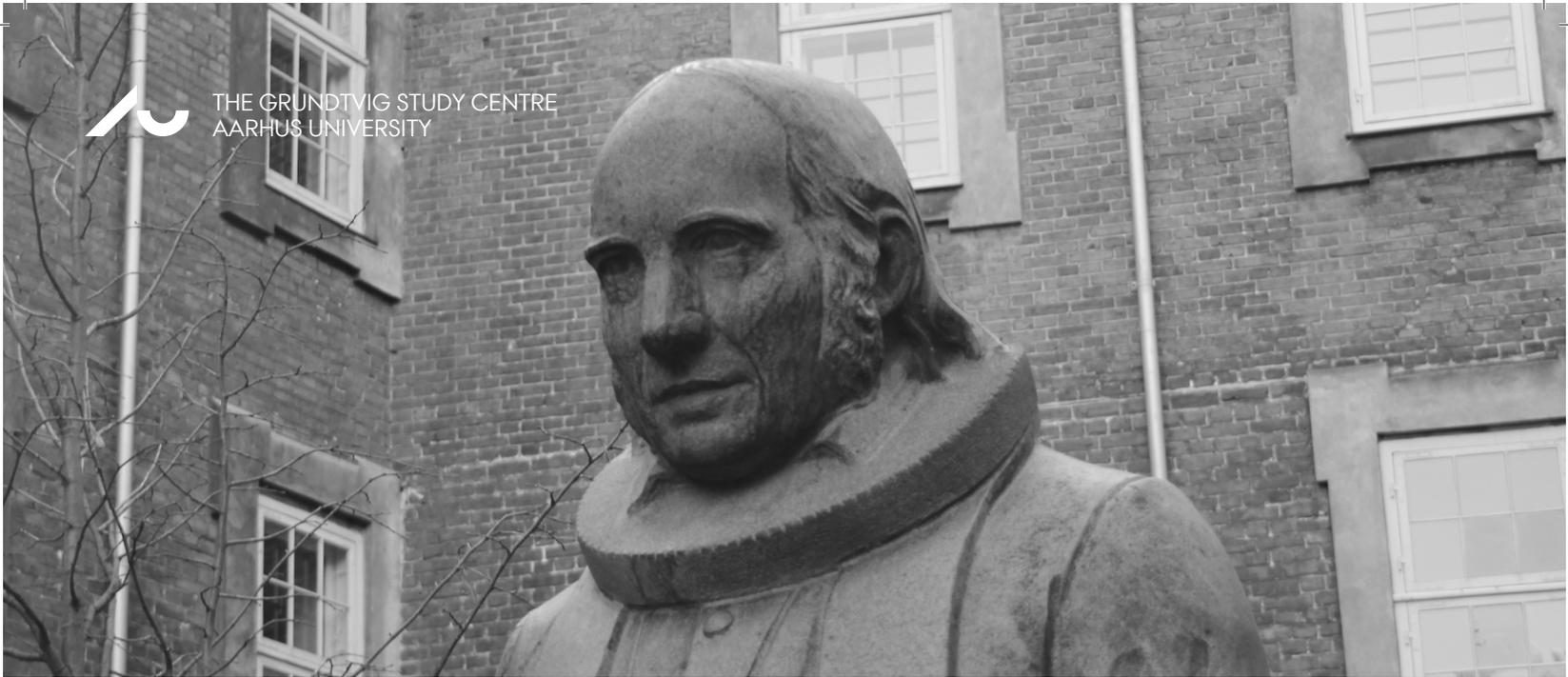




THE GRUNDTVIG STUDY CENTRE
AARHUS UNIVERSITY



Grundtvig in transnational exchange



List of participants

University of Cape Town:

Ra Tiedemann-Nkabinde
Muhammad Zakaria Asmal
Lee-Shae Logan Scharnick
Abdulkader Ismai Tayob



University of Hamburg:

Gordon Mitchell
Juliane Tutein
Sadiq Rahman
Harry Hauber
Ise Gainza
Hamida Behr



University of Aarhus:

