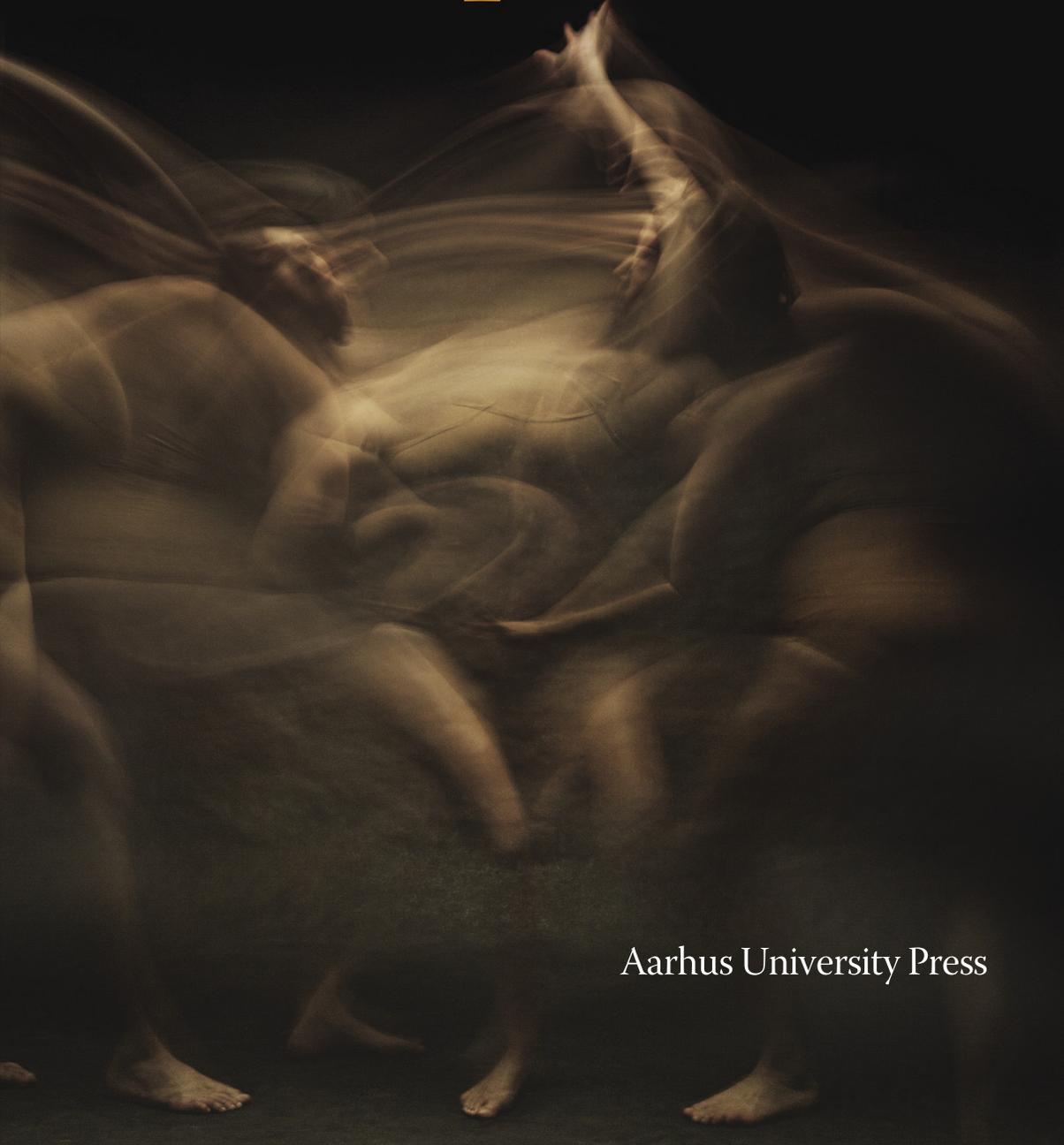


Lars-Henrik Schmidt
On Respect



Aarhus University Press

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LARS-HENRIK SCHMIDT

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CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	7
I	INTRODUCTION: THE WAY <i>ALONG</i> WHICH...	8
II	INTERMEZZO: THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD [<i>SKIFTEDAGEN</i>] OR THE HEGEMONIKON OF PERSONHOOD	15
III	EXPLORING <i>IN</i> A MAP	17
IV	THE PROBLEMATIC <i>UNDER</i> CONSTRUCTION	96
V	THE GAZE <i>TOWARD</i> THE HORIZON	169
VI	TIME <i>FOR</i> POWERLESSNESS	201
VII	DEFERENCE <i>BETWEEN</i> RELATIONS	213
VIII	RESPECT <i>FOR</i> DECENCY	243
IX	DIGRESSION <i>WITH</i> TEMPERAMENT	254
X	THE CONCLUSION <i>AFTERWARDS</i> : MINIMA DIDACTICA	284
XI	DOCUMENTS <i>OF</i> THE MATTERS	305
	REFERENCES	338

