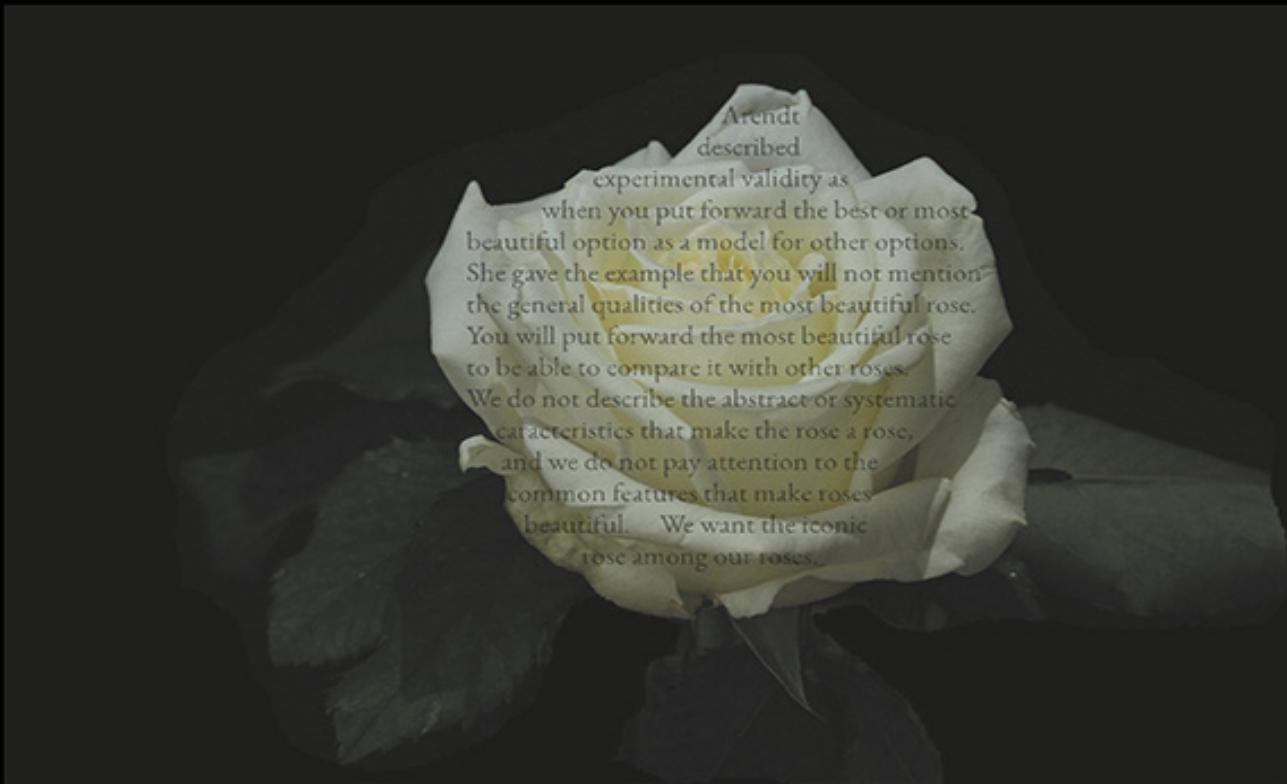


Readability

– Birth of the Cluster text, part I



Ars Discendi I, Ars Legendi
– Introduction to the Art of Learning

Annandreas

Publications

Är texter felskrivna?

Läslighet del 1

Läslighet del 2

Typografisk manual

(Typografiska undersökningar)

Are texts wrongly written?

Readability part 1

Readability part 2

Typographic manual

(Typographical investigations)

About this translation

This is a special project. It is a test of a new text design, and I wanted to keep the idea to myself until I was ready to market all my first couple of books in both English and Swedish simultaneously. Because of this, I felt I had to use a self-publishing service. It would probably not have been possible to publish them in that way with an ordinary publisher. I think you will understand why when you know the scope of this project. Since I am using a self-publishing service, I have done all the work on my own - translation, typography, proofreading etc. I could have bought those services, but they are expensive. It would have cost me a fortune only for this book. I could not afford that, and I found it too risky to borrow the money. Because of this, you should understand that this translation may not be perfect, and I will comment on that.

