimur*: kilad eller tuktad granit som håller ihop banslänten. Med den knogade min far och min fosterfar sommarn 1906 eller 1907. Dit bar min syster och jag frukostmaten från Björkelund. (Johnson 1955: 13)
>
> ['The train glides into the long gentle curve over the Bodån river, round Sanden. I know we shall very soon be on something called the *glacis wall*: cut or dressed granite that supports the railway embankment. My father and my foster father laboured on it in the summer of 1906 or 1907. That's where my sister and I used to carry their breakfasts from Björkelund.']

This sense of experiencing a multi-layered reality in the North permeates *Vinterresa*. The book contains throughout a vibrant interplay of a now and a then, a here and a there, to borrow the terms of the title, "Här – där", of the section that fronts the book. Thus, busy busses—the trope of traffic again—can work as emblems of the ways of the present, but also open up routes into the linguistic landscapes of the past:

> Vi stiger åt sidan för bilar och går förbi en bensinstation. Fullsatta bussar är på väg mot avlägsna byar—som med ens är så nära att jag hör deras namn viskas i örat med den rätta betoningen, det riktiga uttalet, av unga röster som är gamla eller försvunna nu. (Johnson 1955: 20)
>
> ['We move aside for cars and walk past a petrol station. Full busses are on their way out to distant villages, which are suddenly so close that I hear their names being whispered in my ear with the right intonation, the proper accent, by young voices that are now old or departed.']

Similarly, hybrid soundscapes that conflate the mechanised roar of the modern and, behind this, the milder tones of past modes of mobility can be represented in an economical language of condensation, fragmentation and ellipsis, reminiscent at times of the voice of contemporary, "concrete" poetry:[7]

> En gata öppnar sig mot en frusen hamn. Tunn snö, ishalka en bit, gå försiktigt. Bjällerklang, fast här finns ingen släde, ingen rissla, inga hästar just nu. Jag hör det ändå—bakom ljudet av den tunga bussen som frasar och dundrar i väg. Och nu kan jag se det: vi som står här-där. (Johnson 1955: 21–22.)
>
> ['A street opens out towards a frozen harbour. Thin snow, some slippery ice, walk with care. The jingle of bells, though there is no sledge here, no sleighs nor horses just now. But I can hear it all the same—behind the noise of the heavy bus that swishes and roars off. And now I can see it: those of us standing here-there.']

Both *Vinterresa* and "Sommardagbok" were published in the golden years of the welfare state development. And both accounts abound with references to multiple building processes. These constructive activities create continuities (cf. the foundations laid by the forefathers) as well as discontinuities with the past. In "Sommardagbok", the following representation of Luleå's townscape aims to capture these (dis)continuities:

> Driver omkring i stan. Man har rivit, man bygger nytt. Luleå växer åt alla möjliga håll, även uppåt, trafiken växer med stan. Ett av mina första

> tydliga minnen är härifrån. Vi bodde här en vinter när jag var mellan fyra och fem år gammal. Snö och is, och den jämfört med Björkelund då yrande trafiken, brusande stadsliv [...]. (Johnson 1963: 55)
>
> ['Wandering around the town. Things have been demolished, things have been built. Luleå is growing in every direction possible, including upwards. The traffic is growing with the town. One of my first clear memories comes from here. We lived here for a winter when I was between four and five years old. Snow and ice and, compared with Björkelund, the hurly-burly of traffic, the roar of town life [...].']

On the one hand, Johnson, as always, resists reducing the North of his childhood and youth to something static or slow. On the other hand, he acknowledges and appreciates how the North has changed, as also seen in this commentary, likewise focused on Luleå, on a capital-style commercial culture that is representative of the growth of consumerism throughout the nation in the welfare period: "Vi går förbi skyltfönster som kunde vara i Stockholm eller var som helst i Sverige. Jag befinner mig i nuet, förefaller det mig, och vill inte beklaga det bara av den orsaken att det inte råkar vara förflutet" (Johnson 1955: 20) ['We walk past display windows that could be in Stockholm or anywhere else in Sweden. It occurs to me that I am in the present—and I am not going to complain just because it doesn't happen to be the past']. In Boden, the signs of welfare expansion, of the centrality of the North and of a trajectory into the future are similar: "Här Boden, som växer alltmer på bredden, på höjden, framåt. Ett centrum, det med" (Johnson 1963: 56) ['Here Boden, which is spreading more and more, sideways, and upwards, and forwards. A centre even!']. Johnson's enquiry into the emergence of the welfare society in the North finds its finest metaphorical expression as he stops in Södra Sunderbyn, between Luleå and Boden, to observe the orderly and well-organised behaviour of the thousands of timber logs transported down the Lule river. The timber and the accommodating system that surrounds it are tropes of the welfare society and its well-adapted and well-looked-after citizen (demonstrating how travel books can contain what Fussell calls "parables of their times" (Fussell 2001: 115)), in sharp contrast to the memories of toil, poverty and anger Johnson himself has invested in the nearby location of Sävast where he worked one summer as a rafter:

> Första världskriget som skulle bli det sista. Fattigdom, slit, hemskhet—och älvens skönhet. Bryggorna gungar under oss. Timret flyter snällt in i rätta bommarna och mot buntverket. [...] Ingen oro här, ingen vrede i timret nu, ingen revolution där så att det brötar ihop och måste behandlas med dynamit. Ett välfärdstimmer på väg till sina ålagda uppgifter. (Johnson 1963: 56)

> ['The First World War was supposed to have been the last. Poverty, toil, awfulness—and the beauty of the river. The walkways sway under us. The logs float in a well-behaved way into the right booms and on towards the bundling machine. [...] No fuss here, no angry logs now, no rebelliousness causing them to pile up and having to be given the dynamite treatment. This is welfare timber on its way to its allotted tasks.']

This may carry echoes of the criticism of the passivity of the worker presented in "Personligt dokument", but is equally indicative of the ways in which social conditions have improved and how the North of Sweden is moving with the times.

An Aesthetics for the North. Distance as Closeness, Darkness as Light, Labour as Art

The mutual bonds between travel and writing are well established: writing makes sense of the travel experience, as Susan Roberson suggests (Roberson 2001: 61), while concepts of travel can illuminate strategies of writing. Both "Sommardagbok" and *Vinteresa* incorporate broader references to Johnson's literary activities. *Vinterresa* in particular contains, bound up with the journey from Luleå and Boden to Kiruna and back to Boden that forms its core narrative,[8] an important self-reflective dimension which explores the relationship between artistic representation and the northern experience. We shall conclude our discussion by briefly considering the notions of hybrid creativity and "transport" of motifs, material and perspectives which seem key to Johnson's literary practice and "programme," in *Vinterresa* articulated with particular reference to the writing of the North.

While passing through the landscapes of Lapland towards Gällivare and Kiruna, Johnson considers the (friendly) criticism he has received that he has not been faithful to Norrbotten in his writing. He does this by debating the notion of faithfulness itself, deploring the author who remains restricted to only one environment rather than availing himself/herself of the mode of distancing which, eventually, can be converted into (new) closeness. He goes on to document how travelling away, to continental Europe, liberated his literary engagement with the North—how short stories and sketches focused on France and Germany transformed into northern narratives that "burst" (*brast*, Johnson 1955: 80) forth. These and related observations seem to form part of an aesthetical credo that centres on cross-fertilisation, on import and export, on combinational creativity. Johnson sums up the ways in which literary sentiments, settings and characters tend to travel and transform between inspiration and realisation in the concept of "ett växelbruk" (Johnson 1955: 106), a rotational method, with which most

novelists will be familiar: the demigoddess in the age of Homer, the girl in Richelieu's France, the Berlin bohemian of the 1920s, the revolutionary exile in contemporary Europe—all may have taken their first steps in a Norrbotten village or town (Johnson 1955: 111).

This type of creative hybridity works both ways, of course. When Johnson reaches Kiruna, the degree of electric illumination in the industrialised townscape leads him to represent it as a wintry bay of Naples relocated to Lapland. To complete the circuit, also Boden, generally assumed to have inspired Johnson's early novel *Stad i mörker* (1927) ['Town in darkness'] which formed a dialectical relationship of light and darkness, north and south with *Stad i ljus* (1928) ['Town in light'], focused on Paris, is in *Vinterresa* reclaimed as a place of both light and darkness. While disputing the close connection between *Stad i mörker* and Boden, Johnson is nevertheless careful to conclude *Vinterresa* with pronounced descriptions of his hometown as a site which fuses the light and the dark in a modern mode: "mörker med fin elektrisk belysning i" ['darkness with fine electrical illumination'], "Genom det elektriskt genomlysta mörkret" (Johnson 1955: 123) ['Through the darkness that was penetrated by electric lighting'].

We shall finish with arguably the finest articulation in *Vinterresa* of the fusion of North and South, of the manual and the spiritual, of traditional "high" art and the modern craft of the labourer, as found in the following tribute paid by Johnson to the extreme efforts of the workers who connected the North and created its enduring structures and travel lines:

> A.J. Rost [Johnson's foster father[9]] var med om Nuoljatunneln. Vattnet droppade, rann eller sprutade över hans hals, axlar och rygg när han stod och enpickade. Enpicka var att hålla borrstålet med vänster hand och borrsläggan med höger—i en ställning som jag senare upptäckte att Michelangelo hade klagat över de fyra-fem år han målade taket i Sixtinska kapellet. Sträckt hals, vildskäggigt ansikte som vänds uppåt mod Förtjänsten, Dagspenningen eller någon annan gud, någon annan makt. En bild, en reproduktion i barndomen och ungdomen, en sann tavla någonstans i Italien som visade hur det kunde vara i Nuolja. En arbetare som grävde, borrade, sprängde fram konst. (Johnson 1955: 78)

> ['A.J. Rost [Johnson's foster father] worked on the Nuolja tunnel. The water dripped, ran or sprayed over his neck, shoulders and back as he stood there "solo drilling." This involved holding the chisel drill in the left hand and the lump hammer in the right while working in a position that I later discovered Michelangelo had complained about during the four or five years he spent painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Neck stretched back, face and wild beard turned up towards Wages, the Daily Rate or some other god, some other power. A picture, a repro-

> duction in my childhood and youth, a real painting somewhere in Italy showing what it might be like at Nuolja. A worker digging, drilling, blasting out art.']

As epitomised in this passage, Johnson's work is an unfailingly sensitive, innovative and incisive instrument for the capture and exploration of the dynamics of the North.

NOTES

[1] The distinction between these two forms is by no means a clear-cut one in Johnson's case: as we shall see in the following, travel writing and memory sketch tend to coalesce in several of the texts under discussion, contributing to their creative hybridity.

[2] In the foreword of *Ansikten* the diversity of the literary voices represented in the anthology is emphasised, while the common ground that obtains between the writers is located in the material conditions they emerged from (*Ansikten* 1932: 5). "Personligt dokument" was republished in 1977, the year after Johnson's death, in a double issue of *Svensk litteraturtidskrift* focused on the author's life and work, reflecting also a revival of interest in Johnson in the context of the new radicalism of the 1970s (cf. Johnson 1977).

[3] All translations from Swedish into English in this article are by my friend and colleague Peter Graves to whom I am grateful.

[4] In the booklet *Eyvind Johnsons Björkelund* ['Eyvind Johnson's Björkelund'], published by the Boden division of the Eyvind Johnson Society, it is documented how the building and expansion in the 1880s, 1890s and early twentieth century of the iron-ore railway line from Luleå and Boden to Gällivare, Kiruna and eventually Narvik on the Atlantic coast, alongside the decision at the turn of the century to establish the major military complex of Boden Fortress, in itself a response to the increased strategic importance of Northern Sweden and the significance of the iron ore fields, led to an unprecedented population growth in Björkelund and beyond.

[5] Already "Personligt dokument" demonstrates how Johnson enjoys observing the mobility that formed a key part of his childhood and family experiences in a "geometrical" perspective that complicates easy and elementary ideas of fixed spatial relationships: his account of the family's move from the village of Svartbjörnsbyn to the expanding settlement of Björkelund is articulated in terms both of further peripheralisation (in the village) and a new closeness to the centre that the town represents. "Personligt dokument" likewise contains a much cited passage that reflects on the ambiguity of home and of travel "directions" caused by Jonhson's extended stay in a foster family: "Jag vistades också hos släktingar några år som fosterbarn, och när jag kom hem var det som en besökande, trots att jag bodde alldeles intill; jag gick bort fast jag gick hem och gick hem ibland när jag gick bort. Senare har jag försökt att utreda detta underliga förhållande" (Johnson 1932: 185) ['I also lived with relatives for a few years, as their foster child, and when I went home it was as a visitor in spite of living very close by; I was going away even though I was going home, and sometimes I was going home when I was going away. In later life I have tried to analyse this peculiar situation'].

[6] In Johnson's critique of the dark side of technology and the worship of the machine a degree of continuity is noticeable with the positions he formulated in "Personligt dokument" three decades earlier. With a large sawmill as setting, a central passage of

"Personligt dokument", containing echoes of Karl Marx, portrays machines as insatiable monsters whose primary purpose is to produce profit, reducing the worker to a tool in their mechanical operations and triggering subversive acts of sabotage. These formative experiences, Johnson recounts, have had the lasting impact on his mindset that his appreciation of machines, including their aesthetical attributes, is always mixed with a sense of antagonism (Johnson 1932: 191). Similarly, "Sommardagbok från Norrbotten", from roughly the same time as "Upplevelse av Norbotten", critiques the environmental consequences of the technological utilisation of the waterways of the North (Johnson 1963: 57).

[7] Cf. the affinity between travel writing and poetry asserted by Paul Fussell: "A travel book is like a poem in giving universal significance to a local texture" (Fussell 2001: 115). See also Arne Melberg on the lyrical dimensions of travel writing (Melberg 2005: 14).

[8] This corresponds to what Paul Fussell calls "the completion of the circuit" (Fussell 2001: 109) and identifies as an important compositional device in travel writing.

[9] Johnson's biological father, Olof Petter Jonsson, died from silicosis in 1915, thus falling victim to the working conditions of his time. Johnson's mother, Cevia Gustafsdotter, lived until 1942.

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Performing Space —A Modernist *Hembygd*

An Exploration of Sara Lidman's Works

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG Dieser Beitrag über das ‚modernistische Heimatdorf' in Sara Lidmans Werk bzw. ‚die Heimat des Lidmanschen Werkes im literarischen Modernismus' baut auf der Erfahrung eines Aufenthaltes in Missenträsk auf (März 2013). Im Geburtshaus der Dichterin habe ich mich von den konkreten und textlichen Spuren des Ortes leiten lassen, eine Auswahl von Werken gelesen und mich, als deutsche Literaturwissenschaftlerin und Touristin, einem biographischen und atmosphärischen Experiment ausgesetzt. Vor diesem Hintergrund setzt sich die Werkauswahl aus den beiden ersten Romanen (1953, 1955) und dem zweiten Teil der Romanserie *Jernbanan* (1983–1999) zusammen, die einen starken regionalen Bezug aufweisen. Hinzu kamen einer der sogenannten Afrika-Romane, *Jag och min son* (1961), und das Protokoll-Buch *Gruva* (1968), die den dörflichen Horizont zwar klar überschreiten, aber dennoch gemeinsame thematische Komponenten und verwandte erzähltechnische Gestaltungsmittel aufweisen.

Die mehrfache Fokalisierung ist eines der Verfahren Lidmans, die für einen eigenartigen Übergang zwischen der Wahrnehmungsposition von impliziter Erzählinstanz und den jeweils involvierten Figuren sorgt. Auf diese Weise wird das ‚biograpische Interesse' der Lesenden immer wieder geweckt, die häufig eine Sprachrohrfigur vorzufinden

meinen, aber niemals Klarheit über die jeweilige Parteinahme gewinnen können. Zugleich wird eine geschlechtsspezifische Zuordnung der Perspektiven verunsichert, denn der weiblich und der männlich konnotierte Blick können gleichzeitig zur Anwendung kommen.

Trotz meiner biographischen Neugier, die auf die atmosphärische Wirkung von Missenträsk zurückgeht, liegt der Schwerpunkt der vorliegenden Analyse auf der sprachlichen Konstruktion des Heimatdorfes. Diese Verankerung in der mündlichen Sprache (als sprachlich erzeugter Ort) weist ebenso deutlich eine eigene Historizität auf wie der regional-, kultur- und mediengeschichtliche Wandel Norrlands. Nimmt man eine distanzierte, ethnographische Haltung ein, wie sie Lidman selbst in der Serie *Jernbanan* nahelegt, ergibt sich eine Neubewertung der Kombinationen von historischen, auch dialektalen sprachlichen Registern: Dieses Verfahren zielt darauf ab, dass die Lesenden im performativen Nachvollzug die Konflikte zwischen den staatlichen Institutionen und Akteuren und den neuen Siedlern in Norrland erfahren können. Diese in der gesprochenen Sprache der Lokalbevölkerung aufgeführten sozialen und psychischen Konflikte hinterlassen Spuren in den Träumen, Gedanken, Dialogen, Lektüren und Texten. Der historische Ort erscheint vornehmlich als ein Konglomerat, das die mündliche Rede von Zeitzeugen hervorgebracht hat.

Die Erzählinstanz nimmt sich der vielstimmigen Figurenrede an und dokumentiert den historischen Sprachgebrauch, unabhängig davon, ob ein realistischer oder phantastischer Code zur Geltung kommt. Häufig taucht das Motiv einer verzerrten Nachahmung auf. Dies kann als programmatischer Hinweis auf eine Ästhetik einer formalen, hier performativen und narrativen Mimesis gedeutet werden, die besonders klar den Nexus von sprachlichen und sozialen Handlungen herausstellt. Sprechen ist Handeln. Das Glossar, das den ländlichen Dialekt und Soziolekt ins Hochschwedische überträgt, unterstreicht ebenfalls das sprachliche Handlungspotential, das unmittelbare soziale und politische Effekte herbeiführen kann. In der Serie *Jernbanan* werden die stilistischen Kollisionen zugespitzt, wobei lautliche und syntaktische Mittel hinzutreten. Dies ist als prosalyrisches Verfahren gedeutet worden, kann aber auch der nachdrücklichen Betonung der inszenierten mündlichen Rede in ihrem Vollzug dienen.

KEYWORDS Sara Lidman, modernism prose, staging of place, oral literature, writer's autobiography, exploitation, tourism

Not just in Scandinavian literary history but also in German-language accounts of Swedish literature is Sara Lidman (1923–2004) considered an author of charismatic identity with a strong regional attachment to Norrland.

One aspect of her works concerns cultural and socio-historical 'representativeness,' above all, of the colonisation of remote woodlands and high-moor bogs which she critically explores in the seven novels of *Jernbanan* ('The Railway'), as well as of the exploitation and oppression of Norrland's miners, blacks in South Africa and Kenya in the early 1960s, or the Vietnamese population during the Vietnam war. The state-funded exploitation of the resource-rich areas of Norrland since the nineteenth century approximates an occupation with the seemingly utopian vision of propelling the entire Swedish nation on a course of both economical and nationally edifying progress. Today, many regions are termed *glesbygd* ['thinly populated areas'] and there is considerable discussion as to whether it is at all possible to 'maintain operations' in the northernmost region of Sweden's elongated geography: "Ska hela Sverige leva?" ['Should Sweden remain as a whole?'] (cf. Johansson 2008). The dynamic of rise and fall, in the sense of a naturalised narrative, is closely linked with this region and exerts a strong aesthetic fascination: it now seems entirely appropriate to speak of a suggestive aesthetic of ruins in the areas gradually being abandoned which have formed their own emotional tropes.

This can best be explained by the fusion of a former spirit of optimism and nostalgic disillusionment, with living history finding its expression in both the genealogical or personal accounts of contemporary witnesses and the features of the cultural scene. The actual and the naturalised narratives, and the biographies of the Norrland inhabitants, can be vividly understood as parallel lines. The improvement in access depicted in *Jernbanan* is also interpreted as a symbolic aspect of the history of modernisation in Sweden which is seen as nationally representative: thus a metaphorical path is taken from the workers' and peasants' destitution in the nineteenth century to the era of the Swedish *folkhem* ['people's home'].

On the Scene

On a mental map of Sweden, Västerbotten, the village of Jörn and the town of Skellefteå are doubtless on the periphery, if it is not the case—especially from the vantage point of Stockholm or southern Sweden—that the entire Norrland territories are seen as a diffuse northward appendage to the country. The little village of Missenträsk, Lidman's birthplace, is not even shown on many maps; in the 1950s, almost 300 people lived here, today the figure has dwindled to around 20. Of the 35 former farmsteads, only one larger, modernised agricultural holding has survived. The proximity to Vithatten mountain, however, makes this a popular region for *vildmark* tourism ['wilderness tourism']; and the skiing, sledding and snow scooter activities on offer or overnight accommodation in a yurt tent imbue the woodlands

and high-moor bogs with the connotations of adventure and action. It may be that the further development and colonisation of Norrland to reflect the needs of tourism has already been set in motion, as the low land and property prices attract both international investors and private individuals, whether they be thrill-seekers or desperados. Because the infrastructure in a number of areas is being 'dismantled,' the conversion of existing buildings or traffic routes are typical signs of a new form of signification. The appropriations of the tourism industry will encroach on the landscape and distribution of resources and above all create social tensions due to the growing discrepancy between well-situated visitors, local businesspeople and frequently low-income local groups.

With this background-knowledge in mind, I set out to Lidman´s home village in order to stay in her house and work on her novels, aiming to explore her literature in relation to the surroundings of its place of origin and to test my own approach between academia and tourism, between familiarity and alterity, between an inside and an outside perspective.

The station in Missenträsk has closed (Fig. 1.), as have the chapel, school and grocer's shop, all of which are now located eight kilometres away in Glommersträsk. The majority of the occupied buildings in Missenträsk are located on the (only) village through-road, while the few side roads present a mixture of occupied and empty buildings. The snow-covered tracks which

Fig.1. The station in Missenträsk. Photo: Antje Wischmann.

pass through the bog forest are used as a snowmobile route in the winter.[1] The station building in Jörn (Fig. 2) is a testament to past glories and the extent to which forestry and the exploitation of natural resources (copper and iron ore, silver) as well as hydropower (for electricity generation) formed part of a prestigious national project around 1900. The Jörn–Arvidsjaur route opened in 1928 and ceased operations in 1990, having connected the main line in northern Norrland with the inland line. Today, timber is transported along this route by lorry. The railway line between Jörn and Skellefteå is still in operation; it is significant that updated forms of colonisation are also manifest here, as the French-made railway carriages are not well suited to winter operations in Norrland and thus often have to be substituted with replacement bus services. I myself was able to see how a bus journey of this type intensifies touristic or exotic patterns of perception: as the only passenger, I was driven through a dazzlingly sunny winter landscape on the Jörn–Umeå route for several hours by a good-natured bus driver, accompanied by boisterous dansband music. Of all places in the vicinity of Umeå, a little variety was added to the endless woodlands: a herd of reindeer gathered on the carriageway.

Fig. 2. The station building in Jörn. Photo: Antje Wischmann.

Under the Spell of the Home

The 25 kilometres from Jörn to Missenträsk can only be traversed by car.[2] The house in which Lidman was born and spent her childhood is administered by institutions such as Umeå University and Skellefteå, and authors or researchers (like me) can rent it for a token price; scholarship holders are accommodated here, as are, on occasion, the first resourceful tourists. This both fossilised and alive establishment largely constitutes receivers' notions of the authorship setting and sets the tone for many biographical interpretations of the author's novels, prose works and plays. Her journalistic works and political agitation writings are mostly related to a world explored and experienced far away from this Norrland microcosm. It thus seems appropriate to focus more closely on the idea of contact between the world and Missenträsk (cf. Holm 1998). This zone of contact is established by language use, especially by personal and media communication, oral tradition and the circulation of material texts and documents.

The large stables, the barn, the grandparents' house and the great-grandfather's cottage are located close by Lidman's house of birth (Fig. 3). The house itself is still filled with many of the author's books and some of her furniture, as if she had only just departed. A note signed by Lidman is stuck below the kitchen clock, the fridge hums, the water pipes gurgle, spectacle cases lie on top of a chest of drawers. This was the very first time I had been

Fig. 3. Sara Lidman's house of birth. Photo: Antje Wischmann.

in such intense biographical proximity of an author. This overwhelming or perhaps ambivalent proximity transmutes into reflective distance when considering that Missenträsk is representational space, historical environment, literary institution and biographical territory in almost equal measure. From the mid-1970s, the author spent her summers here, writing the 'railway' series (1977–1999). She mostly, however, lived in Stockholm, before moving to Umeå in old age.

Fig. 4. The wall clock in Lidman's house of birth. Photo: Antje Wischmann.

There is little reason to glorify this place as an enclave in time and space: the *glesbygd* policies, the population exodus, technical advances and touristic trends will in all probability foist changes upon Missenträsk. *Kommunikationer* (both 'means of transport' and 'means of communication') are leitmotivically yearned for by Lidman's characters, whether these be a rail link, the daily newspaper from Skellefteå or a glossy magazine like *Hela Världen* ['The Whole World'] in *Hjortronlandet* ['Cloudberry Country'] (Lidman 1955: 120). Later, there is excitement over the arrival of a radio, not least legitimated by the broadcasts of church services, or a telephone connection is eagerly awaited. But also a migrant worker, a door-to-door salesman or a home-visit hairdresser who import knowledge of the world through their narratives can assume the role of storage or broadcasting media.

I witnessed this when I realised that there was no public transport in the village and no internet in Lidman's home. The relief is all the greater on discovering that, at the very least, one is not in a notorious *glesbygd* mobile phone dead zone. The electricity network is stable, but the water supply is sometimes subject to fluctuations. The municipal street lighting in Missenträsk is due to be switched off for good in 2016.[3] When twilight falls, will the loud humming of the generators then also fall silent? If the last residents move to 'Glommers' or Jörn, will they find a street lighting cooperative or maybe even a settlement of holiday homes behind Lidman's house, as is feared?

Discounting nostalgia, the stillness of Missenträsk can still take on a threatening face today. The author herself expressed the idea that Missenträsk might fall mute, disappear or even be absorbed by the cosmos. Below the kitchen clock, a typewritten note by the author is pinned on the wall explaining that the loud ticking of this wall clock (Fig. 4) is just as welcome as the polyphonic ticking of the many alarm clocks laid out throughout the house. The building thus insists on its own rhythm and is safeguarded from the risk that the universe might creep in.[4] The ornamented wooden clock, allegedly purchased by family members who had emigrated to the USA, should therefore be wound up regularly.

Only several weeks after leaving did I realise that the building's floor plan had suggested a way to navigate through Lidman's work. I spent most of my time in the spacious kitchen-cum-living room. The majority of the books in the ground-floor living room are kept in cabinets; right next to the door, I found the two early works *Hjortronlandet* (1955) and *Tjärdalen* ['The Tar Pit'] (1953), novels which encouraged me not to look at the dialectal expressions as a barrier to understanding. Immediately adjacent was Birgitta Holm's indispensable and pioneering work *Sara Lidman – i liv och text* ['Sara Lidman—in Life and Text'] (1998). This monograph enables a detailed

contextualisation of Lidman's œuvre, reviewing recurrent topics of shame, guilt and repentance (frequently from a psychoanalytical standpoint). Holm had direct contact with the author while writing her study, meaning that certain indiscreet issues could first be addressed in later research projects. According to Holm, the Electra complex proves to be a key premise of Lidman's authorship: an academically qualified farmer's daughter uses her artistic output to speak out and empower herself, only to later pin the blame for this supposed arrogance on herself.

The Africa and Vietnam novels can be found in the staircase corridor on the second floor, as well as *Gruva* ['The Mine'] (1968), whose interviews and monochrome photos had already impressed me many years ago. In view of some recent work on the documentary-interview genre and several papers on *Jag och min son* ['I and My Son'] (1961/1963), I decided to focus on these two examples of the political 1960s in my presentation of Lidman's works.

Only a few days later did I discover the author's major work on, of all things, a large, leather-bound bible. This was a new edition of the 'railway' series in two substantial anthologies (in total some 1,600 pages).[5] Both volumes feature a glossary which I immersed myself in after the administrator of the Missenträsk farm had shown me such things as old agricultural equipment, the sleds, the hot tub and the berry-picking rakes for harvesting the blueberries and cloudberries in the stable building. This simultaneous 'reading' of historical artefacts made clear to me the marked ethnographic dimension to Lidman's works. I had initially evaluated the 'railway' series with reference to the Lidman family's involvement in the ambivalent colonisation process. Now, however, the glossary's historico-cultural and etymological expertise and its literary-style alienation effects, in addition to the striking layout of *Jernbanan*, drew my attention to the modernist language and the narrative self-reflection of the mimesis (see below on 'mimicry' and 'scenic imitation').

