The Roles of Writers in the Danish Welfare State

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Abstract Welfare is a well-established concept in a Danish political and literary context, and it has given rise to strong differences of opinion between literature, culture and state. The article presents the Nordic welfare model, introduces the discussions on the function of literature from the 1950s to the present day and the literary welfare themes.
Key words The Nordic welfare model; Danish literature; literary culture; framing; the function of literature

In the golden age of the Danish welfare state, from the mid-1950s to around 1980, art and literature are one of the hottest subjects in the public debate. Fierce political debates and popular resistance accompany the establishing of the Danish Arts Foundation in 1964, with public discussions about funding for writers and artists in the welfare state a recurrent theme over the following decades. It really provides food for thought that several of the objections to the Arts Foundation and its dispensations raised in the 1960s and 1970s are still alive and kicking in the 2010s.

However, even though the debate on the Danish Arts Foundation and the funding of literature is easily recognisable decade after decade, the discussions are nevertheless accompanied by many attempts from writers both young and old to break new artistic ground both thematically and formally, to challenge the welfare-state public and their own artistic roles.

The Jewel in the Welfare State Crown — the Scandinavian Model

The Danish welfare state comes into existence via a number of legislative initiatives from the second half of the 1950s up to the present day. Parallels and comparisons between the structure of the Danish welfare state and relations in the other Nordic countries are often made (Christiansen 2006). A number of researchers talk about a Nordic model for the welfare state that seriously gets underway in the period after the Second World War.

In a Danish context, the new laws and schemes for an old-age pension from 1956 were the first icon of the welfare state. These gave all Danish citizens the right to receive the basic pension irrespective of their economic situation. The welfare state is thus based on a principle of universalism, which means that it is citizenship that guar-

antees the individual social rights.

Apart from universalism, welfare research emphasises that the Scandinavian model is characterised by its granting the individual a certain degree of independence from the labour market via social guarantees and schemes in connection with education and training, pregnancy, unemployment or illness. The so-called flexicurity model (an expression that first emerges around 1995) promotes a flexible labour market that can easily adapt to changing economic situations and demand for commodities and labour (Klindt 2009). Additionally, the Scandinavian model is typified by the public authorities intervening and offering benefits within family area in the form of day-care centres for children, leisure activities for young people, centres for the elderly, assistance in the home for old people, and help to the sick (Esping-Andersen 1990).

It is possible, as the welfare researchers Jørn Henrik Petersen and Klaus Petersen point out, to choose to adopt either a broader or a narrower definition of the welfare state. A broad definition regards the welfare state as an overall term for the entire societal architecture, one that also comprises values and ideas that form the basis for the Danish welfare state, including science, art and literature. A narrow definition focuses on concrete political areas such as pensions, education and training, housing, culture or health(Petersen et al 18).

Whichever definition one chooses, it is important to note that the various political areas are knit together and are all part of the establishment of a new type of society, one based on a modified form of capitalism.

A group of Nordic welfare researchers, including Klaus Petersen, summarise their considerations of the Nordic model in the following way:

> Nevertheless, in the post-war years, there seems to have been developed fairly parallel plans for 'the good society' in political parties and among social engineers in the Nordic countries. The new interpretations of the political goals included neither the classical liberalistic nor the socialist utopias, but a new type of society, a modified capitalism. To various extents, all the political agents wanted to keep the market forces under control. The ambition of the Social Democratic party and, to a lesser degree, the Liberal and Conservative parties was to fit all policy dimensions into a framework that gradually took the form of a welfare state. Social security pensions, care of the elderly, the children, the handicapped, health services, education, research, and cultural policies were all firmly knit together. Apart from the non-Social Democratic left, all political parties had agreed upon economic growth as a precondition for welfare. (Klausen et al 21)

In a Danish context, cultural policy was the large major legislative area in the golden age of the welfare state in the 1960s. It was as if the establishment of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs in 1961 and the law relating to the Danish Arts Foundation (1964) added the finishing reformist touch to a Danish-Design crown. Artists and politicians came together to discuss frameworks and ideas for the ministry and the legislation that

came into being in the mid-1960s. At meetings at Krogerup Højskole and the Louisiana museum in autumn 1960, Social Democratic and Social Liberal politicians met with the head of Louisiana, Knud W. Jensen, and the writers Ole Wivel, Bjørn Poulsen, Thorkild Bjørnvig, Elsa Gress, Erik Aalbæk Jensen, Peter Seeberg and Villy Sørensen to discuss the relationship between the state and the arts and the obligation of the state to support quality art.