Ove Korsgaard
Jes Fabricius Møller
Katrine Frøkjær Bauunvig
Tina Langholm Larsen
Edward Broadbridge
Michael Schelde



Facilitator: Prof. Dr. Gordon Mitchell and Gertrud Yde Iversen

Curator: Gertrud Yde Iversen

Photos: Abdulkader Ismai Tayob: 16,17

Sadiq Rahman: 1,3,11,12,13,14,19

Sofie Amalie Klougart: 2,4,8,9,10,15,18,20

Host: Michael Schelde



Grundtvig in transnational exchange

The world has gone global. Technology, economy, human beings mingle on an international and global scale. But we haven't gone global without clashes. Clashes between political systems, clashes between economic systems and clashes between cultures.

Grundtvig was not 'international' the way we understand it today. He did visit the UK and Norway but mainly he stayed within the ramparts of the city of Copenhagen.

But although he was a resident of Copenhagen he did reflect the time of changes from the French revolution with its total transformation of society and the consequences of the new understanding of the people, the state, and nation. Grundtvig himself called it the transformation from the age of the estates to the age of the people.

In this transformation Grundtvig developed different tools to help the commoners play a new role as a people in society. A new understanding of the Church and the role of the Bible, of education and especially the education of the people, and a new understanding of poetry, songs and hymns, as well as of the body and body-culture.

We started out with various quotations from Grundtvig – see page 4 – and framed them within the different understanding and different kind of experience concerning Nation Building and National Identity as developed in South African, Germany, and Denmark.

We brought the perspective to an actual context, where Nation- and State Building and National Identity have become central in a more global world in which trade, information technology, knowledge dissemination have already for years been global. The question during the seminar was how the contemporary context of religious and ethnic diversity as well as global flows of culture and capitalism can change the mediation of Grundtvig's ideas and his legacy.

Professor Abdulkader Tayob,
University of Cape Town

Professor Gordon Mitchell,
University of Hamburg

Michael Schelde, Centre Director,
The Grundtvig Study Centre, Aarhus University

The program

- Introduction by Michael Schelde
- Building the Nation – perspectives on Nation-building as a continuing process by Ove Korsgaard
- (Post-)modern challenges to social cohesion in Denmark - a historical perspective on contemporary problems by Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig

The Danish case

- From the age of the estates to the age of the people by Ove Korsgaard
- Manuals of collective effervescence: Grundtvig on synchronicity and social identity by Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig
- Grundtvig's Hymns, Songs, and Poems as building-bricks for 'a people' by Edward Broadbridge

The South African case

- Religion Education Policy and Conflict over Religious Performance in Post-Apartheid Schools by Abdulkader Tayob
- Religion and Public Broadcasting in SA: From social control to social transformation, between public hegemony and public pedagogy by Lee Scharnick-Udemans
- The role of religion in the writings of South African Black Consciousness (BC) by Muhammad Zakaria Asmal
- Rainbow finance: the case of Islamic banking and finance in South Africa by Ra Tiedemann-Nkabinde

The German case

- Hyphenated Hamburgers. Memory, Identity and Cultural Performance in Germany by Gordon Mitchell & Sadiq Rahman.



Grundtvig quotations

Of a 'people'
all are members
who regard
themselves as such.
(1848)

It has been well contended:
No man has comprehended
what first he did not love!
(1834)

In this lies our wealth,
on this tenet we draw:
that few are too rich,
and still fewer too
poor.
(1820)

Freedom our watchword
must be in the North!
Freedom for Loki as well
as for Thor.
(1832)

Man is not an ape, destined
first to ape the other animals
and then himself
until the world's end.
Rather is he a divine experiment
showing how spirit and dust
can permeate one another
and be transfigured into
a common divine consciousness.
(1832)

Human comes first,
and Christian next!
for that is life's true
order.
(1837)

...I am not only royally minded,
but more recently I have noticed
that I am more so than I ever realized
myself! Now it is no longer enough
just to have a king, now I would like
to be a little king myself and see nothing
but small kings around me, provided we
have learned the noblest of all arts:
the royal art of controlling oneself.
(1848)

Arts-based inquiry

Part of the seminar was structured within the framework of Arts-based inquiry.