My preferred language is Swedish, so this translation may have become a little Swenglish. I hope you can accept the possible discrepancies in style and grammar. I have used what I think is acceptable grammar, but there could be peculiarities. E.g., I know that some constructions, which often are acceptable nowadays, are considered bad style by some - such as dangling prepositions or split infinitives. I have tried not to use them, but in my quest for not doing that, I may have used some strange solutions. My linguistic - feel- for this is not very well developed. This is also the case for my use of commas. This text is about writing better texts, and I think it is faster to read texts with more commas. I chose to use commas almost as much as I could,

e.g., after the introductory part of a sentence. In news articles, this is not always done (I think). This is neither the case for run-on sentences (I think). It makes it a little difficult to develop one's linguistic feel. A further weakness is that I am not very confident concerning syntax, i.e. clause analysis. I know that common errors are to use commas by restrictive relative clauses and to forget them by independent clauses. A better analysis of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses and of dependent and independent clauses would have been the next step in improving this text. You will probably notice some such errors. At this point, it was too demanding to correct them. E.g., there could be many errors with commas when I have used 'which'. In this, I know that it is more common to use 'that' in restrictive clauses in American English. I tried to use that as a tool in this text. Still, for the most part, I tried to use an improved British-European-International English. Examples of this is that I chose to simplify some words (program/programme) and that I used s instead of z in many places (realise/realize). Z:s are annoying - it is a new convention that may need to change. Concerning typography, I have also tried to use an improved international standard. By this, I mean that I have tried to use solutions from different countries. You will notice that in the text. One example is that I do not use as many capital letters as is often done in British and American texts. They are annoying - it is an old convention that may need to change.

I may not have written a text that shows all the necessary nuances, and I may have used some bad choices of words, clumsy formulations, faulty punctuations, and such. As a reader, you have to remedy all this, and I hope you will do it with a warm smile rather than by a hefty criticism. This text may not be perfect, but still, I hope it will be good enough for a proper test of the text design and that you will

understand everything I have written about. It is the ideas in this book that are important.

I felt it was too tedious to perfect the book further. It will have to do for now. I see it as a mvp - a minimum viable product. I have read some grammar books and used a grammar service - Pro Writing Aid. I hope they have made this text acceptable to read. You could see this book as a version 0.7 where a version 1.0 would have been a proper book, which knows that it is correct. I have trouble understanding whether it is good enough. I have tried to correct as many errors as I can, but I do not know whether there are any major errors left. I mention this as I want you to know that I care very much about this text. It is sometimes said that errors show that you do not care. If there are too many errors, it is not because I do not care. They exist because of my level of English at this point. If this text is not good enough, I hope I can remedy it soon by a future edition when I can afford it. I hope you can accept this.

In philosophy, you are supposed to question the tradition. I have done this in a lot of ways in this book. I have tried to write the best book in the world. It should be much easier to read this book than ordinary books. I also wanted this to be a true philosophic project with philosophic akribia, and because of this, I have not made any scientific tests. You are doing such a test when you are reading this book, and you are supporting this kind of research by having bought this book - Thank you! Your support is invaluable. I have no other occupancy, and I have dedicated my time to this project with one mission - to give you a proper opportunity to answer the question whether texts have been wrongly written. A sedimented experience causes you to constitute a certain meaning about that question. You can negotiate this meaning through this book. I hope you will enjoy this experience.

Annandreas

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1 Reading instructions, reading expectations, inspirations, ambitions, and some reservations

We do not undertake analyses of work to copy them or because we suspect them. We investigate the methods with whom someone else has created their work to put ourselves in motion.¹

1 Reading instructions, reading expectations, inspirations, ambitions, and some reservations

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1.7 Are texts wrongly written?

It is not a harmless book you have got in your hands. As you can see, the text is written in a different way. The idea of this book is that we should try to evaluate the truth about texts. I claim that texts have been wrongly written for hundreds of years. The text has a history, and it has not been easy to change it. I argue this should be done. We should change how we write texts. Texts should be written as this one because it is better to read it.

The text you are now reading seems to be more comfortable to read, and because of this, I suppose that the comprehension also will be better. It is a significant improvement. This is the possible truth I want to share, and I want to give you the opportunity to arrive at the same conclusion. I want to give you the opportunity to answer the question whether texts are wrongly written. It is the main purpose of this book.