Hjortronlandet, Tjärdalen

In *Hjortronlandet*, two female characters prominently emerge from the collective of poor villagers in Ön ('island'). One of them is the aloof girl Claudette, thus named because her mother had once read a French novel. This minor distinction increases the risk of 'Klådett' being regarded with suspicion.[6] As the daughter of a financially secure family, Claudette looks upon the *lumpenproleratiat* Skrattare ('laughing') family with fascination: Their destitution may be repellent, but this does not impair their subversive energy. It is significant that the talented and seductive Märit is part of this marginalised family, her command of standard Swedish gives her family a chance to defend itself against the sanctions of the authorities (*Kronan*).

Märit has managed to delay the action for eviction by composing her letters in 'finely turned-out' officialese (Lidman 1955: 72). As a mother, wife and farm worker in one, the adult Märit finally wears herself out and dies, while Claudette leaves the village and resolves to imbue her name with new meaning and define her identity on her own terms (cf. Lidman 1955: 246).

The naturalistic style recalls the *Statare* novels, in particular the works of Moa Martinson.[7] In *Hjortronlandet*, an indignant attitude is, of all things, presented in an ironic and cutting manner which simultaneously conveys a sense of alienation. The primitivistic reminiscences are highly obvious, for example when Stina enters as an *urskogsmänniska* ['primeval being;' Lidman 1955: 87–88] and beats up the teacher in a carnivalesque rebellion against the arrogance of this official who abuses her power and, having bettered herself through education, despises those from her own social class.

The newspaper as a means of broadening one's horizons is mentioned on several occasions in *Hjortronlandet*; even the shabby newspaper wallpaper is closely studied. The fishmonger from the small town brings not just the sensation of his delivery van (in contrast to the *one* horsepower the village has) and his pompous, gum-chewing daughter to Ön, he even expands its vocabulary by circulating the expression "Jag är idel öra" ['I'm all ears'; Lidman 1955: 118]. The metaphorical expression points to the recurrent humoristic mutual play-off between verbal and figurative meaning: 'free play on words' and (primitivistic) references to the material world are contrasted: for the hungry villagers, for example, the concrete significance of rye (*råg*) is more important than the metaphorical term 'backbone' (*råg i ryggen*; cf. Kerber 1989: 63]. In this context, it is important to emphasise that in Lidman's work subordinates in Norrland are also aware of the ambiguity of idiomatic phrases or metaphorical expressions.

The *läshunger* ['hunger for books and education;' Lidman 1955: 243] is vividly portrayed, this desire interestingly directed at matter taught both verbally and in written form. In this respect, biblical material is also welcome and, as it were, relieved of its didactic functionalisation. Lutheran discipline, which amplifies malevolence and social control, appears in a critical light. At the same time, the religious daily rituals in *Hjortronlandet* are presented in a comparatively neutral manner as routine practices which can be adopted as well as potentially repudiated (cf. Lidman 1955: 126). The common practice of religion stabilises the village community, even if the latter is also in a position to present itself as a misanthropic community of victims.

In one scene in *Hjortronlandet*, the language of the provincial authorities is confronted with the local dialect, resulting in an intersection of

linguistic registers. Linguistic styles are infectious! The officials inspect the Skrattare farm to check the lease which, in accordance with the settlement policies of the time, prescribes its agricultural use. The well-meaning grandmother Anna-Stava has lent out one of her cows, and so it becomes possible to deceive the inspectors. In the following summary, the linguistic register of the first half of the sentence recalls officialese, while the colloquial wording in the second half conveys the language of the villagers: "Nu kunde man tvista om markens lämplighet och dylikt, om ett kreaturs vara eller icke vara kunde intet käbbel uppstå." ['There may very well have been discord regarding the suitability of the arable land and the like, but no-one argued about whether there was cattle or not;' Lidman 1955: 72.] The triumph of the laughing Paria family is increased by a recurrent derisive technique, unmasking imitation which is also conceptualised as 'mimetic theft' and frequently used in Lidman's works both narratively and programmatically. The transformation of an experience into a play-acted scene enables a temporary reversal of power relationships. The five impudent sons of the 'laughing family' closely observe the three officials, so they can 'copy' them in the winter season; in this regard they affirm their superiority (cf. Lidman 1955: 73). This scenic technique must naturally also be considered in connection with Lidman's theatrical output, it goes beyond the character level to achieve a higher level of reflection and is transformed into a further, integrated genre when, in a fictitious drama tableau, the roles of Do (the incompetent) and Da (the responsible) engage in dialogue. A didactic interlude is incorporated within the flow of text: a play within a play.

The debut work *Tjärdalen* exhibits a considerably tauter structure, as the chapters are divided up into weekdays and the plot focuses on one conflict, a relative rarity in Lidman's otherwise more episodic novels. The integrity of a village community in Eckträsk, which is first threatened and then—with the help of a collective victim (in the sense proposed by Réne Girard)—restored, is portrayed with almost allegorical intensity. The death penalty is implicitly imposed on one villager who destroys a charcoal pile and sustains life-threatening injuries because no-one (with the exception of one heroically portrayed disabled woman) gives the perpetrator medical attention: he comes to a wretched end. Even the committed and mediating figure of Petrus fails in his duty to provide assistance. The villagers' 'propensity for violence' is heightened by their dependence on both the authorities and a shameless lender (cf. the close analysis in Kerber 1989).

In the context of increasingly digressive narrative techniques and the exploration of alienation effects, *Hjortronlandet* stands as the foundation for Lidman's mature polylogic work. These techniques, which are energised in terms of narrativity and genre combinations and often deployed to re-

flect on language, are multiplied in *Jernbanan*—in the late works, the techniques themselves occasionally even appear to assume a foregrounded role.

The predominantly psychological, interrelated novels *Regnspiran* ['Rain Bird'] (1958) and *Bära mistel* ['Carrying the Mistletoe'] (1960) follow on from the early works and declare existential marginalisation as necessary to practise art: bourgeois manners, a settled life, marriage and family are not compatible with committed authorship. With her linguistic and acting talent, the little girl Linda (in *Regnspiran*) does not just possess a valuable gift but also a powerful manipulative instrument which gives her a strong sense of guilt. As an adult woman, the singer and musician Linda accompanies the unhappy and unsuccessful homosexual Björn on tours: the relationship founders on Linda's masochistic subjugation, her artistic career on insecurity and self-restraint which Linda imposes on herself in the manner of a 'womanly masquerade' (Joan Rivière).

Authorship is connoted as masculine, conceptualising writing as a risky challenge to patriarchal relations and religiously ordained 'self-effacement.' The sanction is experienced as anticipated. In a programmatic passage on the self-empowerment of the author, little Linda demonstrates a linguistic appropriation in the domestic setting, creating an alliance with fatherly power:

> Han satt vid bordet och hon stod bredvid och upprepade ett par ord i taget. Hon blev ivrig och glömde osämjan med fadern och la sin hand på hans knä. Han darrade vid beröringen. Snart kunde hon upprepa hela rader utan att staka sig och slutorden gjorde henne vild av förtjusning. För varje rim slog hon sin lilla knytnäve i faderns knä med ett högt fnitter.
> Till slut kunde hon hela strofen utantill och började gå i bestämda turer genom stugan medan hon läste den, för varje rimord stampade hon i golvet.
> *Tu måst all ting från tig skilja* och hon gick från fadern till utdragssoffan i hörnet som var hennes sovplats, *om tu Jesum följa wil*: hon passerade kopparsån och diskbänken, gläntade på skafferidörren, *wilt tu höra himlen till*: hon stampade framför eldstaden. *Wällust, gull och wärdslig ära*: förde henne förbi höstolen, vedkistan och kommoden till kammardörren, *bör icke ens begära*, hon smällde igen en liten låda i köksskänken och stannade framför föräldrarnas säng med det rödvitrutiga överkastet som hängde ända ned till golvet, *Then all wärlden dyrka plär*: den versen ledde henne till österfönstret, *såsom trenne Gudar här* var den sista versen, hon rabblade den och sprang triumferande tillbaka till fadern, hon kom med utbredda armar som om han varit hennes mor. (Lidman 1961: 12–13)
>
> ['He sat at the table, she stood next to him and repeated the words in succession. In her excitement she forgot the earlier row with the father and placed her hand on his knee. Her touch made him tremble.

> Soon she could repeat entire lines without getting stuck, the final words sent her into rapture. She struck the father's knee with her fist on every rhyme and laughed out loud. Finally, she could recite the entire strophe by heart and marched around the room while speaking, also stamping her foot with each rhyme.
> *You must give your all*, she moved away from her father to the pull-out bench in the corner which was where she slept, *if you want to follow Jesus*, passed the copper tub and the sink, cast a glance at the cabinet door, *if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven*: she stamped her feet in front of the stove. *Sensuality, gold and earthly glory*, she passed the hay-storing chair, the firewood container and the chest of drawers next to the door, *you shall not covet*, noisily shut the little drawer in the kitchen cupboard and stopped at her parents' bed, whose red and white checked cover hung down to the floor. *Whoever idolises the world*: this line led her to the east window, *like these three gods*—she quickly rattled off this last line and returned triumphantly to the father, with outstretched arms as if he were her mother.']

The idea of a 'home village' (hembygd) should not be understood in too literally a semantic sense. Instead of regional topography, a metaphorical place of the self's or the subject's origin is constructed from the spoken language which expresses itself in a vivid, extreme manner in the dialect. Genealogical thinking is thus less concerned with the historical family tree than with a sensory, aesthetic relationship to the world based on linguistic experience and acts.

Jag och min son

At the centre of *Jag och min son* (1961)[8] is a perpetrator with no sense of wrong-doing. The unnamed male first-person narrator is not 'entangled' in the collective use of violence in South Africa (in contrast to, for example, the well-meaning Petrus in *Tjärdalen*) but is a self-aware proponent of racist rule who, however, considers himself neutral and apolitical. This businessman from Norrland appears to see a disdain for alterity as necessary to valorise his own life choices. The text, which is composed of the narrator's heterogeneous reflections, creates an aesthetics of the open diary. As a 'crisis profiteer,' the protagonist expects to do good business in this unstable country. Beyond this, he is characterised by contradictory traits which are depicted in provocative combinations: loving father of his young son Igor but misogynist lover with sadistic tendencies, anti-fascist in his notes on the Eichmann trial (1961) but former Franco combatant and a hardened veteran of the Finnish-Soviet Winter War. His 'dissecting gaze' (Lidman 1961: 111) essentialises cool rationality and the arrogance of power (connoted as masculine).

This very early and highly explosive engagement with 'Swedish racism' is spectacular, appearing to problematise Sweden's role as a 'pioneering liberal education nation' with a cynical undercurrent and in the process breaking new political ground: the act of solidarity with the 'third world,' the blacks or subordinates, reveals itself as well-meant patronisation which takes the (colonial) Nordic mentors' sense of superiority for granted. It is of significance that the author Lidman thus launches her own political project, the global struggle against oppression and exploitation, in a spirit of massive self-doubt.

The personal aspect of *Jag och min son* is more complex yet, as in this novel Lidman further refines the psychological case studies which were her two preceding works *Regnspiran* and *Bära mistel*. Existential exclusion, however, is put aside in this continued exploration of divisions, while destructively connoted gender relations increase in importance. The feminine position in the gender matrix is equated with the subordination of the blacks, and the struggle between the sexes projected onto a conflict of 'ethnic difference.' Just as meaningfully formed is the structural archetype, which sees the 'external system of rule' internalised and repression and violence ultimately 'passed down;' in both Norrland and South Africa, it has a devastating impact.

In Lidman's second Africa novel, *Med fem diamanter* ['With Five Diamonds'] (1964), a documentary journalistic style is used to portray how, in the 'asynchronously modernised' postcolonial societies of some African nations, ethnicity and gender perilously promote aggressive exclusion processes and foment hate. The young Kenyan Wachira leaves his village to earn money as a *boy* in Nairobi, hoping it will help him to marry Wambura and facilitate recognition of the tribal community. Humiliated by the feminine connotation of his role as service staff, Wachira's self-contempt and hatred finally erupts when, in the heat of the moment, he murders his homosexual brother who, with his Indian partner, a doctor, had vindicated new forms of social opportunity and with them the modernisation of society.

What stands out in *Jag och min son* is the way in which the psychological and autobiographical is interweaved with the political; the narrative failure of the novel (cf. Holm 1998; Granqvist 2009) is a pointed indication of how the desired combination of an 'egocentric-psychological' and simultaneously politicised world literature again leads to colonial arrogance. The gesture of solidarity towards the oppressed and exploited cannot eschew exoticism. Furthermore, in the course of a modernist critique of civilisation, technology, consumption and the suppression of desire, Lidman holds out the prospect of an African capacity to achieve knowledge and liberation,

which at the same time, however, appears rather deceptive. The title *Jag och min son* may also reference the relationship between Europe and Africa: the overrated subject is named first, increasing the provocative potential of the title. The final words of the text, which conveys something of a 'work in progress,' end without a full stop and concern the loss of the son in and to Africa (Lidman 1961: 223), giving almost graphical expression to the highly uncertain future of the former colonial nations. The balance of power between the 'first' and 'third' worlds can and may not be the same as the hierarchy of parents and children.

The interest in solidarity conveyed by the narrative voice always remains directly linked with the outlook, attitude and knowledge of the sentient characters. The implicit reader is thus also addressed simultaneously with various, in part even contradictory, ideas. This gives rise—at least from today's perspective—to an enlightening or educational invocation, as the multiple focalisation draws the reader's attention to their own biased, colonial or heteronormative interpretative understanding.

> En svart flicka sitter på trottoaren med bara fötterna i rännsten, sitter i skuggan av en parkerad lastbil och broderar på en linneduk. Vilken sammanstötning av livsstilar – stenålderskvinnan, med asfalt mellan sig och jorden, broderande som en fästmö från sekelskiftet på en duk så stor som skulle hon bli värdinna vid ett enormt matsalsbord. Brigitte Bardot sitter klistrad på bilrutan, anstränger sig att puta med munnen som en negress – hur skulle hon inte avundas den här barfotabruden en sex appeal som putar utan minsta ansträngning. (Lidman 1961: 164.)
>
> ['A black girl sits on the pavement, her feet in the gutter, sits in the shadow of a parked lorry and embroiders a linen fabric. What a clash of lifestyles—the stone-age woman, asphalt between her body and the earth, embroidering like a maid, and the piece of fabric so large that one might see her as a hostess at an enormous dining table. Brigitte Bardot sits, stuck to a car window, tries to pout her lips like a Negress—how she would envy the effortless erotic magnetism of this bare-footed beauty.']

According to Granqvist, who sees the male first-person narrator as the author's alter ego, the project of recognition and the construct of desire remain bound to a dichotomous concept of identity and alterity (Granqvist 2009: 74).[9] Holm, by contrast, bases her assumption that this is more an autobiographical than documentary work on the process of focalisation. She defines the multiple focalisation as transferring sight to the characters while the narrative voice formulates its own assessment: "Bilder och associationer hämtas från romanpersonens värld även om relationen är författarens" ['Images and associations are borrowed from the world of characters in

a novel, although the relationship [with what is depicted, AW] is that of the author'] (Holm 1998: 259).[10] The switch back and forth between internal and external focalisation is unusual and is a characteristic feature of Lidman's œuvre. This multiple focalisation does not aspire to analytical plausibility, which Holm expresses as *gridlock*, a narrative block.

Jernbanan ['The Railway']

In the following, I will focus on the four novels of *Jernbanan* written between 1983 and 1999. The first three volumes have previously been discussed by Helena Forsås-Scott (1984: 1177–1181). In its enormity, and with a 20-year genesis stretching back to 1977, the series as a whole assumes monumental proportions which do not facilitate easy access for the reader. This is not the place to examine the general function of family sagas as narratives of epic breadth, but I will at least touch on the 'end of history' debate and the need for authenticated history. Beyond these issues, the distinct fascination with *släktforskning* ['depiction of family history in terms of genealogy'] in Sweden seems worthy of note, as reception of Lidman's works frequently emphasises the bonding of the reader or scholar with a place of origin in Västerbotten / Norrland. *Jernbanan* thus appears to suggest certain types of historical reconstruction employing contemporary witnesses and historical artefacts, occasionally stimulating its receivers to conduct interviews themselves, index and analyse archives or inspect church registers. The study of such ancestors who may have contributed to the background of a personal biography evidently holds out the prospect of creating continuities and enriching a reciprocal relationship with the world.

From the novel *Den underbare mannen* ['The Wonderful Man' (1983), the second part of the series spans an arch from the activist settler Didrik (who has been interpreted as a portrait of Lidman's grandfather) via his son Isak Mårten to Didrik's daughter-in-law Rönnog. Didrik personifies the beginnings of railway construction and the enthusiasm of the settlers and pioneers. The colonisation process is portrayed in great detail, making it possible to reconstruct the intricate internal and external motivations of the settlers' work, tantamount to outward and self-exploitation.

Ditches were created to drain the marshlands (*träsk)* and high-moor bogs (*myror*) for the construction of a railway and agricultural use. The settlers were given a (sometimes already developed) plot of land to provide for themselves, so that those families could pay their leases in the form of work and taxes: alongside agricultural self-sufficiency, trench digging, forestry, railway works were the major employment opportunities. The *rallare* laid railway tracks, while the *snallare* were responsible for transporting the building materials and other goods by horse-drawn carriage. Other occupa-

tions which crystallised in the course of colonisation were the merchants (*grosshandlare*) who freighted goods from coastal towns to the small inland general stores (cf. Lidman Ordlista 2003: 834) or the migrant/ seasonal workers, called 'birds of passage,' who sought work along the railway lines under construction and in contrast to the temporary local workers (*hemfödingar*) usually came from other parts of Sweden. The image of the migrant worker, still relevant in the present day, is vividly described in the following depiction of an overnight stop for transport workers (*snallarställe*):

> De hade fäll med sig och låg på köksgolvet; de hade stekpanna med sig och värmde skaffning på elden; kaffe däremot köpte de för några ören i stugan som gav nattlogi. (Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 834.)
>
> ['They had a fleece which they laid out on the kitchen floor; they also had a pan for heating up their food on the fire; on the other hand, they bought coffee from the people they lodged with.']

The draining of the countryside resulted in more arable farming and stronger pine and fir tree trunks.[11] Initial successes in exploiting Norrland's resources raised expectations of major profits across the nation. If the tightly calculated lease agreement could be fulfilled, a silviculturalist family's (*hemmaskiftet*) estate became its own property (*hemmanet*), confirmed by an entry in the land register (*lagfart*). This transformation is called *avvittring* (approximately 'land division') (cf. Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 829). Achieving such success, however, meant fighting for decades in circumstances of great hardship, often exacerbating already extreme poverty and deprivation. The punishing working conditions and the inflexible, sometimes absurd adhesion contracts for the leaseholders recall the work of slaves offered the prospect of—constantly deferred—imminent freedom in a hypocritical and cynical way. The never-ending work of the settlers has a general existential and ethical dimension, in turn typical of the rationality and discipline of the self in modern twentieth century life. The characteristic features of compulsory labour to which the settlers submit in the spirit of pietism are all too obvious (cf. Lidman 1999: 726).

The co-coloniser Didrik is nevertheless marked as a positive character, highly ambivalent and imbued with carnivalesque energy. He is enthusiastically involved in the construction of the railway, invests his time and savings, but falls from favour with the authorities after misappropriating financial aid: he pays the starving village residents more than they are entitled to. He gets into debt and as a coloniser has a keen sense of moral guilt, not least because the estate handed over to him in the course of an official allocation has been appropriated from a completely impoverished family

which could not meet the leasehold conditions. For misappropriation of state funds, in 1896 Didrik must serve a sentence of several months in Stockholm's Långholmen prison, although this in no way weakens his brazen crooked attitude. Didrik thus becomes a henchman of the state colonisers and forces his descendants to meet the terms of the lease, thus condemning his children to a life of debt. As a railway pioneer, Didrik is an outstanding advocate of modernisation and a media technology 'early adopter' who is fittingly one of the first to use a telephone (cf. Lidman 1996: 559). On the day Didrik dies, a predominantly mechanical age comes to an end when the electrification of homes begins.

Didrik's daughter-in-law Rönnog rebels with her bursts of rage, her (sometimes sexual) impulsiveness in the face of hardworking, religious and inhospitable subjugation. Although Rönnog is tough on both herself and others, she questions Protestantism and its fixation on sin. Before her marriage, Rönnog pursues a career in the local dairy, which offers the young women scientifically validated training based on the latest hygiene regulations (c. 1910–1920). She opposes self-repression and self-denial. As a respected skilled labourer, Rönnig initially appears distinct from the primitivistic tradition embodied by many of Lidman's female characters, but her violent temper nevertheless takes on a threatening guise. In O*skuldens minut* ['The Minute of Innocence'], Rönnog gives birth to Nanna, who learns the art of storytelling from her father. Holm sees Nanna as the author's most explicit alter ego character; the little girl vies with Rönnog for the attention of the father, and with her younger sister for the love and affection of her mother.

To prevent being drowned out by it, Nanna must find a way of relating to world at a very young age, and this is made possible by her dramatisation of events, her creative stories and narratives (mimesis as transformational imitation). In contrast to Linda in *Regnspiran*, the genesis of a childhood talent is portrayed in a positive light. The story ends in the 1920s. A harmonious balance is struck at neither the beginning nor the end of *Jernbanan*, and no 'original state' or nostalgic notion of history is suggested (cf. Larsmo 2001: 289).

Lidman's works with a regional connection to Västerbotten are considered difficult or almost impossible to translate because they use an artificial language which combines dialects/sociolects, biblical idioms, traditional local linguistic constructs (e.g. legends, ghost stories, fairy tales, family gossip etc.) and neologisms. The difficulty in translating—as in the passage with the young Linda's readings in the kitchen—relates less to a territorially given linguistic ability than to a staged orality and polyphony. Using literary means, a *genius loci* is created as an articulative space. This is

indeed a challenge for translation, as can be seen in the lengthier extracts cited above.

An emerging innovative trend of acknowledging a lack of fixed genre boundaries in Lidman can be seen in recent research, particularly concerning the transitions between prose, poetry and drama in the 'railway' series. The occasional lack of punctuation in the text and the 'expansive' layout, the rhythms of colloquial language and the typographical alienation in the series are interpreted as characteristics of prose and poetry. They can, however, also often be understood as scenic means and signs of fictitious orality. Lidman's manner of working, such as dictating the first version to tape (cf. Holm 1998: 402), also substantiates this written staging of a sometimes faltering, sometimes flowing way of speaking and alternating vocal texture, which in my opinion should be related to the idea of multiple focalisation. The various episodes, for example, on isolated incidents or fates are structured in sequences and scenes, they sometimes resemble documented oral narratives, that is, report by historical contemporary witnesses.

The glossary of dialectal and historical expressions in *Jernbanan* provides ethnographical insights into how historical, neglected subordinates become visible in retrospect and can be made to 'speak.' It must be remembered here that *Skellefteå-bondska* ['rural Skellefteå dialect'] is a mixture of local dialect and the idiom of the uneducated rural underclass and thus a characteristic sociolect: "Bondska – skelleftemålet till skillnad från rikssvenskan, 'schwänschkan'" ['Rural language—the dialect of Skellefteå, contrasting with standard Swedish, termed "Schwänschkan"'] (Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 829). The 'sch' sound not used here in the standard language and the spelling with an 'ä' in 'schwänschkan' reinforce the language's class-specific proletarian social distinction. Biblical texts exert the greatest written-language influence on the characters' discourse.[12] The 'railway' series includes a further register, that of pompous and sometimes misunderstood expert or official language. Didrik tends to fall into rhetorical fervour (*ordberusning*), the sound of the words carries him away, the gradual development of his language and thoughts steering him down unexpected avenues. A new language appears to emerge via the medium of Didrik (although he himself is portrayed as an enthusiastic user of media). Didrik transforms the clash of linguistic registers, which always means a performative iteration of class struggles, into something new, a verbal and scenic code presented as unique. His carnivalesque use of language vividly elucidates the elementary relationship between word/term (*ord*) and order (*ordning*). Before Rönnog marries into the family, Didrik's hegemony is seriously undermined by the power of two women, Anna-Stava, the wife who loves him unconditionally, and Hagar, the lover demonised for her carnality. The primitivistic borrowings are more than apparent, allowing identification

of a legendary female archetype, honoured in the glossary with the noun *queejn* (approximately 'matriarch'). An explicit commentary is presented expressly for this purpose: "Trots Hustaflans bud och trots fattigdomen var kvinnorna i Västerbotten tämligen suveräna, 'stugans drottning'" ['Despite the laws of the catechism and despite poverty, the women in Västerbotten were almost in complete control, sometimes the "queen of the home"'] (Lidman 2003: 833). The codex of *Hustaflan* in Luther's *Small Catechism* (1531) states that "Mannen är kvinnans hufvud" ['the man is the head of the woman'] (Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 831). This rule is nevertheless subversively circumvented by Anna-Stava in the same novel by grotesquely imbuing the expression with new meaning and her practice of wearing the cranium of her former lover Hård on her body at all times.

The make of Didrik and Anna-Stava's marital bed, 'Imperial,' reveals just how much referential power a single word can have in the symbolic order of the sexes. The potency embodied by furniture—sexual desire, untamed greed for profit, ridiculous narcissism—is exposed in the process. Another definition in the glossary unmasks how male norms are made to appear entirely natural: "människan – I första Mosebok 2:25 heter det I Carl XII: bibelöversättning: Och the woro både nakne, menniskian och hans hustru" ['Man—in the first book of Moses 2.25, the translation of the bible by Carl XII reads: and both were naked, the man and his wife'] (Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 832). The frequency of biblical language indicates that patriarchal society is upheld every day via iterative linguistic practices.

As a paratext, the glossary in *Jernbanan* holds a key function, providing essential stage directions for the socio-cultural setting. In order to illustrate and bring to life this milieu, all furniture, tools, items of clothing, artefacts and foodstuffs are qualified to inspire a lexicon of historic everyday actions: *am-stolen* (chair for breastfeeding women), *björnbindningar* (iron chains for securing wooden trunks to their means of transport), *lista* (a metre-long knitted scarf which can be wrapped around the entire body), *kom-i-säng-tröja* (seductive nightdress), *nagg* (quill for punching holes in the thin bread called *tunnbröd*) and *fårfeta* (lamb suet, considered a delicacy) (cf. Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 829, 832, 833, 830) all make the spartan scenography loom large before our eyes. The glossary concludes with a seemingly bizarre list of units of measurement which takes ethnographic meticulousness to extremes. The scale zooms down to *skålpund* (425 g) and *tum* (2.5 cm) (cf. Lidman, Ordlista 2003: 835–36). The glossary conveys a poetic and ethnographical manifesto which invites us to explore material details, perhaps even to lose ourselves with abandon in them.[13]

Many of the above-mentioned narrative techniques are used together, but more freely, in the 'railway' series. The lack of punctuation and the en-

jambments create an impression of occasionally faltering speech. Only after reading are the receivers in a position to interpret who perceives, feels or dreams. A daydream, an inner image, can, for example, be related in an italicised passage (cf. Lidman 1983: 154).

By contrast to the earlier texts, the ethnographic-documentary narrative voice appears outside the depicted world and explains the dialectal expressions in the ongoing text: "under stajn och rajta (under sten och torv)" ['under stones and peat'] (Lidman 1983: 29), which appears like a retrospective intratextual effect of the glossary. The transfer and citation of voices thus form separate thematic areas (cf. Lidman 1983: 133). In the context of 'code switching' and reciprocal translation into dialect or standard Swedish, the expressions are allocated to a character using linguistic means; when there is a translation from standard Swedish to dialect, there is a sense of a shift to the historical past, the dialectal wording supposedly a prior stage of development (cf. Lidman 1983: 214). These decodings and recodings enable the establishment of a temporal scale between 'then' and 'now,' and assume the function of an ethnographical verification of authenticity: italicised dialectal expressions, which are sometimes only comprehensible after consulting the glossary (cf. Lidman 1983: 50), establish a documentary technique, as if a record of the character discourse were being made and the respective term cited as evidence (cf. Lidman 1983: 32). Such idiomatic expressions unique to certain characters also set the tone of the passages in 'actual speech,' whereby characteristic expressions or a personal phonetic pronunciation are suggestive of individual characters (cf. Lidman 1983: 34). If the speakers are expressly identified, graphically emphasised inquit formulas (in the layout of a drama) are used in some contexts, conveying an immediate sense of clarity, scenic intensity and tempo change.