The arts-based inquiry can take the form of poetry, storytelling, photo-art or theatre. A broad structure is the “Spirals of Dialogue”:

The metaphor of a spiral emphasizes the tentative and ongoing nature of inquiry. Learning is in experiences, which unsettle assumptions. Important, therefore, are interactions between people who are very different from each other. And equal status contact is best ensured when the activities are equally unfamiliar and structured to challenge each individual. The creative arts can be such a venue. The process of inquiry is in three activity stages: research, exhibition, and reflection.

1. Research

“I see something I don’t understand, and make a film in order to understand it.” (Kim Ki-duk)

An art school format offers an opportunity to produce individual work while interacting with others. From the start participants know that they will be producing art for exhibition, and that this will involve research of oneself in relation to a given theme. Working concepts are developed, individually or in groups. Some practice in stage performance can help people to become familiar with slipping in and out of roles. The place in front of the camera becomes a travelling stage where it is possible to experiment with different ways of being.

2. Exhibition

“To fail as a human being is to accept somebody else’s description of oneself.” (Nietzsche)

The stage is a place where it is possible to suspend for a while the normal way of doing things. Art offers a way of revealing and of hiding. The activity of conceptualising, producing, and exhibiting one’s own work is usually accompanied by a degree of thought and emotion. Anticipation about how different audiences might respond is never far off. Writing a text which offers one’s own interpretation may help to consolidate the experience, but once public, a picture takes on a life of its own and can be interpreted in many ways.

3. Reflection

“We do not learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience.” (Dewey)

An understanding of research which views participants as subjects, and not as objects of research, means that reflection becomes a major part of any learning. Towards the end, photographs of group processes taken during the workshop can be used to explore how people were feeling and thinking at different points. The art works themselves are an ongoing reminder of moments of uncertainty and courage, warmth and alienation. Such exercises in abstraction and synthesis are more than routine impact evaluation, they are central to the workshop itself. Where possible, reference to theoretical literature, is for students a recognizable distancing device. Discussion in relation to texts, which they had been required to read beforehand, occurs then in a clearly demarcated theoretical space.

Quotes on art-based learning

“I see something I don’t understand, and make a film in order to understand it.”

(Kim Ki-duk, South Korean Filmmaker)

“Art enhances, prolongs and purifies the perceptual experience.”

(John Dewey, *Experience, Nature and Art*, 1954)

“If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist.” (John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 1934).

“The only truly safe place I have ever known in this world in this life that I have lived was at the centre of a story as its teller.” (Athol Fugard)



Projects presented

1. ‘Grundtvig Unwrapped’. Participants wrapped the Vartov statue of Grundtvig in white sheets, to which they pinned Grundtvig quotations. As they did so, Grundtvig’s words were spoken by a reader. The sheets were then unpinned and as each quotation was taken off, it was chanted by the group and the audience.
2. ‘Freedom is the best gold’. It contained film and acting around the Freedom Pillar in Copenhagen, solo and joint poetry reading, slogan shouting, acting, singing, democratic walking, dancing and drumming.
3. ‘Grundtvig for India: Grundtvig in Translation’. A videodrama in which a Danish researcher (female) has a Hindu friend, Radha, who is not allowed to marry her Muslim boyfriend, Muhammad. The Dane consults the Vartov statue of Grundtvig and Grundtvig is reincarnated. He preaches love and tolerance from the Vartov pulpit, and the audience are left to assume that his good advice is followed.

Reflections on central quotes of N.F.S. Grundtvig from the perspective of South Africa and Germany: Freedom

Freedom our watchword must be in the North!
Freedom for Loki as well as Freedom for Thor.

