

'Writing & Fighting - introducing the theme'

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I have called my introduction to our theme today for 'Writing and Fighting'. That describes the experience many of us have, that it can be hard to formulate ones thoughts and get them on paper. Sometimes it takes the character of a fight with or into a world of words and expressions. To couple them or should I – with Nick Barwick's paper in mind - say copulate them into nice sentences with clear and sometimes even rich meanings.

That is the intension, but very often the screen remains blank or becomes filled with sentences you have written once before. Especially when you are going to write in another language than your native, you constantly find yourself using the same words and expressions, which don't cover what you mean or even worse – what you feel.

Undoubtly, many writers and essayists have this kind of struggle. For some writers it takes the character of an additional struggle with unconscious forces.

The first writer, I will mention, is a man with a unique ability to observe and describe Nature. In his later years he became a seaman and eventually a captain. He showed unique skills in painting with words pictures of people, their passions and dreams.

He has made the following statement about his writing:

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"My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, above all, to make you see. That - and no more, and it is everything"
Joseph Conrad, 1897.

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Joseph Conrad, August Strindberg and Sigmund Freud twenty years later were influential to a Danish writer Alex Nielsen, who we can see here in the centre, - 4 years old surrounded by the rest of his family.

He grew up in a working-class milieu. The family was poor, but still better off than many of the families in the neighbourhood. His father was a foreman in a factory and the chairman of the local temperance movement.

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Here is the family house situated in Nykoebing Mors, the biggest town on an island in Limfjorden, Jutland. Aksel is standing to the left.

Although quite silent in his early age, he was to be not very happy in his family, leaving it early.

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The young man grew up and was rebellious, restless, in opposition, what we would call maladaptive in many ways. He was a wanderer and took hire on a schooner going to Newfoundland, where he deserted and was employed as a lumber jack worker for some time. He returned to Denmark and eventually went ashore trying to settle down.

He began writing, which he understood as destined. He became relentless in his endeavour to recollect or call to mind 'the truth', that was to be sincere about feelings and thoughts.

He was critical of the local society, which he regarded and named as stupid, not in the sense of being unintelligent, but in the sense of creating narrow minded delusions about people. He criticized and all most hated the bourgeoisie and the mob, which he accused of being hostile and trying to put people down and take away their exceptional skills.

No doubt Axel Nielsen in his novels drew upon his own experiences first and foremost driven by an intense uneasiness with authorities and regulations. Very often he was mistrustful, awkward, gloomy, isolated and by one of his sons described as a not very present father.

In 1930 he left Denmark and settled down in Norway, where he changed his name to Aksel Sandemose.

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As a writer and journalist he was often involved in the discussion of moral and ethical issues concerning ordinary life writing columns in newspapers. He was intensely against the Nazi movement and regarded people who joined the movement as stupid and inferior.

He had throughout his life a drinking problem, which eventually took his life in 1965.

Sandemose wrote about 25 novels, not all glorious titles, but all of them trying to reveal the true nature of the human mind. For example he was very interested in dream interpretation.

After finishing the novel 'The vanishing is a Dream', he writes: "I must again realize that the only thing that lives under my pen is the attempt to solve my own problems".

I myself read his books, when I was seventeen. Except for one book, I don't remember much of his authorship. I think, I must realize that what was going on under my eyes at that time was trying to solve my own problems.

I don't think that Axel Sandemose would be in this introduction at all, if it was not for the fact, that he very concretely has described an aspect of the Danish personality, namely the feeling

of inferiority, a disbelief in self confidence and the Danish habit of bringing down the self-esteem in others.

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Probably inspired by some of the dictums from the temperance movement, he wrote the 'Law of Jante':

- §1. You shall not believe that you are somebody.
- §2. You shall not believe that you are as worthy as us.
- §3. You shall not believe that you are any wiser than us.
- §4. You shall not imagine that you are any better than us.
- §5. You shall not believe that you know anything more than us.
- §6. You shall not believe that you are more than us.
- §7. You shall not believe that you are good at anything.
- §8. You shall not laugh at us.
- §9. You shall not believe that anyone cares about you.
- §10. You shall not believe that you can teach us anything.

After a meeting of reconciliation in Nykoebing Mors in Sandemoses last year 1965, where he met with the citizens, he had criticized so heavily, the town made a little table with the ten commandments of the law of Jante.

In the Danish language 'Jante' is a designation for a 'little piece', a button or something like that, but in the novel it is the name of a town, which was actually not identified as Nykoebing Mors, Sandemoses home town.

During the years several towns in Jutland wrote Axel Sandemose and asked him, if it was their town, he had in mind, when he wrote about the law of Jante.

Some would claim this law to be universal, but I am not so sure.

I recently heard a lecture about the Danish writer HC Andersen and other Danish artists, which during many years in the 19th century travelled to Rome to work and be inspired, a period called 'The Golden Age' in Danish painting. The lecturer describes the contrast between the historic, life-enjoying, sensual, warm atmosphere in Rome, which contrasts so much the cold, flat, puritanical and depressive North.

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Some people think that the law of Jante is a law concerning social and sociological factors. We who are gathered here know that members of groups sometimes launch very envious attacks on individual persons who they bully and scapegoat.

However, the real playground for the Jante law is our inner world where the critical and sometimes persecuting relationships are played out. I think that Axel Sandemose all his life tried to escape his inner self persecuting objects, and was projecting them out onto others.

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Will the jurisdiction of the law include the candidates as they write their clinical paper?
Can they become somebody, even if they grow and separate from their training and teachers?

Thor Kristian will give us a good starting point for discussion of rules and regulations of this important and often neglected part of our training.

We will discuss how we can make progress in our writing process?

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I have learned that it is important to be able to imagine a success: To be able to visualize yourself actually presenting the paper or thesis.

Some discipline will also help.

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And guidance. By the way most of the writing in the cloisters was copying other documents!

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Some personal features will be needed.

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Unfortunately Nick Barwick was not able to participate, but as you know we have the opportunity to discuss his humorous and penetration paper of the psychological obstacles of writing.

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A waiting gratification, maybe like this

/Slide 16, same as 9/

The process of publishing scientifically is even longer.

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The editor of the Scandinavian Journal 'Matrix' Søren Aagaard will open his mind for us, and reveal how he balances the roles of birth helper and executor.

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Finally Isaura Neto from Lisbon will give us an example of a written clinical recording, to discuss the art of Notation and Journalizing.

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What an excellent menu, we have got here, and I have not mentioned the social programme at all.

Talmud and Chinese sayings suggest three important things to do in life. The results all have immortal character: Have a child, grow a tree and write a book

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Welcome.