1.1 Reading instructions

It may take some time to get used to this cluster text. Keep calm and carry on reading. A nice reading rhythm will eventually appear. At first, you may feel some discomfort. You are challenging an old habit, and your reading may be a bit messy in the beginning. As you read the first couple of pages, you may notice the larger spaces more than the words. Such effects will decrease after a while. Other effects may take a little longer to get used to – such as the longer lines.

It may take some time finding a good rhythm, but it will happen. After a while, you will not notice the spaces. You will immerse yourself into the reading as you should. This happens because the brain affects our reading. Our brain wants to understand. If we do not understand, our reading pace will be reduced and more regressions will happen. This happens with ordinary texts, but it may be even more apparent with this kind of text. You will get used to the text, just as you did for ordinary texts. Just carry on reading, and the adjustments will take place by itself.

My thought is to present a text with a length of about a thousand ordinary pages, so you can form a good idea of how it is to read this kind of text. It is probably not enough just to read a dozen pages. There may be training effects after some hundred pages, which makes your reading even better. This is partly why this book is so extensive, and of course, because I have much to tell.

The differences between this kind of text and the ordinary ones are significant. You will notice this if you read an ordinary text shortly after this one. My experience is that it feels as when you are leaving the highway when driving - a kind of speed blindness enters. After reading this text, it does not feel very good to read ordinary texts after this one. This is mainly why this book may not be harmless. There is a danger that your motivation to read ordinary texts will be reduced. I feel so myself. After reading this text, it is tougher to read ordinary texts with shorter lines and only smaller spaces between sentences. As many others, I do not think it is as comfortable to read on screens as on paper. The relationship is approximately the same between this text and ordinary texts.

I do not know whether I am the first to write this type of text, i.e. to publish this type of book with the idea that it should replace ordinary books. It feels naive to believe that one can be the first with such a simple idea, but my investigations have not given me reason to believe

otherwise. I have searched the Internet and some reading research, but found nothing pointing in this direction. Neither have I found a book as this one, but I found a clarifying extract in a text about reading research, *The Secret Code*, issued by the Swedish Research Council in 2006. There, one of the approximately seventeen researchers writes:

Is empty space important?

Yes it is important because without the markers it will be hard to read

This with having nothing/void as a boundary marker is somewhat ingenious.²

I disagree with researchers who think that writing texts with only smaller spaces is ingenious. In fact, it is not particularly ingenious. You may already have noticed this. It is not enough to describe a possible ingenuity with only small spaces. It should be described by spaces of a certain kind in a particular way.

The initial question whether texts are wrongly written is a sincere question, but it may be perceived as a rhetorical one, since I suppose this text is better, and ordinary texts, i.e. single-space texts, are wrongly written. I make this assumption to enable a better reading experience. With a better experience, you will be able to answer the question properly. It is hard for me to decide whether this text is better since I am forced to read my own text. I can only surmise it is better. Your answer will probably be better than mine. This text may not be the best text for all types of readers. You will have to evaluate and answer this. That is why I have written this book as a question.

Assuming this text as better makes it easier for me to write a better text. I can skip all comments such as: - if this text is better, if there is a difference, and so on. Such comments and apologies would have made the text a bit

awkward to read. I assume this text as better, so that it will be nicer contentally to read it.

I want to make it clear that texts possibly not should look *exactly* as this one. I may not have written a perfect text, as it is hard to know where all the line breaks should be. The line breaks and the larger spaces between sentences remain for us to investigate properly.

In cases it seems strange that I write as if this text is true, it is because it becomes a better and more interesting text (as I mentioned earlier), but it is also an exemplification of a philosophical thought - a heideggerian thought. I hope I am *in truth* when I present many of my thoughts. When we live our everyday lives, i.e. when we express our daily thoughts, then we hope we are *in truth*. We even assume this to be the case. We do not live as sceptics, then we probably would not have got much done. It is rarely easy to determine whether our assumptions are true. In my statements, and interpretations, I assume this text to be true, i.e. better. If I am right, it means that many of our previous statements and interpretations have been incorrect. We assumed ourselves being in truth, which was not the case. You will understand why I mention this thought when I return to it in chapter 5 and especially in the last chapter. It should be clearer by then. This order may apply too many thoughts in this book - they become clearer in time. I ask for your patience while you read, so I will be able to clarify many of the thoughts in time. I will do so continuously.