“Freedom our watchword must be in the North! Freedom for Loki as well as Freedom for Thor” is underwritten by a wonderful sentiment; freedom for all, regardless of who they are and what role they play

in society. The quote for me compels us to critically engage with the concept of freedom, the underlying foundation of modern Western democracy and question how and by whom freedom is made material in the contemporary age. Through this line of analysis we are also forced to consider who is included and excluded and what on what grounds, through the national-building process”. LS Scharnick-Udemans, University of Cape Town.



Reflections

Of a 'people' all are members
who regard themselves as such. (1848)

“These statements speak to the politics of identity and the politics of belonging.

Citizenship is relatively easy to understand, in some cases it is a birth-right, in other cases it is a status that can be attained through administrative processes. Grundtvig’s work presents Danish citizenship or at least Danish identity as something that is unique and desirable. To be a part of the Danish national family is to be neither too rich nor too poor and to be surrounded by this kind of equality in your everyday life. But however lovely the thought, in contemporary times regarding yourself as part of people does not *make* you a part of that people.” LS Scharnick-Udemans, University of Cape Town.

“Similarly, when Grundtvig says that all are ‘of a people’ if they regard themselves as such, does this mean that new people entering Danish society will have to leave all vestiges of their cultural and other identities behind and fully integrate into Danish society and accept its cultural norms? These are of course tricky questions that scholars of religion and theologians deal with regularly.” MZ Asmal, University of Cape Town.



Reflections

Of a 'people' all are members
who regard themselves as such. (1848)

“This is a beautiful, idealistic statement. In reality in many societies this is not the case though. Looking at the case of Germany, gaining citizenship is a long process and comes with tests of knowledge and attitude. One is only allowed to apply for citizenship after three years of full employment. In Germany there is a population of 80.9 million people in 2014, and 8.2 million of these do not hold a German passport. This is the highest number of non-German passport-holders in Germany since records started in 1967. When one is granted German citizenship, the former passport has to be abandoned. Dual citizenship is not permitted. These insights show how belonging to a people is highly restricted in Germany. The sense of belonging of the individual to the people of Germany is only a small, romantic aspect of the matter. The rights to settle, to vote, to use social services, are not gained by will-power but by following a long legal path.” Hamida Behr, University of Hamburg.

“As a German I am aware that I have a quite **BROKEN** relationship to being part of a people that brought so many sorrows in not too far away history upon other people. On the other hand the German nation has so many thinkers, artists and scientists that brought **ENLIGHTENMENT** in the darkness of human consciousness...I consider myself more as a „Weltbürger“ as a global citizen, and with regard

to the environmental crisis we can't do other than to think global. What does it do to the world around me if I do this or leave that? That's the question. It was interesting to hear that GRUNDTVIG was a thinker and artist who reflected widely on what makes a society or a nation more human, like through economic justice. Harry Hauber, University of Hamburg.



Reflections

In this lies our wealth, on this tenet we draw:
that few are too rich, and still fewer too poor. (1820)

“While there is a conscious effort to dedicate departments to Grundtvig’s works in Denmark, the legacy of Mandela is being increasingly questioned in South Africa by youthful radical groupings that wish, rightly or wrongly, revise the narrative of South African nation-building. In real terms, while not much has changed in the economic conditions for the country’s poor majority, Mandela is being seen by some as a sell-out who allowed the continuing economic oppression

of blacks at the altar of a peaceful transition with merely formal equality and universal suffrage. Of course, others are seriously contesting this revision and we may still say with some certainty that Mandela, like Gandhi in India, is still regarded by most as the father of the nation. However, the lesson we get from this is that neat comparative analyses like Fukuyama’s, which lack analytical depth, simply cannot account for more dynamic and contextual factors. Would the Danish narrative change if they were not dealing with a wealthy and largely homogenous population where class and racial divides continue to polarize the country as in South Africa?” MZ Asmal, University of Cape Town.



Reflections

It has been well contended:
No man has comprehended
what first he did not love! (1834)

“Grundtvig’s commitment to democracy and social and economic justice was remarkable and the institutions he established, or was a catalyst for, have evidently shaped the Danish nation in a profound fashion. For me, it was Grundtvig’s commitment to broad-based education and his egalitarian ethos that shone through and these can stand as examples of transnational nation-building projects.”
Ra Tiedemann-Nkabinde,
University of Cape Town.