The Social Democratic prime minister Viggo Kampmann was personally interested in art and literature and he asked for a dialogue and guidance from the artists with regard to social life: "If only those who are culturally interested were prepared to leave their critical stance behind and start to give us advice in a kindly and understanding fashion, much would have been gained. Naturally, they can back out, but they should clearly understand that government will carry on regardless," he stated in a birthday interview with Ejvind Larsen in *Information* in 1960 (Larsen 5). Here, he also expressed his ideas about making culture a real asset in the development of society. The interview was the direct cause of the meetings at Krogerup and Louisiana.

Kampmann also felt that those in the Ministry of Education, which had been responsible for the area of culture until that point, had been far too passive. Denmark was beginning to lag behind other countries (Rohde 1996). The Social Democratic congress of 1957 had just received a large petition from 79 prominent artists and scientists, who feared that the post-war society was well on the way to becoming too strongly oriented towards technology and economics. One was on the point of forgetting science, education and art, and the prospect of "passive cultural life", i. e. the successful entertainment industry, was viewed as problematic. The individual ought to be made independent and emancipated to "cultural self-activity". Among the many artists who signed the petition were the writers Halfdan Rasmussen, Erik Knudsen, Karl Bjarnhof, Knut Becker, Henning Ibsen, Siegfrid Pedersen and Lise Sørensen.

In this way, welfare policy — especially via Viggo Kampmann's initiative — also came to include art and literature, with universalism being the underlying principle. Art and literature were to help to keep all of society "alive and mobile" (Petersen 70).

In 1965, the writer Anders Bodelsen made use of the concept citizenisation of artists in connection with welfare-state cultural policy. In a leading article in the periodical *Perspektiv* he argued that the various initiatives to do with arts funding was a veritable enrolment of the artist in society, and a chance for artists to be able to live under the same conditions as their audiences. Artists could be satisfied with their "welfare and consumer situation" (Bodelsen 4) and moreover criticise both people in general and themselves in particular. From Bodelsen's point of view, artists were now very much on their way out of the Romantic realm of the spirits and their traditional outsider situation: They had arrived in the present and in welfare society. "No artist has ever suffered from knowing the society he possibly opts out of or chooses to generate," Bodelsen claimed.

An Undying Debate

When one studies statements made by the many fierce protagonists in the Arts Foun-

dation debate of 1965, it is clear that there are four main positions: debaters who oppose funding as such; debaters who oppose the forms of art being supported; debaters who oppose the system that has been established; and debaters in favour of the Arts Foundation funding dispensed via the Arts Foundation system and its so-called arm's-length bodies that comprise both artists and experts. The "arm's length" principle was formulated as far back as the Krogerup/Louisiana meetings in 1960 in a discussion between the Social Liberal politician Jørgen Jørgensen and the writer Villy Sørensen.

The storekeeper Peter Rindal from the linen factory in Kolding became a symbol of popular opposition to Arts Foundation funding and to the kinds of art being funded. Rindal declared himself to be a warm supporter of books by such popular writers as Morten Korch and Ib Henrik Cavling, and his opposition had to do with both the experts' dispositions and the concept of supporting the arts: "We can't pay for something we don't like," he stated to *Information* (Rindal 1965), emphasising that it is the majority which is to decide what is art, and that artists must be able to live off their own work without support from the state. What Rindal perhaps did not realise was the fact that Morten Korch had received funding in the 1949 budget, along with such writers as Johannes V. Jensen, Martin A. Hansen and Tove Ditlevsen. The announcement of the dispensation of financial support to artists in the budget of 1948 is published in *Ekstra Bladet*(6.10.1948).

But there was no room for such niceties in the large-scale debate that was aggressively run by the newspapers *Jydske Vestkysten*, *Kolding Folkeblad*, *Vestkysten* and *Hejmdal*, which — to add bite to their arguments — sent photographers out to take pictures of scrap metal, cranes and pumps, which were then presented as modern pictorial art (Kastrip og Lærkesen 199). The provincial press also featured inflammatory articles stating that hard-working tax-payers were sure to be able to get a job polishing Klaus Rifsbjerg's stylish sports car while the writer took a holiday under warmer skies! (Jydske Vestkysten 2)

On the TV front, the level-headed journalist and art connoisseur Flemming Madsen was sent to Esbjergs Kunstpavillon to lead a major TV debate (Danmarks Radio, 12 March 1965), where both opponents and supporters were able to speak. "The blackest intolerance and the bitterest reactionism blended yesterday evening with a deep understanding of art as well as vaguer in-between points of view," Ole Schrøder wrote in his "TV Opinion" in *Ekstra Bladet* (Schrøder 10), and his description could also well apply to the confused picture the debate painted for the subsequent period.

However, it is clear from the 1965 debate that a number of the opponents of the Arts Foundation do not regard the arts as being something that has to do with society as a whole. Rindal, for example, has nothing against helping to pay for a bridge across the Great Belt, which he considered to be "a matter of common interest", but not for art and literature.

