

Bergstedt, Bosse & Anna Herbert: Are the theoretical underpinnings and structure of the traditional monography conducive to the postmodern thesis. *Nordic Studies in Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 238–251. Oslo. ISSN 1891-5914.

In this article we argue that there are several similarities between the process of *Bildung* and the process of producing a modern monography. A short historical summary of *Bildung* and hermeneutics is given, followed by a discussion concerning the positioning and conceptualization of the individual within the process of *Bildung*, which is then criticized from a poststructuralist perspective, so as to suggest how the modern monography might be developed to include an alternative view. Here, knowledge is seen to arise from the interaction of both conscious and unconscious processes, implying the necessity for a different type of research which takes into account ruptures, gaps, inconsistencies and irregularities, as opposed to looking for meaning, unity and consistencies. Presenting examples of postmodern monographies, we argue that the modern thesis needs to expand and/or change to allow for these new modes of research to develop.

**Keywords:** bildung · monography · deconstruction · poststructural

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# Are the theoretical underpinnings and structure of the traditional monography conducive to the postmodern thesis?

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In this article, the concept of *Bildung* will be discussed as one of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern monography. We will argue that the tradition of *Bildung* informs the structure and shapes the content of the modern monography and that this is not conducive to the postmodern dissertation, especially when considering research using poststructural theories, such as those of Derrida and Lacan. We will discuss new possibilities and alternative structures for the postmodern thesis, using a variety of examples of current doctoral dissertations to illustrate these.

## The history of *Bildung*

The concept of *Bildung* has presented researchers with greater and greater theoretical and pedagogical challenges over time.

The cause of these challenges can be found in historical changes taking place within the field of philosophy and pedagogy. The theory of *Bildung* originates from the late 18th century. The concept emerged simultaneously as the political and governmental landscape went through several vicissitudes, progressing from monarchy to nation states and from autocracy to democracy, as a result of which the individual's *Bildung* and societies' *Bildung* simply became two sides of a coin.

Proponents of *Bildung* such as Johann Gottfried Herder, Immanuel Kant, Johannes Gottlieb Fichte and several others tried to create the foundation of a new type of interaction between the individual and society, as well as between the individual and the collective; Herder emphasizing the importance of society in this interaction and Fichte emphasizing the importance of the individual. This was done against a backdrop of concepts such as autonomy, self-government and individualism (Forster, 1998, p. 346 f.; Franco, 2001, p. 156 ff.; Barnard, 2003, p. 82). With Humboldt and Schleiermacher, *Bildung* became a technique of self, whereby the individual could control his/her own 'becoming' within the confines of the collective.

The neo humanist ideal of *Bildung* came to influence higher education in Germany. Humboldt, who in 1809 established the University of Berlin, was one of its main proponents, pushing through educational reforms according to this ideal. Here, subjects such as language, mathematics and history became central (Gustavsson, 1991; Fosslund, 2004). Johann Gottfried von Herder's approach was more socio-political; individual *Bildung* was important in so far as the collective experiences of *Bildung* resulted in the creation of a 'people' with a common destiny and identity. For Herder (2002), philosophy enables a description of how the individual develops into an organic unit, which

constantly works to realise its potential in terms of skills and capacities and which in turn drives social progress or social *Bildung*. Herder developed the methodological foundations for hermeneutics which later Schleiermacher came to build on.

During the first decades of the 19th century, hermeneutics threw off its theological shackles to become established as a general teaching of what it means to understand a text, another human being or a historical event. A methodology developed which was supposed to facilitate the interpretation of the subject behind the text. The aim here was to understand the writer's psyche and thereby achieve a greater understanding of the text at hand.

The comprehension of a text was thought to be achieved once an analysis of the text was seen in light of the author's life and as a part of the author's particular process of *Bildung* (in this analysis, an understanding of the author's culture and language was essential). It was hoped that such an analysis would enable the reader to reach a more in-depth picture of the life and aims of the author at hand. The mastermind behind this methodology was Friedrich Schleiermacher, who added a whole variety of concepts to the field of hermeneutics and *Bildung* such as the hermeneutic circle, preconception and intuition.