The layout also creates scenic effects: as in reconstructing Didrik's eye-to-eye contact with a Sami in the specific textual layout, the Lord's Prayer is given in bilingual Swedish and Sami versions side by side (cf. Lidman 1983: 75), a technique of implied mutual commentary also used in *Gruva*.

The layout and typography visualise the idioms and not least the collision of linguistic registers, text types and topic areas. At the same time, the font and its size can reflect the volume and vigour of a statement: an advertisement, for example, is presented in bold type, the seed corn is extolled as if with a roaring voice: "SE HIT! [...] **Underkornet som är ett dunderkorn!**" ['LOOK HERE! [...] The wonder grain is the purest thunder grain!'] (Lidman 1983: 191). Contemporary advertising language is critically unmasked but also prized as a linguistic and material base element; perhaps a little like the debris which becomes a coveted product as railway ballast or the newspaper wallpaper which suddenly sparks a seemingly literary flood of associations.

The modernist language is a touchstone of any translation, which must stand up to phonetic scrutiny: Didrik's expression *"Undrande kommationer!"* ['wondering commucations!'] [*recte* 'kommunikationer,' meaning both means of transport and communications technology in Swedish] (Lidman 1983: 251) is difficult to translate into another language, because of the need to pick up on the phonetics of the thundering [*dundrade*] wonder miracle seed and simultaneously convey the meaningful slip of the tongue typical for Didrik. On his newly acquired word *prioriteringar* ['priorities'], for example: "Han gillade att säga ordet, det fanns en munterhet där, det gick på tå, det nådde inte golvet med hälarna – dess innebörd hadde han dock allt mindre sinne för" ['He wanted to utter the word, he was cheerful, he seemed to go on tiptoe, his heels had lifted from the floor—but he concerned himself ever less with the content'] (Lidman 1983: 211).

Instead of volume, the speed of delivery may also be emphasised: "inbilla-dig-inte-att-du-är-min-förtrogne!" ['don't-imagine-that-you're-my-confidant!'] (Lidman 1961: 77). The clash of registers often releases surprising humour: "extraprima furutimmer" ['extra-fine spruce wood'] (Lidman 1999: 784) plus "samt 1 styck galen hustru" ['one piece of mad wife'] (Lidman 1999: 802). (Note the phonetically founded linguistic contact between *furutimmer* ['spruce wood'] and *fruntimmer* [colloquial term for 'a woman']). The phonetic infectiousness of words brought about by allusion and internal rhyme appears to give the language employed its own dynamic—and on occasion these experimental acoustic effects appear to propagate themselves.

Some syntactical constructions (e.g. dialectal inversion, anacoluthon, sequences) aim to orchestrate the stream of thoughts as a potential flow of words. The dialectal habit of ending sentences with "och så vidare" ['and so on'], after which it must be clear to the other person that expected and unnecessary formulaic expressions will now follow, occurs in the manner of a leitmotiv and bears out the scenic means and the staged orality. One special case is the hypothetical conversation (one character imagines what another would say) in which the cited excerpt from the character discourse is presented in inverted commas (e.g. '"medixin åt utbölingar"' ['medixine for those losers from outside;' once again Didrik's incorrect pronunciation of a loan word] (Lidman 1983: 349).[14] A variant of hypothetical narration is the anticipation of speech by a (not always easy to identify) narrative voice which employs conjecture about how a character may respond, that is it continues the dialogue speculatively (cf. Lidman 1983: 228). When neither inquit formulas nor inverted commas are used, the use of an omniscient voice occasionally appears, now and again taking Didrik's side: "Hade det stått i avisen?" ['Was that in the newspaper?'] (Lidman 1983: 38). "[...] vet du vad primitiv betyder? Slå upp i ordboken! Bra att kunna" ['[...] Do you know

what primitive means? Look it up in the dictionary! It's good to know'] (Lidman 1996: 511). I see the frequent question marks at the ends of main clauses as intonation pointers to raise the voice in the implied speech. The textuality should be experienced in speech mood.

Exclamations expressed phonetically are given a vivid graphical function, for example, "telefåååån" ['telephone'], "FÅÅN" ['telephone or idiot'] (Lidman 1999: 704) or "Avavavaviiiken!" ['dededeviation'] (Lidman 1983: 57). The orthography reconstructs the manner of speaking and increasing vocal intensity, the call's spelling indexically attributes it to one character's authorship. (When characters speak, linguistic momentum is increased: with his stuttering and drawled pronunciation of the place-name Avaviken (a play on *avvikelsen*, 'deviation'), Didrik reveals that he is about to commit adultery, something his wife also understands immediately.

The long list of place-names ending in *-träsk* is also designed to highlight the phonetic effect (cf. Lidman 1996: 509–510). This 'naming' of an imagined terrain as a collective place is an epitaph in minimalist prose poetry.

The sections in verse entitled "SKALLEN" ['CRANIUM'] in *Den underbara mannen* can only be clearly attributed to the point of view of a character in retrospect, following knowledge of the episode relating to Hård's refound skull. The short lines of this passage, set as free verse in the layout, increase the tempo, although at the same time they demand greater concentration because the lack of punctuation requires the reader to construct meaningful phrasing/ sequences himself. The enjambments pointedly create an ambiguity by the fact that two different phrasings and interpretations are frequently plausible (cf. e.g. Lidman 1983: 162).

Lidman employs similar linguistic techniques across her works and text types, primarily because they represent a stage for a performative critique of power: "MYNDIGHET – dymedelst berövande gemene man hans myndighet" ['AUTHORITY,' literally: 'majority institution,' AW]—by which means ordinary people are robbed of their authority/ their majority'] (Lidman 1975: 41).[15] In place of multiple focalisation, Larsmo sees various narrating roles in Lidman's work. He considers them as helping to relativise the idea of language's regional roots. The strong claim of language and stylistic orchestration to independence, sometimes even the status of protagonist, questions the usual connection between language/ dialect and origin/ descent.

Gruva ['The Mine']

Even *Gruva* (1968) is based on a material/ concrete combination of documented character's voices. The famous documentary takes Odd Uhrbom's black-and-white photos of Svappavaara and Kiruna as its starting point

and is primarily an 'under-ground' record of workers who are seen in mining shafts, excavators and other vehicles or changing cubicles, alone or in small groups. Other images show families in their homes or life on wintery streets. Particularly expressive are the close-ups of the workers' faces and bodies, marked by heavy exertion, in part—as in the photo of an undressed worker being examined by a medical officer—also of work-related deformities and illnesses: the exploitation of human vitality and time, if not simply a theft against every single working human committed by a state company and endorsed by society, is denounced in *Gruva*.

Lidman visited the pit in Svappavaara as part of a commission which refocused attention on the Vietnam war to inland Sweden. The number of interviews Lidman conducted with the workers was far higher than the number of biographical narratives recorded in *Gruva* (cf. the detailed commentary in Annika Olsson 2004). There is still controversy as to the extreme concentration of male workers (cf. Olsson 2004: 234–235), even if they formed the majority for the symbolically physical underground labour. I would venture to argue that the category of 'class' had absolute priority on this political project. In this case, it is undoubtedly officially recognised gainful employment in the male sphere which is negotiated in the anti-capitalist and socially emancipatory struggle for liberation.[16]

Gruva is devoted to the ethnographic exploration of an unknown place, with the reader encouraged to adopt the role of intensively addressed, practically involved witness (cf. Olsson 2004: 237). The stories of the workers use the previously discussed techniques of staged orality, scenic structuring and linguistically reflective fracture. The interviewer appears in the prologue and an inquit formula: "Sara: [...]" (Lidman 1968: 81). The ellipses '[...]' indicate pauses in speech or a search for words but at the same time are valuable verifications of authenticity and a means to imbue the interview responses, compressed into monologues, with rhythm. In the section "Parantes om språket" ['A comment on language in brackets'] (Lidman 1968: 75–77), the narrative voice intervenes in order to attribute a racist comment to one character giving their view on the Finnish–Swedish language conflict. In everyday speech, Finnish and Sami linguistic practice mark out the social hierarchy as well as the hegemony of the 'white,' Swedish, male persons within the workforce. They frequently express solidarity with the North-Vietnamese colleagues, who are far ahead of Norrland in terms of the class struggle.

Gruva is the outcome of newly acquired critical insights which are carried over from the Vietnam protests to the Norrland mines: those who make the natural resources available, thereby safeguarding the lives of many while at the same time risking life and limb, have a clear entitlement to

land ownership and the means of production (cf. Lidman 1975: 43). The bureaucratic arrogance of the mine operators and the unrealistic regulations set by the municipal authorities are attacked in *Gruva* by means of the above-mentioned combined critique of power and language. Euphemisms are elaborated and the cynical attitude of managers entrenching themselves behind a wall of legal or technical jargon demonstrated using the example of document collages. The prologue contrasts a quotation from Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) with the summary of a meeting of the company management (cf. Lidman 1968: 10–11). Their use of violence is thus linguistically 'mediated'—Stanley Milgram's experiment on obedience to authority figures was already the subject of considerable discussion in the early 1960s.

If we acknowledge the literary status of *Gruva* (cf. Zillén 1993, Olsson 2004, Bak 2012), the possibility of discovering another of the author's calling cards in this work is opened up: I interpret the fossilised fir cone found by one of the interviewed workers deep in the mine as a reference to authorial reflection and the conscious use of means to create continuities in Lidman's works. Neither Holm nor Olsson could find this interview excerpt on the tapes.

> Men det käraste jag har är faktiskt den här tallkotten. Experterna har sagt att den legat i jorden i sjuttifem tusen år. Den låg på tjugo meters djup. Det var jag som fann den. Den är ju svart och grå och du tycker kanske att den ser obetydlig ut. Men jag ser på den och känner på den varenda dag. Det är så man vill stanna av och tänka efter när man tar den här kotten i handen. (Lidman 1968: 58.)
>
> ['The most valuable thing I have is this fir cone. Experts believe that it lay in the earth for 75,000 years. It was 20 metres in, and I found it. It is black and grey and does not really look like anything special—or so you will think. But I look at it every day and briefly hold it in my hands. Then, you want to stop time and reflect.']

Might this fir cone, which extends labour history back into a mythical prehistoric era, be found in the Missenträsk study—even if not in fossilised form? In any case, I would suggest that the fir cone is to be found on a shelf there.

Gruva is a work which captures the literary spoken text of representatives of the working world between the covers of a book, in turn impacting on the extra-textual world: one year after *Gruva* was published, strikes erupted in the mines. More recently, the current cultural history of Norrland has helped Lidman's works to regain political relevance. New finds and increasing demand for iron and copper ore have rejuvenated the mining industry, with the surprising effect that a highly efficient extraction industry

was established *after* de-industrialisation, its boom requiring the recruitment of international workers. The mine in Svappavaara, which was shut down in 1983 and swamped with water, is due to reopen in 2014.

Outlook

Language is an ethical and political instrument in Lidman's work, delimiting or expanding the world of individuals and collectives. It establishes power structures and sets out patterns of perception. Every linguistic utterance is an act which engages with the world. These insights into the constitution of the world through language are predicated on the experimental use of modernist language, and are probably experienced as such by readers.

In Lidman's incredibly prescient commentary on regional Swedish politics, appeals and linguistic reflection again go hand in hand. Whoever no longer wishes to speak of a *hembygd* ('home village') but rather a *glesbygd* ('thinly populated area') and *av-folknings-bygd* ('exodus village') is already executing the politically approved depopulation process and has admitted defeat (cf. Lidman 1985: 18f.). In 1985, writing of a "natur-upplevelse-produktion" ['nature experience industry'], the author already presages the danger of event tourism (Lidman 1985: 19).

Lidman did not live to see how a further variant of continued slavery using both old and new means would become established in Norrland: every year, seasonal workers from countries such as Thailand, Poland or Ukraine are hired to pick blueberries or cloudberries; they are forced to spend a part of their pitiful wages on travel, food and accommodation. The undignified working and lodging conditions violated and still today often violate human rights. The seasonal workers were often deprived of their identity papers, placed under huge pressure and were often not able to pay for their return journeys. Their concerns have since met with greater sympathy amongst the Swedish public, but the conflict continues.

The exodus of people in Västerbotten/Norrbotten, the resource allocation conflicts for electricity and water are recurrent themes in the local newspapers. Who should be held accountable when state institutions withdraw and appear to turn certain areas adrift? A reduction in the number of empty flats or houses caused by new immigrants is just as worthy of an optimistic piece in the newspaper as the postponement of a school closure. The opening of cafés, flea markets or the care and conversion of listed buildings are a testament to the spirit of resistance. In closing, it is also worth mentioning that the danger of a hotel with the outline of an elk being built on Vithatten mountain appears, for the time being, to have been averted.

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NOTES

[1] In the summer, tourists can hire railbikes.

[2] I was driven by the administrator of the Missenträsk farm, Lars Sundqvist. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warm thanks for his generous assistance and valuable information. My stay in Missenträsk would not have been possible without Lars. I would also like to express my due thanks to Umeå universitet, in particular Carina Sehlstedt, Birgitta Holm and Annegret Heitmann for finding me accommodation.

[3] This was officially announced at the time of my visit in late March 2013.

[4] "– När hon går, klockan, tänker man inte på henne. / – Men när hon står kan man intet tänka, fyllde en annan i." ['– When the clock ticks, you don't think of it./ – But if it stops, you can't think at all, added someone else'] (Lidman 1981: 142).

[5] See list of works consulted.

[6] The consonance with the word 'klåda' (itchiness) invites mockery.

[7] The influence of Stina Aronson (1892–1956) on Lidman's work has not to date been sufficiently explored, see for example Aronson's depictions of Tornedal.

[8] On the 'Immorality Act' and details of Lidman's deportation, see Hale, who like myself examines the first version of *Jag och min son* (1961). He assumes that this work initiates the documentary phase (cf. Hale 2000: 68). Hale suggests that the author was irritated by the media attention, her isolated case problematically diverting attention from basic infringements of human rights (Hale 2000: 62–65). Granqvist observes that Lidman would have had to leave the country in any case due to visa issues in February 1961 and therefore assumes a certain over-dramatisation of the incident which Lidman would have accepted.

[9] Granqvist himself casts an essentialist look at the author when he attests to her 'inherited religious' obligation to engage with the issue of personal guilt (cf. Granqvist 2009: 74).

[10] Holm writes of the absorption of the narrative voice (and even of the author) (cf. Holm 1998: 406), removing the possibility of differentiating between 'who sees' and 'who speaks.'

[11] Conversely, trench digging also lead to a lowering of the water table.

[12] The amalgamation of very different linguistic registers presents a challenge to translation, as analogous alienation effects must be created in the target language.

[13] The ethnographic profile is highly relevant to the tone of the translation and for marking linguistic alienation effects. The foundations are laid for receivers choosing to limit themselves to the Västerbotten horizon or discover the influence of the periphery on the world and identify the modernist impulse. Simple colloquial language is to be preferred in place of an effective dialectal equivalent in the target language. One might almost say that it is a translation which can unlock the potential to expand the local relevance, model the dialect more strongly as a sociolect and thus intensify the universal ethical issues.

[14] The 'thought report' may as such be a marked, imagined inner monologue: "Didrik

berättade genast inom sig att [...]" ['Didrik immediately recounted in his mind and for himself that'] (Lidman 1983: 68).

[15] The preposition 'dymedelst' is formal officialese, as if the noun 'official' had become connotatively 'infected.'

[16] The fact that, at this time, there were by all means report books relating to female workers or housewives, further shores up this consciously chosen focus, even if allowance must be made for the cooperation between Lidman und Uhrbom.

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Telling Tales Testing Boundaries

The Radicalism of Kerstin Ekman's Norrland

ABSTRACT Beginning with analyses of *De tre små mästarna* (1961) [*Under the Snow*] and *Händelser vid vatten* (1993) [*Blackwater*], this investigation into the representation of Norrland in the prose fiction of Kerstin Ekman draws on theoretical material by, among others, Umberto Eco, Mieke Bal, and Rosi Braidotti. The study revolves around the ways in which the texts are told and, especially, who is seeing the events narrated and the implications of this. The juxtaposition of different focalisers in *Blackwater* helps engage the reader in the novel's central questions about memory, identity, environmental destruction, and interpretation. With the central character a troll from the forest, *Rövarna i Skuleskogen* (1988) [*The Forest of Hours*] develops a far-reaching critique of the western categories and boundaries used to determine what is 'human' and what is 'animal'. In the trilogy *The Wolfskin*, consisting of *Guds barmhärtighet* (1999) [*God's Mercy*], *Sista rompan* (2002) ['The Last String'] and *Skraplotter* (2003) ['Scratch Cards], a plot covering the whole of the twentieth century is focalised by a number of characters and involves the reader in issues to do with postcolonialism, environmentalism and ethics.

KEYWORDS Kerstin Ekman, Norrland, narrative, focalisation, identity, ecocriticism, postcolonialism, ethics

Introduction

In 2003, the year in which Kerstin Ekman completed her Norrland trilogy *Vargskinnet* ['The Wolfskin'] with the publication of *Skraplotter* ['Scratch Cards'], the Swedish literary critic Jonas Thente claimed that she, along with a number of other authors of her generation including Sara Lidman, Per Olov Enquist and Torgny Lindgren, represented a specific Norrland tradition. This literary Norrland, according to Thente, was "noga upptrampat, uppmätt, bergfast etablerat med konsensuellt upprättade mytologiska regelverk" ['paced out and measured in meticulous detail, claims staked on bedrock and subject to consensual mythological sets of rules'], with the authors depicting "ett strävsamt folk, nära naturen och Gud och just så charmigt egenartade och autentiska som man vill ha dem, norrlänningarna" ['a hard-working people living close to nature and their God, and as charmingly eccentric yet authentic as you could ever wish; these are the people of Norrland'] (Thente 2003: 171–172). But as Thente read the work of a younger generation as a revolt against this allegedly established version, he failed, as Anders Öhman has pointed out, to dismiss this Norrland mythology seemingly created by the authors themselves and instead provided an unusually clear example of "det kategoritänkande med vars hjälp man betraktat den norrländska litteraturen och som idag fungerar som en närvarande frånvaro" (Öhman 2004: 43) ['the thinking in terms of categories that has provided the lens for viewing Norrland literature and that continues to operate today as an absence, yet still present'][1]. Surveying the well-established tradition of approaching and presenting Norrland writing in terms of specific categories, Öhman in the introduction to his study of the Norrland author Gustav Hedenvind-Eriksson (1880–1967) foregrounded blindness as the corollary of this categorisation and underlined its consequences: "Det är en blindhet som, förutom att den varit förtryckande och hämmande, även har lett till att mycket av den norrländska litteraturen och verkligheten lämnats obeaktad" (Öhman 2004: 44) ['It is a blindness that, in addition to being suppressive and inhibiting, has also had the effect of leaving much of Norrland literature and reality unnoticed'].

Seeing is a central theme in the present study of Kerstin Ekman's major works of prose fiction set wholly or mainly in Norrland. Who is seeing Norrland, what kinds of Norrland are being seen, and with what consequences? The notion of seeing helps foreground not just the concepts of subject and object but also those of order and hierarchisation, power and marginalisation and, of course, nature and culture. The fact that liminal characters and beings are to be found in some of Ekman's novels adds to the urgency of the question about animal and human: where do we draw the line, what are the implications of such a line and, indeed, to what extent do we need one? The

notion of seeing also highlights the role of the reader, and not just the reader who finds herself/himself eagerly turning the pages of an author whose early experience as a thriller writer can still be perceived in some of her later work, but also the reader who, inevitably, finds himself/herself involved in elaborate processes of interpretation. As I shall try to demonstrate, Thente's insistence on placing Ekman's work in a specific category of Norrland writing is particularly unfortunate and, indeed, misleading. In the last instance, as Anders Öhman has pointed out, "handlar det helt enkelt om förmågan till ett rikare seende: kategoriseringar har den egenskapen att inte bara krympa det betraktade utan även den som betraktar" (Öhman 2004: 44) ['it is simply about the ability to see better: categorisations have the effect of reducing not just that which is observed but also the observer'].

Born in 1933, Kerstin Ekman was brought up in Katrineholm, south-west of Stockholm, at the time when the foundations of the Swedish welfare state were being laid. Having completed a degree at the University of Uppsala, she worked with the scripting and production of film, a job that included a spell in the early 1960s in Nikkaluokta, on the hiking route to Kebnekaise in the far north of the country (Boëthius 1993: 112–114), clearly a source of inspiration for the setting of *De tre små mästarna* (1961) [*Under the Snow*, 1997], the fourth of eight thrillers published between 1959 and 1963. While living near Älandsbro in the Norrland province of Ångermanland in the 1970s, she published the first three volumes of the tetralogy that came to mark her breakthrough; however, "Kvinnorna och staden" ['The Women and the City'], as the work is commonly known, is not set in Norrland. But Älandsbro is not far from the Forest of Skule, central to Ekman's 1988 novel *Rövarna i Skuleskogen* [*The Forest of Hours*, 1998]. Around 1980 she moved with her husband to the small village of Valsjöbyn in Jämtland, close to the Norwegian border, where they were to remain for well over 20 years, in other words throughout a period characterised both by the partial dismantling of the Swedish welfare state and the emergence of the environmental movement. The landscape of north-west Jämtland with its forests, lakes and high mountains, increasingly sparsely populated over time, became central to the plots not just of *Händelser vid vatten* (1993) [*Blackwater*, 1995] but also of the *Wolfskin* trilogy consisting of *Guds barmhärtighet* (1999) [*God's Mercy*, 2009], *Sista rompan* (2002) ['The Last String'], and *Skraplotter* (2003) ['Scratch Cards'], and the novella *Hunden* (1986) [*The Dog*, 2009].

Ekman has received numerous awards for her work, including the Nordic Council Literature Prize for *Blackwater* in 1994. She was elected to the Swedish Academy in 1978 but left in 1989, when she and two other members found themselves in disagreement with the Academy's handling of a protest against the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie. The author, Ekman has insisted,

must have the freedom to take risks, to be different, to be a dissident (Ekman 1995; Ekman 1996*b*).

Under the Snow and *Blackwater*

Under the Snow (1961) was the fourth of Ekman's thrillers to be published as a book. And the success of *Blackwater*, her most widely translated novel and about to be made into a film in Sweden as I write, is no doubt due mainly to its affinities with the genre of the thriller. But as the South African novelist and academic André Brink emphasised when listing, in 1996, *Blackwater* as one of the two novels that had given him the greatest pleasure over the year (the other was Louis de Bernières's *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*), Ekman's book, rather than being a thriller, "assumes the guise" of one for other purposes (Brink 1996).

Published 32 years apart, *Under the Snow* and *Blackwater* are set in different parts of Norrland and narrated in very different ways. In fact, the constructions and implications of the Norrland settings in these texts have little in common. But I want to begin this analysis of Norrland in Ekman's prose fiction by comparing and contrasting the two—because of the genre affinity they undoubtedly have, and because of the light the differences between them can shed on the development of Ekman's Norrland. My analyses of Ekman's Norrland texts then move on to *The Dog* and *The Forest of Hours*, before turning, in the final section, to the *Wolfskin* trilogy.

Although the opening chapter of *Under the Snow* is set in winter, indeed as a sliver of the sun again becomes visible in Rakisjokk following the winter solstice many weeks previously, the remainder of the plot unfolds in high summer. There are Sami characters in this novel, and in Rakisjokk both Finnish and Sami are spoken in addition to Swedish, but the perspective on this area of northern Norrland is that of the outsider. Torsson, the policeman called to Rakisjokk following the death of the art teacher at the village school, has been living in Kiruna, Sweden's northernmost town, for many years but invariably spends his holidays in his home town of Eskilstuna, not far from Stockholm; and David Malm, who is an artist and friend of the dead man and who solves the murder mystery with the police the following summer, comes from the Swedish capital. In part, the narrative is seen through the eyes of Torsson and Malm respectively, and while the penultimate chapter is narrated in the first person by the as yet unidentified murderer who is also the focaliser here, the focalisations of Torsson and Malm are frequently interrupted by the perspective and voice of the omniscient narrator. Umberto Eco has made a useful distinction between "open" fabulas and "closed" ones (with "fabula" denoting "the basic story stuff" as

opposed to the plot, "the story as actually told" [Eco 1984: 27]): in the closed fabula, Eco writes,

> the sender offers his addressee continual occasions for forecasting, but at each further step he reasserts, so to speak, the rights of his own text, saying without ambiguity what has to be taken as "true" in his fictional world. (Eco 1984: 34.)

A typical instance of a closed fabula is indeed the detective thriller. *Under the Snow* may be a page-turner, but the text makes only limited demands on the reader's interpretative skills.

In conjunction with the focalisations of Torsson and Malm, the omniscient narrator of *Under the Snow* reinforces the outsider perspective on a tourists' Lapland, a Lapland defined by means of maps and often seen from above, as in the following passage:

> De hade kommit upp på en vinddriven platå och David tystnade. Daldockor slängde sina stora huvuden i blåsten. Långt nere kunde han se sjöarna glimma som kalla speglar – Rakisjaure, ett isvasst knivsår som mörknade av förbiglidande molnskuggor. [...]
> Konstapeln plockade fram kartan och började studera den. Han låg på alla fyra och snodde runt i riset. Kikande åt alla håll mumlade han dystra antaganden om fjälltopparnas belägenhet. De kom överens om att de befann sig där den krossade myggan lämnat ett av sina ben på pappret. (Ekman 1964: 143–144.)

> ['They had reached a windswept plateau and David fell silent. The large heads of the globe flowers were swaying in the wind. Far down below he could see the lakes glimmering like cold mirrors, the Rakisjaure an icy sharp slash, darkened by passing shadows of cloud. [...]
> Torsson took out the map and started studying it. On all fours in the scrub, he peered this way and that, mumbling gloomy guesses at the positions of the mountain peaks. They agreed they were just where the squashed mosquito had left one of its legs on the paper.' (Ekman 1997: 111.)]

As they reach an ancient site sacred to the Sami, David cannot resist the temptation to lift one of the holy stones, a *seite*. The deluge that follows makes them lose all sense of direction, until eventually they find themselves looking at "ett landskap som *log en fullkomlig främlings stela leende mot dem*" (Ekman 1964: 149; my italics) ['a landscape that *replied with only the fixed smile of a complete stranger*' (Ekman 1997: 115; my italics)]. While providing an exotic setting for a thriller plot, the segment of Norrland constructed in *Under the Snow* remains inaccessible and alien.

Having similarities with a thriller *Blackwater*,[2] published more than three decades later, is considerably more many-faceted and more complex—a neat example, as I hope to show, of Eco's "open" fabula. While most of the plot is set in Norrland, the area is located further south, in north-west Jämtland close to the Norwegian border, with part of the plot also set in Norway.

The murders of two young people in a tent some distance from the small village of Blackwater on Midsummer's Eve sometime in the early 1970s are still unsolved 18 years later. The narrative covering this timespan involves considerable shifts in chronology as different parts are seen through the eyes of different characters. These changes also have a crucial impact on the novel's construction of Norrland.

Blackwater is divided into two parts. With the exception of the opening pages, Part I is set in the year of the two murders in the early 1970s, from Midsummer's Eve until early winter, while Part II is set 18 years later and covers the violent resolution of the original murder mystery. Part I is focalised by Johan Brandberg, a young man from Blackwater who leaves the village on that fateful Midsummer's Eve; by Birger Torbjörnsson, a GP who lives in the bigger village of Byvången and has practised in this sparsely populated area for many years; and by Annie Raft, a teacher who arrives at Blackwater with her daughter Mia on Midsummer's Eve. Part II, set 18 years later, is focalised mainly by Johan and Birger.

The alternating focalisers in Part I construct differing aspects of this part of Norrland with its small village by a large and deep lake, its murmuring rivulets and rushing streams, its boggy lands with numerous species of sedges, its forests, and the high mountains in the west. Johan initially presents the view from the village with its houses, small farms, grazing goats and scrapped rusting cars, before travelling across the border and encountering, thanks to the female character whose companion he briefly becomes, stories of primeval forests as the spaces of matriarchal myths and erotic encounters. Birger combines his knowledge of the inhabitants of the area with interests in fishing and shooting which bring him to distant lakes, far-away forests and abandoned settlements; at the same time the involvement in environmental causes of his wife, a textile artist, helps sharpen his awareness of environmental change and destruction. Joining with Mia a commune at the abandoned settlement of Stjärnberg, Annie Raft experiences the landscape and demanding living conditions in the vicinity of the high mountains, several hours' walk from Blackwater, before moving down to the bigger village of Byvången and sharing with her students some of her critique of late-capitalist western civilisation.