Other debaters, on the other hand, emphasise precisely the importance of art and literature for all of society. The Conservative writer Hans Jørgen Lembourn repeats the idea of the dangerous passivation that intellectuals had warned against in

1957, speaking warmly of the activising effect of art. Cultural policy must not be dictated by social causes but should promote activity and movement in society as a whole. If "the affluent society" is to avoid ending up as a "nanny state" with "overgrown babies" that are only capable of opening their mouths, art must challenge and force the public out into an active situation, emphasises Lembourn, who during the 1971 – 81 period was chairman of the Danish Authors' Society (Lembourn 6).

The last major battle in the first of the welfare-state art debates took place in 1967 and had to do with a proposal to support the establishing of culture centres throughout the country. The idea of culture centres came from France, where President de Gaulle's minister of culture, the author André Malraux, attempted to decentralise cultural life by setting up arts centres (Michelsen 30). In Denmark, the proposal was made in 1963 in the cultural affairs committee of the Danish Folketing, and a white paper was drawn up concerning the future culture centres. The aim of the new centres was to be to renew local cultural life and be meeting places where citizens could concern themselves with literature, the visual arts, music, drama and film as well as take part in study circles and leisure-time education. The director of the art museum Louisiana, Knud W. Jensen, publicly strongly supported the idea of using the new culture centres for chamber music, dramatic productions, films and art studios (Jensen 19). Culture centres would transform the new dormitory towns into environments where people could thrive — and thereby help fulfil an important task of welfare.

Bodil Koch, who was minister of cultural affairs 1966 – 68, had a bill prepared in 1967, but she decided not to present it in the Danish parliament because she feared that the centres would end up as strongholds of highbrow culture that had no popular backing. There was, in fact, support for the bill in the committee of cultural affairs, but several members of the culture centre committee were worried that the culture centres would start to compete with libraries and folk high schools — and critics in the public sphere had also made their voices heard.

The Arts Foundation debate seems to have caused Bodil Koch to think twice about attempting any more "top-down" initiatives, for she chose instead to prepare for a kind of cultural pause, even though she did not make direct use of this concept, which had been launched by Jens Otto Krag back in 1963 when he wished to curb the advance of the new Ministry of Cultural Affairs. As prime minister, Jens Otto Krag was critical of the ministry and its first minister, Julius Bomholt, whom he quite simply dismissed in 1964 and replaced with Hans Sølvhøj. "Culture-pause" is listed as having entered the language in 1962 (Jarvad 487).

The Social Liberal politician K. Helveg Petersen, who succeeded Bodil Koch as minister inthe 1968 – 71 period, expressed the view in connection with the local government reform of 1971 that the local authorities would now come to play a more active role in policies related to culture and art. In a feature article about the new cultural policy in *Ekstra Bladet* he begins to assert that culture is one of the most controversial and disputed areas of all, and that if one mentions the word "culture centre", one automatically causes offence: "Not at any price will one have such places for which the state takes the initiative and where it will attempt to impose a particular

cultural pattern" (Petersen 10). Gradually, however, the minister sneaks in the centre idea into the feature article, emphasising a model that encourages a cooperation between initiatives from the top and bottom of cultural life. His point is that the far too closed nature of the cultural debate will end, and that "our discussion of culture" will gain completely new dimensions. In addition, art has the "spin-off" effect of contributing to the national economy. An old argument to do with arts funding is brought forward, and the art and culture policy of the welfare state now also finds it universalistic principle in the economy: art benefits the economy of the country and thereby everybody's economy.

K. Helveg Petersen was proved right, and the double strategy — top-down and bottom-up in a single move — worked. Culture centres did actually emerge after the local government reform in both the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in the form of centres known as "kulturhuse" that opened in many Danish towns. The centre in Århus, for example, opened in 1972, when local youth organisations took over the former Århus Museum building. New culture centres are still being established around the country and the concept of culture centres is actively being fought for through club and association activities.

The Arts Foundation debate has never really stopped. The various positions from 1965 are present throughout the whole period of the debate on arts funding. Inthe mid-1970s, the writer of children's literature Martin Elmer — a member of the representatives for the Single-Tax Party — added up the figures and criticised the fact that funding went to the same author year after year (Elmer 1976). Now Henning Mortensen has received a total of DKK 165,000 and Jørgen Leth DKK 109,000 Elmer remarked angrily in his comments on the report for 1975 – 76. In 2010, the same criticism is made by Leonora Christine Skov in a large-scale attack on the dispensation practice of the Danish Arts Agency and the Danish Arts Council (Skov 8). Here, among others, it was the writers Kirsten Hammann and Katrine Marie Guldager who came under fire for each having received, over a period of 17 years, DKK 2 million in funding. In 2011, Jens Chr. Grøndahl admittedly did not, as was the case in 1965, talk about Klaus Rifbjerg's cream-coloured sports car, but he did say that Danish writers for a whole generation had been on an Arts Foundation diet of "whipped cream and motherly care" (Grøndahl 1).