The hermeneutic circle is often described as the relationship between the whole and its segments in the analysis of a complete text. An understanding of the segments presupposes an understanding of the whole of the work and vice versa. Words are segments of the whole sentence, sentences are segments of a paragraph, the paragraph is a segment of a chapter, a chapter is a segment of a book etc. Not until an adequate understanding of the whole is achieved, can the meaning of the segments be comprehended in their entirety and the researcher considered having

a sufficient 'grasp' of his/her object of research.

At the end of the 19th century, a new discourse emerged. Coming from two very different fields, Karl Marx (historical materialism) and Herbert Spencer (evolution) created new vantage points to describe the individual's process of *Bildung*. The individual now became the object of social sciences and not only an object of philosophy and the humanities. Becoming a 'human being' was to be achieved by the individual whilst realising a social ideal.

In Scandinavia, the concept of *Bildung* was used within the field of pedagogy by amongst others N.F.S. Grundtvig and Ellen Key. Their influence waxed and waned during the 20th century, after which *Bildung* became a central concept at the end of the period. Sven-Erik Liedman (1990) has argued that this newfound interest in *Bildung* was the result of an attempt to merge two dominant perspectives in the educational field within *Bildung*, one often termed progressive and the other objective.

The progressive perspective is related to knowledge set in the context of an individual's experiences and interests. Here, the subjective component is important. According to the opposite perspective, knowledge is considered to be based on an objective process. Students are expected to acquire these objective forms of knowledge as part and parcel of their educational process.

Different suggestions have emerged as to the weighting of subjective and objective components. Bernt Gustavsson (1991) has tried to describe *Bildung* in terms of the opposition and the dialectical tension within and between three dichotomies; process/aim, equality/elitism, context/specialization. Both Liedman and Gustavsson claim that the «road» to *Bildung* passes through personal and integrated knowledge. The basic tenant here is that the individual educates

himself through his/her relationships in the public domain. It is a process which takes place throughout life.

There is an evolutionary aspect to the theory of *Bildung*, where new knowledge is added to old, and here the search for context, metaperspectives and integrated knowledge are recommended. Personally integrated knowledge is dialectically mediated, resulting from an oscillation between the binary poles of objective and subjective knowledge, leading to a synthesis. The onus then is on individuality which has been shaped and formed through the merger and integration of knowledge during the process of *Bildung*, resulting in an independent self-sufficient citizen.

## **Bildung and the modern monography**

In what way then does the process of *Bildung* inform the modern monography (in terms of a doctoral thesis)? Let us make a very simple comparison between the central tenants of *Bildung* (cohesion, evolution, part/whole, synthesis, integration, interpretation, uniqueness) and the structure and content of a modern doctoral thesis. For the purpose of this paper we will limit our discussion to quantitative research, which is predominant within many of the humanities and social sciences.

A modern monography is expected to be cohesive; there will be a problem or a hypothesis to be investigated using a variety of methods, and finally resulting in an analysis and an argument which either supports the hypothesis or disregards it. It evolves in much the same way as the process of *Bildung* new knowledge added to old, integrated through synthesis and/or merger, new perspectives emerging along the way. There must of course be a visible progression in the material which is obvious to the examiner; the

segments of empirical material analysed to arrive at metaperspectives and cohesive units of new knowledge.

Using certain kinds of methodology an attempt is made to find what marks out the subject at hand as unique or worth while studying and developing as part of another researcher's results and findings. Sometimes the methodology aims to facilitate the description of causal relationships which are described in the analysis.

Interviews, observations and texts are presented which show the phenomena under investigation from a variety of perspectives and angles. The process of analysis rests on interpretation and construction of meaning, creating a whole out of the *segments* and hopefully something new.

The researcher becomes a subject, an interpreter, who aims to understand the material at hand and thereby an active co-determiner of knowledge, as opposed to a purely passive observer. To analyse and interpret is a part of «becoming» a subject, a becoming where the individual shapes and forms him/herself.

Both the product then and the researcher can be understood as caught up in the confines of *Bildung*, a process which presupposes the existence of a comprehending, whole, cohesive subject whose perceptive capacity can be brought to bear on a potentially cohesive, whole and consciously comprehensible object of study.