Reviewing *Blackwater* in the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter*, Birgit

Munkhammar argued that in light of the three focalisers, the novel might just as well have been three separate ones; indeed, she structured the major part of her review as if this had been the case (Munkhammar 1993). I have disagreed with this claim before, arguing that the *combination* of these separately focalised sequences is crucial (Forsås-Scott 2002: 414–415). But rather than limiting the implications of this combination to what I now think is a somewhat simplistic understanding of relations of gender in my earlier article, I propose to expand them here by shifting the emphasis to narration, the reader, memory, and the postcolonial and ecocritical implications of the construction of Norrland in *Blackwater*.

Eco has written about the role of what he, perhaps illustratively, terms "specific specialization-indices" in establishing the "Model Reader" of a text, for example the use of specialised terminology (Eco 1984: 7). For the reader to be able to familiarise herself/himself with the setting of Ekman's novel, it is essential that Annie *arrives* on that Midsummer's Eve, that, as she approaches Blackwater with Mia, she encounters the small village and its surroundings for the first time. To begin with, there are similarities here with the situation of Torsson and Malm in Rakisjokk. Neither Annie nor Mia is able to understand what the people at the bus stops are shouting to the driver or to each other: "De for i ett främmande land" (Ekman 1993: 14) ['They were travelling in a foreign country' (Ekman 1996*a*: 10)]. Annie "visste inte att de for uppåt efter ett sjösystem som sträckte sig ända till högfjället i Norge där det rann upp ur myrar och fjällbäckar" (Ekman 1993: 14–15) ['didn't know they were travelling upwards along a system of lakes extending right up to the high mountains in Norway, where it ran out of marshlands and mountain streams' (Ekman 1996*a*: 10)].

In its dialectical relationship with the focalisations of Johan and Birger, Annie's perspective as an outsider helps ease the reader into the closely observed specifics of the Norrland setting of this novel, from the details of the lush flora in the summer light and the way of life in the commune at Stjärnberg, to the isolation in the darkness of winter and the cold that threatens to freeze the fluid in the eyes of the skier. In other words, the combination of different focalisations makes this Norrland accessible to the reader while simultaneously involving her/him in the construction of it. At the same time the different focalisations are fundamental to the sender of this open fabula being able to lead "the addressee step by step to a state of pluriprobability" (Eco 1984: 34).

In Part I of *Blackwater* the sections focalised by Annie predominate, extending to just over 40 per cent of the text, while those focalised by Johan and Birger respectively amount to just under 30 per cent each (Wendelius 1999: 43). But there is more to the sections focalised by Annie than their

role in involving the reader in the construction of this Norrland. With the exception of the opening pages, the sections focalised by Annie in Part I are analepses. While Johan's and Birger's sections are set in the present of the Midsummer's Eve and its aftermath, Annie's sections are looking back from a point 18 years into the future, constructing her *memories* of events. There are references to the notebooks on which she is relying on the very first page of the account of her journey with Mia from Östersund on Midsummer's Eve: "Det stod ingenting om resan i hennes anteckningsböcker för de fanns inte än" (Ekman 1993: 13) ['There was nothing about their journey in her notebooks, because they hadn't existed then' (Ekman 1996*a*: 9)]. There are a few further references to Annie's notebooks, along with occasional reminders that she is looking back, such as "Birger *som hon då inte visste namnet på*" (Ekman 1993: 82; my italics) ['Birger, *whose name she did not know then*' (Ekman 1996*a*: 76; my italics)].

In Mieke Bal's analysis of narrative, memory is a special case of focalisation and often amounts to a narrative act: "loose elements come to cohere into a story, so that they can be remembered and eventually told" (Bal 1999: 147). As constructed in Ekman's novel, Blackwater and the surrounding area are studded with the remains of human habitation and references to characters who once lived there, such as Anton Jonssa who used to herd the horses on their summer grazing and whose name still denotes a path. Annie takes a special interest in some documents that provide fragments of the story about those who lived permanently at Stjärnberg just a few decades previously. In due course she teaches her students, fearful of a nuclear apocalypse, how to remember essential information by storing it, on the classical model, at stops along a specific route; and when Annie, 18 years after that Midsummer's Eve, has gone out into the forest to solve the mystery of the double murders, she must have taken, in the view of her partner Birger, "Minnets väg" (Ekman 1993: 434) ('the Path of Memory').[3] And this, he points out, could not possibly have taken her to Stjärnberg, for here the clear-felling has transformed the landscape:

> Alla stigar är utplånade. Där finns inga hållpunkter för minnet. Det är en kalyta som blev en tundra. Det växer knappt. Det är för frostlänt, för utsatt. Nej, där är allt minne utplånat. (Ekman 1993: 434.)
>
> ['All the paths have been obliterated. There aren't any fixed points for the memory. It's a clear-felled area that became tundra. Hardly anything grows there. It's too exposed to frosts. No, all memory has been wiped out there.' (Ekman 1996*a*: 412.)]

Bal has made an important distinction between mastering, "looking from above, dividing up and controlling," and mapping, which amounts to "[g]oing back—in retroversion—to the time in which the place was a different kind of space" and a way of "countering the effects of colonizing acts of focalization" (Bal 1999: 147). In my earlier article I illustrated "mastering" with the attempt by the police to survey and control the area around the site of the double murders (Forsås-Scott 2002: 416–418). But in light of the ecocritical dimensions of Ekman's novel, the efforts of the police are just one version of a much bigger process of mastering, which has resulted in the obliteration of memory on the newly-formed tundra commonly referred to as "Ytan," "the Area," and which in turn is only one of a growing number of huge clear-fellings.

The "Area," however, has further implications. When Annie and Mia hear someone running up the forest path that Midsummer's Eve, Annie catches a glimpse of a dark young man with straight black hair. Associating him with the double murders she discovers soon afterwards, she categorises him as "en utlänning" (Ekman 1993: 83) ['a foreigner' (Ekman 1996*a*: 78)] and—without daring to state her suspicion openly "för det var så infekterat" (Ekman 1993: 83) ['because that was so poisoned' (Ekman 1996*a*: 78)]—a Vietnamese. While well informed of the Vietnam War and its resonances in Sweden, Annie is new to Blackwater and ignorant of the Sami. Johan, the character Anne and Mia have seen running up the path, is half Sami, and on one of the final pages of the novel Gudrun, his mother, underlines to him that her language, Southern Sami, is spoken by only a few hundred people and that she herself was banned from using it at school: "Vi fick prata samiska på dass vi. [...] När jag gick på skolan fick man skämmas för att man var lapp som för ohyra eller tbc" (Ekman 1993: 458) ['We had to go into the privy to speak our own language. [...] When I went to school, they made you ashamed of being a Lapp, like having vermin or tuberculosis' (Ekman 1996*a*: 434–435)].

One form of ecological imperialism, according to Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, is "environmental racism" which they define, quoting the American environmental philosopher Deane Curtin, as "the connection, in theory and practice, of race and the environment so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other" (quoted in Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 4). Environmental racism, say Huggan and Tiffin,

> is perhaps best understood as a sociological phenomenon, exemplified in the environmentally discriminatory treatment of socially marginalised or economically disadvantaged peoples, and in the transference

> of ecological problems from their "home" source to a "foreign" outlet (whether *discursively*, e.g. through the more or less wholly imagined perception of other people's "dirty habits", or *materially*, e.g. through the actual re-routing of First World commercial waste). (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 4; italics original.)

In Ekman's novel the colonial policies that have helped marginalise the Southern Sami are effectively applied to all the inhabitants of this peripheral part of Sweden. Significantly it is Gudrun who underlines the parallels between them all, irrespective of ethnicity. When Johan argues that those trying to survive in this part of Norrland are not all involved in the environmental destruction caused by industrialised forestry, she contradicts him:

> – Dom försöker väl så gott dom kan, sa han. Hålla sig kvar. Som alla som bor här. Det är väl inget [*sic*] skillnad på samerna och dom andra i det avseendet. [...] Dom försöker leva nån sorts liv som hänger ihop med det som var förr. Och dom flesta vill minnas. Alla kan inte bygga vägar åt bolaget. Alla är inte med och förvandlar det här till Ytan.
> – Jo. (Ekman 1993: 459.)
>
> ['I suppose they do the best they can,' he said. 'Hanging on. Like everyone living here. There's no difference between the Sami and the others in that respect. [...] They try to live a life that somehow connects to the past. And most of them want to remember. Not everyone can build roads for the company. Not everyone is involved in turning this into the Area.'
> 'Yes, they are.' (Ekman 1996*a*: 435–436.)]

The narrative of Ekman's novel involves the reader in a dialogical process of construction, based on differing focalisations and requiring extensive interpretation. The lines quoted above are followed, on the subsequent page, by a short passage about the turning of the forest into "the Area" that is addressed to a "du," "you":

> Hata dig. Vet vad du gjorde, vad du har varit med om. Det var brådskan, ingenting annat. Den stora brådskan. Alla fick så bråttt mot döden.
> Stigar går och försvinner som vägar, som skogar. Men att det gick så fort var fatalt. Nu har du bara närvaro och ett hungerhål. (Ekman 1993: 460.)
>
> ['Hate yourself.[4] Know what you did, what you took part in. It was the haste, nothing else. The great haste. Everyone was in such a hurry, hurrying towards death.
> Paths run and disappear like roads, like forests. But it was fatal that it all went so quickly. Now you have only the presence and a hole of hunger.' (Ekman 1996a: 437.)]

Whose words are these? Are they spoken aloud? Who is the "you" to whom they are addressed? The second-person address clearly sharpens the environmental critique, but the specific interpretation is left to the reader. The interpreter's role is demanding and the result can be wholly wrong, as turns out to be the case with Annie's assumption about the identity of the double murderer. But in *Blackwater* the active role of the reader emerges as a key democratic strategy, a means of beginning to create alternatives to the power structures that have resulted in colonialism and environmental racism, and that are now resulting in the irreparable destruction of the forest.

The Dog and *The Forest of Hours*

Rövarna i Skuleskogen (1988) (*The Forest of Hours*) constructs a Norrland quite unlike that of *Blackwater* and with implications that are also very different, most importantly because the main setting is the Forest of Skule and the central character a troll. *The Forest of Hours* can usefully be approached in light of the notion of "centring on the peripheries" outlined by Cairns Craig, as "the opportunity of the periphery to construct an alternative kind of history, a different kind of map of the ways in which the past has been shaped, and therefore of the ways in which the future might be shaped" (Craig 2007: 32). While the concepts of mastering and mapping are relevant for a reading of this novel too, we encounter them in terms very different from those relevant to *Blackwater*.

Ekman has highlighted the relationship between *The Forest of Hours* and *Hunden* (*The Dog*), the novella published just two years earlier, referring to the latter as "mycket ett språkligt arbete; man kan ju inte skriva inifrån en hund som inte har ord, men jag ville försöka beskriva sinnliga upplevelser utan symboler och liknelser" (Gullberg 1990: 50) ['very much a language project; of course you cannot write from inside a dog who lacks words, but I wanted to try to describe experiences pertaining to the senses without symbols and similes']. The story of the puppy who gets lost and survives the winter in the forest (a setting that has nothing in common with the metropolitan environment of Virginia Woolf's *Flush* [1933] although the *The Dog* clearly has affinities with Woolf's "biography"), may be told from the dog's perspective but culminates in his reunion with human beings. As Petra Broomans has put it, "Människorna fanns alltså hela tiden på andra sidan gränsen och de fick bara vänta. Människans språk hade egentligen aldrig slutat" (Broomans 2002: 410) ['In other words, the human beings were on the other side of the boundary all the time, just waiting. Human language had in fact been there all the time.'] The narrative of *The Forest of Hours* develops a more radical approach, tackling head-on the implications of the fact that the western definition of humanity, as Val Plumwood has empha-

sised, is dependent on the presence of the "not-human": the uncivilised, the animal and animalistic (quoted in Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 5).

When Skord, the troll, is spotted on the opening page of *The Forest of Hours* by a giant stuck under a fallen tree, he is no more than the glint of an eye among the greenery and the glimpse of a hand with fingers so similar to peeled birch roots that the giant is not sure if he might be seeing a bunch of roots after all. Skord at this point is "mager och jämförelsevis okunnig och utan baktankar, ja, utan tankar alls. Det var inte mycket mer under hårtovan än ett fladdrande som av lavskrikans vingar" (Ekman 1988: 10) ['a scrawny little troll, unknowing and guileless, and not much given to thinking at all. There was little more than fluttering, like the wings of [Siberian] jays, going on under that tussock of hair' (Ekman 1998: 4)]. But as he learns to speak and, in due course, learns several languages, Skord becomes more like a human being, his identity morphing throughout his long lifespan from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Yet he retains his affinity with the forest, not just because he repeatedly returns there but also because he is able to communicate with animals and, as a shapeshifter, able to enter the body of a crow or a stoat. With this liminal character of the forest at the centre, the plot of Ekman's novel can explore the notions of mapping and mastering in terms that are far more comprehensive and radical than those in *Blackwater*, developing an alternative map of the past—and perhaps also "of the ways in which the future might be shaped" (Craig 2007: 32).

Skord learns about representation and language by observing Bodel, the beggar girl he encounters with her brother Erker on the paths near the Forest of Skule. Using a needle and thread Bodel is able to write, illustrating in the process the distinction between signifier and signified:

> Hon skrev blommorna utanför stugan en och en så att de inte framstod bara som en tovig, starkt doftande fäll av koätbara gräs med nickande blomst i topparna. Hon skrev dem med lingarn som hon tvinnade dubbelt sedan hon färgat det med björklöv, renlav eller aspbark. Hon skrev dem inte som de stod där, inte så att de hade kunnat tas från linnelappen och sättas tillbaka i grässvålen, utan hon gjorde tecken för dem. (Ekman 1988: 106.)
>
> ['She wrote down the flowers outside the house, one by one. This way, flowers became more than just tufts of sweet-smelling stuff, nodding in the wind above a mat of cow grass. She wrote them using linen yarns, spun with double threads which had been dyed with birch leaves, reindeer lichen or the bark of aspens. She did not write them as they were. They could not have been taken from the linen clout and put back into the grass. She turned them into signs.' (Ekman 1998: 116.)]

However, representation and the telling of stories also amount to the exercise of power. When Bodel uses sticks, stones and spruce cones to make a miniature version of a small village, Skord's threat to drop a handful of stones on the farm where Erker has been maltreated turns not just into the destruction of Bodel's village but into the devastation, by fire, of the village itself. Far bolder and more elaborate as a linguistic experiment than *The Dog*, the narrative of *The Forest of Hours* is a balancing act between the categorisations and ordering necessary for the telling of stories on the one hand and the problematisation and, indeed, critique of categorisations and ordering on the other. Prominently meta-textual and with a central character whose language changes markedly over the centuries—and necessitates a glossary covering words in Ångermanland dialect, Latin, German and French (the English translation has a glossary of Scots words in addition to the Notes)—*The Forest of Hours*, like *Blackwater*, makes extensive demands on its reader. While the novel about Skord has a third-person narrator, the omniscience of this narrator is modest, with the perspectives of the liminal central character foregrounded throughout.

The troll of the forest and the Forest of Skule, then, become central to the plot of Ekman's novel, but what, more precisely, are they associated with? Constructed from the troll's perspective, the forest is a chaos: "i skogen levde man i ett grönt virrvarr, i svarta kärrhål, i rasslande lövkronor, i hål och skrevor, i mossa som gav efter under foten och i gungande risbrötar" (Ekman 1988: 25) ['forest life went on in a green wilderness of rustling leafy canopies, in black bog pools, in holes and clefts, and over mossy surfaces that gave way under foot and crumbling piles of dry branches' (Ekman 1998: 22)]. The forest also has a timescale of its own:

> Skogen är genomdragen av tid. Klapperstensfälten har stelnat i stenvågor, i långa bränningar av frusen tid. I myren har den susande skogen sjunkit och varje myrråk brygger jäsande tid. (Ekman 1988: 276.)
>
> ['Strands of time run through the forest. The high fields of scree are solidified waves of stone, long swells of unmoving time. Tall trees, once whispering in the wind, have sunk into the peat bogs, where time ferments in the marshy pools.' (Ekman 1998: 310.)]

In due course Skord leaves the forest, but not before he has been part of a band of robbers; subsequently he returns to these characters—or, rather, their successors several generations into the future. The robbers are characterised by a liminality akin to that of Skord, spending the winters "som orrar nergrävda i snö" (Ekman 1988: 97) ['dug [...] into the snow like black grouse' (Ekman 1998: 105)]; and in a sense they, too, reflect the timescale of the for-

est as the names, years and places of burial of their leaders, unlike those of the kings of Sweden, are left unrecorded and quickly forgotten. Only those able to put together a story about themselves and find a listener may have a chance of establishing an identity for themselves—to the extent that a story is a criterion of identity in a context in which the very notion is so radically problematised:

> Vem var Baldesjor utan sin berättelse? En räcka rapningar och snarkningar? En loppbiten och svullen kropp under grova fällar? En skrovlig röst, en hand som stack med spjut och stötte med dolk. Ett örsprång, ett evigt pissande, ett slyngknippe av hungrigt mullrande tarmar. Var det något mer? Och vem kunde svara på det? (Ekman 1988: 131.)
>
> ['Who was Baldesjor without his story? Just a string of belches and grunts? A flea-bitten, bloated body under the coarse covers? A rough voice, a hand that threw spears and stabbed with dirks. A sore ear, someone who pissed regularly, a snake's nest of hungrily rumbling gut. Was there more to him than that? Who could answer?' (Ekman 1998: 144.)]

With the Forest of Skule a recurring location in the plot of the novel, the narrative structure helps reinforce that reversal of centre and periphery in which the character of Skord plays the key role.

The Forest of Skule with its very different perspectives on place, time and identity provides not just the starting-point but also the point of reference as the plot traces the development of western civilisation over 500 years. With the emphasis on humankind's efforts to penetrate, interpret and, indeed, imitate aspects of the natural world, including the universe, the narrative takes the reader from the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, with Skord serving as the famulus of a priest, via an alchemist's efforts to make gold in sixteenth-century Uppsala with Skord as his assistant, and on to the Thirty Years' War in which Kristiern Scordius appears as a barber-surgeon on the Catholic side. Having been captured by the Swedes and incarcerated in Finland, he re-emerges as physician to His Lordship in Gustavia in the West Indies, briefly a Swedish colony in the late eighteenth century, and by the nineteenth century Kristiern Schordenius is a mesmerist practising in Stockholm. Ekman's picaresque novel—whose central character is perhaps a trickster responsible for generating the plot—opens up several opportunities for Skord to get back to the Forest of Skule, but it is thanks to his role as a mesmerist and the commission to treat Xenia, lost in the forest for 12 years, that he returns for good.

What, then, is the effect of the juxtapositions, throughout Ekman's novel, of central aspects of the development of western civilisation and the forest? When, in the opening section, Bodel tells Skord about the world, she

introduces him to categories, order and hierarchies. At the bottom are the people tilling the earth, above them is the foreman, and above him not the best riding horses, as Skord assumes, but Her Ladyship, the Master, the Bishop, the Pope in Rome and, finally, God in Heaven. Animals, Bodel explains to Skord, do not count because they lack souls; indeed, "[i]ngenting som han sett i skogen räknades som kunskap" (Ekman 1988: 27) ['[n]othing Skord had seen in the forest counted as knowledge' (Ekman 1998: 24)]. The categorisations and ordering of this world gradually become more detailed and more rigid, as illustrated by the section on the efforts in the sixteenth century to make gold and the quest for the Philosophers' Stone, with the separation of the human world and the natural one finalised by Descartes. Invited to Stockholm by Queen Christina, the French philosopher died there in 1650. In Ekman's novel Skord is introduced to his thinking by the scribe who has been copying Descartes's notes, and in addition to the division of the human being into body and soul, Moshe Feigenbaum highlights the role of the Cartesian "Method"—"de som förstod att använda sig av den skulle få en sådan makt över tingen att de höjde eller sänkte sig, upplöstes eller blandades på hans befallning" (Ekman 1988: 322) ['those who understood how to use it would have such power over matter that on command things would rise and fall, dissolve or mix' (Ekman 1998: 364)]—and of the consequent reductionist perspectives on animals, who

> rör sig efter de lagar Den Högste stiftat för dem. De är tappar, kuggar, hjul och leder i hans stora Machine och de går runt i den Carousselle som han för evigt har satt dem i. De äter, de parar sig och de föder avkomma som äter och parar sig. (Ekman 1988: 323–324.)
>
> ['go about their lives according to the laws the Highest Being has designed for them. They are tappets, cogs, wheels and joints in His great Machine, and they rotate for ever in the Carousels in which he has placed them. They eat, mate and give birth to offspring which eat and mate.' (Ekman 1998: 366.)]

However, when Skord meets Xenia it is animals and plants that not only provide the metaphors for their relationship but embed their love in a context that explodes any boundaries between nature and culture. Ironically it is Skord, using his old taroc, who has been teaching Xenia about the hierarchies and order she has to learn about in order to function in the world of human beings—"Först föds man, så skriker man. Sen kravlar man, så går man. Ser du, alltid i ordning, ända till slutet." (Ekman 1988: 383) ['First you are born, then you cry. Then you crawl, then you walk.'][5] You see, always the order, all the way to the end.' (Ekman 1998: 430)]—and it is her reading of novels that has provided her with a model for understanding hu-

man existence: "Det ena kom först, det andra kom sedan – som i en roman' (Ekman 1988: 376) ['One thing came first and then came another—as in a novel' (Ekman 1998: 421)]. But in Ekman's narrative, inevitably dependent on the demands of story-telling yet consistently pointing up the effects of human systems of order and hierarchisation, the union of Xenia and Skord dissolves all boundaries:

> Xenia älskar Skord som tornsvalan älskar luften hon dyker i. Tornsvalan vet att hon inte ska röra vid marken mer, inte så länge hon lever. Skord älskar Xenia som laxen hoppar i forsen. Högre, mycket högre än han behöver hoppar han. Starkare språng tar han än det som skulle räcka till för att föra honom opp på forsnacken. Xenia och Skord älskar varandra som rosling och björnmossa flätar sig in i varandra—för intet öga, i ingen avsikt och till intet ändamål flätar sig in i varandra. (Ekman 1988: 392.)
>
> ['Xenia loves Skord in the same way the swift loves the air she plunges into. The swift knows she will not touch the ground again, not for as long as she lives. Skord loves Xenia the way the salmon leaps in the waterfall. He leaps higher, much higher than he needs to. [He leaps more powerfully than he would need to reach the top of the fall.][6] Xenia and Skord love each other the way bog rosemary and bear moss intertwine—not for show, not for a purpose nor with intent.' (Ekman 1998: 441.)]

The representation of the area of Norrland at the centre of Ekman's novel, the Forest of Skule, helps raise fundamental questions about the prevailing western understanding of the world viewed from an historical perspective, ranging from the definition of time to categorisations such as subject and object, nature and culture. The novel that has a troll from the forest as its central character does not only problematise identity, power and hierarchy but also spells out the effects of these constructs over the centuries. The result is a critique of western civilisation that is as far-reaching as it is imaginative.

The Wolfskin

When *Skraplotter* ['Scratch Cards'], the final volume in Ekman's trilogy *Vargskinnet* ['The Wolfskin'], was awarded the August Prize for fiction in 2003, the Prize Committee pinpointed the lottery scratch card as "sinnebilden för ett utarmat Sverige av i dag, sett ur marginalens perspektiv med snabbt avfolkade landskap, kyrkor och konsumbutiker" (Anon. 2003) ['the image of an impoverished Sweden of today, seen from the margin with rapidly depopulated provinces, churches and co-op shops']. The notion of an "impoverished" Sweden "seen from the margin" is an unmistakable example of a perspective from the centre. However, it is also grounded in aspects of the plot not just of *Scratch Cards* but of the entire trilogy.

Set in a part of Norrland that, geographically, has much in common with that of *Blackwater*, the plot of *The Wolfskin* covers virtually the whole of the twentieth century. The perspective from the centre has been established by ministers of the State Lutheran Church who arrived from the south in the nineteenth century and wrote accounts of their sparsely populated parishes reaching right up to the high mountains on the border with Norway. The perspective from the centre is reinforced by the young midwife who is engaged to the incoming minister and who, in the opening pages of the first volume, *Guds barmhärtighet* (*God's Mercy*), arrives to take up her post in Röbäck in March 1916. As the plot expands to include extended parts set in Norway (in addition to Germany, Italy, Scotland and India), the perspective from the centre is most powerfully—and violently—exemplified by the Second World War and the German occupation of Norway with its categorisations of people, its refugees, and also its implications for the Sami who can no longer bring their flocks to the areas high in the mountains where the reindeer give birth to their calves.

However, mastering in the form of the perspective from the centre is also apparent as Ingefrid, on the opening page of *Scratch Cards*, sees Blackwater for the first time on a November afternoon in the 1990s:

> Byn vintersov i snön. I orörligheten steg rök ur skorstenen på ett vitt hus. Därinne skymtade ett gammalt par, två skuggor som ljuset snart skulle lysa igenom. Fönstret bakom dem vette ut mot en stor isbelagd sjö.
> Nedanför förstubron låg granris att torka fötterna på. I en björk var en fläsksvål fastspikad åt talgoxarna. Det satt en virkad gardinkappa i fönstret mot vägen.
> Allting var så smått. Kunde det vara hela människoliv? (Ekman 2003: 5.)
>
> ['The village was asleep for the winter in the snow. Nothing moved but the smoke rising from the chimney on a white house. Inside an old couple could be seen, two shadows that the light would soon penetrate. The window behind them faced a big ice-covered lake.
> Below the front steps were branches of spruce for wiping one's feet. A piece of bacon rind for the great tits had been nailed to a birch. There was a crocheted curtain along the top of the window towards the road.
> Everything was so small. Could these be entire human lives?']

Ingefrid, a minister, has arrived from Stockholm to claim her inheritance including sections of forest defined, through another process of mastering, in terms of place-names and numbers such as Blackwater 1:2, 1:17, 1:24 and 25. More importantly, she wants to trace her biological parents. This process, central to the plot of the last volume of the trilogy, also completes the elaborate mapping that deconstructs the prominent elements of mastering in *The Wolfskin*.

We have traced the changing focalisations and their significance in *Blackwater* and seen how, in *The Forest of Hours*, Skord's liminal characteristics and shifting identities similarly help foreground focalisation. As in *Blackwater*, the reader of *The Wolfskin* is challenged by the narrative's changing focalisations, but in the trilogy there are more of these in a narrative spanning over a considerably longer period of time. With the plot revolving around three generations of women in addition to a male artist, the reader, as in *Blackwater*, is introduced to the location by a female character arriving for the first time. The young midwife, Hillevi Klarin, is a meticulous observer and more diligent than Annie Raft as she begins to document the new setting of her life during the long journey from Östersund to Röbäck, the third-person narrative detailing her notes on dialect words and terminology, the shooting of a she-wolf, and the recipe for a local treat made of potatoes, barley meal, diced pork and soft whey cheese. With her copious notebooks, initially journals detailing her work as a midwife, Hillevi who gets married to Trond Halvorsen, in due course a shop-keeper and key figure in the community, plays a central role in much of the trilogy.

But the opening pages of the first novel in the series are narrated in the first person by another character, Kristin or Risten, who recalls meeting, at the age of six, her maternal uncle who spoke to her in Sami, the native language that she has forgotten but begins to recall as he sings to her. As Hillevi's and Trond's foster daughter, Risten knows not to tell them about the encounter with Laula Anut; but her first-person narration, told from a chronological point towards the end of the trilogy's timespan and characterised by her part-Sami origin and observations of Sami life gathered during her marriage to a reindeer-herding Sami, is in sharp contrast to the sections focalised by Hillevi. Risten's memories highlight the pressures of a nomadic life initially alien to her, including her worries about giving birth and bringing up two small children, but she also recalls the freedom of moving with the reindeer in the mountains and summer nights with her husband in their hut: "Jag behöver bara tänka på lukten av färskt krossat björklöv och hur Nila kom till mig om natten. Om sådant ska jag inte berätta" (Ekman 2002: 84) ['I only need to think of the scent of fresh crushed birch leaves and of how Nila came to me at night. I won't tell of these things']. Risten's nomadic life is brought to a sudden end by the death of her husband in an accident that takes places shortly after the war yet is directly related to it, but involved as she is with her sons and, in due course, her grandchildren and great-grandchild, this character—who also keeps a few sheep—maintains an affinity with nature not to be found in the character of her foster mother, Hillevi.