Now we have stepped into a world where this type of text is seen as true, i.e. the cluster text is true, and I will not leave this assumption until the end of this book. This strategy is uncontroversial if I am right. If I am wrong, I understand that some may see this book as strange. In such cases, I want you to look beyond that, so you can understand the thoughts and procedures I am trying to exemplify. My next idea may be true, and then it may require a similar *procedure* as the one I am using in this

book. Linus Pauling³ said that the best way to get a *good* idea is to get many ideas. I have many ideas to comment on, and the question is how this should be done. I try to use a certain way to make an exposition, and I want you to think about this way. I am interested in the general problem of how to make expositions, and I want you to think about it. How would you have made this exposition? What procedure would you have used to reach a certain exposition? Which procedure, or procedures, will you be using after this experience?

First, I need to make a couple of conceptual clarifications for the future arguments. I refer to this text as a *cluster text* – words are clustered in orthographic sentences with five spaces in between. I sometimes refer to ordinary texts, i.e. texts with no larger spaces, as *single-space texts*, *rectangle texts*, or the *standard interpretation*. I use those words when required – for clarity. This exposition will be much about learning, and I will use the term *subjects of knowledge* for those who are learning. It is a general term for all those who are engaged in some learning. It may be children, pupils, students, professors, or those learning in occupational activities or in their leisure time. In short, I call everyone present in a learning situation, i.e. in a situation with the goal of learning, as a subject of knowledge. I use this term to simplify my writing. I hope it is clear from the context whether it is about parents, students, or any other group I am referring to. There will be more introductions of concepts onwards.

This is an introductory reading instruction which could affect your way of reading. Your reading expectations could also affect your way of reading.

1.2 Reading expectations

I suppose the chapter title has given you a certain direction now when you are reading. The book title *Readability - the birth of the Cluster text, introduction to the Art of learning*, has also given you some guidance. This is the first book in my book series, *Ars Discendi*, which translates the art of learning. Because of this, you can assume that this book is about learning and reading. I begin the art of learning, *Ars Discendi*, by an art of reading, an *Ars Legendi*.

I thought of using *Readliness*, *Readness*, or *Legibility* as the main title. *Readness* is not really a word, and it is a bit awkward. *Readliness* is often used as something like preparedness. I used this word, wrongly, in my shorter book *Are texts wrongly written?* to refer to this book. *Legibility* is closer to *Ars Legendi*, the art of reading, but I do not know if everyone knows this word, and it is probably more related to typography, so I decided to use *readability*. I use it in a broad sense, and it concerns everything about reading. You could think of it as a term for all thoughts that concerns reading in one way or another. It will be clearer ahead why I use this term. The term *readability* is often used to describe how readable a text is. I often use it in a broader sense, but of course, this text is also about *readability/legibility* in the ordinary sense; this text is more *readable/legible*. The cluster text has a better *readability/legibility*.

The table of contents and what one previously has read or heard about a book are other sources that may affect our reading expectations. Sometimes, there are common expectations that could lead to poorer reading. In an art of reading, an *Ars legendi*, we need to handle them. / need to handle them as a writer. Some expectations and perceptions about reading and texts can lead to better concentration and comprehension, but if they are wrong, they could lead to poorer reading - obviously. I will start this book by commenting on some of them. Different expectations and perceptions affect what we can understand when we read. Therefore, I will problematise some such expectations

throughout the book and not only in this chapter. I will problematise several perceptions - not just those concerning reading and learning.

I am trying to develop thoughts about an art of reading, i.e. I am trying to create an experience in this book that can turn us into better readers. In such a project, we need to work with perceptions and expectations. It will be clearer ahead, especially in chapter 11, what I mean by this. Until then, I want you to gain experience of such things I write about, that is, about the perceptions of the different phenomena. This reading experience will work as a preparation for the thoughts about reading comprehension that I will elaborate in chapter 11.

I do all of this because I want a teenager to be able to read this book. All these thoughts are thoughts they may never have come across, and that may lead them to feel a bit crestfallen. At first, they may feel the reading of this book as when you are crossing a wide sea. It feels as too much and too difficult. I hope I can change this. I hope they will be happy to see that they managed to cross the sea, and that they by doing so have learnt much about reading and learning, i.e. that they have become better readers and learners. I hope this will be true to all who are reading this book - teenagers as well as elders, and everyone in between.