## The subject of conscious thought

Postmodern critique of the concept of *Bildung* is precisely that it does not recognize just how problematic the presuppositions described above actually are. The subject is considered to be synonymous with concepts such as the *self* and the *individual* in this tra-

dition. *Bildung* is then a question of inner development, which results in personal development.

Wolfgang Klafki (2002) for instance, is one of those who claim that the concept of *Bildung* is based on self-determination, freedom, emancipation, autonomy, reason, self consideration. In the beginning was the subject, would seem to aptly sum up the point of departure of *Bildung*. The problem with this «subject of the humanities» is that there is no other vantage point available when analysing and creating a theory of what the subject *is*. Further, the general lack of analysis of this subject, coupled with the lack of any attempt to say something about it (other than that it is the sum of its history, according to Hegel, or the sum of its experiences and perceptions, according to Fichte) becomes problematic when considering the subject's relationship with the Other (Hyldegaard, 2005), a relationship which is essential to the understanding of *Bildung*.

Attempting to make a brief summary of this subject on the basis of research discussed in this article, it might suffice to claim that *Bildung* traditionally emphasizes that the subject is an actor who creates knowledge based on conscious processes. This presupposes that every individual has an inner life, consisting of feeling, will and consciousness, expressed through external acts such as behaviour, language, symbols and other forms of observable activities.

The inner life of man then, is not accessible other than through an interpretation of these external acts and traces. Therefore, the development of methods which enable an interpretation of these expressions is necessary, and these expressions in turn become the primary object of knowledge. In other words, central to the concept of *Bildung* is the metaphysics of consciousness and the ego. Let us take a closer look at this claim.

## Metaphysics and the Ego

Already in the formulation of scientific laws, there is a desire to subordinate and coordinate various phenomena. Simple structures – for instance in theories about forces, energies, atoms and living cells – are often framed in a perspective attempting to create unity by subordinating diverse phenomena to an all embracing larger whole (Hauge, 1995; Bergstedt, 1998). This type of thinking is based on a tacit assumption that every structure has a centre that indicates how meaning and context can be created, corresponding to the discourse. In this manner, the centre of the structure becomes the instance that guarantees and provides meaning. At the same time, this guarantee becomes something that stands outside the structure itself, as some sort of origin. It could be God, Man, an Object, or a scientific theory, for instance. In other words: metaphysics. Metaphysics can be recognised as a desire to find a point outside the system, a kind of origin, a primary point of departure.

In a similar way, the Ego has been described as a metaphysical centre. The Ego is a dominant referent, that is, the centre that provides the world of humans with meaning, and through which humans create meaning, according to Freud. The Ego consists of memories, existing as energy potentials in an interacting network of neurons:

Memories are established when intense external or internal events raise the energy levels within neurones. Kolb and Wishaw (neuropsychologists) describe a memory model very similar to Freud's using the metaphor of water being poured down a sand dune, producing grooves – deep ones where the force of water is greater and finer ones where the force of water is less. When more water is poured over the same area it will travel down the same grooves. Over time grooves which are used often become deeper and deep-

er. According to Freud, these are part of the ego's memory network. Donald Hebb claimed that cells which fire together wire together. Freud had made this the foundation of his ego network model and its capacity to expand more than half a century earlier: (Herbert, 2010, p. 12)

Each memory is connected to symbols, or words. In this sense, the Ego can be said to correspond to a network of chains of words, like strands in a yarn, or branches in a root system. Freud argues that perception depends on words, which enable people to differentiate between reality and hallucination. When a memory is imprinted by something for the first time, this memory trace constitutes the blueprint, against which all subsequent experiences of this thing will be compared.

As time and experiences accumulate, layer upon layer of new memory traces cover older strata, in terms of both words and images. According to Freud (1895), words enable the individual to distinguish the object in the surrounding world. So if I have previously learned what an apple is, it will be easier for me to observe when there are apples in the fruit bowl. I will also be able to decide whether I want one or not, depending on my attitude towards apples. This means that we see by means of our words.

Lacan (1966) also claims that language constitutes the matrix, through which the Ego experiences its world. Even images are structured by language. The ego mirrors the world through its own gestalt and its own experiences, creating imaginary pictures which it projects on to reality, and has a tendency of getting stuck in these imaginary pictures, simply because it invests heavily in the creations of knowledge which it has entrenched itself within.