While the protests in 1965 started outside the ranks of the professional writers and politicians, the present-day discussions often flare up among professional debaters. At the newspapers' websites for Internet comments on articles and points of view it is still possible, however, to find Rindal's arguments and rhetoric being recycled, and at times the fundamental premises for the funding system are also questioned, as was the case, for example, in connection with the arts funding committee of the then minister of culture, Per Stig Møller, which took a look at the entire funding system in 2011.

Protests from the major trade unions and workplaces, however, belong to the 1960s. It is still possible as a politician to profile oneself by criticising the Arts Foundation and airing the thought of privatising arts funding, as the newly established Liberal Alliance party has done. The really large-scale debates on values that were

linked to the Arts Foundation in the 1960s have, however, shifted over to other policy areas such as health, the fight against terrorism, immigration and globalisation.

The undying discussion about the Arts Foundation can be perceived as a sign that art and literature have successfully been made a part of the welfare policy area, an area thatcan and shall be discussed and regularly adjusted, but where the answers are universalistic, even though the politicians find their justification for the universalism of the arts in various arguments such as: the arts contribute to the formation of a national identity; the arts promote growth; the arts contain quality, create internationalism and can be used to market Denmark as a brand.

All the parties that won seats in the Danish parliament in 2010 back the idea of arts funding out of societal considerations, although the Danish People's Party and the Liberal Alliance in particular wish to limit the state's influence and the nature and size of the funding.

The Differences of Opinion Between the Welfare State and Literature

When studying the differencesof opinion between literature and the welfare state, there are three areas in particular that overlap each other and that also affect the issue of the roles of writers: 1) literary thematisation of the living space and forms of experience of the welfare state and the reader relation of literature, 2) interpretations of the function of literature in the welfare state and the public debate, and 3) differences between literature and the framings of the welfare state's ideas and values in the political debate.

Within these three areas it is important to take a closer look at the distinctive nature of the literary discourse and its status in relation to other welfare-state discourses, at the political, pedagogical and communicational discourses that are publiclyused about the arts, and at the exchanges between various discourses that included literature. These areas are highly comprehensive subject areas in themselves that exceed the scope of this presentation. Here it will only be possible to look at a few examples of how various political, scientific and artistic discourses are present and interrelated during the establishment of the welfare state.

When defining the sociological and political relations concerning the differences of opinion between art and literature with the welfare state, it is relevant to include a sociological concept about the positioning of art and literature in particular societal fields. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the literary field can be interesting here, even thought it originates from his analysis of French literary culture in the 19th century, with many autonomous art groupings and various schools that flock round the Paris café tables of the time. The field concept can, however, contribute to a description of the social and conceptual complexity connected with the welfare states' framing of literature. Bourdieu defines the field in the following way as a particular social universe that has its own laws, and that functions independently of the political and economic laws. The existence of the writer as an actual figure and as a value is inseparable from the existence of the literary field as an autonomous universe that is equipped with specific principles for an evaluation of its practice and its work (Bourdieu 162 – 163).

In my opinion, this autonomy must, however, be modified: Literature is made independent as a social universe where writers, publishers and experts, not politicians and socio-economists, define artistic quality, lay down the agenda for literary renewal and create literary groupings and schools.

Particularly in the early phases of the establishment of the welfare state, one sees many underscorings of the idea that art and politics ought to be kept separate. The author Villy Sørensen expresses himself in no uncertain terms when he asserts that the welfare state wants artists to take on all sorts of other tasks than precisely art, but that it is a complete misunderstanding to try and get the artist to think along political lines (Claussen 34).

This point of view was later repeated by various groups of writers, not least by the poets of the 1980s, where Michael Strunge, Søren Ulrik Thomsen and Pia Tafdrup claimed that the prime obligation of the poet must be to create poems that constitute an enclosed linguistic reality, since they never address themselves or refer to an outside world. "If the poem has any aim whatsoever, it must be to resist demands from the outside," (Tafdrup 142). Pia Tafdrup wrote in her poetics *Over vandet går jeg* (I walk over the water, 1991). Jens Martin Eriksen did not lay claim to such a hermetic lyric poetics, but emphasised that the literary practice and political practice of the writer ought to be kept completely separate: "Literary practice develops in sovereign fashion, whereas political practice becomes that of every other human being," he states in his presentation at the conference "The Book's Situation" in 1990 (Eriksen, 17 – 18). At the same time, several of these authors actually became extremely active social debaters: Michael Strunge as a critic of the 1968 generation, Søren Ulrik Thomsen as ethicist with critical views on the physical and mental frameworks of modernism, Pia Tafdrup as a commentator on world events in her literary interviews and Jens Martin Eriksen as a writer of documentary books (together with Frederik Stjernfelt) on ex-Yugoslavia and on multiculturalism.