The role of the reader and the prominence of meta-textuality in the trilogy are both reinforced by the key part played by the character who is an

artist. At one level the artist who began by drawing and painting animals, especially horses, before switching to working in glass and achieving international fame for solid blocks incorporating the outlines of small babies, can be read as a rebellious migrant along the lines spelled out by Edward Said, who has argued that "liberation as an intellectual mission"

> has shifted to the unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. (Said 1994: 403.)

However, the artist in *The Wolfskin* who speaks several languages ranging from his native Jämtland dialect to Norwegian *trøndersk*, *bokmål* and *rikssvenska*, and who sometimes calls himself Elias Elv but uses other names too, is also a liminal character with affinities with Skord in *The Forest of Hours*. Having had to flee from home as a young boy and frequently starving while avoiding people, he sometimes felt that "han inte hade det stort annorlunda än en räv" (Ekman 1999: 124) ['he was more like a fox' (Ekman 2009: 118)]; and it is Elias, frequently accompanied by a dog, who stuns Ingefrid with his claim that "[e]tt liv utan djuren är ett gudlöst liv" (Ekman 2003: 251) ['life without animals is life without God'].

When, after many years and much hesitation, Elias Elv returns to Blackwater, it is "[f]ör att få *se*. Denna nåd som är mig kärare än livet" (Ekman 2002: 101; italics original) ['to be allowed to *see*. This grace that is dearer to me than life']. Ingefrid is not just a new arrival whose observations help measure some of the changes that have taken place since Hillevi first travelled to Röbäck more than 80 years previously: her search for God, for new versions of the pivotal religious experience she had while listening to Bach's St John Passion in Engelbrektskyrkan in Stockholm in 1967, is also bound up with seeing, with what she refers to as "en ljusvidgning" (Ekman 2003: 131) ['an expansion of light'].

In *The Wolfskin* animals are important to Risten and Elias, and they become so to Ingefrid too when she is left to look after Risten's sheep during lambing. Watching the first ewe in labour Ingefrid finds her body moving in unison, "en kroppens inlevelse som hon förut bara hade känt med Anand" (Ekman 2003: 251) ['a physical involvement of a kind she had previously only experienced with Anand'], and when the lambs have been born and are feeding contentedly, Ingefrid's sense of happiness is as much about them as about the fact that the son she has adopted from India has settled in his new school.

Children, and especially very young children, are prominent in *The Wolfskin* as the ecocriticism of *Blackwater* and the cultural criticism of *The*

Forest of Hours combine with an "ethics of care" akin to that defined—albeit from an explicitly materialist position—by Rosi Braidotti. Having introduced the notion of the "nomadic subject" as a "political fiction, that allows me to think through and move across established categories and levels of experience" (Braidotti 1994: 4),[7] Braidotti, writing about the ethics of care, has argued that the necessary "interconnectedness" is "best served by a nomadic, non-unitary vision of the subject which has dissolved the boundaries of bourgeois individualism and redefined itself as a collective, multi-layered yet singular entity" (Braidotti 2007: 119). The unreported murder of a baby just delivered by Hillevi shortly after her arrival in Röbäck continues to haunt her and her family. Elias Elv finds a young baby abandoned and, recalling the earlier incident with the baby delivered by the new midwife, struggles to find a woman able to breastfeed it. Risten is taken from her young mother in an attempt to spare her from growing up in poverty on the margins of society. Conceived out of wedlock in the mid-1940s by Hillevi's daughter Myrten and placed with foster parents when only a few days old, Ingefrid is another abandoned child; and the same is true of her adopted son. It is, Ingefrid tells Birger, the GP who has been brought from *Blackwater* into *The Wolfskin*, "människor som behöver våra gärningar, inte Gud" (Ekman 2003: 313) ['our fellow human beings who need our deeds, not God']; and the needs of children epitomise this ethics of care:

> Man ska inte tysta barnet med ett slag på munnen när det vill sjunga. Man ska inte straffa det och stänga in det i ett mörkt rum utan öppning, för att det inte förstår vår världsbild. (Ekman 2003: 365.)
>
> ['No child should be silenced by being hit on the mouth when she or he wants to sing. No child should be punished and shut into a dark room that has no opening because he or she does not understand our concept of the world.']

Anand is a child in search of means of expressing himself and his interpretation the world, his creative vision inspired by Elias's collection of many-coloured shards of glass. And when Ingefrid's faith is shaken by an accident that comes close to claiming Anand's life, she thinks of the surviving part of her faith as "den barnsliga delen" ['the childish part'], indeed as "barnet som jag omsluter" ['the child I'm enveloping'] (Ekman 2003: 364). In this trilogy where boundaries of all kinds are not just called into question but torn down, the forest at night with its wild animals that used to frighten Ingefrid helps change her perspective: "Ögonen är tvättade i det klaraste vatten. Jag är där jag hör hemma" (Ekman 2003: 369) ['My eyes have been cleansed in the clearest of waters. I am where I belong']. Emerging as arguably the most

conspicuous example of this narrative's instances of "a nomadic, non-unitary vision of the subject" redefined as "a collective, multi-layered yet singular entity" (Braidotti 2007: 119), Ingefrid decides to remain: appointed to the long vacant post as minister in Röbäck, she stays with Anand, Birger, Risten and Elias Elv who is her father and whose real name is Elis Eriksson.

Conclusion

"Vi har möjligheter i oss till en annan sorts samhällen än dem vi skapat" ['We have within us the potential for societies quite different from those we've created'], Kerstin Ekman once pointed out in an interview (Bolinder 1988: 11). She was referring to her tetralogy 'The Women and the City' and the expectations for Katrineholm as it was developing from a railway station into a town. But the notion of the potential for different societies is, if anything, even more relevant to the boldly original exploratory projects launched by the plots of her novels set in Norrland, which constitute the main part of what is arguably the most important *œuvre* in contemporary Swedish literature. The representations of Norrland in these novels, based on close observations and in-depth knowledge, are conveyed with narrative skills recalling Walter Benjamin's words (as he alludes to a quotation from Paul Valéry) about the "old co-ordination of the soul, the eye, and the hand" being "that of the artisan which we encounter wherever the art of storytelling is at home" (Benjamin 1973: 108). Ekman's texts engage us in absorbing stories and challenging processes of interpretation, ensuring that conventional categories are demolished along with traditional boundaries as these Norrland novels insistently raise fundamental issues about our civilisation, its power structures and their consequences for all living beings, and alert us to the potential of radically different perspectives and new approaches.

NOTES

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

[2] I am grateful to Norvik Press, London, for permission to re-use some of the material in my article on *Blackwater* published in O*n the Threshold* (2002).

[3] Joan Tate's translation "Memory Lane" trivialises the concept.

[4] Tate's translation, "Hate you", fails to convey the meaning of the Swedish.

[5] Sentence missing from the published translation.

[6] Sentence missing from the published translation.

[7] In "Narratives from the Margin? Welfare and Well-being in Kerstin Ekman's *Skraplotter*," *Scandinavica* 2011, 50, 1, pp. 84–95, I have drawn on Braidotti's notion of "nomadic becoming" for an analysis of *Scratch Cards*.

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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 C*onfessions* 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 härsken 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 *Norrbottens-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 unmistakeably '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 gastroskopy 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 1995*a*: 94; Flasch 1995*c*: 260 ff.; Flasch 1995*b*: 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 1995*a*: 48; Flasch 1995*c*: 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 O*rmens 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 unmistakeable 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 biologistic 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 "människan" ['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 "cyklister" ['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 skrina 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 Lappland, he turned out to be related to Lindgren "på mödernet" ['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.); Billicsich 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 självövervinnelsen" ['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 invandrare 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 "Raggsjöliden – 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 Schau-Platz, 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 1997*b*: 53 f.). The other epochal event is the "Erniedrigung zum Austauschbaren, zum bloßen Sein für anderes" (Adorno 1997*b*: 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 1995*a*: 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 irreducable "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 "sylteläsket" ['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" ['imaginations;' 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 metafictional 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 "känslosamhet" ['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 milt" ['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 "oskuldsfull" ['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 amd 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 "ickeexistens" ['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 Lingren'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 Bewusstseinsspiegelungen" (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 œuvre (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, högmodsdrömmar" ['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" ['indecency;' 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], "fårfotssoppa" ['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 "världsfrånvänd" ['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 authory [cf. G 92]. In *Minnen*, he extensively employs the principle of *durée reelle*. 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-disolving 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 1972*b*: 366; Adorno 1997*a*: 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 Burträsks och Vindelns och Skellefteå landsförsamlings socknar" ['the chapelries of the parishes of Norsjö and Lycksele and Malå and Jörn and Burträsk and Vindeln 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 1972*a*: 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'etre" ['a raison d'etre;' G 98] of his entire œuvre 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 dehumanising 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 gastroskopically: 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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ELISABETH HERRMANN

Norrland's Regional Literature as World Literature

Per Olov Enquist's Literary Work

ABSTRACT The work of Per Olov Enquist, one of the most important contemporary Swedish authors, is known far beyond Sweden's and Europe's borders, and thus even received in North America. A great many of his fictional documentary works and dramatic plays, the biographies of poets such Hans Christian Andersen, Selma Lagerlöf, Knut Hamsun, and August Strindberg, as well as the bestselling novels *Lewis Journey*, *The Royal Physician's Visit* and *The Book about Blanche and Marie*, have secured a firm position for this Norrland author in the canon of world literature. The continuous transgression of the borders between historical facts and their fictionalization builds the basic characteristic of Enquist's literature. For Enquist, the goal of writing is to sound out the "innermost space of human existence." He is eager to explore those secrets and ambiguities that underlie certain historical events or individual life stories. How is individual life determined? And how do individuals find their place in the world? In several of his works, the author uses the metaphor of drawing topographical maps to illustrate the search for one's own identity as an attempt to position oneself in the world. Starting from his memory of lying on the kitchen floor as a young boy and drawing maps of his native village Hjoggböle, the area around Bureå, the Västerbotten and Norrland region as well as of his na-

tive country Sweden, Enquist reveals to his readers what it is that he considers literature to be: the compression of real signs into a fictional space which resembles reality, but, at the same time, moves beyond the boundaries of reality. Through an analytical synopsis of those works that use the motif of map-drawing as a central theme and often refer to each other in direct intertextual reference, namely the novel *Captain Nemo's Library*, the essay collection *Kartritarna* ['The cartographers'], and Enquist's biography *Ett annat liv* ['A different life'], this article examines the metaphorical function and poetological meaning that the depiction of the author's own region and home as well as references to his own life story and origin have in Enquist's work.

KEYWORDS Per Olov Enquist, Norrland, Västerbotten, Hjoggböle, regional literature, world literature, regional provenance, identity, cartography and writing as metaphors for the process of self-positioning in the world

Locating Norrland on the World Map

The northern region of Sweden is hardly anchored in the general geographical consciousness of the North American population and Norrland's location, from the North American perspective, is probably most accurately described as 'unexpected geographical proximity and unconscious cultural kinship.' This lack of conscious familiarity may be due to the sparse settlement of Norrland and the consequent lack of easily identifiable city names, or to the fact that the northern reaches of Scandinavia are not tourist destinations typically associated with European travels.

In the age of *Google Maps*, geographical ignorance can be quickly remedied, and from a Canadian perspective, one discovers, with a targeted zooming-in on the space that so far has been marked as a blank area on one's own mental map, that Northern Scandinavia is far less geographically distant than suspected. In fact, the unknown area in the east can almost be seen as a neighbour: as the scope of the lines of latitude lessens notably in the high north and far away from civilization, the continents move closer together. While the North-West Passage creates a geographical link between the northern regions of Europe and America, an array of geological, climatic, and cultural-geographic similarities are identifiable across the boreal regions of the Northern Hemisphere. These commonalities exert comparable influences on the lives of the inhabitants of both continents.

Contrary to the Central European perspective, from a Canadian perspective, the Scandinavian North is not imbued with the legend of a counter-world, born of the fin-de-siècle spirit and invoking a fascination with the alterity of another world, opposed to civilization, representing the exot-

ic, mystic, and primal, and as such, evoking a melancholy desire. The regionally influenced literatures of both nations rather portray as central themes

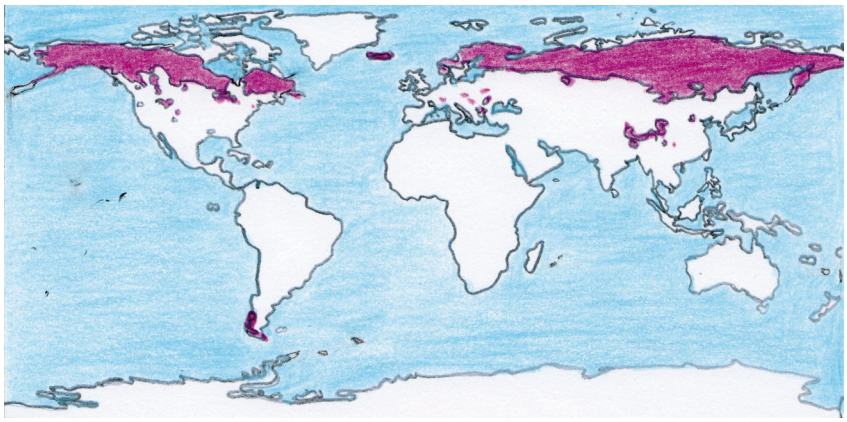

Fig. 1. Boreal region. Drawing: Helena Herrmann.

a consciousness of living on the edge of civilization and experiencing the attending feelings of marginalization, as well as a connection between the extreme climate conditions and the influence that nature and solitude exert on daily life.

The literary work of author Per Olov Enquist, who himself hails from Norrland and is regarded, even in North America, as one of the leading contemporary European writers, provides an ideal opportunity—in place of *Google Maps*—to use literature to zoom in on northern Sweden from a North-American perspective.[1] Doing this, one discovers an unknown landscape that is similar to one's own and allows for close study of both the

Fig. 2. P.O. Enquist. Drawing: Alexander Herrmann.

particularities of living conditions in border spaces, and the dichotomy of centre and periphery.

Enquist's home village of Hjoggböle belongs to Bureå county in the district of Västerbotten. It is located 1000 km north of Stockholm, 100 km north of Umeå, and 20 km south of the city of Skellefteå, deep in the woods and surrounded by the Bureälv river delta. While this location is first mentioned in a documentary fashion in Gustav Vasa's *Jordabok* ['Land book'] in 1543, finds of tools and weapons from the third millennium B.C. point to an earlier site, or as Enquist laconically states: "Byn är urgammal" ['The village is as old as the hills'] (Enquist 2008: 21). At the time of Enquist's childhood, the village had 150 inhabitants (2008: 55). Today, according to the village's website (http://www.hjoggbole.nu/), it comprises approximately 200 houses, or households, and is composed of multiple sections grouped along the shore of the lake. In his autobiography *Ett annat liv* ['A different life'], Enquist describes the location of the village with geographical precision:

> Byn är egentligen flera byar. Byarna omringar en sjö som heter Hjoggböleträsket, den genomströmmas av Bureälven som kommer in från Mjödvattsträsket, sedan tar älven en krok mot norr och öster, via Fahlmarksträsket, Budaträsket, Bursjön och fram mot havet vid Bureå. Runt Hjoggböleträsket ligger byn, som en orm; delarna har olika nam, Östra Hjoggböle, Västra Hjoggböle, Forsen, Sjön, Hjoggböle. (Enquist 2008: 38)
>
> ['The village actually consists of multiple villages. The villages surround a lake, which is called Hjoggböleträsket; it is passed through by the river Bure, which comes in from Mjödvattsträsket, then turns north and east past the Fahlmarksträsk, the Budaträsk, the Bur lake, and finally into the sea at Bureå. The village wraps around the Hjoggböleträsk like a snake; the different sections have different names, East-Hjoggböle, West-Hjoggböle, Forsen, Sjön, Hjoggböle.']

"Sjön," or the lake, is the part of the village where Enquist grew up. Thanks to the exact description, followed by further details strewn throughout the text, regarding the structure and geography of the village and its immediate surroundings, it is easy for the reader to locate the author's place of origin on a map, even without being personally familiar with the area, or ever having visited it.

Regional Provenance as a Literary Point of Departure

Enquist's home, even if not always forming the central point of the plot, provides a point of departure, or reference, in the narrative—not only in his autobiography, but also in the majority of his prose works.[2]

His early novel *Musikanternas uttåg* ['The March of the Musicians'] from the year 1978 belongs to the set of works directly anchored in Västerbotten. Here the author focuses on the political events occurring between 1903 and 1909 involving the agitation and early attempts at organization within the sawmill workers' union in Bureå. Enquist relies on authentic material to process this piece of regional history. He cites records and reports of agitation, and conveys the memories of those involved and the political standpoints prevalent at the time. The reader receives insight into the cultural and social histories of the region through the portrayal of the social democratic agitator Elmblad, who hails from the south of the country and desperately struggles against the prejudice and religiously motivated mentality of subjugation that reign amongst the natives in this "dark land" (Enquist 1978: 72) in the north. As one who himself comes from this region, the author paints portraits of his novels' figures and their mentality with a mixture of identification, sympathy, and critical observation, and discusses the social formation and conditionality of the individual. In order to maintain factuality, while still creating a sense of intimacy, the author incorporates a first-person narrator named Per Olov Enquist, who acts as an analist (chronicler). This character functions simultaneously as a link between the real collective event and the narrative, as well as between the characters in the novel and the real inhabitants of the Västerbotten village Hjoggböle, some of whom are known to the author and whose story he tells.

The naming of a first-person narrator, or chronicler, who is closely connected to the author is a clever narrative move that P.O. Enquist applies in many of his works. It allows, on the one hand, for the technique of processing historical facts via fictional portrayal to become a thematic focus, while at the same time the process of historical and biographical research is evident. Both together build the basis for Enquist's documentary writing (Butt & Herrmann 2008). The author positions himself with respect to the narrative through the narrator, often without evaluating the events from a subjective or judgmental standpoint, sometimes though by broaching the issue of his own subjective engagement directly.

In the 2001 text *Lewis resa* ['Lewi's Journey'], which portrays the founding and expansion of the Christian Pentecostal Church in Sweden, a nameless first-person narrator—who is not difficult to identify as the author of the novel to follow—informs the reader in a 30-page-long "Prologue" about the writing of the book and the sources upon which it is based. Like Enquist at the time the book was written, the narrator lives as a Swede in Denmark and receives, through the estate of a countryman, access to a life chronicle comprising a thousand handwritten pages. With the help of this document he reconstructs the story of the so-called Philadelphia congregation in Sweden and composes a

biography of its two leaders, Lewi Pethrus and Sven Lidman. Although the text is referred to as a novel by Enquist, it actually presents a mixture of historical documentation, biography, and theological essay, and functions at times as a sort of doubtful soliloquy or treatise.

The political agitation and social history of Enquist's native region stand at the centre of *Musikanternas uttåg*, and *Lewis resa* goes one step further by focusing on an important component of the spiritual and mental history of his home, despite the geographical distance assumed by the author and the first-person narrator, and the setting outside of Norrland. *Lewis resa* can indeed be seen as Enquist's most personal tangible and enlightening novel, as it portrays in great detail precisely that religious movement that not only provides the spiritual and social background of events in Enquist's works, but that largely determines his own socialization (Butt & Herrmann 2008). As a critical reprocessing of the joy-negating religiosity of the fundamentalist movement, the novel contains a socio-political and regional historic dimension, as well as an autobiographical one. On the one hand, in addition to the workers' movement, which forms a focal point in *Musikanternas uttåg*, revivalism is portrayed in *Lewis resa* as the second central popular movement out of which Swedish social democracy grew. On the other hand, in that it describes the emergence of Pentecostalism—so influential in northern Sweden—the novel discusses the formation of a collective as well as an individual consciousness. And finally, it is surely no coincidence that the author dedicated this book to his mother, Maja, who is ascribed the role of facilitating figure within this religious movement, not only in Enquist's autobiography, but also under the disguise of the fictional mother-figure Josefina Marklund in the novel *Kapten Nemos bibliotek* ['Captain Nemo's Library']. Religious dogma is exercised by the mother primarily as an educational instrument. *Lewis resa* reads almost like an explanatory commentary or glossary for the catchword "pietism," a concept so central to Enquist's collected works. It helps the reader to understand the spiritual-historical provenance that provided the starting point for Enquist's life, and from which he gradually disengaged himself through writing. The book additionally contains a humorous, almost grotesque self-deprecating dimension with regard to the author's own poetic activity. It exposes the ambition of the two protagonists and religious leaders, Lewi Pethrus and Sven Lidman, to become writers as little more than the drive to relentless self-degradation through the confession of "all emotional refuse" (Enquist 2001: 150)—a common practice in the tradition of Pietism.

Not all of Enquist's novels are situated in Norrland or even in Sweden; rather the author writes himself into the world, locating his plots globally or—if one looks at the biography of the author—often coordinates them with his current personal location. But even when works are located in the USA,

Munich, Berlin, Moscow, Copenhagen, or Paris, "literary landscapes" emerge, as Carola Wiemers (2009) has determined, which always refer back to the place of origin and childhood of the author, be it through autobiographical cross-referencing or intertextual reference, direct citations between texts, or via the protagonists or the narrator figure in the works. In the Enquist corpus, the life story of the author continually appears as both the transparent inscription of a palimpsest in the form of thematic parallels or allusions, or as repetitive motifs without these being expressly put forward as themes. With the natural exception of autobiography this is true throughout the many genres and different thematic foci of the corpus, which include the investigation of 'the requirements of love,' (*Nedstörtad ängel* ['Downfall. A Love Story'], *Liknelseboken* ['The parable book']) 'the borders of personhood' (*Nedstörtad ängel*, *I ljodurets timma* ['The Hour of the Lynx']), or psychological illnesses (*I ljodurets timma*, *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*) as well as the portrayal of historical personalities (*Livläkarens besök* ['The royal physician's visit'], *Boken om Blanche och Marie* ['The Book About Blanche and Marie']) or the fictionalization of political or historical events (*Hess* ['Hess'], *Legionärerna. En bok om baltutlämningen* ['Legionnaires. A book about the rendition of the Baltic people'], *Sekonden* ['The second'], *Katedralen i München* ['Cathedral in Munich'], *Berättelser från de inställda upprorens tid* ['Reports from the times of the given up riot'], *Musikanternas uttåg*, *Kartritarna* ['The cartographers'], *Lewis resa*). Only in the process of a comparative consolidation and fixing of the many puzzle pieces—constantly reforming, but also repeating themselves in kaleidoscope-type patterns—does this autobiographic inscription become legible. This not programmatic, but rather associatively completed voyage into childhood is most notably focused upon in the biographies of other writers, as in *Från regnormarnas liv* ['Rainsnakes'], a play on Hans Christian Andersen, *Bildmakarna* ['The picture makers'], a dramatic representation of the biographic origin of Selma Lagerlöf's novel *Körkarlen* ['The coachman'], and the film manuscript *Strindberg: Ett liv* ['Strindberg. A life']. In these works the famous authors' search for the source of his or her artistic creativity becomes a thematic focus both within the plots and on a metafictional level.

If one takes the observance of the biographical fragments embedded into the works seriously, and regards them in relation to the author's own statement that everything a writer has to share is a certain mode of processing experience (Butt & Herrmann 2008), then one could find here an important key to understanding Enquist's work; a key that points to all writing having a story of origin and a starting point.

In the following, I will further investigate this approach and the distinct starting point of Enquist's writing, which, it is my assertion, is both biographical and geographical. The goal of this investigation is, firstly, to offer clues

to the poetological approach employed in Enquist's work of writing oneself simultaneously forwards and backwards, from and towards the source and origin, and secondly, to inquire as to where and how this particular type of regional literature is located within world literature.

When the Margin Moves to the Centre

In three of his works—the 1991 novel *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, the collection of essays *Kartritarna*, published in the following year, and his 2008 autobiography *Ett annat liv*—Enquist practices, both in terms of motif and narrative strategy, the aforementioned technique of zooming in from a satellite perspective on the smallest geographical detail. He maps his own home in the centre. Beginning in Sweden, the province Norrland, and the district Västerbotten, the focus narrows to the village and finally the house in which the author grew up. "The green house" functions as a magical motif, appearing throughout Enquist's literary corpus and securing, as Enquist himself emphasizes, "den geografiska punkt varifrån hans liv kunde betraktas" ['the geographical point from which his life could be examined'] (Enquist 2008: 7).

It is notable that, in the case of autobiography, the standpoint from

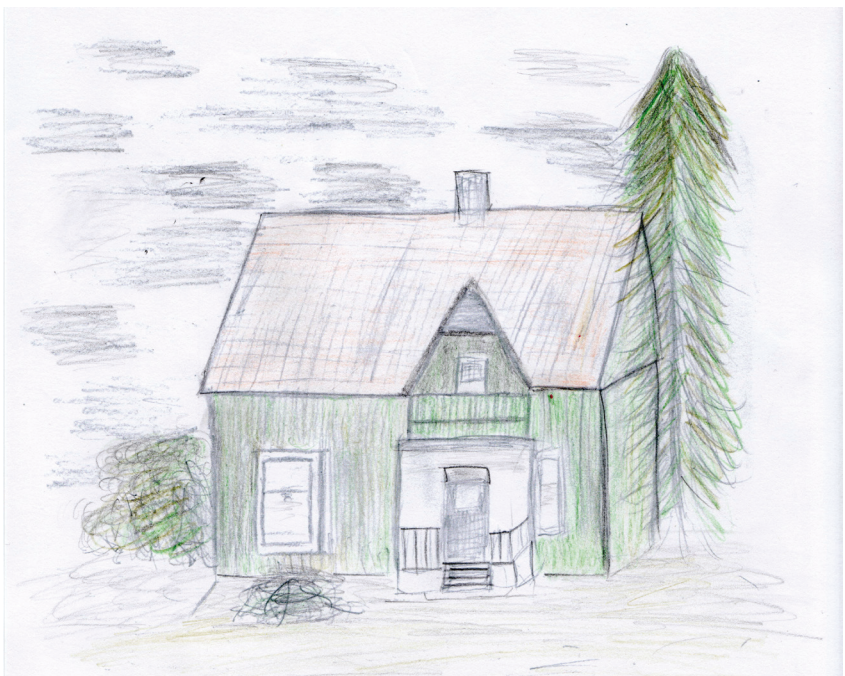

Fig. 3. The Green House. Drawing: Nikolai Herrmann.

which Enquist's own life is retrospectively observed and the starting point for the same, namely his home town, are identical. This fact points to the characteristic distinctiveness of Enquist's writing: the heritage and life story of the author form the epicentre of his work. Recurring symbols, motifs, and chains of motifs that are ingredients for his own biography, such as the missing father, the photo of the corpse, the dead newborn, the face frozen under the surface of the ice, the beloved foster sister, the exchange of the children, the grotto, the cat as "benefactor," and precisely the green house, build a network of reference points, with the help of which stories are constructed and one's own life stories are traced "i form av prickad stig" ['in the form of a dotted path'] (Enquist 2001: 294). The punctiform combination of one's own biography and the fictionalization of this biography create one of the most prominent and exciting characteristics of P.O. Enquist's prose work.

The connection between Enquist's life and work goes so far that Heinrich Detering stated, in his review on the occasion of the release of the German translation of *Ett annat liv*, that the author might now be simply offering a weaker, autobiographical, and limiting repetition of stories that we already know in a richer and more beautiful form (Detering 2009). The concern that the autobiography could emerge as a simple patchwork of "Reprisen" ['reprises'] and "Selbstzitaten" ['self-citations'] (Detering 2009) of major literary creations turns out to be unjustified as the autobiography goes far beyond the author's childhood and describes the transition of a "different life" into "another life" in which the self-loss, alcoholism, depression, and the temptation to commit suicide could be overcome through the healing power of writing about life's painful and formative points. On the other hand, this is the miracle that the protagonist in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek* is hoping for with the minute reconstruction of the tragic events he experienced as a child. It is not only that Enquist's works cite his life, but that his life cites his works. The symbiosis between biography and literary work could not be closer.