The ego wishes to understand its world and set it into meaningful context, and will happily brush over the inconsistencies or fill

in the gaps to achieve this, as any text editor will ensure. This is why it is extremely difficult to find all the linguistic faults in a text, and a writer can send his narrative to any amount of text editors who will always find a new fault not seen by the previous ones. The brain is constantly turning pictorial stimuli right side up covering over veins and filling in holes, so as to arrive at a comprehensible picture (this is an unconscious automatic process). Under great and prolonged stress it might not be able to work effectively and we suddenly find it very difficult to interpret environmental stimuli correctly. A feeling emerges of not quite being able to «get it together».

This brief summary of the centring force of the conscious subject, described in terms of psychoanalytic and neuropsychological theory, points to several difficulties. As long as the conscious subject is taken as a point of departure for *Bildung*, there will be centripetal forces at work which may result in the perception of unity where there is none, and cohesion where there is disruption.

The attempt to restructure segments into a cohesive whole might belie the actual importance of the particular disharmony at hand, which in and of itself may present an unequalled opportunity of perceiving something new, albeit beyond the immediate grasp of consciousness. Postmodern theory in general and poststructural theory in particular have taken these gaps and ruptures as their point of departure, their object of study. It is in the disunity, disharmony and the incomprehensible that we might learn something new.

The Other as beyond comprehension, demanding a specific ethical stance, has become a field of study. Causal relationships are questioned by researchers who, readjusting the segments of study again, and again allow for new formations to emerge like the patterns in a kaleidoscope, where hidden power

relationships are described, thereby challenging the construction of the so called autonomous individual, gender, the self (i.e. the ego as a central referent).

This challenge to the individual as autonomous or the ego as a central referent is of course not new or specific to poststructuralism. Nietzsche aimed to bring rupture to western philosophy when he claimed:

I is the conditions of the predicate 'think'. It thinks; but that this 'it' is precisely the famous old 'ego' is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an 'immediate certainty'. (Nietzsche, 2000, p. 214)

Lacan (1969–1970) added «the subject thinks when the ego is in doubt». It is precisely this subject which presents one of the greatest challenges to the tradition of *Bildung* and the theoretical vantage point of the monography. Let us therefore take a closer look at this non-ego subject to see what consequences it might have for postmodern research and its framing within the modern monography, before investigating the rationale behind the method of deconstruction and Derrida's critique of metaphysics.

## The subject of the unconscious

It is obvious from the discussion above that conscious thought and perception do not cover the concept of the postmodern subject or its capacity to reach a different kind of knowledge. Several theoreticians within the social sciences have attempted to describe these 'other' levels of conscious thought and knowledge. Mead (1934) for instance describe these levels as the 'unpredictable'; at times even foreign and surprising part of the psyche, which he termed the I. Mead calls the conscious aspect of the subject Me. This conscious reflective subject is born through interrelations with others and in confronta-

tion with challenges and problems (Mead, 1934).

Whilst Mead described the «foreign» aspect of the subject as I, cognitive psychologists refer to primary processes when they discuss the unconscious processes involved in creative activities, and neuropsychologists speak of left frontal lobe activities or a specific relationship between right and left frontal lobe interaction, but none of these theories offer an in depth explanation or discussion of this foreign aspect of the subject.

Here, psychoanalysis has more to offer when attempting to provide an explicatory model for why we for instance don't always say what we think we are saying. There are other layers of consciousness which affect speech, through slips of tongue, intonations, facial expressions and gestures, jarring the conversation in ways not always obvious to ourselves, but very obvious to others (Munk Rösing, 2005).

When we experienced an intense event or something traumatic which affects our physical wellbeing as well as our psychological wellbeing, we can set the experience into words. Yet a part of this experience may seemingly have slipped through the symbolic web of signifier chains settling as a somatic trace (the emphasis here lies on seemingly) only to emerge as a symptom of some kind at a later date. It seems possible even to wipe away any memory of the event from consciousness, but it doesn't mean the event won't effect us later. Like a band aid placed over a cut, a symptom might arise to cover the psychological scar which has evolved. How can we reach this aspect of our psyche?