Reflections

Human comes first, and Christian next!
for that is life's true order. (1837)

“Moving on to another point that I raised in discussions, the difficulty when dealing with figures that almost transcend history, as with religion and holy books, is that their quotes are often open to differing interpretations. For example when Grundtvig says “Human comes first and Christian next”, does he mean man as in white Christian Dane, or can this be applied to foreigners, migrants and refugees?” MZ Asmal, University of Cape Town.

“One quotation turned out for our group on the second day of the workshop to be interesting to work with: “HUMAN comes first, and Christian next! For that is life's true order.” As the Danes told us, Grundtvig's quotations are used by opposite political parties, so why not wrap him i.e. his statue in the courtyard of Vartov (meaning: he is there in the Danish nation, but not really recognized). The “Wrapped Reichstag”, realized by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1995 is an art-based method to rethink and reset the meanings of a building that influenced the modern German nation in profound ways.” Harry Hauber, University of Hamburg.



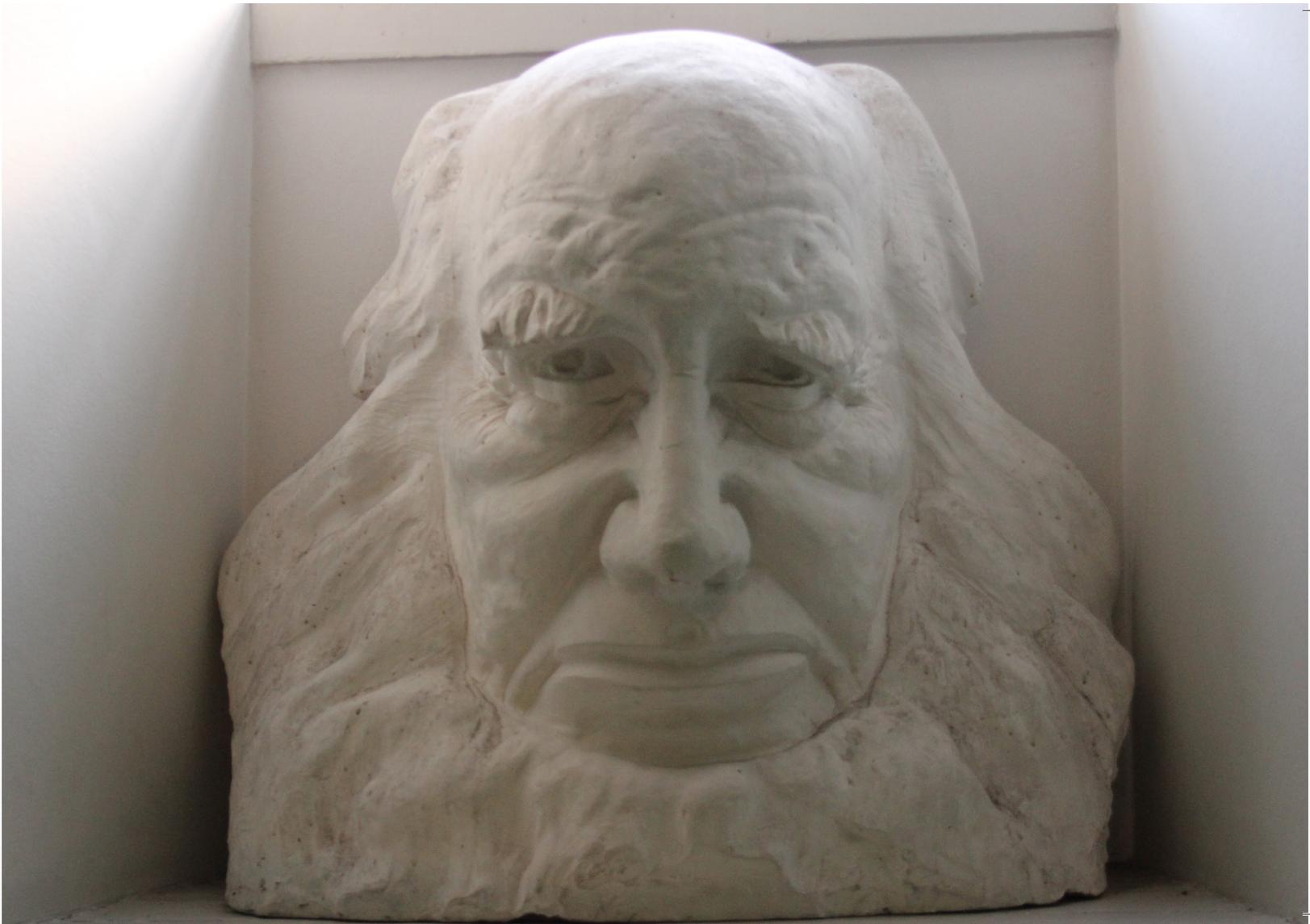
Reflections

...I am not only royally minded, but more recently I have noticed that I am more so than I ever realized myself! Now it is no longer enough just to have a king, now I would like to be a little king myself and see nothing but small kings around me, provided we have learned the noblest of all arts: the royal art of controlling oneself. (1848)