His heritage in Norrland, the landscape of Västerbotten, and the area around Skellefteå and Bureå, as well as the Pietist upbringing and the insularity and narrowness of village life are of central meaning here, as the life would not have been the same life if it had begun at a different point. Enquist names the biographical constellation, as well as the regional provenance, as the decisive factors that determined his life to become a "different life." Thus, the title of the autobiography holds a double meaning and refers equally to the turning point in later adult life, described both as singular and beneficial, and the sense of being different, experienced since childhood, that differentiates this life from other lives. "I varje fall: han var

en annan" ['In any case: he was different'] (Enquist 2008: 24). The prologue introducing the three parts of the autobiography, "Oskuld" ['Innocence'], "Ett starkt uttlyst plats" ['A strongly illuminated place'], and "In i mökret" ['Into the darkness'], is not described as a prologue or preface, but rather carries the telling title "Utgångspunkter" ['Starting points' or 'Points of origin']. It portrays the author's visit to Hjoggböle as the point of origin of the writing, and the search for the painful points in his own life. Enquist searches for the formative factors in a life that, on the one hand, describes a gifted youngster's move out of the province and, on the other hand, is determined by a story of loss and the lifelong process of working through the traumas of early childhood.

In Enquist's autobiography and prose texts, the house, the village, and the region of Bureå and Skellefteå, the landscape of Västerbotten and Norrland do not form an illustrative backdrop creating a specific atmosphere as we would know it, for example, from the genre of crime fiction that has become so successfully established in Sweden. Landscape figures much more prominently in Enquist's work as a factor influencing the identities of narrative figures and protagonists developed on the basis of autobiography. Thus Norrland indeed provides a point of origin; namely a point of origin of identity. The author of the autobiography *Ett annat liv*, speaking about himself in the third person and the nameless first person narrator in *Kapten Nemo's bibliotek*, as well as the first person narrator who refers to himself as one of the "cartographers" mentioned in the essay collection of the same name, hail from the same region and village and see themselves as challenged to relate to a world far outside their own centres. The author marks the fact that this self-location is first and foremost a geographic one by a notable and informative intertextual reference in which the novel *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, the collection of essays *Kartritarna*, and the autobiography *Ett annat liv* cite one another directly.

Contrary to popular perception, and the geographical fact that Norrland is located on the periphery, that is, on the northern edge of Europe and the top end of Sweden, the author presents the opposite perspective in his autobiography—one he was convinced was the only true one as a child:

> Spånhyveln låg vid sjöns utlopp, och endast hundra meter från det gröna huset. Han är som barn övertygad om att han egentligen på detta sätt är född vid Sveriges centrum, benämnt Sjön, Hjoggböle. Bevis för detta: man lägger samma bönhuset och mjölkbordet och bäcken och bryggan över bäcken och framför allt spånhyveln, som alltså inte fanns annat än som fornlämning och således bör anges på kartan med eget karttecken. Man fick dock ej bli högmodig för att man var född i mitten av riket, snarare hade man ett ansvar för *utkantsmänniskan*. Dessa söder om Jörn. Eller skåningar. (Enquist 2008: 18)

['The plough plane lay by the outflow of the lake and only a hundred meters away from the green house. As a child, he is convinced that he has actually been born in the centre of Sweden, a place called Sjön, Hjoggböle. Evidence for this: the chapel and the milk collection point, as well as the brook and the bridge over the brook, and most importantly the plough plane, which ever since has existed only as prehistoric monument and therefore has to be sketched onto the map with its own symbol. One should not become arrogant because one was born in the centre of the realm, however. Rather, one bore a responsibility for the *individuals on the outer edge*. Those south of Jörn. Or the people in Skåne.']

In the child's perception, the "I" and its own location form the centre of the world, and that which lies outside this perceived centre constitutes the periphery. The author makes it clear *ex negativo* in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, through the protagonist's tragic loss of his home in his early years, that this sort of self-perception—for the child, the only one thinkable and valid—is a necessary prerequisite for the formation of a consolidated identity.

The Literary Formation of "Weltbeziehung" ['our relationship to the world'][3]

Kapten Nemos bibliotek is surely one of Enquist's most difficult-to-interpret novels and forms, at the same time, the centrepiece of his literary works. The novel tells the story of a childhood traumatization through uprooting. The reader finds a logical order and comes to see the tragic dimension of the non-linear and fragmented plot only in retrospect by putting together the pieces just like the first person narrator and protagonist of the frame story does when striving to construe, and at the same time distance himself from, his own life story by narrating it:[4]

Two boys born on the same day in the same hospital live to their sixth year joined in friendship in a small north-Swedish village, until one Sunday when a female member of the Pietist community, upon seeing the children in the church and noting how each so clearly resembles the mother of the other, has the intuition that they must have been switched at birth and assigned to the wrong parents. The authorities are notified and investigate the case. The midwife on duty for the births is questioned and cannot with any certainty exclude the possibility of a mistake. On state orders, the children are finally swapped "back." Integration and emotional rehabilitation in the new families is not successful after the switch, however. Instead, the calamity unleashed comes full circle: One of the two mothers loses her sanity and dies after her newly appointed son and his alleged father's painful attempts at care in a mental hospital. A short while later, the narrator's adversary, who is, at the same time, his alter ego, drowns during a shared boating ex-

pedition. After further tragic incidents, the surviving "I" goes crazy—to employ the common term—retires to an old grotto, and is eventually discovered there and brought to an institution. After four years of silence, the protagonist attempts to tell his story and is thereupon deemed healthy and released.

The perception that one can, in reality, be a different person than the outside world and even the self believes, becomes an existentially threatening reality of the self in this novel. Thus the novel tells of nothing less than the loss of one's identity and sense of belonging. These are, as the novel makes clear, defined in younger years through heritage and family, and by one's home—in this case, represented by the house, which is clearly signified in its peculiarity through the fact that the father when building it painted it green instead of red.

In his confusion and fear before the imminent exchange, the boy begins to complete drawings of the house and its premises. He maps the home being taken from him and attempts, in this way, to internalize it, so that which he loses externally can remain his internally. This is his desperate effort to create a point of reference, in spite of the pending uprooting, through which the identity of the self can be secured.

> På papperet började jag, med timmermanspennan, upprätta detaljbeskrivningen av huset. Man fick ju vara noga. Jag fick inte göra ett enda misstag. Då skulle på något sätt det gröna huset för alltid gå förlorat. (Enquist 1991: 73)
>
> ['I began, on the paper, using the timberman's pencil, to set out the detailed inventory of the house. I had to take care. I must not make a single mistake. Then, somehow, the green house would be lost forever.']

The central motif of isolation and solitude in Enquist's works is intensified in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek* to become an abandonment perceived by the child himself, but of which he does not grasp the actual seriousness: "Och jag överlämnades kvar. Alldeles tom, som sniglar, lite slem, lite skal, lite död, alltså ingenting särskildt" ['And I was left behind. Completely empty, like snails—a bit of slime, a bit of housing, a bit of death, so really nothing special'] (Enquist 1991: 70–71). In his condition of absolute forsakenness, the process of mapping from the perspective of the child constitutes a helpful construction, through which the "I" can use the middle point that is in actual fact lost, though memorized and transitively preserved through drawing, to further locate oneself and establish a relationship to the world. Later in the book, the first-person narrator mentions that he not only took stock from the green house outwards, but had also drawn topographical maps of Sweden (Enquist 1991: 141), in which he had exactly plotted the sur-

rounding area and marked the village that, for the first and only time in this novel is named as the real, localizable place "Hjoggböle" (Enquist 1991: 134). The tragedy in the novel's plotline consists in the fact that the relationship with the outside world that the protagonist desires to be an experience of security and "resonance" (Rosa 2012: 9–16)—or as sociologist Hartmut Rosa also names it as the experience of a positive "Weltbeziehung" ['relationship to the world'] as "Getragensein" ['being carried in the world'] (Rosa 2012: 374–413)—is so shaken to the core by the exchange that the "I" has to seek another helpful construction, in addition to the drawing of maps, to even be able to continue to live. By means of his imagination the protagonist—who throughout the novel never refers to himself with a name—is able to create for himself a mentor and "välgörare" ['benefactor'] (Enquist 1991: 159) that he cannot find in real life and, as the name betrays, is not actually real: Captain Nemo is "nobody." The imagined benefactor tells the boy a parable, however, in which the relationship of the "I" to the world reverses and the protagonist no longer has to regard himself as cast out of the home and thrown into the world, but rather as the sole survivor in an extinct world:

> Ett barn var ensamt i hela världen. Alla hans anhöriga och alla sina vänner hade upptagits. Snö hade fallit länge, och övertäckt allt med sitt vita täcke. På jorden fanns ingen enda människa mer än detta barn. Alfild Hedman var död, Sven Hedman var död, bussen med Marklin som chaufför hade stannat för alltid, ingen post kom, det gröna huset stod tomt. Alla var uppryckta. I hela världen fanns endast ett barn efterlämnat. Det var jag. Jag var den allra siste. (Enquist 1991: 174)
>
> ['A child was alone in the whole world. All his relatives and all his friends had been taken away. Snow had fallen for a long time and covered everything with whiteness. There was no one on earth except this child. Alfild Hedman was dead, Sven Hedman was dead, the bus driven by Marklin, had stopped forever, no post arrived, the green house stood empty. Everyone had been routed out. In the whole world only one child had been left behind. This was me. I was the very last child.']

A securing of identity can, in the case of the severely traumatized protagonist in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, only be achieved through the negation and obliteration of the world by which he has been repudiated as well as through the subsequent reconstruction of events through the process of writing. This process of knitting together those events, that for the "I" as a child were incomprehensible and which add to a sensible whole for the reader too only in hindsight, determines the framing story for the novel and is, at the same time, reflected in the title of the book. Captain Nemo's library, located on the bottom of the sea in the submarine "Nautilus," is

not only the setting for the "rescue" imagined by the narrated (diegetic) "I" within the inner story of the novel, but also a metaphor for the interior of man, in which all experiences and memories of life (here, that of the first-person narrator) are archived. This, on the other hand, is the pool from which the author narrating the story and the homodiegetic narrator draw their creations.[5]

On a metafictional level above and beyond the novel, the motif of the library, hinted at in the novel's title, points to the fact that the novel itself, more than any other of the author's works, portrays a sort of compilation, collection, and "library" of Enquist's writing, in which are bundled countless biographical allusions, as well as literary motifs and symbols from the author's previous and future works. Thus *Kaptain Nemos bibliotek* can almost be read as a 'book of Enquist's books;' writing as the compilation of fragments of lived life and the consequently completed self-location in the world become objects of narration.

Mapping as the Key to Enquist's Poetology

The most artistic and most pregnant metaphor, not only for *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, but also for an understanding of Enquist's collected literary work, is that of self-location; geography and writing become the agents that facilitate the process of setting oneself in relation to the world. This metaphor figures prominently in the collection of essays following directly on the heels of *Nemo* and carrying the significant title *Kartritarna*.

This 300-page text, which is composed of 10 independent chapters that are nonetheless thematically related via the cartographic motif, is an aggregation of actual events, political and personal, historical and autobiographical, a mixture of journalistic inquiry and literary-poetic reflection. The first-person narrator, who represents himself as the author of the volume, takes on the functions of observer, witness, documentarian—and cartographer of the decaying century. In fact, the book's ambition, in the words of its author, is nothing less than "to map European reality at the end of the twentieth century" (Enquist 1997: dust jacket). Adopting the technique of poetically recasting historical facts and connecting this with the idea of zooming in on specific regions, zones, and intellectual realms, Enquist, in this work, employs once again the style of literary documentarism for which he had, by the 1970s, become famous beyond Sweden's borders. He uses the blurring of the lines between reportage, non-fiction, essay, biography, and autobiography to illustrate individual, social-psychological, historical-political, and cultural-anthropological currents, as well as tendencies in the history of ideas, and writes himself back through the past centuries of European history not in stations, or in the form of a chronicle, but rather in

pictures, small stories, and allegories. Thus the author reveals the technique of his literary creation to be a diametrical transition across different places and time periods, which he places like transparencies on top of one another in order to trace the various contours of both individual and collective history. Only this approach—that is, a transverse reading of the story—allows the subtext and any intermediate texts written in as history or biography to be teased out. Historical reality is never immediate nor absolute—this the author makes clear. In fact, there is no such thing as historical reality. Instead, it is composed of an abundance of circumstances, events, coincidences, truths, and possibilities. Because reality is always cobbled together and complementary, it can never be captured as a whole, but rather must be broken down into its component truths and regarded as relative to possible, but never absolute, interpretations. In the individual essays composing the "cartographer" volume, the author undertakes tentative attempts at explanation and interpretation of collective as well as individual history, but also subtle rejections of these. He proves to be the searching, imaginative "cartographer," that he, much like his alter ego in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, obviously was as a boy; he trusts the creative strength of his imagination without losing himself in speculation as he is constantly oriented to pre-existing facts.

In notable repetition and nesting of chapter titles, as well as direct connection to the corresponding passages in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek* and an almost verbatim pre-emption of his autobiography *Ett annat liv*, to appear years later, the first person narrator and author of the volume demarcates the starting point of his literary activity in the next-to-last subtitle of the last chapter, entitled, as is the collection of essays, "The Cartographers:"

> Innan jag kunde skriva ritade jag kartor.
> Först var det Sverigekartan. Det var på smörpapper, och jag ritade på köksgolvet i det gröna huset. Svårast var det vid Jämtlands gräns mot Norge. Där gick det ut och in på ett intressant sätt. De sydliga landskapen tenderade ofta att bli mycket små, som små köttiga utväxter, nästan kojuver.
> Men det var roligt att rita, och jag var noga med att rita in byn, som hette Hjoggböle, på rätt plats så man kunde känna sig trygg. I sydändan satte jag också Stockholm i periferin, för att man skulle känna avståndet.
> Det var början. Jag ritade något hundratal Sverigekartor, till slut mycket exakt. Jag var nu helt säkert på Sverige, det var inritat och under total kontroll, men med mittpunkten, som var byn, alltid utsatt.
> Jag började då teckna orienteringskartor.
> Tecken var ju inte svåra. Det var lövskog och sankmark och barrträd och bäck och höjdkurvor och kyrka, och allt var lättritat. Först tecknade jag kartor över byn, som hette Hjoggböle. Det var på sitt sätt en uppförsto-

> ring av den gamla Sverigekartan, jag hade så att säga lyft ut mittpunkten, och detaljgranskat.
> Jag kunde ju min barndoms landskap, i detalj. Det var bara att rita ner. Till slut hade jag dokumenterat byn så exakt, och så många gånger, att jag kunde, eller tycktes tvingad att, lämna den för andra kartor. (Enquist 1992: 296)
>
> ['Before I could write, I drew maps.
> First it was the map of Sweden. It was on sandwich paper, and I drew on the kitchen floor in the green house. The border between Jämtland and Norway was the most difficult. It went in and out in an interesting way. The southern landscape tended to become very small, like little fleshy outgrowths, almost an udder.
> But it was fun to draw, and I took great care to draw the village, called Hjoggböle, in exactly the right spot, such that one could feel secure. At the south end, I added Stockholm at the periphery so that one could feel the distance.
> That was the beginning. I drew a couple hundred maps of Sweden, in the end, very precisely. I was now very sure of Sweden. It was plotted and under total control, but the midpoint, which was the village, was constantly marked.
> I then began to draw maps for orientation.
> The symbols were not difficult. It was deciduous forest and swamp and conifers and brook and contour lines and church, and everything was easy to draw. First I drew maps of the village called Hjoggböle. It was something of an enlargement from the old Sweden map; I had lifted the middle point out, so to speak, and examined it in detail.
> I knew the landscape of my childhood in detail. You simply drew it in. In the end, I had documented the village so exactly that I could leave it, or seemed to be forced to leave it, in order to draw other maps.']

What, in *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, is described in the most literal sense of the word as an essential action of securing location and identity in a life-threatening situation, is here portrayed as a human process of development, with which a very specific poetology is connected.

The cartography documented in such detail by the author in the three works in question here is not simply a childhood occupation and amusement. What the boy so carefully traces and what the author thoroughly retraces through memory is the external and internal landscape of his childhood, as well as his move out of the same. Mapping describes an incremental process, a movement of drawing oneself forward and moving oneself forward from the source, from a securely located centre in a not yet determined or unsecured territory.

The starting point for drawing maps as a child—precisely like the starting point for writing literature—is for Enquist the home village, marked as

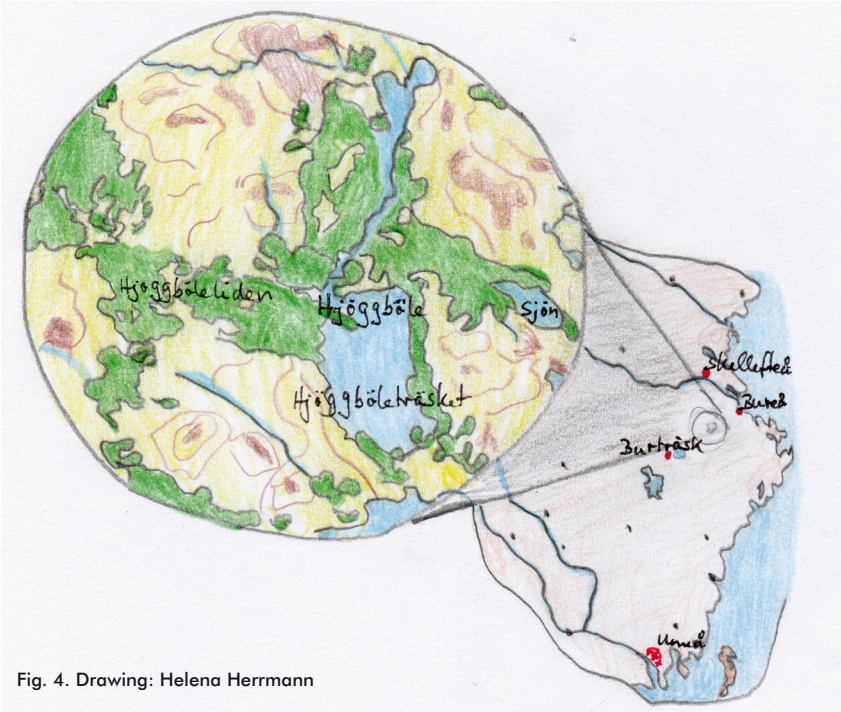

Fig. 4. Drawing: Helena Herrmann

a geographical point and a topographical region. It is not the objective determination of the centre and the periphery, but rather the determination of his personal point of reference that is crucial. The symbolic centre, the home, is elevated to a geographical middle point and the actual centre—the capital city—fades out of the field of view. Such a determination of heritage and home, which marks the perception and the growing awareness of one's own borders, seems to be a prerequisite for individual development and horizon expansion, as well as, in the end, for the crossing of borders. In his study *Erzählte Provinz. Regionalismus und Moderne im Roman* ['The narrated province. Regionalism and modernity in the novel'] Norbert Mecklenburg states:

> Die Region ist also das objektive Korrelat zur 'Territorialität' des Menschen, die wie ihr Gegenstück, die 'Weltoffenheit', ein „Existentialmodus" ist, ohne den er keine Identität ausbilden und erhalten kann. Regionale Bezogenheit auf einen Identitätsraum, „enracinement" (Simone Weil), ist ein menschliches Grundbedürfnis, vielleicht sogar „das wichtigste und meistverkannte". Damit nähert sich der Begriff der Region dem der Heimat an. (Mecklenburg 1982: 17.)

> ['The region is thus the objective correlate to the "territoriality" of people, which, like its opposite of "being open to the world," is an "existential mode," without which it cannot develop and maintain an identity. Regional relation to a space of identity, "enracinement" (Simone Weil), is a basic human need, perhaps even "the most important and most often misjudged." Thus the term region moves closer to that of home.'] (Mecklenburg 1982: 17.)

Only when the point at which an individual finds itself—as shown by the examination of *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*—can actually be determined and held onto, is it possible to ensure the sense of being (there) and of one's own existence. Only when an individual has become sure of his existence by locating a delimited space of affiliation, can he move away from this point of origin in order to build an identity. At this juncture, he even seems compelled to leave his starting point in order to re-orient himself from another point and continually redefine his relationship to the world. "In the world through which I advance, I am constantly creating myself," writes Franz Fanon (1967: 229) in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*. Accordingly, identity is not something that is acquired once, but rather constitutes a constant movement: a movement that is not only physical, but can also be conceived of as intellectual or spiritual. Both are inextricably linked to one another. Along these lines, Ian Chambers writes in his book *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*: "Our sense of being, of identity and language, is experienced and extrapolated from movement: The 'I' does not pre-exist this movement and then goes out into the world, the 'I' is constantly being formed and reformed in such movement in the world" (Chambers 1994: 24). The change in geographical location and the encountering of the foreign implies a changed perspective and point of view, and a new identity.

This raises the question of whether leaving home might actually be a prerequisite for the critical examination of the self and what is one's own, as well as for the objective reflection on identity. Firstly, the view from without—in the metaphor of cartography, it is the view from above, the bird's eye view or satellite perspective—is able to recognize the fundamental as such and to oversee the whole, precisely because this becomes an abstraction when regarded from a distance. "Det finns ett avstånd från fasta marken, då allt som syns förvandlas till karta. Där finns en brytpunkt där konkret blir abstrakt" ['There is a certain distance from firm ground, from which everything one sees transforms into a map. There is a site of fracture, where the concrete becomes abstract'], writes Arne Johnsson (1997: 8) in his article "Mellan himlen och jorden. Anteckningar om att se" ['Between heaven and earth. Notes on perception'].

In his collection of essays *Kartritarna*, Enquist implements, via abstraction, precisely that expansion of a point of view caught in regionalism to a broadened view open to the world. Like the boy in the "Cartographer" chapter—and thus this episode serves a key function—the author explores the space of his own existence on a higher level in order to transcend it: he focuses on the home, the home in Västerbotten, as well as the national "Swedish village," and from there looks outward on a "European reality of the twentieth century" that is only ascertainable in excerpts.

The reflections and remarks on death, sport, animals, the relationship between life and writing, the changeover of epochs, the shattering of ideology and utopia, the Swedish self-concept, politics and the course of history, and the role of humans, first appear as a stringing together of individual blocks of thoughts and fragments without formal connection, or links on the level of content. The maps that Enquist actually draws in this volume, however, are those of a landscape beyond the periphery of the Norrland home region, or that of northern home country; they are maps of a landscape beyond that of Europe re-ordered after 1990. It is not actual geographic points and regions that the writer and journalist Enquist emphasizes as examples in his chapters, but rather it is much more political and cultural spaces and spiritual landscapes that he maps. These various spaces build representative arenas for individual lives and collective history, but more than that they make from the multiplicity of layered heterogeneous spaces the real and innermost living space of human existence. Herein is displayed the understanding of literature that is so central to Enquist's work: Writing constitutes a borderline between the known and the unknown for the writer, between proximity and distance, between presence and absence, between the real and fantasy—between truth and lie. Enquist writes further:

> Det var först ganska enkla kartbilder. Kartritaren medtog det han kunde. Först liknade det mesta terrängen kring Bensberget. Efterhand kom egendomliga, nästan lögnaktiga, inslag med i landskapen. Jag upptäckte att man kunde ljuga ihop kartbilder med tecken som vart och ett för sig var sanna: eftersom de som såg mig över axeln noterade att tecknen var sanna noterade de inte att landskapen inte fanns, att de var lögnaktiga, *dikt*. (Enquist 1992: 297; emphasis EH.)

> ['First it was very simple pictures of maps. The cartographer took with him what he could. First most of it resembled the terrain around the Bensberg. Little by little, peculiar, indeed almost untrue, traits began to mix themselves into the landscape. I discovered that one could draw maps with lies, with figures, each of which perceived itself to be true: because those who looked over my shoulder noticed that the figures

> were true, they did not see that the landscapes did not exist, that they were lies, *fiction*.']

Thus the act of drawing maps does not only correspond exactly to the act of writing fiction, it *is* fiction: namely the concretion of real figures into a symbolic landscape. For Enquist, the drawing of maps, as well as the writing of fiction, is the transformation of a concrete reality into a picture. It is, however, more than the mimetic reproduction of the real:

> [...] genom att lägga bilder som block utan synlig förbindelse med varandra, men med spänningar oavbrutet löpande mellan sig, skapas i mellanrummet mellan blocken en ny, och annorlunda, sanning. (Enquist 1997: 208)
>
> ['[...] in that one places pictures as blocks without visible connection to one another, but with continuous tension flowing between them, a new and different truth is created in the space between the blocks.']

In the process of literary transformation, reality is transcended and newly conceived so that an autonomous world emerges, resembling reality, but not identical to it. Based on an exact observation of the surrounding area and an express orientation towards reality, the tracing, copying, and describing of real occurrences gain independence in the imaginative and poetic, thus transcending Horace's maxim *ut pictura poesis*. This is the silent and secret process of crossing the border between reproducing the real and producing fiction:

> Ingen såg över min axel, för att bestraffa lättfärdigheten, tecken var ju abstrakta, kartorna likartade, jag utövde barnsliga sysselsättningar och kunde därför, i hemlighet, kartteckna en värld som inte fanns. (Enquist 1992: 297)
>
> ['No one looked over my shoulder in order to punish the flippancy; the symbols were indeed abstract, the maps similar; I practiced childlike preoccupations and thus was able, in all secrecy, to map a world that did not exist.']

In particular in the biographies of writers, Enquist often places a thematic focus on the relationship between art and life, writing and truth (Herrmann 2005; 2006*a*). In doing so, he defines literary writing and the art of writing fiction on the one hand as the search for the individual childhood and "prehistory," which, in his case, bring him back over and over to his home in Västerbotten. On the other hand, he defines art as lying, that is, as

a re-writing and alteration of the fragments or individual "blocks" (Enquist 2008: 55) taken from reality for the purpose of working out its crucial contours.

The reworking of real events into a feigned history, or the border crossing between historical facts and the illustration and interpretation of these through fiction, can be identified as *the* specific characteristic of Enquist's literature. Assigning the narrative and dramatic works to the category of Swedish documentarism, as is often done in the research (Glauser 1982; Houe & Rossel 1997), is indeed justified if one considers documentary literature as writing that does not reduce itself to the most authentic reproduction of events possible, but rather writing in which the factual basis is employed more as a structuring element and starting point for interpretation (Butt & Herrmann 2008). In writing this kind of documentary, the author's central intention in falling back on historical or biographical facts seems to be observing lived history—or history passed down—from a new standpoint, assuming a different and distanced perspective, and in this way ordering real events within new patterns in a sensible, but to date unconsidered context, in order to come closer to their "innermost core;" "[...] föreställningens innersta rum har den egenheten att vara vandringens slutmål" ['[..] the innermost space of imagination has the peculiarity of being the end goal of migration'] (Enquist 1992: 89).

Norrland's Literature as World Literature

Over the course of his activity as a writer, Enquist moves away from, but then, as in a crabwalk, always back to, the Västerbotten region. He has written himself free from the anchoring of literary fiction in topography and in the authentic, although he continues to feel beholden to these throughout the entirety of his work. In recalling that he drew countless maps of his home region and native country of Sweden from memory as a child, the author makes clear what writing fiction means to him: documenting the process of becoming conscious of one's own heritage, as well as the movement away from it as a movement from a well-known and deeply internalized place, the home, out into an unknown landscape, into a world beyond fixed external, regional, national, and also societal and individual borders. Above and beyond regional and national borders, the author's literary search for the "innermost space of human life" and the wandering between different worlds constitutes in numerous ways a transgression, and transcendence, of boundaries. It demarcates a transition from individual to collective, from autobiographical to social and political, from authentic to fictional. In Enquist's work, the individual constantly stands in an alternating interaction with the general. The autobiographical becomes the point of departure for

the historical. The historical then leads back to his own biography. Identity splits into a multiplicity of other possible, that is, fictional identities. The portrayal of the self becomes a mirror of the universal.

Thus Enquist's regionally aligned writing moves far beyond the horizon of the biographical. His literary writing serves far more to map being in the world. Though the world, as we experience ourselves in this age of globalization, can never be experienced or grasped as a whole, Enquist uses the technique of zooming in on geographical detail. He elevates the microcosm to a macrocosm and places it in the center of his investigation. In his search for the innermost core of human existence, the events portrayed in his texts as belonging to the regional surroundings and the village cosmos expand from a personal "world map" to social, political, and historical maps representing excerpts of the world.

As literature, which has at its centre the question of the fundamental conditions of being human and hence the individual's self-positioning in the world, Enquist's literature proves to be in the truest sense of the word "world literature." With his specific kind of literature about our relationship to the world and his literary examination of psychological, philosophical, social, and political questions, he has written himself into the canon of world literature.

However, the question of the correlation between heritage and writing remains. In his autobiography *Ett annat liv*, Enquist notes, only a few chapters after he undertakes to prove that cartography is a practice preliminary to literary writing, that "[h]an reser allt oftare ut i Europa" ['ever more often he travels out to Europe'] (Enquist 2008: 150). We know that his travels have brought him overseas and that the author lived for many years abroad. Enquist, however, does not belong to those writers who regard themselves as "transnational" or "transcontinental" writers and, based on their biographies, place their writing within the context of world literature. One example of this type of writer would be Enquist's school friend and literary colleague, Lars Gustafsson from Västmanland (Herrmann 2006*b*: 137–138). Enquist on the contrary is a world-class writer with roots in Norrland. His writing is tied to a region and has, as this text has attempted to show, a precisely identifiable geographical starting point.