According to Freud (1900) and Lacan (1966), the unconscious expresses itself through language, breaking through discourse, demanding our attention. Lacan claims the unconscious shows itself through gaps and ruptures in language. These traces point to «lack» or something missing, we

might for instance not be able to remember the name of a person or an account number; we might not remember the specifics of a certain event.

The unconscious shows itself as an irregularity, something which breaks through the smooth surface of the imaginary world created by the ego (the ego is always attempting to make meaning and sense out of the world, much of which is an illusion necessary for its wellbeing and survival). When these ruptures and discontinuities emerge, we can be quite sure that another kind of 'thought' is at hand.

Lacan (1966) claims that the unconscious subject should be considered a place of ongoing interaction and construction of differences, through amongst other things displacement and condensation. Here, meaning can shift along a signifier chain (displacement), as for instance when the Wolf Man dreamt of wolves sitting in a tree outside his bedroom window, after having had a story told by his grandfather about a fox which had lost its tail to the hunters knife (Freud, 1918).

The fox changed into a wolf in the dream, another alternative could have been a dog or a dingo, all depending on the content of the Wolf Man's associative chains. The wolves had tails and these Freud claimed indicated that the Wolf man did not accept the loss of the fox's tail to the hunter's knife. The switch in the dichotomy on/off is a metaphor for the phallus being lost or maintained (illustrating the function of condensation). It is obvious that the subject is a story teller, using old material to weave into new narratives, using condensation and displacement to enable change.

Conscious knowledge according to Lacan (1969–1970) is termed *connaissance*, unconscious knowledge *savoir* and bodily knowledge *savoir-faire*. These do interact and inform each other, but they are never com-

pletely and totally accessible to each other. On the other hand, this lack of complete disclosure is what drives the desire for knowledge, all kinds of knowledge claims Lacan, and therefore 'lack' is gain in the currency of research.

## The speaking subject and the Other

The unconscious is structured by language, is in fact a language with its own symbolic patterns and grammar, some of which will affect the conscious perception of the subject (Lacan, 1966). The repetition of certain destructive behaviours, melancholia, neurotic symptoms, repetitive dreams and other forms of stagnant material indicates, that certain parts of the signifier network in the symbolic have become exempt from the creative motion of exchange enabled by displacement and condensation, or is unaffected by these two forces for other reasons. To enable movement in these frozen parts of the signifier chains it is necessary to set the whole network in motion by creating new linguistic constructs.

Following signifiers along chains of words in the signifier network during a conversation might enable us to reach memories carrying traces of the unconscious. During therapy the therapist enables such a transition, and through him/her the traces are given meaning, enabling the creation of *connaissance* from *savoir*. When referring to the unconscious incomprehensive dimension of another person, Lacan writes Other. The Other reminds us that there is something beyond within ourselves. The Other's speech can affect us, cause us to re-evaluate our beloved imaginary knowledge, ideas of self and our well established ideas about the world, to which our egos cling with great tenacity.

Facilitated by a creative conversation, the Other may enable a change in the order of logic of our symbolic communication, leading to an opening towards the unconscious, allowing the subject's speech to emerge. A successful conversation can facilitate the emergence of long lost memories and feelings hitherto hidden, along with the capacity to express these memories through discourse. The thick walls of defence erected by the ego might crumble, sweeping away the cause of inflexibility in the signifier network (which originally caused the repetition of symptoms, dreams, destructive behaviours etc):

*Savoir* supplies the material that is used in the ego's reflection of what it has learnt. This reflection then affects and perhaps changes the ego's relationship to itself and the world, which in turn allows new *connaissance* to develop. Hopefully this makes the ego more adaptive to its environment, a development that is not always straightforward, as implied in Hegelian dialectics or in Piaget's development spiral where assimilation constantly leads the individual to a higher plane. *Savoir* emerging from the subject can create set-backs for the ego when trying to deal with information from the subject which breaks with its previously held beliefs and ideas. In fact, this kind of information can cause the ego at first to take a few steps back .... A period of stagnation sets in when the ego busily attempts to resurrect its precious imaginary air castles (beautiful but no longer adaptive). (Herbert 2010, p. 75 f.; italics in original)

The process seen here then is nothing like the process seen in building, where development is considered to move upward and onward toward a higher plane. How then does this transfer into understanding the written texts which are objects of research or the observations and interviews which are transformed into written texts and later analysed as part of the same?