“There is a crack, a crack in everything
That’s how the light gets in”.

This quote of Leonard Cohen came back to me several times throughout the Copenhagen Convention, when I reflected on Grundtvig in transnational exchange and heard the lectures on NATION-building... It was interesting to hear about Grundtvig’s own cracked biography, like leaving his hometown and father, or the censorship upon him etc., so there are obviously many chances for the light to get in, as it shines through his hymns, poems, sermons and the more than 35,000 pages he wrote.” Harry Hauber, University of Hamburg.





The People's Walk

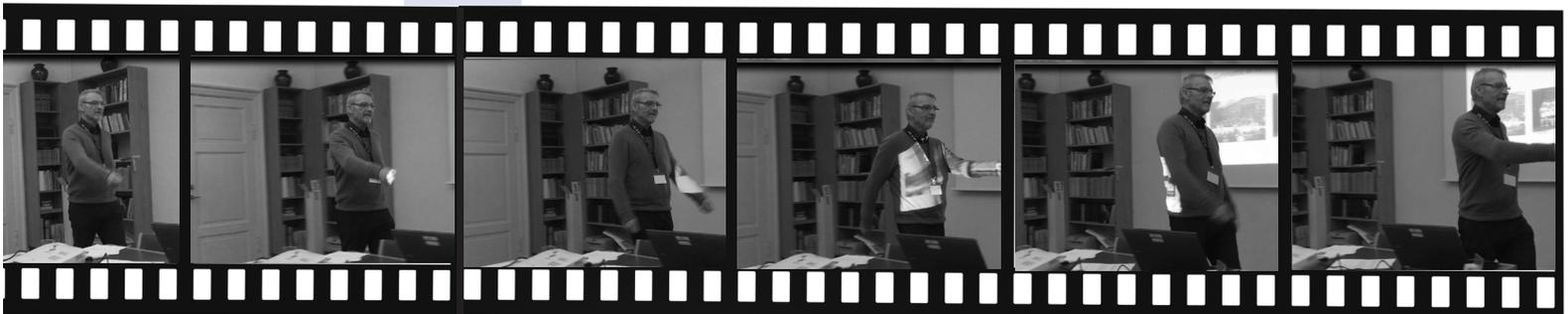
Swedish 'Ling' gymnastics was created by Per Henrik Ling (1776-1839). It is also known in Denmark as 'people's gymnastics', and 'the people's walk' was once an important discipline in every gymnastics lesson. In *Basic Gymnastics or Primitive Gymnastics* (1924) Niels Bukh writes about how to walk: "When working on how to walk free, we must use all means to achieve a free, bold, and compelling element in posture and movement. Guidance may be given in the bearing of the torso, shoulders, and neck, but freedom must always be the essential motivator. The goal is to make the natural gait of the team uniform and attractive, and this cannot be achieved before the pupils' daily walk outside the gymnasium is characterised by beauty and freedom."