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is an excerpt of a text written in Danish and in an unmistakable tone of Danish. It has been a difficult task to translate the book into a text that, with a little ingenuity, can be read in English. The book is edited by Lars Geer Hammershøj and Jens Erik Kristensen. Under their editing the translation is by Russel Dee and revised by Mary Waters Lund. I am grateful for the great efforts by everyone. The last review is by Tobias Hiort-Lorenzen, and together we have decided upon solutions to a number of doubts and difficulties. We may not have settled all the difficulties, but to the best of our ability we have arbitrated between solutions. We considered it important that the thinking was made available – not least because a number of other books, articles and papers are dependent on this reference work.

Lars-Henrik Schmidt
Copenhagen 2011

I: INTRODUCTION: THE WAY *ALONG* WHICH...

When you throw yourself into a new project, you have to be open to the fact that you don't know where it will end or under what circumstances.

I wanted to illustrate and document the social-analytic perspective in a focused way, and my diagnosis of contemporary times told me that respect and the lack thereof provided a focal point for philosophical speculation with a penchant for education's privileged position at the beginning of the new millennium.

At the same time, I was convinced – by all the signs in the heavens – that the absence of joy, which tragic philosophy was supposed to promote, was not just a personal matter. The task of this investigation – called a treatise out of respect for and deference to the academic tradition – is thus to comprehend the connection between respect and this loss of joy. It is this treatise's primary thesis that education relations – a special instance of social relations – turn on respect, which is linked to a loss of joy. My primary thesis will be illustrated by pursuing a constellation of four sub-theses. Altogether, I claim the following:

A: That the problems of education are education's. If education has not directly caused the problems of education today, it has at least been a co-producer. The tragedy consists in the fact that it is the success of education that creates its problems.

B: That the educational perspective has been dislocated: from teaching to learning, and from care to development, which opens the door to a libertine educational perspective. What is encouraging, however, is that *society* is promoting – although it is still not determining – the development of a libertine *educational perspective*. Such a thing can and will be devised.

C: That social analytics can be a *philosophy* for this tendency in education. Even though this sub-thesis may appear trivial, it is by no means the case. My ambition is to provide a philosophy for education that serves society.

D: That social analytics can diagnose the loss of joy that is the consequence of today's tendencies in education and, as a tonic, recommend a remedy – namely, a speculation about the respect that unfolds a tragic philosophy of deference. The thesis is – one more time – that education as a profession is subject to a loss of joy and an excludedness, that is, a feeling of irrelevance.

Theses A and B are the diagnosis (presentation of the case), thesis C is the interpretive construction (the analogy), and thesis D is the constructive interpretation (regimentation).¹

My attempt at gaining an understanding consists of a construction of a problematic that is constituted by a series of linked *theses* for which my presentation will offer *authority*. The approach of the theses is this: that the problems of education are education's, i.e. the tragic feature that its success leads to its problems. This discourse on learning promotes what I call a libertine educational perspective. I will analyze and demonstrate this tendency and offer a tonic in the form of a speculation about respect in order to form a basis for proposing ideas for a less joyless education.

Mutual defiance

When I first began my speculation about the phenomenon of respect, I was not conscious that shifting from the history of ideas to a cultural exploration of the

¹ Cf. The analytic pact in Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Filosofierende eksperimenter, D-I*, op. cit., pp. 67ff. My intention is not to clarify the theses one by one but to thematicize them in one and the same problematic. Stylistically, this will imply a certain redundancy, but the redundancy also alludes to the category of commonness.

philosophy of education would shift my perspective. Therefore, my treatise here will be an example – among many possible others of course – of what can be understood as the discipline of the ‘philosophy of education’ today, in particular at the Danish University of Education (DPU), a new university established in 2000. For me, it has to do with a *philosophizing* directed toward the field of education to help transform ideas from philosophy and the history of ideas into a practical education of relevance for today. I do not discuss explicitly here the schooling that must exist in order to implement such philosophizing, but its agenda is, of course, implicated in my presentation.