## Discourses and deconstruction – a part of critical analysis

These ruptures and gaps discussed above, along with the inflexible units of knowledge reflecting a fixture in the symbolic chain of signifiers in the unconscious can also be found in written texts (Bergstedt, 1998; Derrida, 1978). In fact, within the structure of language, power relations are embedded and fixed through amongst other things traditional dichotomies, such as male/female, strong/weak, active/passive, known/unknown, domestic/foreign, safe/dangerous etc.

These structures reproduce and maintain power relations even if laws are set in place to counter balance the same, campaigns are carried out, educational reforms are made to enlighten the subject of discourse etc. Every subject moves within multiple discourses; analysing these may enable us to gain sight of the power relations affecting our lives. The individual in other words is not autonomous, s/he is trapped in the matrix of language, until language and its structurally embedded power relations can be discovered and counterbalanced. Derrida developed deconstruction to achieve this kind of analysis and to reach so called decentred language beyond the metaphysics of discourse.

Barbara Johnson (1994) has defined deconstruction as the attempt to carefully uncover the contradictions hidden in a text. In presenting itself as a whole construct, a piece of textural architecture, these contradictions are not immediately evident. Deconstruction enables a critical analysis of the cultural foundation of the text, its hidden assumptions and presupposed, culturally mediated truths. In doing so, deconstruction makes use of the gaps and ruptures in the text, these might become evident in a shift of narrative style or when the author contradicts him/herself seemingly unaware, presenting information which blatantly goes against the ra-

tionale of the text. Whilst deconstruction originates from structuralism, its main aim is not to uncover underlying cohesive patterns of meaning, but rather to point to the ruptures and gaps in discourse.

Derrida (1978) presents deconstruction as a tool enabling us to deal with the metaphysics that language in itself constitutes. He believes we should analyse our texts and our speech to catch a glimpse of the underlying dichotomies. We should then try to replace one of the words in the pair, preferably the dominant term, to see if it is possible to create new constellations. In this way binary terms that get stuck can be dissolved, such as man/woman, strong/weak or conscious/unconscious etc.

Besides the analysis of dichotomies, Derrida (1978) stresses the importance of discerning elements that break into our texts, whatever opens possibilities for something new. Except for when the author or speaker contradicts him/herself, other subversive elements can be metaphors (if these are contradictory), rupturing the order of speech (for instance, if the author addresses the reader directly, in the first person). These ruptures create an opening in the text, behind which we can catch a glimpse of a 'decentred' language. Here, order breaks down, allowing discourse temporarily to be dissolved. We are now in a position to take a closer look at the claims made earlier in this article, i.e. that the traditions of *Bildung* underpinning the modern monography are not conducive to the expression of postmodern research in a doctoral thesis.

When considering the analysis of underlying power relations in a discourse or the many conflicting discourses hidden in a text, modern methods of hermeneutics will not suffice. As an object of investigation for postmodern research, patterns of emergence (much like the patterns of a kaleidoscope) are investigated, and in doing so some re-

searchers and theoreticians (such as Foucault) break with the use of chronology and causality normally present in historical research. Others such as Derrida throw light on dichotomies which lock and perpetuate pervasive cultural truths, and change these by crossing over one of the terms in this binary linguistic unit, thereby breaking with the emphasis on the whole or the origin of the text so important to hermeneutic tradition's of *Bildung*.

Bosse Bergstedt crossed over one of the binary linguistic units of conscious and unconscious when considering the importance of the interplay between *savoir* and *connaissance*, whilst reading a text. The ego's *connaissance* enables the creation of meaning, whilst the subject's thought emerges when the ego is in doubt, confronted with something different (e.g. enigmatic sentences found in poetry), or a foreign presence in the text. The latter is experienced as a sense of having reached a deeper level of the text when reading (Bergstedt, 1998), or the sense of a shift within the reader, leading to a change which is not immediately understood but which drives the reader to persevere with the discourse/narrative at hand, feeling that something new will emerge. The ego attempts to set the experience into words and create meaning for the reader, and this interrelation between *savoir* and *connaissance* enables a new reading of the text, as will become evident in the discussion below when presenting Bosse Bergstedt's thesis.