Frustration and immediate understanding

By managing reading expectations, readers could be prepared for what they have to endure, and therefore, I do it in this first chapter. I hope it will ease your reading. Advanced readers are already aware of what I am mentioning. Advanced readers, e.g., expect some *frustration*. There are uncertainties at a first reading that you may have to accept. Advanced readers do not expect to understand everything right away. They try to understand *something* to be able to understand a little more in the

future. Troubled readers may think they need to understand almost everything at once. It is very important to understand this difference! To not accept frustration and expecting an immediate understanding are examples of expectations/perceptions that may adversely affect our reading. I mention those, because I think they are the most common perceptions that make troubled readers just a bit worse as readers. Try to accept these thoughts and try to continue reading bearing them in mind!

I will give you a couple of more examples of perceptions that could affect your reading.

Loose threads

It is a bit problematic when there are loose threads in a text, i.e. thoughts that we do not understand. This can happen when something differs from our expectations. If there is a loose thread, we can cling to it. It could distort our focus or concentration, and then we may miss something important. Example *Footnotes*: I have already used some footnotes that could cause such problems. Instead of concentrating on the main content, you may wonder why I write as I do in the footnotes. I will comment more thoroughly on how I use the footnotes in the next chapter. Until then, it may be good to know that I intend to mention something about the important people and concepts in the footnotes. I put some biographical facts that I think may be interesting in the footnotes. It may also be good to know that if I only have written a word with an equality sign (=), the explanation of the word is in the main text at that page. Such is good to know, so it not will distort your focus/concentration. You should not wonder whether there is something wrong or why something is the case. You should be focused on the negotiation of the meaning in the text. Therefore, I tell you about such matters. I will continue to do this for a further couple of reading expectations.

Overlapping threads

I have already given you a short reading instruction, and now I am trying to manage different reading expectations that could affect your reading. I will soon try to manage what I call inspirations and reservations. All these areas are interrelated, and they can affect your reading. They represent a kind of reading instruction - i.e. pay attention to this while reading. I have put them in different sections under different headings, but you should probably see them as intertwined in different ways. To manage problems under different headings can lead to problems for some readers. I have made a sectioning whose borders are not easy to maintain - and which possibly not should be maintained. In cases where thoughts intertwine, some readers may perceive it as if the writer does not adhere to their sectioning. It could be annoying if you are not told about it, or if you cannot figure it out on your own. A well-written book uses headings to make the text easier to understand, but such headings are troublesome when thoughts in different sections intertwine. Then, a problem could be that there will be too many headings. Assume that you first elaborate on three things separately, then how they affect each other two and two, and finally how they all affect each other - that could lead to seven headings that may not facilitate the reading as intended. It may be better to write a single heading and then let the discussion develop. If so, the headings could be perceived as a focus word, which focuses the attention but that will not lock it down. You can elaborate more with a vague heading than to what the heading actually refers. Vagueness can actually be good, but some troubled readers may have a problem with it.

It is not easy to make a good breakdown of headings. You will probably notice some of the problems I have had, and sometimes, you may think it may be your reading expectations that causes you not to understand something. The breakdown can interfere with your reading if you expect

something special because of it. As a writer, it is sometimes impossible to stick to the breakdown you have made. It is difficult to write well, and then you have to hope for the reader to remedy your weaknesses. I want you to think about this as you read ahead. Remedy my shortcomings!

The main reason I address these problems is that this book is dealing with areas that are intertwined. There is not just one main thread, but many, and unfortunately, many readers are often just trying to understand one main idea when reading. The problems here are more complex, which makes it difficult adhering to one thread, i.e. to one main idea.

Usually, readers pick up markers when reading – such as headings. There are also other markers such as the paragraph sectioning, the use of special words, and so on. Usually, you will be disturbed if they are not related to what you think at that moment. That is to say, you are disturbed if the text does not match your reading expectations. It is important to keep this in mind, if, e.g., I am presenting a piece of new information that does not seem to have a clear link with the previous paragraphs. It can be linked, i.e. intertwined, at a later stage. It could also be a mistake on my part, but, naturally, I hope I have avoided such mistakes.