The treatise’s demonstrative *claim* is that the social-analytic perspective practices a philosophy that can *offer* education a way of thinking that makes it capable of serving society. Social analytics can be a philosophy *for* education and not a philosophy of education.

A way of thinking is by definition dogmatic. There is *no* such thing as free thought – but you can *relate* more or less freely to your premises. Herein lies the path to joyfulness [*lystigheden*]. The relational form is decisive and that is why I claim that the Danish language has certain advantages in its prepositions.² We possess certain advantages; and I would like to illustrate how from the idea that the social self can be made problematic as a relation that relates to itself [*forholdsforhold*].³

2 See Paul Diderichsen, *Elementær Dansk Grammatik*, Copenhagen, 1974, p. 71.

3 Since the perspective cannot avoid standing in relation to popular – theoretical as well as practical – talk about ‘relationships’ [*relationer*], an explanation is already required at this point as to why the social analytic perspective has not compliantly surrendered to this horizon: Social analytics perseveres undaunted with the category ‘relations’ [*forhold*]. Relationships [*re-lationer*] connect things mutually, just as re-ligion holds things together, while relations relate to relations [*forbold forbolder forhold*]. In Danish, you can *forbolde* (relate), *underbolde* (entertain), *overbolde* (obey), *afbolde* (arrange), *tilbolde* (train), *medbolde* (empathize), and *vedbolde* (maintain) (and, furthermore, you can *bolde i, mellem, fra, ad, bos, gennem, efter, mod* [idioms using a variety of Danish prepositions]). In short, what the perspective uses the category ‘socials’ (‘positioned-ness’ [*stilletbed*] or more precisely ‘attitude’ [*boldning*])

Specifically, a series of theses is proposed, the effectiveness of which are tested. That is, what effect does it have to pursue this line of thinking? Does this philosophical endeavor have any effect on the education to be conducted? This has more to do with constructing a problematic than proving or consolidating a hypothesis. The problematic's interpretive construction displays the result itself.

If I had been a French writer, the title of this treatise, all other things being equal, would have been: *Pour une philosophie de la déférence*. Deference, in this treatise, signals reverential respect for what is venerable. In English, the title could have been: *On the Category of Respect with Constant Reference to Educational Concerns*.

My intent is to construct a problematic *for* education that replaces the problematic of recognition with a problematic of deference. That is, with a problematic that deals with respect; not respect for the other, but respect for the *difference* to the other. 'Respect' is at present linked to a problematic that has to do with *recognition* and, above all, *mutuality*, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the street-level brutalization of the phenomenon. The deference problematic uses 'respect' as a differentiation and thus as 'a deference,' i.e., a person who does not require mutuality. This sort of philosophical problematic may also eventually have an effect on street-level education. New categories can only appear in the light of existing categories and are justified by the fact that the old cannot denote the new phenomena. Thus, we can speak of an *intervention* that, if possible, could encourage a shift away from dialectical, dialogical and equality-oriented education to a *tragic*, respect-commanding and libertine-oriented education.

[Trans. note: With the term 'socials,' Schmidt is making a conscious parallel to Heidegger's 'existentials'] about, can be set forth in reference to prepositions and verbs or verbal forms. The methodological principle is precisely not to treat social relations as things but *to treat things as social relations*. Thus, interpretation. And thus: There are only co-relationships. As we shall describe in the following, this feature is a counter to Marxism's idea that social relations are made into things and to sociology's – or rather its Durkheimian – initial conception that social relations can be viewed as things.

The end of methodology

My presentation will not be introduced by the traditional methodological considerations. I will sum up a particular perspective's view of the 'state of the art' through a diagnosis that comprehends tendencies in the field of education with the help of a theoretical perspective that is more or less presupposed but can be documented on a running basis and developed throughout the presentation. The analysis endeavors to be theory-generating. This aspect calls for a new educational perspective. It is an educational perspective that we have on repeated occasions denoted here as libertine. Not that we are enthusiastic about this phenomenon; it is simply the supporting *thesis* that the *tendency* – i.e., the often repeated tendency in the diagnosis of our times – heralds such a thing. There is an underground connection between this and the ideas surrounding a 'minima didactica.'