Why does one become a writer though, and why does Norrland prove to be such a fertile ground for authors? In his review of Enquist's newest novel *Liknelseboken* ['The parable book'] in *Dagens Nyheter* on 24.03, 2013, Gabriel Byström determines that "Den västerbottniska jorden har visat sig vara en alldeles särskilt god biotop för berättare. Här finns en omvittnat stark tradition. Lidman, Salomonsson, Lindgren, Widding. Och så Enquist" ['The ground in Västerbotten has proven to be a particularly good biotope

for authors. There is a demonstrably strong tradition here. Lidman, Salomonsson, Lindgren, Widding. And, indeed, Enquist']. During his visit in Hjoggböle, the reviewer asks himself: "Vilka nycklar finns här i Sjön till Enquists författarskap?" ['Which keys find themselves here in Sjön with a view to Enquist's authorship?'] (Byström 2013). In his autobiography, the author himself grapples with the question of why he became a writer and whether his authorship could potentially be traced back to a tradition existing either within the family or within the local area. In this context, he also refers to the unusually high number of writers in his northern home village:

> Med tiden skall byn, Hjoggböle, belägen djupt inne i skogen tjugo kilometer från kusten och tusen kilometer norr om Stockholm, få ett slags nationell berömmelse eftersom de hundrafemtio byborna fostrat inte mindre än fem författare, definierade som medlemmar i Sveriges författarförbund. Han får många frågor. Varför denna plötsliga förtjockning av berättare? (Enquist 2008: 55–56)
>
> ['In time the village of Hjoggböle, which lies deep in the woods, 20 kilometers from the coast and 1,000 kilometers north of Stockholm, should attain a sort of national fame because, out of the 150 village inhabitants, five authors have emerged who have been listed as member of the Swedish Writer's Guild. People often inquire of him [the author and protagonist of the biography]: Why this sudden concentration of authors?']

The author suggests possible answers to this question, such as, for example, the inbreeding almost inevitably occurring in past centuries in a scantily populated village, which is said to lead either to idiocy or to writing. Or, perhaps the at least one thousand year-long tradition of oral storytelling, which was particularly strong in this area and could have influenced following generations. Indeed, the question of the meaning of the poems that the father wrote with a timberman's pencil in the red notebook and which Enquist's mother burnt after his death appears in both the autobiography and in the author's other works. In the end, however, the author continues to owe the reader a final answer to the question of the source of his authorship.

One possible hint to the solution to this puzzle, as well as to the question of the high percentage of Swedish authors with roots in Norrland, lies in the motif of cartography: If Enquist's literary writing can be understood in analogy to the activity of cartography as a mode of setting oneself in relation to the world, as well as a self-positioning in the world, then it stands to reason that the drive to locate oneself in the world is greatest where the world is situated furthest from the centre of the "I:" namely, at its geographical edge, as well as in physically and psychologically experienced solitude and isolation.

NOTES

[1] The following titles have appeared in English translation: *The Magnetist's Fifth Winter* (*Magnetisörens femte vinter*) 1964, *The Night of the Tribades* (*Tribadernas natt*) 1975, *The March of the Musicians* (*Musikanternas uttåg*) 1978, *Rainsnakes* (*Från regnormarnas liv*) 1981, *Downfall. A Love Story* (*Nedstörtad ängel*) 1985, *The Hour of the Lynx* (*I lodjurets timma*) 1988, *Captain Nemo's Library* (*Kapten Nemos bibliotek*) 1991, *The Royal Physician's Visit* (*Livläkarens besök*) 1999, *Lewi's Journey* (*Lewis resa*) 2006, *Grandfather and the Three Wolves* (*De tre grottornas berg*) 2003, *The Book About Blanche and Marie. A Novel* (*Boken om Blanche och Marie*) 2006, and *Three Cave Mountains* (*Den tredje grottans hemlighet*) 2011.

[2] This article represents a combination of previous articles and research papers by the author of this article, in which she has investigated Per Olov Enquist's literary work from various perspectives. Subject of investigation have been the examination of the collected work in its literary-historical development and meaning (Butt & Herrmann 2008), Per Olov Enquist's documentary writing (Butt & Herrmann 2008; Herrmann 2006*b*), the relationship between fact and fiction (Herrmann 2006*a*; 2005), P.O. Enquist's literary transgression of boundaries (Herrmann 2006*b*; 1999), the literary figuration of individual and collective identity and alterity (Herrmann 2007; 2006*a*; 2006*b*), as well as Enquist's poetology of the search for the innermost core of human existence (2006*a*; 2005). This contribution constitutes a continuation of the existing research on Enquist's literary work in so far as it analyzes the metaphoric as well as the poetological meaning of the geographical and biographical heritage of the author, which form points of thematic focus in several of his works. As one of very few scholars Per Svensson devoted an individual chapter of his book on P.O. Enquist to the meaning of the Västerbotten region in Enquist's prose (1994: 7–25).

[3] With this term and the affiliated concept I refer to Hartmut Rosa's monograph *Weltbeziehungen im Zeitalter der Beschleunigung. Umrisse einer neuen Gesellschaftskritik* (2012).

[4] See here comprehensively Herrmann (2007).

[5] On the multiple meanings of the motif of the library in Enquist's novel see Herrmann (2007: 291–293).

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The Joy of Narration

Mikael Niemi's *Popular Music from Vittula*

ABSTRACT *Le goût du baiser d'un garçon* (2000) de Mikael Niemi fut le plus grand succès littéraire en Suède après 1989. Souvent, le roman est décrit comme un témoignage d'une culture minoritaire dans la région suédoise frontalière de la Finlande, où l'on parle une langue particulière, le *meänkieli*. Dans mon article, j'explique que cette réception est moins due à l'intention implicite du roman qu'aux attentes de ses lecteurs dans une phase de restructuration identitaire en Suède après la fin de la guerre froide. En effet, la Suède est, depuis, souvent imaginée comme un pays multiculturel, et le témoignage littéraire supposé d'une culture minoritaire sur le territoire du pays répondait bien à ces attentes. Cependant, ce n'est pas la seule façon d'interpréter le roman. Il s'agit plutôt d'un texte ouvert, jouant avec des discours identitaires multiples pour ouvrir des pistes d'identification au lecteur, sans préférence pour l'une de ces pistes. Plus important que le contenu du roman est donc en effet la forme, ou plutôt la dynamique inhérente aux formes narratives utilisées. Une œuvre composée moins pour donner du sens que pour l'ouvrir, et pour suivre la joie de la narration.

KEYWORDS narrating identity, Tornedalen, Mikael Niemi, imagined ethnicity, joy of narration, Swedish multiculturalism

When I came to Gothenburg, Sweden, in August 2013 in order to write the present essay, I was astonished by the fact that basically everyone that I met and talked with—literary scholars, yes, but even neighbors

with very different social backgrounds—had not only apparently read Mikael Niemi's novel *Populärmusik från Vittula* ['Popular music from Vittula'] (2000), but often also held very pronounced views on it. Many could even quote passages spontaneously, albeit not always accurately—13 years after its first publication. Statistically, this may be less surprising, as with more than 800 000 copies sold in Sweden, almost one Swede out of ten owns a copy, making the novel one of the best distributed books in Sweden ever. It had apparently well appealed to the needs and expectations of the Swedish public at the beginning of the new millennium.

However, not all the interviewed readers uttered the same opinions, nor did they share favorite quotations, and some, especially those that came from Norrland even felt deceived: it was far too much like the stories that one knew from home. The book, it seemed to me, was not as static and clear cut as literary reviews and scholarly articles that I had read hitherto would suggest. In my, admittedly not very systematic interviews, the book emerged as a joyful game with reader expectations—and with the art of narration. It takes narrating forms from different literary and medial traditions and discourses, in order to sample, adapt, and rewrite them as a means of creating a literary universe that offers many possibilities to identify with, but refuses to give any stable and definitive meaning. In the present essay, I propose to analyze these interactions between reader expectations and Mikael Niemi's art of narrating more closely.

Looking for Swedish Multiculturalism. Literary and Political Contexts

Between 1990 and the beginning of the new millennium, Sweden was undergoing a period of particularly profound rewriting of national identity. During the Cold war period, Sweden was most often imagined as a utopian middle way between East and West, between socialism and capitalism. After the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the communist world, this form of self-definition was no longer possible. Moreover, this discursive identity crisis was coupled with a period of economic problems that questioned the Swedish welfare state in both practice and ideology. It was at this moment that the discourse of multiculturalism entered Swedish debate: after at least 40 years of immigration, Sweden now became aware of its immigrants as part of Swedish society. From being imagined as a neutral, cultural homogenous country situated between Eastern and Western Europe, it changed in self representation to become a part of the global village, a multicultural, creative spot in Europe—close to nature and technologically highly developed (cf. Mohnike 2007*a*; Mohnike 2007*b*; Mohnike in print).

It is thus no coincidence that most of the scholars and journalists who commented on Niemi's works and especially his novel *Popular Music from Vittula* tend to stress questions of local identity and place making as main aspects of his writing, and yes, these themes are certainly important (cf. e.g. Gröndahl 2008; Jonsson 2012; Ridanpää 2011). In a situation in which multiculturalism became a discourse to define Swedish national identity, a novel that appeared to picture a cultural minority within Sweden was more than welcome. Before the year 2000, for many readers, the community of people living in the valley of Torne, the Tornedalen, far up in the North of Sweden was simply considered to be formed by some Swedes living in the border region to Finland. After the success of *Popular Music*, the people of Tornedalen appeared as an ethnic group of its own with a distinct language, the *meänkieli*, and a particular culture with, for example, astonishing drinking habits and sauna competitions, to quote only two of the many fascinating customs, and, last but not least, as a group of people that seems to suffer from a double identity in the Swedish nation state—being both Finnish and Swedish, or neither, appears to cause many problems, despite the humorous style; in the words of the narrator summarizing the school lessons: "Vi bröt på finska utan att vara finnar, vi bröt på svenska utan att vara svenskar. Vi var ingenting" (Niemi 2000: 50) ['We spoke Finnish with an accent without being Finns, we spoke Swedish with an accent without being Swedes. We were nothing']. Following this line of observation, a lot of readers—professional or amateur—would hence read the novel as a literary expression of an ethnic minority finding its own voice and speaking back to the majority society (cf. e.g. Gröndahl 2008: passim).

Interest in Tornedalian, *meänkieli*, culture was not the only result of this search for Swedish multiculturalism. Other than the revival of Sami and Jewish traditions, we might think here of the emergence of an "immigrant literature" that would represent and speak for the new "multicultural" Sweden. As Wolfgang Behschnitt and I have shown, this new Swedish migrant literature was more a discursive than an empirical product, that is a result of the acceptance of multiculturalism as the new frame for Swedish identity (cf. Behschnitt & Mohnike 2007; Mohnike 2007*b*; Nilsson 2010). Consequently, both migrants and minorities were often discussed together and described and imagined as cultures distinct from a Swedish majority culture—and their books were read through an "ethnic lens", to speak with Trotzig (Trotzig 2004; cf. Mohnike 2007*b*). Similarily, *Popular Music* was read as an example of such ethnic literature.

As Magnus Nilsson has shown in his *Föreställd mångkultur* ['Imagined multiculturalism'] (2010), social groups that had hitherto been described in terms of social class were now increasingly culturalized, or to put it blunt-

ly: before, people living in suburbs and in poor conditions were workers, unemployed or otherwise socially disfavored. Today, they are in the same economic situation, but are called immigrants. This is even true for the reception of Tornedalian culture. In their chapter on Tornedalian literature in the anthology *Litteraturens gränsland. Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i nordiskt perspektiv* ['Literature's borderland. Immigrant and minority literature in a Nordic perspective'] (2002), a book that is in itself an example for the new multicultural discourse, Satu Gröndahl, Matti Hellberg and Mika Ojanen observe that reviews of Niemi's *Popular Music from Vittula* tend to stress the category of the ethnic, whereas Tornedalian literature before was usually defined as either regional or proletarian literature (cf. Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002: 139–140).

It seems that Niemi's *Popular Music from Vittula* would then be one of the first novels that could be read as depicting Tornedalen as a distinct culture—perhaps because its readers would like to read it that way. Multiculturalism as a frame for Swedish identity caused readers to feel a need for a novel that showed that Sweden had been multicultural even before the arrival of immigrants. The success of the novel might thus be partly explained by this coincidence, and not by the fact that it was the first book that tried to put Tornedalen on the cultural map of Sweden.

In fact, *Popular Music from Vittula* was not the first novel to be written on the subject—neither by Niemi nor in general. Interested readers could have learned about language and culture in the Tornedalen from the books of Hilja Byström (1908–1993) as early as the 1930s and 1940s, and from the works of more recent authors such as Gunnar Kieri (*1928) and Olof Hederyd (*1923); and they had the possibility to discover it in the oeuvre of the great literary voice of Tornedalen before Niemi, Bengt Pohjanen (*1944), to name but some productive authors (cf. Gröndahl, Hellberg & Ojanen 2002: 147–156). What's more, Mikael Niemi (*1959) had himself written quite a number of books before *Popular Music*, most of which use the Tornedalen and local traditions and languages as a background and source of inspiration. One might cite here his report book from 1989 *Med rötter häruppe. En rapportbok om Tornedalen* ['With roots up here. A report book on the Torne valley'], his poems, such as *Näsblod under högmässan* ['Nosebleed during church service'] (1988) or *Änglar med mausergevär* ['Angels with Swedish Mauser'] (1989), and particularly his two young adult novels *Kyrkodjäveln* ['The church devil'] (1994) and *Blodsugarna* ['Bloodsuckers'] (1997). In all these books, *meänkieli* and the dominance of Swedish and the threat for local traditions as well as intergenerational conflicts concerning language use were discussed. The interest in *Popular Music from Vittula* was thus not due to the fact that it was the first novel to strive for a place for Tornedalen in Swedish literature. It was the right book at the right moment.

The Art of Narrating

But *Popular Music from Vittula* was not only a book that answered to the needs of multicultural discourses. A closer reading shows that it interacted with quite a number of other discourses important for speaking of identity today in an often subversive manner. It thus became an amusing read for anyone questioning his or her identity at the turn of the millennium, independent of an interest in Northern Swedish sauna habits. It is, as I want to argue, especially its 'literariness,' its *Literarizität*, that becomes an instrument of seducing its readers and subverting essentialist readings.

The novel is composed of twenty chapters, framed by a prolog and an epilog. Prolog and epilog are narrated from an adult perspective, whereas the chapters depict scenes of the narrator's childhood and youth in the 1960s and 1970s in the municipality of Pajala in Northern Sweden near the Finnish border. The chapters follow a loose chronological order, starting in the early childhood of the protagonist Matti and his friend Niila, and ending when the friends feel they have arrived at the happiest moment of their youth—before separating in all four corners of the world to become adults.

Several reviewers have characterized the style as "magic realism." To them, the narrative suggests that it is being faithful to the historical, natural and social circumstances it relates to, but repeatedly turns surrealistic. Interestingly enough, a reader as learned as the *New York Times* journalist Hugo Lindgren explains this oscillation between realism and ecstatic flights of the imagination with the climate of Northern Sweden and the youth of the protagonists: Niemi tells his stories, Lindgren says, with "a dusting of magical realism, as if the extreme climate knocks the senses off kilter. (Or perhaps it's the vodka.) His prose buzzes with wonder, fearlessness and ecstatic ignorance: the sensations of youth" (Lindgren 2003). For him, and for many others, the style thus asserts the authenticity of the tale, anchored both in the nature of Northern Sweden and of the protagonists—a rather essentialist, culturalistic reading.

Of course, authenticity is not to be equaled with truth: as the quotation shows, the *effect of authenticity* (cf. Schlich 2002: V) is created by referring to previous knowledge of the implied reader: first to an internationally known literary style—South American magic realism—, secondly to the reader's memories of their own youth, and particularly to other narrations of youth in other media, and thirdly to international stereotypes of life at the polar circle, including snow, vodka and marginalization, paired with local interpretations of those themes. In this case, authenticity thus consists in reacting to reader expectations in a way that rather confirms than subverts existing literary models (magic realism) and stereotypes of North Scandinavian otherness.

However, it would be too easy to reduce the literary style to magic realism. Each of the twenty chapters "is an epic in miniature" (Lindgren 2003), that seems to look for its own form, adapting its style and content to the dynamics of narration needed at each moment of the book to ensure the flow of the story.

The first chapter, for example, takes the protagonists Matti and Niila from their quite realistic first encounter as little boys at a playground in Vittula to a more and more fictive journey almost to China—a true flight of the imagination. The second, however, changes tune entirely: it tells the story of the lack of language in the more or less secularized Laestadian family of Matti's friend Niila. Whereas the first chapter is thus a playful introduction to the power of friendship and imagination, the second is an encounter with the brutality of social relationships without words and sounds, given in a naturalistic manner; accordingly, the chapter renounces all use of magical or surrealistic elements. This want is compensated in chapter three by an exuberant allegory on the formative and deformative aspects of school life, which consists in the protagonist being put into an old boiler until he has grown up sufficiently to crack his iron prison. Chapter four turns back to the naturalistic style, describing how school teaches a lack of history and identity to the people from Tornedalen and the greatness of Southern Swedish culture, and it finishes with Niila being beaten by his father for having partly destroyed their unused library with his friend, the narrator; and so on. Each chapter assembles a complex of themes, and adapts its style to it. The chapters are then put in an order that changes mood in an effective way. The book seems hence to be composed as a suite of pieces in a musical manner, each chapter being set in another tonality.

As a result, content seems less important than the dynamics of narration; being true to a supposedly Tornedalian identity less significant than telling a good story. This becomes clear in the prolog that can be read as a programmatic overture. The narrator finds himself alone in a camp some meters below the Thorong La Pass in Nepal. As he is awakened by his alarm clock in the middle of the night, he has a near death experience:

> Det var då, just i den stunden att jag insåg att jag var död.
> Upplevelsen är svår att beskriva. Det var som om kroppen tömdes. Jag blev en sten, en oändlig stor, gråkall meteorit. Och inbäddad djupt inne i ett hålrum låg något främmande, något avlångt och mjukt, organiskt. Ett manslik. Det tillhörde inte mig. Jag var sten, jag omslöt bara den svalnade gestalten som en kolossal, tätslutande granitsarkofag.
> Det varade i två, högst tre sekunder.
> Sedan tände jag ficklampan. Väckarklockans urtavla visade noll och

> noll. Ett kusligt ögonblick fick jag för mig att tiden upphört, att den inte längre kunde mätas. (Niemi 2000: 5)
>
> ['It was then, at that very moment, that I realized that I was dead. That experience was difficult to describe. I had turned into a stone, an incredibly big, bleak meteorite. Embedded deep down in a cavity was something strange, something long, thin and soft, organic. A corpse. It wasn't mine. I was stone, I was merely embracing the body as it grew colder, encompassing it like a colossal, tightly closed granite sarcophagus. This feeling lasted two seconds, three at most. Then I switched on my flashlight. The alarm clock display showed zero and zero. For one awful moment I had the feeling that time ceased to exist, that it could no longer be measured.' (Niemi 2003: 7)]

Of course he discovers that he is neither dead nor that time has come to a halt, but that it was just terribly cold, and that he had accidentally set the clock to zero. But it is important to remember that this chilling reduction to an almost Cartesian subject that doesn't know anything about itself other than that it is thinking—*cogito, ergo sum*—is what constitutes the opening chord of the prolog. As a reader who has just started to encounter the book, we don't know the "I" that is talking, we don't know what kind of realism we are to expect—is the fact that he is dead a literary convention?—in short: we have absolutely no idea what all this is about. And this confusion is apparently mirrored by the narrator—who is 'I'? And why is 'I' here?

This 'musical' theme is further pursued when he gets up and continues his walking-tour through the Himalaya which is evidently the practical reason for his presence in this remote location. He climbs the pass, and there, high above the world, surrounded by a sea of mountains, he has an experience of sublimity, that is an experience of transgressing the limits of his own self, and of the greatness of the world he lives in. He has thus, like so many others since the romantic period, traveled to a place that is supposedly the opposite of culture, of humanity, in order to experience a radical Otherness or Alienation, to speak with the philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels. According to Waldenfels, this experience of Otherness ('Fremde') is not just an encounter with the other, with what is different, but with something that questions the very limits of a subject's way of thinking—not because it poses questions, but because it is profoundly different, intangible, but present. It is the modern, secularized version of an encounter with God (cf. Waldenfelds 1997; Mohnike 2007*a*). In a certain sense, the experience of the sublime therefore resembles the near death experience it follows in the narrative: it questions the experiencing subject in its fundamentals, but it has no answers. The answers have to be found by the narrating subject itself.

This passage is followed by another variation on the same theme. In

imitation of religious habits and overwhelmed by gratitude, the narrator bends down and kisses an iron plate

> med ingjutna tibetanska bokstäver, en skrift som jag inte kan tyda men som utstrålar allvar, andlighet [...]. Det är i det ögonblicket som minnet öppnar sig. Ett svindlande schakt ner i min barndom. Ett rör genom tiden där någon ropar en varning, men det är för sent.
> Jag sitter fast.
> Mina fuktiga läppar sitter fastfrusna i en tibetansk böneplatta. (Niemi 2000:7)

> ['engraved with Tibetan writing, a text I am unable to understand but one that exudes solemnity, spirituality [...]. At that very moment a memory comes back to me. A vertiginous pit into my childhood. A tube through time down which someone is shouting out a warning, but it's too late. I'm stuck fast. My damp lips are frozen onto a Tibetan prayer plaque.' (Niemi 2003: 9).]

However, his flashback home to his childhood gives him enough hints to liberate himself: in Northern Sweden, his mother had used warm water to thaw off him. Here, he frees himself with his own warm urine. The chapter ends: "Äntligen kan jag börja berätta" ['Finally, I can start to tell']. The text thus plays with different variations on the experience of radical Otherness, referring to intertexts from various traditions—philosophical, theological, romantic and especially those of twentieth century travel writing—to create a text that opens up for a search for identity. It is noteworthy that this search for identity is marked as highly personal: it is not by chance that he doesn't understand the Tibetan writing, on the contrary: What is important is that it "exudes solemnity, spirituality"—that it is an open text, that seems to refer to something divine, but doesn't give a more precise meaning and is thus disputable, unstable.

Satu Gröndahl and others have interpreted this scene as a symbolic liberation of the stuck tongues of minority language users after many years of oppression. For the narrator, coming into contact with his childhood in this painful situation means coming back to himself, finding an identity of one self and a language, a voice of one's own. He is in this sense liberating his *meänkieli* soul from the discursive prison it had been locked up in (Gröndahl 2008: 63).

This is of course a permissible and possible interpretation, even if it isn't the only one, as she herself admits. As my rendering of the prologue suggests, I would prefer to stress the quality of the dynamics of narrating that produces questions and open ends, and in fact contradicts every stable interpretation: The text seems to be constantly playing with itself in a

kind of romantic irony: the previously cited near death experience and the following sensation of cessation of time is emptied of meaning and pathos by the fact that the narrator admits that he had accidentally set his clock to zero. The later experience of transcendence and sublimity when facing the elements of nature at the pass is contradicted by the ridiculous situation he finds himself in. Every movement of longing, of looking for a glimpse of stable, fixed eternity, of a secularized encounter with God, is always subverted, without giving place to another, more stable answer. And at the end, the liberation of the narrative voice is assured by the narrator urinating on himself. The idea of finding his own *meänkieli* voice is thereby ridiculed: it is not even some nice cranberry soup or coffee brought from home, but the most impure liquid, produced by his own body that liberates his tongue and hence his capacity to tell a story. It seems difficult to me to accept this image as a simple symbolic rebirth of a minority identity. It might be a hopeful opening up, yes, but at the same time, it is its humorous contradiction. The meaning of the text is hence made unstable.

The prolog thus sets the narration in motion by posing questions and expressing a need for understanding. It is further suggested that the questions created by the confrontation with radical otherness are answered by the text. Interestingly enough, the prolog doesn't give any indicators as to what kind of story will follow other than that it is in some way related to the experience in Nepal. The last sentence in the Swedish original is: "Äntligen kan jag börja berätta" ['Finally, I can begin to tell']—he can narrate, but he doesn't tell us what. The prolog opens the book, invites the reader to enter into a literary universe, but also suggests that it is an unsteady one. As we will see, the text suggests a lot of answers, but none are definitive. And this, I would like to propose, is one of the qualities of the text: it offers a playground for interpretations, but has no preference for any one interpretation—only a disfavor for some of them, especially those that might turn essentialist.

Narrating Identities

As we have seen above, the narrator seems not to be sure what he is looking for when he is narrating and writing his story: "Äntligen kan jag börja berätta" ['Finally, I can begin to tell']. The prolog ends—he can narrate, but he doesn't tell us and probably doesn't know *what*. This will only become clear when we turn the page and come to understand that we are reading childhood memories, and that the book is meant to be a tale of the narrator's early, formative years. The text then becomes a humorous auto-biography, or better: auto-psychoanalysis, that engages in a sort of archeology of knowledge of oneself, picking up glimpses of memories that are not always

compatible, sometimes even contradictory, in order to construct a personal identity that will lead to and explain the narrator's coming to Nepal on the one hand, and his position as a grown up in modern Sweden on the other. In a small digression at the end of chapter four, we are told that the narrator is neither a professional traveler nor a writer at the time of writing, but a teacher in a suburb of the Swedish capital of Stockholm, a description that is confirmed in the epilog at the end of the book.

However, the genre of auto-biography is repeatedly subverted by the power of the narrative forms employed; the narrator often prefers to follow the paths opened up by the dynamics of telling than to obey the obligation to be faithful to the story of his actual childhood. An outstanding example is chapter one, where the two friends, the narrator Matti and his friend Niila, meet for the first time at a playground, and then take the opportunity to climb into a tourist bus to get out of Pajala and see the world. At this moment, the story might be realistic, but when the 5 year old boys follow the group of tourists into an airplane to Stockholm, and then join another group to Frankfurt without being noticed, the reader is probably meant to become more and more skeptical of his narrator's reliability, as he seems to be more interested in the joy of narrating a good story than sticking to reality. The reader is thus invited to question the book as a whole: yes, it gives an idea of childhood in the North, but it is not at all trustworthy in every detail. Don't take me only seriously, the text seems to exclaim.

By not being a serious master of autobiography, the narrator stresses the literariness of his text: the text becomes less singular, specific, less a testimony of one particular subject, but more typical, representative—this is a difference between history and literature that already Aristotle had proposed as fundamental (cf. Aristoteles 1982: 54). If the narrator thus becomes a representative, we have to ask—of what?

Of course, the narrator's story of someone growing up in Tornedalen is rather unusual for the majority of his readers. In this sense, he might be understood as representative of somebody from Tornedalen, and this is an interpretation that is quite usual in research and reviews, as I have mentioned above. When Satu Gröndahl tells us that the narrator frees his *meänkieli* voice in order to tell the story of a minority group, she proposes to read the text as a literary testimony of a cultural group, expressed by specific traditions (as, in the text, competitive drinking, sauna, a local version of chase, fishing etc.) and by a language of its own.

This reading may be confirmed by the general narrative structure of the text: The reader is taken from outside, first from imagined Nepal, then, at least implicitly, from central Sweden to the North, and the landscape and habits are described as though intended for someone who doesn't

know them. Most of the phrases in *meänkieli* are translated either directly or implicitly (cf. Landqvist 2013), all odd habits are sufficiently explained. The narrator thus explains the world of his childhood to somebody that didn't necessarily share it—the position of the implied reader is thus that of an outsider to the world of Tornedalen. By that technique, he creates three worlds—the world of the reader, of which the narrator has become a part, the world of Tornedalen, and the limit of the world, the pass in Nepal. Whereas the pass could be described as the limit of being human, the place of radical otherness, the border between the centre, Swedish Stockholm, and Tornedalen is a contact zone that implies the structural otherness of two different cultures. Following this interpretation, the narrator becomes the guide and interpreter of the strange world of Tornedalen, he is the ethnographer of his own people. This interpretation fits well with the above mentioned reader expectations to discover a multicultural Sweden after the end of the cold war and during the crisis of the Swedish Welfare state, and thus seemed to go a long way toward explaining the book's success: *Popular Music from Vittula* looked like the literary expression of a cultural or ethnic minority.