Whatever you write, you will have to write in a certain order. You have to begin by saying *one* thing. You cannot write two things at once. You have to write something before you write something else. A certain order suits different readers differently well. As a writer, one has to decide on a scheme. Sometimes, this will lead to some overlaps. Therefore, I ask of respite from those who temporarily may feel a bit confused, maybe frustrated, if there are some such overlappings of ideas. My word of advice is to carry on reading, and then I hope I will resolve any confusion with a later paragraph.

Meta-text

As a writer, one opportunity to manage reading expectations is to use meta-text. I am doing it right now. I am commenting on my own text. Meta-text is text about text. In principle, you can see this whole chapter as meta-text. As a writer, you can try to reduce the effects of phenomena similar to those I have mentioned above with meta-text. I can comment if something seems to be a loose or overlapping thread that I think could affect your reading adversely.

There will be other problems if you use too much meta-text. One of them is that the text will become too extensive, and because of this, I will sometimes avoid such comments. I hope, however, that you still will be able follow me in my possible change of thought. The character and scope of this book makes it difficult constantly to comment on every single thought. Therefore, make sure you know that failures could happen, and that you possibly could remedy them with a more active reading. If there is no meta-text, it may be helpful to imagine what such a text would have said if it existed. It may cause you to better understand the shortcomings of this book. There may be situations where you do not really understand, and then I want you to think about what I wrote in this first chapter. Once again, try to remedy the possible shortcomings. Advanced readers usually do this.

Threads

I have already mentioned a couple of thoughts about threads. I will elaborate more on reading expectations using the threads of this book. In Latin, *textus* is another word for weave (or fabric), and it consists of threads. It is a good metaphor for texts and reading. In the next section, I will describe what each chapter in this book will be about.

The different threads run through the various chapters, and each chapter has its own specific thread - it has its own content. With this procedure, i.e. by explaining the threads, I

want to give you an introductory whole, which should make it easier for you to orient yourself in the text. I hope it provides a frame/body/skeleton, which you could fill during your reading. Then you will hopefully come to see a kind of fabric or weave that will enable you to manage all the different threads when we get further ahead.

This book has two main threads. One is the question about the cluster text and reading. Text and reading are intertwined in one main thread. They form a subarea that one needs to master in an art of learning. Another main thread is to introduce the art of learning. These threads are interrelated, where the introduction to the art of learning can be seen as the main one. This book is probably best understood as a preparation for any future books about an art of learning. I have plans for several books. This book is an attempt to find tools and procedures that could drive a good development in such a project. I have some thoughts regarding learning that I wish to implement. I mention this, so you could better understand what this book is about. Many of the thoughts, ideas, concepts, theories, and methods I mention can be of further use in future books. In other words, there may be excerpts that are not fully relevant to the questions in this book, but they may be important in the future. Then you might wonder why I am writing about them right now. They may not be of instant importance, but they may be important for the future books. If I am not treating text and reading, then I am probably preparing for the art of learning. With this scheme, the thoughts could be used after this book. I want to make it very clear that I am preparing for several books from the start, so you can read with less frustration and greater understanding. I guess that frustration decreases when you become aware of why something is written in the text. Do you feel this right now?

I feel quite sure that the first two books can be of significant use. Then I have some further thoughts which are

more experimental. If they work, I would like to share my thoughts on them in my future books. At this point, I want to keep them to myself. There is a danger that the economy, or some other circumstance, not will allow for such a development, but I hope I will manage.

In addition to the thoughts of the two main threads, it may be good to think of a couple of subthreads. I am especially thinking of three subthreads: an introduction of philosophy, an introduction to Michel Foucault's writings, and an account of some pedagogical points (I avoid the term »educational« on purpose, it will be clearer ahead why I do that). As an introduction, you can imagine the following:

Main thread 1: Introduction to the Art of Learning.

Main thread 2: The question about the cluster text and the art of reading.

Subthread 1: An introduction to philosophy.

Subthread 2: An introduction to Foucault.

Subthread 3: An exemplification of some pedagogical points.

These five threads will begin and end, intertwine and segregate, throughout this book, and possibly also throughout the following books. I can start a new thread while the others continue to braid. Some may end, while others continue. This can lead to either a troublesome warp or a beautiful weave. It will happen mainly due to my ability to exemplify the thoughts in text, but also to your reading ability. If I drop a thread, I treat one of the others. The reason I address this is that many are used to follow *one* thread. That expectation can make it difficult to understand this book.