Literature is made independent, while also displaying varying poetics about its relation to society, and it becomes part of a complex feedback relation with other social fields because of the welfare state's resolve about the universalism of art. The modern and postmodern ages are therefore characterised by a dynamism between the literary fields, artistic trends and poetics and the societal and state institutions and players in the public debate.

Thematic and Relational Differences of Opinion

When it comes to the thematic differences of opinion between literature and the welfare state, it would appear that literature from the mid – 1950s up to the present day deals artistically with a whole series of changes to society and family life brought about by the policy of the welfare state.

This does not mean that all literature in the welfare state deals with the thematics of welfare. But there are a numberof important literary works where the theme is present. The advent of welfare policy is actually accompanied in the literature by a number of portrayals of the new society that is coming into being. The literary expert Lasse Horne Kjældgaard has dealt with the utopias, dystopias and the realistic narra-

tives that are linked to the thematisation in literature of the expanding and crisis-hit welfare state in the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s (Kjældgaard 2009). Using analyses of works by, in particular, Anders Bodelsen, Henrik Stangerup and Svend Åge Madsen, Kjældgaard examines how literature relates the realities of the welfare state and the consequences that can follow in the wake of the state taking over responsibility for family life.

Characteristic for the literature from the mid-1950s to the present day is that a variety of key works have dealt with welfare themes. This applies to an often debated fear of an overprotective state, which is not only dealt with by Villy Sørensen and Svend Åge Madsen in the 1960s and 1970s but also by writers of the 21st century, such as Lars Frost, who lets his "welfare trilogy" *Smukke biler efter krigen* (Beautiful cars after the war, 2004), *Ubevidst rødgang* (Unconsciously crossing against the red light, 2008) and *Skønvirke* (*Arts & Crafts*, 2011) end in a dystopia, a society at war and in crisis. A superficial hysteria about health is rampant, a serial killer is on the loose, and women have taken over all the powerful positions in the state and society!

The changes to family life and the relation between state institutions, the family and the individual have been an important welfare theme, and it is found both such classics as Kirsten Thorup's social-critical novel *Baby* (1977) and in contemporary works such as Helle Helle's book about personal relationships *Forestillingen om et ukompliceret liv med en mand* (The idea of an uncomplicated life with a man, 2002).

The changes to working life and social living space are also themes explored in, for example, the novellas ofTage Skou-Hansen in *Tredje Halvleg* (Third Half, 1971) about the old working-class districts and the new dormitory towns of the 1960s, in Jens Smærup Sørensen's novel *Mærkedage* (*Red-letter Days*, 2007) about the phasing-out of traditional agricultural culture, and in Kirsten Hammann's *Fra smørhullet* (*From the Cosy Little Corner*, 2004) about narrow-mindedness and unhealthiness in the double-loneliness of the welfare family.

Mental impoverishment resulting from living in the welfare state is treated in, for example, Klaus Rifbjergs *Det sorte hul* (*The Black Hole*, 1980), which deals with a middle-aged man who has climbed socially in the welfare state from the working class to the more prosperous middle class, but who mental is sucked directly into the blackest hole of existence, and in Kirsten Thorup's *Tilfældes gud* (*God of Chance*, 2011) about a good-natured career woman who ends up destroying both herself and the African she, with palpable welfare force and power, wants to rescue from poverty.

The theme of youth's criticism of the welfare state can be seen in, for example, Michael Strunge's poems *Skrigerne* (*The Screams*, 1981), which describes the revolt of the punk generation against their parents from the 1968 generation, who have taken the safe path to a middle-class job, family life and a fat pension. The lives of the elderly at welfare institutions has become another major theme, now that the well-known author figures of the welfare state, such as Anders Bodelsen, are themselves reaching old age.

The welfare-state themes point to the possibilities literature has to give the reader insight into all aspects of life, the lives and feelings of their fellow-citizens, both the those that resemble the readers' own, and those that differ from them. The writer

Sven Holm spoke as early as in 1966 of the artist as "the last member of society that has the *entire* human being as his speciality" (Claussen 94).

One can obviously point to both criticism and empathy in many of the literary narratives on life in the Danish welfarestate. In this difference of opinion between literature and the welfare state, literature places itself at the disposal of its readers with its themes, its language, its images and its narratives, its insight into the welfare state. It thereby has an educative function that is often mentioned in the public debate on the importance of literature for the whole of society.