Whilst *Bildung* philosopher's reaction to the mechanistic and rationalistic views held within the enlightenment movement have enabled a meeting between disparate fields such as emotion and rationality, spirit and materiality, art and science, many postmodern theories have taken this attempt a step further by questioning dichotomies and discourses in general, which becomes evident in the postmodern thesis.

There are postmodern monographies which mix quantitative and qualitative research and others which mix fields of study traditionally held separate, as for instance psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology and neuropsychology within the discipline of psychology. Some do both. Postmodern critical approaches also enable a deconstruction of the traditional structure of the thesis allowing for monographies lacking a thesis hypothesis, methods sections or any clear chronological progress. It would seem then that the postmodern thesis is evolving into something Lacan called a 'montage', resembling more a piece of modern art than a book with chapters, an introduction and a conclusion.

### **A few examples illustrating the postmodern doctoral thesis**

We will now move on to give several examples of postmodern doctoral theses which demand a different approach to the monography than traditions of *Bildung*. We do not however suggest that *Bildung* or the monography should be discarded rather we point to the necessity for a widening of the concept and a change in the structure of the modern monography so as to include postmodern dimensions as well as modern and will discuss this at the end of the article.

Bosse Bergstedt's (1998) thesis *Den Livsupplysande texten* (The life enlightening text), differs from the traditional modern monography in so far that the thesis is introduced using a literary introduction (termed entry) and a literary conclusion (termed exit), indicating that it lies in the hinterland of science and fiction, using both creativity and critique. The thesis has no obvious hypothesis other than the rereading and analysis of Grundtvig's pedagogic texts. These are read as text, as opposed to being read for their ideational content. The reading is done in an

attempt to rejuvenate the traditions of popular education.

The linguistic turn has informed both the theory and methods of this thesis. Further the lack of differentiation between theory, method, analysis of results and discussion breaks with the normal structure of a monography. The doctorate contains a description of Grundtvig's pedagogic texts as well as his biography. Chapters two to five can be seen as short stories containing presentations and discussions of Grundtvig's texts, using the method of deconstruction.

An emphasis is placed on details in the text which are thought to create a rupture leading to a critical moment opening up for a new kind of understanding of the text (an inner shift), which Grundtvig (Bergstedt, 1988) calls life enlightening. According to Bergstedt (1998), these moments cannot be arrived at using only scientific analysis or methods. The thesis attempts to facilitate these moments in the reader as well as explain them using poststructuralist theories.

Inherent to the thesis is a criticism of hermeneutics and *Bildung*, evident in the usage of methods focusing on rupture and *detail* as opposed to *cohesion* and *meaningful totalities* and in the lack of inner logic and consistency normally present in a modern monography.

In the thesis *Den romantiska texten* (The romantic text), Horace Engdahl (1986) attempts to show how certain «romantic» texts attempt to avoid communicating a coherent meaning. Language, it is claimed here, functions without an informing structure, the communication of a rationale so important to the classists is seen to be set aside, due to a lack of certain central referents. Language then is no longer used to portray a certain situation or experience, but affects the reader through its own power, according to Engdahl (1986), who had to add a short methods chapter so as to obtain a doctorate.

Within sociology, Bo Isenberg (2006) presents two examples of monographies which have used fiction as a part of scientific work. Magnus Karlsson's thesis of 2000, the analysis of the mediation of social compartmentalisation between generations also contains a translations of qualitative material into empirical stories, which closely resemble small novels. These fictions manifest the analysis and are not meant to be an object of analysis in and of themselves. Flemming Røgilds's (2000) analysis of ethnic and cultural diversity can be described as a kind of fictionalised sociological documentary.