The content in the chapters

The different threads run through the various chapters. Each chapter also deals with its own content and its own

questions, i.e. it has its own thread. You can expect the following...

In this first chapter, am I making an introduction and giving you an overview of this book. I am introducing *my* concept of an art of learning, which begins with an art of reading. I have already given some comments about reading, which initiates both the art of reading and the art of learning. Understandably, reading is also about how to write, which I also will comment a little on.

In the second chapter, I treat a number of pedagogical thoughts, points, which you could evaluate while you are reading. There will also be an introduction to a pedagogical perspective, which I use for both the pedagogical thoughts and the art of learning.

In the third chapter, I will describe my interpretation of the writings of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. I hope you will get a feeling for what he wrote about without having to read all his books. This chapter will lead you to a better understanding of my project, and probably my future books, since I make great use of his writings.

In the fourth chapter, I report how I »found« the cluster text. Foucault was important for this, but so was phenomenology, developed by, among others, Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I will give an introduction to them and some other phenomenologists.

In the fifth chapter, I will use hermeneutics to interpret the phenomena of text and reading. In this chapter, I am inspired by another French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, and his critical hermeneutics. I will mention some knowledge that I think makes the cluster text easier to read and some thoughts that helped me to develop the text to the form it finally received. I will also comment on speed reading. There are many books about it, but Science has difficulty in verifying the phenomenon. It seems to be false. This may be good to know when it comes to reading faster with a better

comprehension, which we may need to do in an art of reading, as well as in an art of learning.

In the sixth chapter, I try to educate you as a micro power. This concept gets some of its meaning from Foucault in chapter 3. In simplicity, this chapter is about how you initially can do to write cluster texts. I will also elaborate on some other situations, regarding reading and learning, that are acting against us as micro powers.

In the seventh chapter, I mention some different roles the text plays in society. I describe some situations where texts and reading affect how we feel and behave, and what we think, say, and write. I do this under a certain influence of Foucault, but the main inspiration in this chapter comes from Jacques Derrida and his method – deconstruction. A part of this chapter is an exposition about the single-space text ideology, and its counterpart – the cluster text utopia.

In the eighth chapter, I treat a particular perception of science – positivism. Different people have different views on science. I perceive those close to positivism being the most common. Positivist thinking influences many activities, and it may be important to know how this happens. It can be important to know a little about different perceptions of science in general, and it is especially important for the art of learning. Positivism can also be understood as a scientific naturalism. Science naturalises many thoughts.

In the ninth chapter, I will make a short, simple, and hopefully rewarding introduction to philosophy with its main areas of knowledge and morality. The previous chapters will then constitute an important background experience where I already have introduced different philosophical perspectives and problematised their relations to knowledge and morality through the cluster text. Through this strategy, I hope you have become extra motivated for this chapter. Through the chapter, I try to stabilise philosophy from an overly weak position, to upgrade moral thinking so we can use it more often, and to destabilise science from what I think of as an

overly strong position (even though it is overly weak concerning many questions). Philosophy is probably not much discussed - especially in Sweden. I hope my preparation raises your interest, and that I could contribute to a more reflected opinion about philosophy for those who rarely are reading it.

In the tenth chapter, I write about the non-history of the cluster text. There have actually been several opportunities to change the text. I will mention some of them, and at the same time I will do a little exposition about the history of philosophy. This chapter is also a description of how important it is with a theory-driven perception, and it will highlight the difficult relationship between theory and practice.

The first ten chapters is a preparation for the eleventh chapter. I want that to be clear. I want you to have an experience of the first eight chapters when you reach chapter 9, and I want you to have an experience of the ten first chapters when you reach chapter 11. Even though it may lead to some frustration, I think you will benefit greatly from this scheme.

In the eleventh chapter, I write about reading and learning from a pedagogical perspective. It will be about some thoughts that could help us when we are trying to read and learn. With a better text and a better reading, we could use them more, and better, when learning. In the first book of an introduction to an art of learning, it should be appropriate to think about an art of reading. It is a common practice when learning, and it could have been used even more, and better, if we were better at it.