Even though literature is not read by all citizens of society and therefore does not always realise its entire educative potential, it nevertheless has an important societal function. Villy Sørensen intensifies such a way of thinking in his retrospective look at his own authorship and the major debates about art and society in his memoirs *På egne veje* (*My own separate way*, 2000). Here he writes:

> [···] art is just as necessary for the health of society as the dream of the health of the individual. Dreams are necessary, even if we cannot remember them; art is perhaps just as necessary, even though very few people are interested in it. (Sørensen 103)

The generation of writers who made their debut in the 1950s and early-1960s, and who made the transition to the artistic citizenship of the welfare state, often dealt with the theme of the human everyday problems of life in the new welfare state andthe possibly dystopian future perspectives of the system itself. But the generation of writers that followed immediately afterwards, and made their debut around 1965 – 67, and who were some of the first to be 'born' with citizenship and access to applying for Arts Foundation subsidies, went about things differently. These writers had emerged while the Arts Foundation debate was raging, and they had seen a cultural divide widening. And, in retrospect, it is clear that as writers they followed other paths than the thematic one when it comes to formulating in their writing and dealing with a difference of opinion between literature and the welfare state. Their works belong to a wide range of artistic tendencies, but they all share having the relationship to the reader often being an important aesthetic focus, no matter whether they work with documentarism, minimalism, confessional writing or experimental, fictional texts.

An early signal of a new orientation in art in general is to be found in the work of the pictorial artist Jens Jørgen Thorsen. In a large feature article in *Ekstra Bladet* in spring 1965 — in continuation of the Arts Foundation debate — Thorsen makes clear his objection to cultural radicalism, its rejection of pop music and popular mass culture and the "spectator art" it has promoted. Instead, Thorsen advocates an inclusive, experimental art with popular roots, along the lines of Asger Jorn and Henry Heerup.

In literature, the revolt against cultural radicalism and neo-radical modernism was underway, inspired by European and American literature and literary theory (Mai 2011). The postmodern aesthetics that opened up for dialogue and interpretation was used when the prose-writer Svend Åge Madsen made his books into DIY-kits, where

the reader personally had to construct a way forward, as in *Tilføjelser* (Additions 1967), the poet Vagn Steen published books with empty pages under the title *Riv selv* (*Tear It Out Yourself*) and *Skriv selv* (*Write It Yourself* – both from 1965), and the writer Charlotte Strandgaard published the documentary book *Herinde* (In Here, 1969) with proposals for a debate about young people's drug addition. The book consists of letters and statements from young drug-addicts about their relation to their parents, friends and the institutions of the welfare state. According to Strandgaard, the way out of the many problems the reader must personally try and help find. These reader-dialogue works thus operate with modernist, concretist and documentary poetics. What they all share is that literature and art from this new angle become a model for, and an example of, language and existence that the reader as well has to work on and use in his or her existence in general.

The French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud has later used the concept "relational art" about forms of art that work with an interactive relation to its public. Bourriaud conceives the work in itself as a meeting between artist and public. In the anthology *Relational aesthetics* (2005) he provides examples of the dialogical and relational aesthetics of contemporary art. Bourriaud deals with advanced installation projects and provocative forms of artistic expression. He claims that while art in earlier historical periods concentrated on the relation between humanity and God and later on that between humanity and the object, contemporary art is preoccupied with interhuman relationships, with its influence on the public. Art creates dynamic relations with other discourses in and outside art itself. The idea of art as a dynamic relation that refers to and includes various discourses and art forms adds a new dimension to the differences of opinion between art, literature and the welfare state. Bourriaud's concept of relational art has been criticised from several sides. Claire Bishop discusses Bourriaud's theories, pointing out that Bourriaud's ideas idealise both society and the subject (Bishop 2004).

Open works and relational literature appear in a Danish context to be attempts to transcend the semantic hierarchies of values that had become linked to the idea of the privileged insight of the modernist writer, to involve the reader and thereby bridge the then so controversial cultural gap. Writers and artists try to formulate themselves on the basis of Villy Sørensen's ideas about disquieting art which – as he described it in his debut feature article of 1954 — is to "gain an overview of the chaotic world, an Archimedean point in the abstract, in the unconscious, in the universal" (Sørensen 40).

In his generation anthology *eksempler* (1968), the writer and critic Hans-Jørgen Nielsen emphasised that the young poetry has abandoned the traditional subjectivist poetic role and the idea of the poem as cognition. Literature is to be examples, actions with things and words. We are dealing with a poetry "that is written between people, not for the people. Attempts to do the latter are not only futile but also involve a relapse to the old role of the poet as a kind of secularised priest that discovers the people" (Nielsen 177).