As an introduction, a reader's guide presumably has its place. Even though the thesis may look strained with its emphasis on prepositions (see the table of contents), it is – to the trained eye – not unrecognizable as an *analytic strategy*.

Chapters I and II set forth, in principle, the *thesis* of the treatise. Chapter III is identical to a *theoretical* and *methodological* section. Chapters IV, V and VI construe the treatise's *case*, and Chapters VII and VIII are the *diagnosis*; finally Chapters IX, X and XI are ideas for a different educational perspective, in which it is insisted that education must *also* be borne by engaging ideas: without ideas, no enthusiasm. This is, at the very least, the idea behind the construction. Contradiction in expression may be attributed to the history of the manuscript. It would be nice for a thought process to be consistent.⁴

Instead of a strained critique of dialectical education and dialogical education and their rapprochements, we must make an effort to conceive a different philosophy of modern education that can serve a different form of education with a view toward a different society.

4 An account of the analytic strategy and its transformation of the traditional treatise may be found in Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Filosoferende eksperimenter, D-I*, Copenhagen 1999.

The social-analytic perspective has already been well-described through a series of treatises over the past few decades, which is why – to the extent possible – there will be no repetition of arguments that seem sufficiently developed in earlier versions. The perspective will be used to recapitulate *diagnoses of contemporary times*. That is, to consider our times as the past of the future by analyzing prevailing tendencies; this has to do with the origin of these tendencies in a social encounter of the past and the present and an omen of possible consequences in the present and the future. Thus, I am building directly on *Diagnosis I-III* (1999).

The perspective appears in a particular vocabulary and a series of categories – including, in particular, designations, maps and tables. Consequently, the treatise will be introduced with a short account of the interpretation of a map. Maps are by definition not abstruse. They are something you ‘put on the table.’ Their order and constellations can portend something opaque that opposes interpretation. The vocabulary of social analytics may seem opaque. This may be due to my failings as a writer. And then it’s just too bad. But it could also be a tragic condition for a way of thinking that does not embellish on a recognized tradition and only allows itself to be discerned in small bits, indeed, as small bits.

My presentation should be able to stand on its own. A certain familiarity with my perspective, however, would not be a drawback – thus, there are repeated references to earlier analyses. My exposition also contains a distilled account of some positions from the social-analytic perspective.

Edgar Allen Poe once referred to a book with the sentence: ‘It can’t be read.’⁵ I would like to be read, but the text lives its own life. If it turns out that it cannot be read, then, unfortunately, it cannot be judged. The approach requires a little patience – perhaps, even some good will – in short, *indulgence*. Hope is out there.

True to tradition, I have used in the treatise the ‘royal we’ as subject. With this stylistic feature, we indicate the nature of a proposal, i.e., the invitation is open to

5 Edgar Allan Poe: *The Man of the Crowd* in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, Vol IV*, New York, 2009 (1840), p. 159.

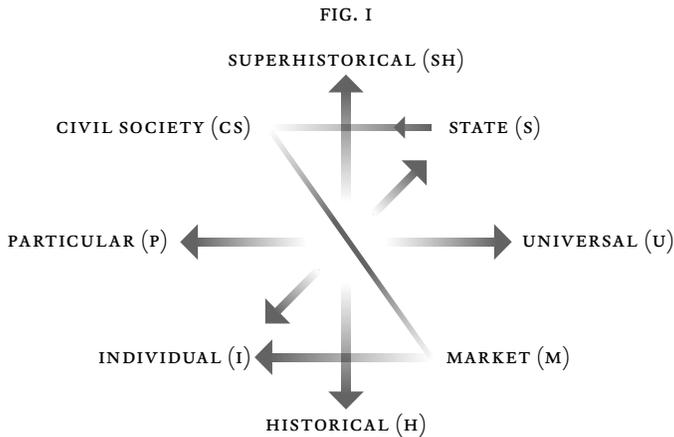
commonness.⁶ Furthermore, this choice is grounded in the fact that the ideas and theses have been discussed with my wife Kirsten Skov Jakobsen (called Stinne or Kisse; her heart broken before our time was up). And they have been presented to the participants in the seminars of the Social Analytic Society, and most of them have been discussed by the editors of the university magazine *Asterisk*, whose editorial work is generated on the basis of social-analytic maps. This is the last time I will allow myself to say social analytics, since so many related ideas are in circulation.