Democratic Walking

It was the anti-democratic ideologies under dictatorships in the inter-war period, primarily fascism and Nazism, which formed the background for the formulation of democracy as an educational concept and concern in Denmark. The new emphasis on the relation between democracy and education was closely linked to a more comprehensive shift from a narrow to a broad understanding of democracy. For instance, Poul Henningsen, an architect and social commentator, proposed that a distinction should be drawn between a political, a legal, an economic, a cultural, and an educational concept of democracy. So the shift was from democracy as a government form to democracy as a life form. For him, art was a means to promote a democratic way of life. Clarifying his ideas for a democratic way of life he refers to the world of fashion: “The less rigorous the fashion – i.e. the more opportunities it offers for each person to dress according to their own type – the more democratic it may be called.”

Already in 1938 Poul Henningsen used jazz as an image of what he understood by ‘democratic culture’: “If one asks a jazz composer to write a modern march, he will answer no, for negroes do not walk in step when walking together; each walks with his natural gait. Yet they have a greater sense of rhythm than we Europeans do with our strict time. This is a good image of the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy from a cultural point of view. It is so easy to find the faith when one walks in step. This makes somewhat greater demands on a person’s individuality to preserve a natural way of walking and still feel one is a loner in a unity” (quoted from Niels Peter Skou: ‘From Social Building to New Personality Formation’ in Poul Henningsen 1921-1955. PhD thesis, South Danish University 2010:212). Ove Korsgaard



Singing as a tool for synchronizing and social identity within the people

“...I have been an admirer of the acts of Providence for too long to think that anything actually comes either too soon or too late, and I know enough about the laws of human nature to realize that nothing new ever occurs in the daily lives of the major nations unless it has been preceded poetically.”The song builds and touches us, much less the psalm itself considered, than the church’s fervent participation in it.” N.F.S. Grundtvig.

The song is the center of liturgical poetry. This is the place for the union of all that man is able to create as being splendid and noble. Poetry presents itself clothed in harmonic verses, resting on melodic rhyme, and elevated by growing music. High above the earth we will be raised and a glimpse of the eternal life will float before our eyes, fixed on the sky. Alas! Only seldom does this happen, and what is the reason for this? ... As long as the majority of choirmasters have a lot to learn from bleaters and Peer Degn, even the most magnificent of hymns would lose their allure and be a source from which sluggishness and not deep emotion emanate. Grundtvig was eventually to abandon this strictly aesthetic assessment. Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig.



This 3-nation arts-based inquiry on Grundtvig broke new ground and discovered fertile soil. Grundtvig was so actively involved in life that he touched society at many points, as this brief booklet notes. So in converting some of his many messages into art (in the broadest sense of the word!) we saw a wrapped-around Grundtvig statue with famous quotes, we learned upper-class, middle-class, and lower-class walking, we heard of Grundtvig as an Indian marriage adviser, and we filmed him at the Freedom Pillar, where he briefed us and the passing cyclists on the benefits of democracy. Finally, we sang and danced his famous rock and roll hit, What is it, my Marie? An arts-based inquiry is not an ideas-based conference, but a deeds-based collaboration that strips away all formality and invites participants to learn by doing. One of Grundtvig's favourite words was *vexelvirkning* or 'interplay', which he applied among others to the interplay between parent and child, between teacher and student, between singing and listening, between the spoken and the written word, and through his spiritual presence, between Germans, South Africans, and Danes, gathered in Copenhagen. Edward Broadbridge.





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The Centre is also responsible for an ongoing critical edition of Grundtvig's Works - see www.grundtvigsvaerker.dk. (in Danish) as they were published in his lifetime. The Centre supports research focusing on all areas that are of interest in Grundtvig studies, including comparative research initiatives that offer new perspectives on Grundtvig's ideas as well as supporting knowledge transfer, education, and dissemination of his work.