The youth revolt of 1968 created new frameworks for literature and art, since the political groupings and grass-roots movements that followed in its wake made use of

documentarism, fictional texts and confessional literature. The experience-based literature of the feminists (known as "red-stockings" in Denmark) was colourful and involved many self-taught writers who criticised family patterns and gender roles, wrote verse about burning their bras, cutting off their hair and turning being a woman over 40 into something festive.

The growth of the welfare state in the education system also meant that more young people actually got the chance to acquire art and literature. This, combined with the development of a large cheap book market, of bestsellers and new quality literature for children also strengthened the dissemination of literature.

The Functional Differences of Opinion

In continuation of the welfare thematics in contemporary literature, the educative aspect and the relational, open aesthetics in art and literature from the mid-1960s to the present day, it is a good idea to examine the functions ascribed to literature in the public debate in relation to the welfare state.

Many debaters in the early discussion of art and welfare emphasised that writers and artists possessed a special expertise when it came to the human problematics of the welfare state, and large sections of the literature and art have also been defined and interpreted as an expression of such a human understanding. The writer Leif Panduro, for example, acquired as a result of his TV plays the status of a senior psychologist who portrayed anxiety, loneliness and distance between people in the new affluent society with more insight and depth than anyone else. The large piles of letters Panduro received reveal him as being a "psychiatrist of the screen" (Jørgensen 290), who was sought out by people committed to psychiatric wards, people who did not dare come out of the closet as homosexuals, or persons trapped in the legal system.

Many viewers felt that Panduro understood them and their particular problems in relation to the public therapist system. He was a psychiatrist who defended them against the psychiatrists. One of the readers who sought out Panduro did so because she had the same name as one of this characters! Panduro maintained a correspondence with her for several years!

The quite tangible use of art and literature which Panduro experienced when people, after having watched his plays, asked for advice about their own lives also became part of the difference of opinion between literature and the welfare state. Literature was admittedly still read for its own sake, for aesthetic enjoyment and for entertainment, but it is also used as a possibility for communicating knowledge of and insight into psychological, social and gender-related difficulties and health problems. And here the function Villy Sørensen intended as psychologically in-depth and symbolising writing is actually linked to Hans-Jørgen Nielsen's conception of literature as an involved example of life and the use of literary texts by the grass-roots movement as proposals for the exchange of experiences and conversation.

One of the illnesses where literature is at present being used as an aid to patients and families is Alzheimer's (AD). A number of players within care of the elderly recommend the reading of literary texts if one wishes to have a greater understanding of the illness. The book by the Swedish writer Ulla Isaksson about the course of her hus-

band's illness *Boken om E* (*The Book about E*, 1994) is recommended in this context as well as Pia Tafdrup's poems about her father's illness and death in *Tarkovskijs heste* (*Tarkovsky's Horses*, 2006). The recommendations of these works are placed alongside specialised non-fiction and scientific articles about the illness.

Because of its thematics, its potential for experiencing and empathy and the training of citizens in its use through the education system, literature is one of the forms of expression that interacts with experiences, ideas and values in various areas of society.

This also applies for the whole conceptual framework of welfare, which is not a kind of open field of knowledge in the public debate, where research, business life and politics as well as literature and art are discussed by debaters from all corners of society.

Framing as a Difference of Opinion

The concept framing is used both in sociological and linguistic research when investigating how ideas and values appear and are linguistically formulated in the political debate. A couple of American examples can illustrate this.

The American sociologist John L. Campbell describes how sociology studies the politicians' framing of their policy in order to ensure it makes an impact. Frames function as normative and cognitive ideas and linguistic patterns that are placed at the forefront of the political debates. For example, the concept economic globalisation in the 1990s is used as a framing for the American shift to a neoliberal economic policy. In a similar way, political wishes to throttle back the American welfare reforms of the 1970s and 1980s are framed by concepts of special treatment of ethnic minorities, which creates divisions in the group of low-paid workers and ends by causing them to turn against the welfare reforms that actually benefit large sections of society. Campbell also mentions the skilful linguistic formulating of the European Union as an example of effective political framing (Campell 27).

The American language philosopher Georg Lakoff emphasises that the comparison of society with a family is an important frame in the American political debate: the Republicans frame the family of society as a patriarchal family with fixed rules, personal responsibility and the right to inflict corporal punishment, while the Democrats emphasise the family as being typified by parental care, where equality, freedom and a sense of community are established. According to Lakoff, framing is nor primarily about politics or political messages. "Frames" are mental structures, or schemata, that give us the opportunity to understand reality (Lakoff 25).

When it comes to the difference of opinion between artistic literature and the welfare state, one can notice how literature reacts to some of the widespread political frames and adopts a critical attitude towards them.