However, this structure is equally appropriate to every other modern description of a rural periphery (cf. Langheiter-Tutschek 2004). International readers don't have any problem to connect it to their national geographies of periphery and centre. A US-American reviewer, for example, starts his review with the words: "If Vittula were in the US, it would probably be someplace in Alaska, Arkansas, or Idaho—somewhere very far off the beaten track." (Anonymous 2003: 1096). In a similar way, a German reviewer begins his reflection on the novel with the following words:

> Eine Gegend im Nordosten des Landes, die allgemein als zurückgeblieben angesehen wird. Dort spricht man einen seltsamen Dialekt und profitiert ein wenig vom Grenzhandel mit dem ebenso armen östlichen Nachbarn. Die jungen Leute verlassen die Kleinstädte und Dörfer, um anderswo Arbeit und Zukunft zu finden. Das kommt uns bekannt vor? Um Himmelswillen: Nein, es geht hier nicht um Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (cited in Langheiter-Tutschek 2004: 209).

Other examples could be cited. It is obvious that for these professional readers outside Sweden, the interest of the book lies not in its ethnographical description of a largely unknown minority somewhere in the North of Sweden, but in the entertaining description of a youth lived in the cultural periphery. The book is thus inscribing itself in the genre of village and country life descriptions, well established since the advent of urbanization and modernity, as Matthias Langheiter-Tutschek has shown, just in a quite

contemporary interpretation. We find the importance of clans, the debated central position of the church, associations of men, such as the hunters around Matti's Grandfather, descriptions of weddings and birthdays as central social events etc. (cf. Langheiter-Tutschek 2004: 203–205). That this is a possible interpretation of the text is supported by a central episode in the book. One of the important persons for the narrator is his teacher Greger, hailing from rural Scania. He uses a Swedish dialect that is difficult to understand even for those that speak modern Swedish, let alone the old people who only speak *meänkieli*. However, he manages to engage in lengthy dialogs with the latter, because he knows the laws of communication in rural areas from home (Niemi 2000: 149–150). Moreover, Greger seems to be the only Southern Swedish person that is an integrated part of the Tornedalian society.

In this way, the childhood and youth of the narrator become representative of more than just the people from Tornedalen and may be read as a description of life in the backwater of modern urbanism: irrespective of the periphery you grew up in, you can find habits and problems in Tornedalen that you might know from home. And if you didn't grow up there, you know it from the stories and films you know about the countryside. In this view, the book would thus not be a book on Tornedalen, but a book on youth in the countryside. A strength of the book is that both readings are equally possible, depending on the choice of the reader.

A third possible reading is quite simply an interpretation of the text as a description of a childhood and youth in Sweden in general. If it was not for the words in *meänkieli* and some other regional features, it is largely a description of typical problems and dreams of Swedish children and young adults living in a smaller town or suburbs in the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century. It thus applies to almost every Swede except those growing up in central Stockholm. Matti's and Niila's problems finding friends, mobbing in schools, first sexual encounters, questions of how to survive in school when you are not the strongest in class, problems with radical religious traditions and, yes, even drinking contests are themes that are common to many Swedes and Europeans. The arrival of the welfare state was often somewhat earlier in Southern Sweden, but even wealth and modern facilities such as cars, record players and the encounter with US-American popular music were phenomena rather new, as Sweden became the wealthy country that we know today only after the Second World War. Dreams of founding a band were shared and realized almost all over the country, and going hunting with friends is an activity shared by many men of all social strata even today. Seen from that perspective, the Tornedalian setting is nothing but the most radical version of Swedish provincialism, and the

story of Matti is representative of the growing up of many Swedes in the 1960s and 1970s.

Popular Music from Vittula thus offers several possibilities to read and interpret the representativeness of the protagonists, and I probably didn't describe every possible reading relating to the narration of identity. The book interacts with a lot of shared discourses, medial representations and experiences of Swedish and European readers, but alienates them in a sympathetic way by being set in Tornedalen. All possible readings, I would like to claim, are present at the same time, creating a universe that allows the reader multiple identifications. It is an open text, powered by the joy of narration.

Crisis and Liberation

Some pages above, I sketched the cultural context of the book's publication as one of negotiating Swedish identity in a period of crisis. This experience of crisis is mirrored by the narrator at the end of the book. When the adult narrator of the epilog summarizes the events between the moment, when the four friends that formed the band at the end of the novel experienced their moment of perfect happiness in chapter twenty, and the moment of writing, his prose is saturated with nostalgia.

> Någon gång per år när min längtan blir för stark reser jag upp till Pajala. Jag anländer i kvällningen och vandrar ut på den nya, cirkusliknande pylonbron som spänner över Torneälven. Mitt över djupfåran stannar jag och ser ut över byn med träkyrkans spetsiga torn. Vrider jag blicken ser jag skogshorisonten och Jupukkaberget med TV-mastens blinkande synål. Under mig strömmar älven i sin ständiga, breda rörelse mot havet. Det låga bruset sköljer bort stadens larm ur öronen. Min rastlöshet rinner av mig i den tilltagande skymningen.
> Jag låter ögonen vandrar över byn. Minnena återvänder, människor som liksom jag flyttat, namn som glimtar till. [...] Och själv blev jag svensklärare i Sundbyberg med en saknad, ett vemod jag aldrig helt lyckats bemästra. (Niemi 2000: 237)

> ['Once or twice every year when I can't control my longing anymore, I travel up to Pajala. I get there as evening is drawing in, and wander out onto the new, circus-like pylon bridge that spans the River Torne. I stand in the middle and gaze out over the village and the pointed spire of the wooden church. If I look around I can see the forest on the horizon, and Jupukka Mountain with the blinking sewing needle that is the TV antenna. Way down beneath me the river flows wide and neverending toward the sea. The low roaring sound rinses the din of the city out of my ears. My restlessness melts away as dusk gathers.
> I let my eyes wander over the village. Memories come flooding back,

> people who've moved away like me, names that flash past. [...] And me, who became a Swedish teacher in Sundbyberg with a sense of loss, a melancholy I have never managed to overcome completely.' (Niemi 2003: 236)]

He has come from his Stockholmian suburb to Pajala, but everything has changed, even here. A new bridge is built, his old friends have moved elsewhere as he has done, they work in ordinary jobs as does he himself—except for Niila, who had forced a career in music in London, but died rather early, apparently from drug misuse. Only the river seems to be the same, and thus turns into a conventional, but still strong image for the passing of time. The story of his childhood and youth in Tornedalen has come to an end, but apparently, his project of connecting with the "I" that he had narrated has failed. He is no longer the young Matti, and the time of the welfare state, modernity, and popular music coming to Pajala is no more. The collective crisis of identity at the end of the 1990s has found a symbolic counterpart in the narrator's personal crisis of identity.

The book ends in this mood of nostalgia, but combines it with some signs of liberation: the narrator cannot solve the problem of nostalgia, but he can relive a memory that liberates him from the moment of solitude:

> Den sista gången vi möttes var under Pajala marknad, [Niila] hade flugit från London och klöste tankspritt i små sår på sin handled. På natten for vi och fiskade vid Lappeakoski. Hans pupiller var små som knappnålar, och han surrade maniskt:
> – Islossningen, Matti, när vi stod där på bron och såg islossningen, fy fan, vilken islossning...
> Jo, Niila, jag minns islossningen. Två småglin och en hemsnickrad gitarr.
> *Rock 'n' roll music.*
> Smaken av en pojkes kyss. (Niemi 2000: 238)

> ['The last time we met was during the Pajala fair, he'd flown in from London and was scratching absent-mindedly at little sores on his wrist. That night we went fishing at Lappeakoski. His pupils were small as drawing pins, and he was buzzing away manically:
> "The breaking up of the ice, Matti, that tome we stood on the bridge and watched the ice breaking up, by God, it was awesome..."
> Oh, yes, Niila, I remember the ice breaking up. Two little boys and a homemade guitar.
> *Rock 'n' roll music.*
> The taste of a boy's kiss.' (Niemi 2003: 237)]

"Islossningen," the breaking up of the ice, can of course be read as an image of the period of adolescence, the centre of the book. At the same time, it is an image for liberation from being stuck, from being locked into a form that comes from the outside with a force that develops from the inside. In his memory, it was the music that was freeing them, helping them find their way, as well as their friendship in an environment not always too friendly.

Looking back from that moment at the novel, the reader might discover that this form of resistance against forces that try to form or lock in the narrator and his friend is a leitmotif of the book—beginning in the prolog, when the narrator is stuck at the Tibetan prayer plate, continuing in chapter one in the great imagined flight to China, that finds its end already in Frankfurt, followed in chapter two by finding a language of security, the esperanto, in the case of stalemate between Swedish and *meänkieli* in the family of Niila, that permits him to communicate with the world. Chapter three describes school time as being locked into an old iron boiler until the end of school time, when he breaks the iron by the force his own growing body. Later on, they experience the breaking up of the ice referenced at the end; Niila kills his father together with his brother to liberate his family from tyrannical oppression, and, in another hilarious scene, they symbolically kill Niila's already dead grandmother, who was starting to haunt him. And then, they discover music as a way to free themselves from the constrictions of the valley, to find their way into the world, to connect with the big world—a way that is not necessarily restricted to words, but extends to rhythm and self-expression. It is not by chance that most of the songs are sung in an English that proves their ignorance of that language. Language is here mere sound.

Interestingly enough, *meänkieli* and Tornedalian culture are not mentioned as either instruments or targets of those flights of liberation. When the narrator is standing in Pajala at the end of the book, no word of regret for the possible loss of language and cultural traditions is uttered. He suffers from nostalgia, yes, but one that is informed by a longing for those moments of liberty and friendship that only youth had given him. The link between the valley, its culture and the youth of the narrator are thus, if not arbitrary, so at least entirely coincidental: His attachment is not due to the valley, but to the fact that he grew up here.

Open Ends

In 2007, the comic artist Anders Annikas made a report book in which he recounts his visit to Pajala in order to see the 'real' setting of the novel and interview the people as to how the success of *Popular Music* had influenced the people there, given that they were suddenly known all over Sweden. Of

course, he doesn't find what he was looking for, the town is not like the one in the book. Some of the local people like the book, others dislike it, and most of them say that the book didn't change much for them in the long run. Annikas was looking for the reality behind the book, for its link to life. One of his interview partners, Regina Veräjä, journalist at the *Haparandabladet*, indirectly criticizes him for his naivety:

> Det som är komiskt tycker jag är att alla inte tar den som fiktiv. 'Jaha, den där och den där är med' och 'ja, det vet man ju vem den där tvåkönade personen ska föreställa'. Det finns folk som inte ens tänkt tanken att det var en roman... Jag tror att folk utanför Pajala har förstått bättre än Pajalaborna själva att den är fiktiv. (Annikas 2007: 25)
>
> ['What I think is funny that most of the people don't take it as fiction. "He is in the book, and he as well" and "yes, of course one knows who the two sex person is supposed to be." There are people who haven't even had the idea that it was a novel... I believe that people outside Pajala understood that it is fiction better than people from Pajala.']

I am not sure whether Regina Veräjä is right in her optimism that people outside Pajala were always better at grasping the fictiveness, the literariness of the book than those from the town, but her general opinion seems valid: *Popular Music from Vittula* is a novel, and as a novel, it seeks to free itself from the constrictions of reality. This principle, I hope to have shown, Niemi has pushed to extremes in a joyful manner. His book provides an opportunity to find a way to a hitherto largely unknown community in Northern Sweden, it opens the reader's eyes for problems of power, oppression and language loss, but it does not dwell on it, or rather, it is not its main interest. What the novel searches for, is liberation from the force of expectations of others, it is a manifesto for the individual, and for the joy of narrating.

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Sammanfattningar på svenska

BJARNE THORUP THOMSEN:

Eyvind Johnson's Hybrid North

Dynamics of Place and Time in Travelogues and Memory Sketches 1943–1963

Artikeln undersöker bilden av Norrland, som den framträder i författaren Eyvind Johnsons minnesskisser och reseskildringar, utgivna mellan 1943 och 1963. Eyvind Johnson föddes år 1900 i Svartbjörnsbyn i Norrbotten och belönades med Nobelpriset i litteratur 1974. Artikelns övergripande tes, att ett kreativt samspel mellan orter, "trafik", tidsplaner och minnen i Johnsons skisser och skildringar skapar en hybrid bild av Norrland som en dynamisk, inkluderande och multidimensionell sfär, ger Johnsons perspektiv på Nordsverige ytterligare relevans idag. Samtidigt som Johnson ofta utforskar det förflutna, är hans Norrlandsbild också alltid, explicit eller implicit, förankrad i ett samtida politiskt, ekonomiskt eller miljömässigt sammanhang, det må handla om beredskapen, välfärdens utveckling, kalla kriget eller en ökad utvinning av naturens resurser. Artikeln befattar sig först med minnesskisser som ingår i officiella antologier tillkomna för att uppmärksamma milstolpar i den nordligaste landsdelens administrativa historia. I dessa sammanhang agerar Johnson som ambassadör för Norrland och anlägger ingående, ibland kritiska, perspektiv på regionens förr och nu. Med referenser till teorier om reselitteratur som hybrid och en "friare" form av litteratur diskuterar artikeln därefter hur Johnson i sina reserapporter, såsom *Vinterresa i Norrbotten* (1955) och "Sommardagbok från Norrbotten" (1963), beger sig in i samtida landskap och till orter som samtidigt bär spår av hans personliga förflutna. I dessa texter uppträder Johnson både som ett barn av Norrland och en reporter utsänd från södra Sverige med specialuppdraget att informera en extern publik om landsdelen i norr. I den avslutande delen diskuterar artikeln hur Johnson i *Vinterresa i Norrbotten* använder resesituationen och resans begrepp för att utforska förhållandet mellan konstnärskap och en norrländsk uppväxt. I konklusionen hävdas att begrepp som hybrid kreativitet och "transport" av motiv, material and perspektiv är centrala i Johnsons litterära arbete och "program" i förhållande till Norrland.

Översättning: Gunilla Blom Thomsen

ANTJE WISCHMANN:

Performing Space—A Modernist *Hembygd*
An Exploration of Sara Lidman's Works

Bidraget om Sara Lidmans "modernistiska hembygd" respektive hennes "hembygd i den litterära modernismen" har en vistelse i författarens hem i Missenträsk (mars 2013) som utgångspunkt. Både mitt perspektiv som forskare och som turist i Norrland har präglat mina erfarenheter och mina aktualiserande läsningar av de utvalda verken. Bland annat har jag försökt att reagera med öppet sinne på författarhusets materiella och textuella hänvisningar, särskilt när läsningen har ägt rum på plats. De tidiga romanerna (1953, 1955) och andra delen av romanserien *Jernbanan* (1983–1999) kommenteras, men även den så kallade Afrika-romanen *Jag och min son* (1961) och protokollboken *Gruva* (1968) tas upp till diskussion trots att de går utöver den regionala kontexten, eftersom tematiska mönster samt berättartekniska och språkreflekterande medel går igen.

Den flertydiga fokaliseringen är till exempel ett unikt medel som kännetecknar en säregen övergång mellan den implicita författarens och figurernas perspektiv. Därför skapas en "biografisk uppmärksamhet" hos läsarna som försöker att identifiera textens potentiella språkrör; samtidigt sätts karaktärernas könsspecifika perspektiv på prov genom att den manligt eller kvinnligt konnoterade blicken praktiseras simultant.

Trots mitt suggestiva och biografiskt nyfikna angreppssätt ligger tonvikten i analysen på den språkligt konstruerade hembygden, det vill säga "hemmet i språket" mindre än på hemmet i den konkreta historiska landsbygden Missenträsk. Den språkligt konstruerade platsen har sin egen historicitet – liksom Norrland har sin egen regional-, kultur- och kommunikationshistoria. När man intar en etnografisk och distanserad position – som Lidman själv tydligt demonstrerar just i *Jernbanan* – framstår kombinationen av historiska, inklusive dialektala språkliga, register som ett tillvägagångssätt för att läsarna performativt skall kunna uppleva konflikterna mellan statsmaktens institutioner och nybyggarna i Norrland. Dessa sociala och psykologiska konflikter lämnar spår i figurernas fantasier, tänkande, tal, läsningar eller deras skriftliga yttringar. Den historiska platsen framstår därför som först och främst producerad av tidsvittnens röster.

Berättaren tar hand om figurernas tal och dokumenterar det historiska språkbruket oberoende av den gällande realistiska eller fantastiska koden. Att vissa figurer brukar härma andras tal eller beteende är ett ofta använt grepp hos Lidman – motivet kan uppfattas som ett mimesis-program, vilket både fungerar som en narrativ och performativ metod och som ett språk-

reflekterande grepp. Härmandet manifesterar att språkliga och sociala handlingar oupplösligt hör ihop. Till och med Lidmans glossar ”Skellefteå-bondska – rikssvenska” pekar på språkets handlingspotential med såväl sociala som politiska konsekvenser. Lidmans analytiska arbete med språket fokuserar ytterligare språkets handlingsmakt, genom manipulation eller motstånd. I *Jernbane*-serien poängteras stilistiska kollisioner ännu tydligare, till och med ljudallusioner och syntaktiska medel som pauser och enjambement spelar en större roll. Detta har tolkats som prosalyriska kännetecken, men understryker enligt min uppfattning huvudsakligen det talade språkets betydelse. Enligt Lidmans författarskap är det just rösterna och talspråket som skapar världen och som kontinuerligt omformulerar den.

HELENA FORSÅS-SCOTT:

Telling Tales Testing Boundaries
The Radicalism of Kerstin Ekman's Norrland

I flera av Kerstin Ekmans romaner tilldrar sig handlingen i norrländsk miljö. Ekman har bott i Norrland i flera decennier, och den djupa förtrogenheten med ångermanländska och jämtländska miljöer gör Norrland i hennes texter konturskarpt och levande samtidigt som det laddas med betydelser. Med utgångspunkt i romanernas berättande undersöker denna studie konstruktioner och innebörder av dessa norrländska miljöer. Vem är det som ser ett stycke av Lappland eller Skuleskogen eller ett hörn av västra Jämtland på gränsen till Norge, vad är det som faktiskt ses, och vad får dessa iakttagelser för vidare betydelse – och då inte minst för läsaren vars roll som uttolkare ofta är så markant i Ekmans texter? Med hjälp av teoretiskt material från bl.a. Mieke Bal, Umberto Eco, Graham Huggan och Helen Tiffin, Edward Said och Rosi Braidotti och med utgångspunkter i berättelser/berättande och fokalisering lyfter den här artikeln fram postkoloniala, ekokritiska, filosofikritiska och etiska perspektiv i Ekmans viktigaste Norrlandstexter.

Det ligger många år mellan *De tre små mästarna* (1961) och *Händelser vid vatten* (1993) som utspelas i Lappland respektive Jämtland, men med tanke på att den första texten hör till deckarperioden i början på Ekmans författarkarriär och att också den andra ofta har kategoriserats som en deckare kan en jämförelse mellan dem belysa spännvidden i konstruktionerna av Norrland hos Ekman. Där Rakisjokk och fjällvärlden runt byn i *De tre små mästarna* ses utifrån av gestalter som har kommit resande för att försöka lösa mordgåtan, ses Svartvattnet med de omgivande skogarna, myrarna och fjällen i *Händelser vid vatten* dels av gestalter som hör hemma i trakten, dels av en gestalt som i romanens början kommer utifrån men sedan blir

bofast. I den senare romanen utgör minnen en väsentlig dimension av de olika fokaliseringar som förmedlar midsommarnatten och dess mordgåta, och minnesproblematiken utvecklas efter hand till en karta över en trakt stadd i snabb förändring, en trakt där inte bara sydsamernas kultur länge har marginaliserats utan också skogens alla minnen nu plånas ut av det industrialiserade skogsbruket. Romanens väv av berättelser som engagerar läsarna i mångfasetterade tolkningsprocesser kan läsas som en antites till sådana externa maktmönster.

Efter korttexten *Hunden* (1986), ett försök att gestalta ett djurs perspektiv på sin tillvaro, genomför Ekman i *Rövarna i Skuleskogen* (1988) en kritisk granskning av den västerländska kulturens utveckling under 500 år med en gränsöverskridande gestalt som huvudperson och den vilda Skuleskogen med dess annorlunda tidsskala som replipunkt. Berättelserna om trollet Skord som blir människa men bibehåller anknytningen till skogen och djuren ifrågasätter skiljelinjerna mellan natur och kultur och mellan subjekt och objekt – och i förlängningen de hierarkier och maktstrukturer som preciserades av Descartes och så länge har satt sin prägel på västerländska synsätt.

Även i de tre volymerna i *Vargskinnet* (1999–2003) karakteriseras berättandet av flera gestalters fokalisering, och även i denna romansvit – som tilldrar sig i samma del av Norrland som *Händelser vid vatten* och faktiskt gör bruk av en av gestalterna från den tidigare romanen – aktualiseras postkoloniala och ekokritiska men också etiska perspektiv. Med en handling som cirklar kring tre generationer kvinnor representerade av en barnmorska, en samehustru och en präst, plus en manlig konstnär lyfter trilogin med sina många metatextuella drag fram etiska problemställningar i relation till landskap, djur och medmänniskor, med det lilla barnets utsatthet som återkommande motiv.

Kerstin Ekman har flera gånger talat om våra inneboende möjligheter att skapa ett annat slags samhälle än det vi har åstadkommit. I de romaner som har granskats här fungerar Norrlandsmiljöerna inte bara som utgångspunkter för kritiska granskningar av vårt moderna samhälle: de öppnar också perspektiv mot alternativ, mot radikalt nya möjligheter.

KRZYSZTOF BAK:

What is Hidden in Västerbotten's Stomach?
On Augustine and Torgny Lindgren's *Minnen*

Uppsatsen undersöker den komplexa intertextuella dialogen mellan Torgny Lindgrens *Minnen* (2010) och Augustinus *Confessiones*, som Lindgren häm-

tat mottot till sin minnesbok ur. Med den patristiska intertexten som utgångspunkt granskas i synnerhet hur Lindgren konstruerat sin bild av Västerbotten. Uppsatsen är disponerad i fyra delar. I första delen (I) formuleras undersökningens hermeneutiska principer, som i enlighet med nyare tendenser inom patristikforskningen beaktar den augustinska tankevärldens heterogena karaktär. I uppsatsens andra del (II) kartläggs paralleller mellan textens och intertextens framställning av nåden, ondskan och människan. En särskilt stark koppling till Augustinus teologi har, som analysen visar, de komponenter i Lindgrens livssyn som i hans ögon bär en specifikt västerbottnisk prägel. Denna intertextuella affinitet kan förklaras inte enbart utifrån Västerbottens lutherska kulturtradition utan måste också relateras till minnesbokens speciella memoriastruktur, som närmare utreds i uppsatsens återstående delar (III–IV). Med stöd i moderna kulturantropologiska minnesteorier demonstreras i tredje delen (III) att de flesta skillnaderna mellan textens och intertextens minneskoncept låter sig knytas till modernitetens kulturminne, som dokumenterar det industriella subjektets uppgång och fall. Minnesbokens Västerbotten infogas av Lindgren i det moderna minnets grundstruktur, formas till ett kvasisubjekt och förses med det industriella jagets karakteristiska symptom på förfall. Majoriteten av upplösningsbilderna hämtar *Minnen* – liksom hela den västerländska moderniteten – från Augustinus paradigmatiska lära om synden. I uppsatsens fjärde del (IV) analyseras minnesbokens substitutmekanismer, som i analogi med stora delar av den västerländska modernititetskritiken försöker motverka det industriella kulturminnets kris genom att återuppliva de augustinska memoriaformerna och skapa en alternativ syntes av förindustriellt och industriellt. I kvasisubjektet Västerbotten och dess agrara rekvisita hittar Lindgren lämpliga bildmodeller för sitt kompensatoriska motminnesprojekt. Samtidigt som *Minnen* genom sin produktiva dialog med Augustinus rekapitulerar det västerländska minnets historia, upphöjs Lindgrens Västerbotten – det är uppsatsens konklusion – till en universell symbol för det europeiska medvetandet och dess öden.

ELISABETH HERRMANN:

Norrland's Regional Literature as World Literature
Per Olov Enquist's Literary Work

Per Olov Enquist hör utan tvekan till de mest betydande svenska samtidsförfattarna som läses både utanför det egna landets och Europas gränser – så även i Nordamerika. Med fiktional-dokumentära verk, ett stort antal dramer och författarbiografier om Hans Christian Andersen, Selma Lager-

löf, Knut Hamsun och August Strindberg, liksom med bästsäljare som *Lewis resa*, *Livläkarens besök* och *Boken om Blanche och Marie* har den norrländska författaren skrivit sig in i världslitteraturkanonen. Balansgången mellan historisk verklighet och fiktionalisering av denna visar sig vara ett grundläggande kännetecken för Enquists litteratur och syftar till att tydliggöra de hemligheter och tvetydigheter som ligger till grund både för historien och för enskilda levndadsberättelser. Målet med skrivandet är för Enquist att tränga sig fram till den "mänskliga existensens innersta rum". Vad styr det individuella livet och hur hittar människan sin plats i världen? Sökandet efter den egna identiteten som försök att positionera sig i världen gestaltar Enquist i flera av sina verk genom en betydelsefull metafor: att teckna topografiska kartor. Genom att utgå från minnet hur han som liten pojke ligger på köksgolvet och ritar kartor över hembyn Hjoggböle, omgivningen runt Bureå, Västerbotten, Norrland och Sverige, uppenbarar Enquist för läsaren vad litteraturen betyder för honom: en sammanfogning av reella tecken till ett fiktivt rum som liknar verkligheten men som samtidigt överskrider den. Genom att jämföra de verk, i vilka motivet med kartritningen gestaltas som centralt motiv i omedelbar intertextuell referens – nämligen i romanen *Kapten Nemos bibliotek*, essäbandet *Kartritarna* och i Enquists självbiografi *Ett annat liv* – utgår denna uppsats från frågan vilken metaforisk funktion samt poetologisk betydelse framställningen av den egna regionen och hembygden, samt referenser till det egna livet och författarens härkomst, har i hans verk. Att denna specifika form av "regionallitteratur" i Enquists fall tillskrivs världslitterär rang lär framför allt bero på att det inhemska mikrokosmos gestaltas som ett exemplariskt uttåg ur världen utifrån vilket de grundläggande förutsättningarna för att vara människa, liksom människans förhållande till världen, kan diskuteras.

THOMAS MOHNIKE:

The Joy of Narration
Mikael Niemi's *Popular Music from Vittula*

Mikael Niemis *Populärmusik från Vittula* (2000) blev den största litterära succén i Sverige efter 1989. Romanen beskrivs oftast som uttryck för en minoritetskultur i gränsregionen mot Finland, där man pratar ett eget språk, meänkieli. I min artikel hävdar jag att den tolkningen förklaras mindre av bokens outtalade budskap, och mer av läsarnas förväntningar och behov. Sverige var efter kalla krigets slut i en period av omdefiniering av den svenska identiteten. Sedan dess har Sverige mer och mer betraktats som ett mångkulturellt land, och en litterär röst från en förmodad minoritetskultur

inom landets gränser var mer än välkommen. Samtidigt är detta inte det enda sättet att läsa romanen. Boken borde istället ses som en öppen text, som leker med många olika identitetsdiskurser för att öppna olika möjligheter för läsaren att identifiera sig, men utan att uttrycka en preferens för en av möjligheterna. Viktigare än innehållet i romanen är således formen, eller de använda narrativa formernas inbördes dynamik, sammansatta mindre för att uttrycka en mening, och mer för att öppna för många olika, konkurrerande tolkningar – och för att ge plats åt berättandets glädje.

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3. References

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Paasi, A. (1996). *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness. The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Edited book

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Smith, J. (1998). "Social Work Education in Scotland," diss., University of Glasgow.

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Simmons, I. G. & Innes, J. B. (1996*a*). "An Episode of Prehistoric Canopy Manipulation at North Gill, North Yorkshire, England," *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 23, pp. 337–341.

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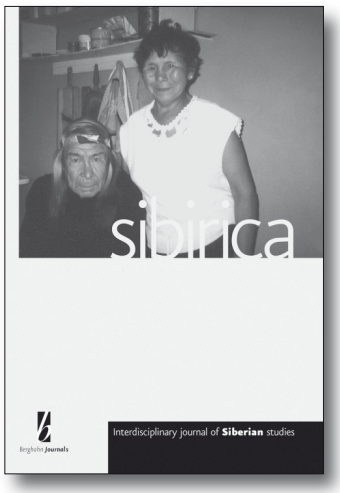

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