The treatise's ineradicable redundancy and countless self-references are not put here to irritate the reader but to serve the same purpose as the use of the royal we. Here, I am fishing 'sans comparaison' – like another Nietzsche – for 'the new philosophers.'⁷ For my part, it is simply looking for *readers*, not for the redemption of women or young men but for ordinary supporters – few as they may be. Different ones.

6 The category 'commonness' and the phenomenon's historical articulation as 'communality' and 'universality' simply constitutes the perspective's theoretical object. Cf. Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Det social selv*, Århus, 1980.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von gut und böse* in *Werke* II, Frankfurt, 1962 (1887), p. 661ff. As readers, we are anglers (see Plato, *Theatetus* (Stephanus no. 200C), cf. *The Sophist* (220A and 210A))

II: INTERMEZZO: THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD [*SKIFTEDAGEN*] OR THE HEGEMONIKON OF PERSONHOOD



Even though it can all be said this briefly,⁸ with the arch-map, it requires a much longer and slower account – a meaningful narrative.

Actually, there is nothing to *reveal*, but it would be worth the trouble to ask an expert map reader. “It is one thing to understand a sea chart, something else to steer a ship,” an old saying goes.⁹ However, the first problem is to understand what a map is. Where this leads can be surprising. The first problem is thus not

8 Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Pædagogiske forhold, Diagnosis III*, Copenhagen, 1999, p. 312.

9 Ludvig Holberg, *Den Politiske Kandestøber in Værker i tolv Bind*, Copenhagen, 1969, ff, B.3, p. 82.

really the problem.¹⁰ The *thesis* can be briefly formulated in this way: the *tendency* of our times consists of a displacement in emphasis in the *domains* on the chart's right side toward the left (from SM to CSI, and that the conflict shifts from being between CS and M to the predominance of a new conflict between S and I; and that the conflict is not experienced as such, because I and M (2nd order) is articulated through CS and S (1st order), and the shift between the upper and the lower opposition is not experienced, covered up by a hegemonic idea. A new problematic is described, in short, in the vocabulary of an antiquated problematic. The *problematic of personhood* must be denoted by this.

10 For an argument for the arch-map, reference is made to *Diagnosis*, op. cit., where the transition from historical value relations to social control relations with affiliated domains is elaborated. The specificity and logicity of the arch-map is thematicized as opposed to a number of other theories. The arch-map can and will become more detailed in later maps. In figure 1, the inner hexagram shows the tendency of the displacement of focus. The predominant opposition is between I and S, and the current tendency between M and I, the inferior or secondary opposition between CS and M.

III: EXPLORING IN A MAP

The earliest maps we know of today are around 6000 years old: Babylonian clay tablets that served the practical purpose of mapping out fields. Map technology has developed since then, but its goals are still practical. The heroes of cartography were those who created maps from their experience so they could be used by others. Above all, those who prepared medieval sea charts, the so-called ‘portolan charts,’ navigation charts, deserve to be highlighted. They were mostly concerned with course and distance. Their practical experience later became a technology we all make use of. Maps are – one should believe – quite practical. We cannot get on without maps.

The social-analytic perspective makes use of many maps. Not theoretical models. We have introduced our account by showing it in map form. There is a family resemblance between the many configured maps by which we will be guided in the following, and an arch-map can be drawn, but the fact that the maps resemble each other must also be seen in the light of family resemblances.¹¹

11 It need hardly be noted more demonstratively that ‘family resemblances’ is an allusion to Wittgenstein’s use of language games in *Philosophical Investigations* § 64. Moreover, it is Nietzsche who brings the category *Familien Ähnlichkeit* to philosophy (see *Götzen-Dämmerung*, in *Werke* II, p. 960). Nietzsche refers here to genealogy.

It seems useful to bring in an allusion to Wittgenstein, because most commentators swiftly trace Nietzsche’s understanding of genealogy back to philology’s search for the ur-text and the ur-language in the second half of the 1800s. One of the more significant examples is Jürgen Habermas in “*Die Verschlingung von Mythos und Aufklärung*.” Bohrer (Hrsg), *Mythos und Moderne*, Frankfurt, 1983.

In the interpretation of social analytics, something else applies. Genealogy is the critique of “Urheber” metaphysics (see Lars-Henrik Schmidt, *Den sociale excorsisme*, Århus, 1988).