Anna Herbert's (2006) thesis *The development of psychoanalytic explanations of PTSD and associated disorders with a special focus on the somatic sequelae to torture* lacks a hypothesis and a methodology section. The work encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research and its interdisciplinary approach allows for a meeting between psychoanalysis, neuropsychology and cognitive theory, enabling the suggestion of a third category of neurosis, 'transitional neurosis' to be added to Freud's (1919–1917, 1926) diagnostic categories actual neurosis and transference neurosis. Transitional neurosis, it is argued, describes the development of an actual neurosis into a transference neurosis as can be seen in PTSD. Further methods of understanding when a transition has been made to a transference neurosis is put forward in terms of the presence or absence of metaphor in relation to the memory of original trauma, thus allowing for a new explicatory model of PTSD, using a modification of Lacanian (1998) theory facilitated by neuropsychological theory and cognitive theory.

Jenny Steinnes's (2006) doctoral thesis, *Den Andre Skoleporten – om institusjonalisering av den pedagogisea handling, et møte med Jacques Derridas språkkritiske perspektiv* describes amongst other things the threat of inflation within language. Not only is lan-

guage threatened with losing its meaning, it must be deconstructed and revised if it is to survive argues Steinnes. To achieve this, it is necessary to use both senses and intellect. Ideas and concepts are a product of sense and intellect and are dependent on the difference between them. Language thus emerges from two directions, internal and external.

Jenny Steinnes claims that the pedagogue should feel challenged to uncover these antagonistic aspects in language. As both the state and market fails to take up the challenge, pedagogues should take responsibility for this field of analysis, which means that they should be open and critical to society. Here the onus lies on creating new kinds of questions (just as above) and to facilitate new thinking, even if one is outside of a traditional educational institution. To convey a message which is outside of other messages enables the opening of a special kind of didactics.

## Concluding remarks

Every researcher is affected by the process of research in one way or another. Qualitative methods more than any imply the probability that a researcher will become involved in a process which has several similarities to that of the process of *Bildung* described here. The aim of the critique presented has been to problematize the positioning of the 'subject' within the process of *Bildung* and thereby suggest ways in which the 'modern monography' might be adapted to include current research practices which also involve post-modern theories.

The centring force of the ego for instance, will affect both the process of interpretation and the final research product. Those researchers, who recognise the problems of metaphysics and the ego point to the importance of rupture and disharmony in the creation of knowledge. Here the text is not read

as a conveyer of a conscious rationale or a collection of ideas, but rather demands that the reader positions him/herself differently, enabling a new relationship to the text, which in turn leads to a different kind of thought process, a thought process belonging to the subject of the unconscious. *Connaissance* and *savoir* interact to enable a differentiated depth of understanding of the text. However, this does not reflect the process of knowledge integration or the steady developmental progression of the researcher as subject, described in *Bildung*:

*Savoir* emerging from the subject can create setbacks for the ego when trying to deal with information from the subject which breaks with its previously held beliefs and ideas. In fact, this kind of information can cause the ego at first to take a few steps back before progressing on to a higher level in terms of having integrated and adapted to new knowledge. (Herbert, 2010. p. 76)

If indeed there is a progression at all, as there are no guarantees. There are egos which don't seem to change a great deal during a life time once the mould of the first two decennia is set in place, as many can ascertain. For the ego does get stuck, and this becomes obvious when we attempt to get over an unexpected loss for instance, mulling away over the event and it's causes for days and sometimes for weeks. At other times fixations are seen in a more positive light such as a life time of adhering to the same football team, watching the same soap every day, walking home on the same side of the pavement, choosing the same seat on the bus etc. Our egos do seem to enjoy the certainty of repetition.

What emerges from this discussion then is not a process similar to *Bildung* where a constant dialectical development pushes the individual forward, rather it is a 'messy' progress with no clear path and with an un-

certain outcome (stagnation, fixation, regression, integration, vacillation, progression, stagnation, etc). Thus if the process of *Bildung* is to encompass a postmodern model and if the monography is to reflect this inclusion, then the process of research and the results cannot be described in a steady clear progression, introduction, hypothesis, methods, results, discussion, etc. The possibilities of the monography needs, to be expanded upon as does the concept of *Bildung*, to allow for messy, slippery areas of research, rupturing, sliding, gaps, excluded, marginalized shades of grey and the beyond of the Other.

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