The concept of the welfare state itself appears in Social Democratic language use when Hans Hedtoft in his debate book *Mennesket i Centrum* (*Man at the Centre*, 1953) uses the concept "the people-governed welfare state" (Bomholt 7). Here, inspired by the British political discussion welfare ideas, he combines the word welfare with a concept of the state. The word welfare has a long tradition in literary history,

being found in such classical writers as Ludvig Holberg, Hans Adolf Brorson, Johannes Ewald, Hand Christian Andersen and N. F. S. Grundtvig, who, in accordance with normal language use at the time, used the word in referred to the individual's well-being, happiness, success and good conditions both in this life and the life beyond.

Hedtoft links the concept of welfare to a state system. The concept does not immediately occur in art and literature to any great extent, nor is it dealt with more closely. Welfare is still basically taken as referring to the individual level.

The political framing of the concept welfare and welfare state means that welfare as a concept is normally now seen as referring to something people have in common. If politicians talk about "welfare", "more welfare" or "lasting welfare", they do not mean the possibility the individual has for well-being and security in his or her personal life, but the individual's share of common welfare, or quite simply common welfare itself.

The concept of welfare forms what Georg Lakoff would call a deep frame in the Danish political debate, even though the political ideas concerning paths to welfare often take very different directions and the concept of the welfare state itself changes meaning and nature according to the context of which it is a part (Petersen 23).

In the mid-1950s, the concept welfare state was on its way to becoming a negative framing in the political debate. The Conservative opponents of welfare policy used the concept "formynderstat" (guardian state, or, popularly, "nanny state"). The term was first used in 1956 by the Conservative politician Poul Møller as a criticism of the consequences of Social Democratic policy concerning the welfare state (Madsen 107).

The concept of a paternalistic state was thematised in Villy Sørensen's *Formynderfortœllinger* (*Tutelary Tales*, 1964). He deals with the principle of guardianship on the basis of psychological, religious, existential, social and political approaches. The tales deal among other things with states and societies that assume guardianship over their citizens, since the citizens either are deprived of, or voluntarily give up, their personal and social freedom and responsibility, after which an ominous conformity and uniformity ensues. Villy Sørensen himself claimed that he had absolutely not sought to portray present-day society, but had been interested to a greater extent in showing that social development can acquire its own negative logic if people do not also develop (Clausen 30).

The point of the tales in this context is that the emerging welfare state could end upbecoming a paternalistic system of government if people are incapable of mental growth. *Formynderfortœllinger* became a literary classic, and the socially critical tale "A Glass Story", which deals with a modern uniformity and self-chosen conformity, was often included in anthologies and was subject to innumerable analyses in the school system.

The negative political framing of the welfare state by the Conservatives initially faded into the background, but the guardian concept still lives on in the political debate and is occasionally used — by a number of Liberal politicians, for example.

The growing demand for labour in the 1960s created a political framing of the in-

coming foreign labour force, who from 1965 were referred to as "guest workers", and from 1966 as "foreign workers" (Jarvad 308). The political framing was critically examined in the literature of the time, in both poems, songs and stories. Among the very first was the Turkish-born Murat Alfar with his poems *Memet en rejsende i arbejde* (*Memet, An Immigrant Worker*, 1974). Here Alfar portrays how an identity as an alien comes about via small shifts in everyday language and self-perception.

In the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, the political framing of globalisation and New Danes has been particularly controversial, both during a debate on values in the first period of the right-wing government under Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and later in connection with the increasing criticism of the tone of the debate about Islam and immigration after the right-wing terror action in Norway in summer 2011.

A number of writers who had their debut in the 2000s and 2010s, such as Eva Tind Kristensen and Maja Lee Langvad, publish critical texts precisely about language use and the framing of new Danes, nationality and globalisation.

Another example of political framing is the talk of the growing group of elderly people in Danish society as a burden or a ticking bomb underneath the welfare society in connection with the welfare policy discussions of the 1990s and 2000s. This framing has been critically dealt with in the literature by Lars Frost. In his welfare novel *Smukke biler efter krigen* (*Beautiful Cars after the War*) the somewhat naive main character Lasse thinks a long time about how morally deplorable it is to use such a term about a whole group of the population.

Differences of opinion between welfare state and literature are seen in the welfare state in various relations:

Firstly, politicians include literature and art in the universalism of the welfare idea; secondly, key works and texts from the 1950s to the present day thematise a number of the changes in family life, working life, education and demography that the welfare state involve; thirdly, political and artistic debaters formulate publicly ideas about the function of literature and the writer in the welfare state; fourthly, the political framing of the construction of the welfare state and the welfare debate itself are critically dealt with in the most important literary works of the period from the 1950s to the present day. Welfare is a well-established concept in a Danish context, and it has given rise to strong differences of opinion between literature, culture and state.

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