In the twelfth and final chapter, there are some different threads to relate and intertwine. I relate the different thoughts that I have begun to discuss, and I try to see what they can do to an art of learning in the making. I describe some syntheses of the previous arguments, and I will try to develop a fruitful position to evolve from, which can be used

in the future books. This happens throughout the whole book and not just in the final chapter.

This is what you can expect from the different chapters. It is important you think about that which is written as something in progress. It is something that is going on – that is being created. The concepts and activities are not finished and carved in stone. This is a beginning. You need to begin with some ideas in order to reach better ones.

1.3 Introduction to the Art of learning - Ars Discendi

I will continuously discuss the introduction of the art of learning in the different chapters, and now I will begin with a brief introduction to what I mean by Ars Discendi. It is Latin and translates to the art of learning. The concept is inspired by Michel Foucault's division of sexuality in *The history of sexuality I - the will to know*.⁴ He made a distinction between Scientia Sexualis and Ars Erotica – between a certain speech about Sexuality, and Sexuality as an art. Foucault described that there has been a special practice and talk about sexuality in Europe, unlike in some Asian cultures, where they developed sexuality and/or eroticism as an art. Kamasutra is an example to which we not really have developed a counterpart in Europe. I will use a similar distinction between Scientia Examinandi and Ars Discendi. There is a difference between the speech and practices concerning examinations and an art of learning. There has been a persistent speech about examinations and study skills (that still persists), but we do not have any art of learning. We do not have a Kamasutra for learning. We do not have any well-developed learning practices commonly used when we live our lives.

In an attempt to create an art of learning, we may need to relate learning to pleasure, as we sometimes do concerning our sexuality. One can perceive the art of learning as a Kamasutra for learning, as an eroticism for learning, i.e. a deeper and more committed attitude. This is a difference to the exam practices where one uses a different attitude. It can be described as when one at times does what one is expected to do and not much else, and then we talk about it in our peculiar ways.

I see a good text and a good art of reading as a good introduction to an *Ars Discendi*. In accordance with the above, you could see it as a deeper and more committed attitude to text and reading. Text and reading could offer pleasure. They should not be something we avoid, or just get done, which seems to be the case for many. Up to a quarter of the adult population never reads a book, in Sweden.⁵ Fewer and fewer read books. Some listen to books, and some read on screens, but they still read fewer books. We seem to need a better reading practice. We need a better readability - in the extended sense of readability.

It may be necessary to clarify the concept of the art of learning further. The two words ›learning‹ and ›art‹ may need some clarification. I will begin this process now, but it will continue in all my possible books.

Knud Illeris addresses four uses of the word learning in *Dialogue, interaction and learning*.⁶ He described learning as...

- ...the result of a learning process,
- ...the mental learning processes of the individual,
- ...the external interaction processes that are a prerequisite for the learning by the individual,
- ...and as a synonym for different ways of teaching.

I am mainly thinking about learning in different processes, but there are of course elements of the other uses.

The concept of art is initially inspired by Aristotle and Erich Fromm. In the *Nicomachean ethic*, Aristotle⁷ made a distinction of what could be different and what could not. To that which cannot be different, there is no reasonable person who questions it. We can call that a doctrine. Usually, we give those areas the ending ›logy‹, as in *psychology*. The art of learning is not a science of learning, a learnology, in this sense. It tries to question what others take for granted, of which the ways to read and write are the first two examples. It will look for such things we could see differently that could affect our learning outcome. There are those thinking we are already doing things properly, and many seem to think that they already know much about learning. They may think they *know* things about learning. The art of learning differs from those who think they know things about learning and do not question them.

Practical wisdom is required to practice an art. Then the art needs to be shown, which is an objective for the practitioner of an art, i.e. the artist or artisan. An artist/performer or an artisan/craftsman is required to show something. In order to practice an art, you need to be an artist or artisan. In an art, you may need to develop techniques, master them, and show how they should be used if something should be talked about as a good art. An artist or artisan needs to master something, e.g. some skill, which is useful to be able to perform well. The artist/artisan must sometimes use the skill in a creative and innovative way to be able to speak of a good art. In the art of learning, skills are needed to learn well, and they should be shown. It is not enough to show a measurement or an evaluation, which is so often done.

In *The Art of Love*,⁸ Erich Fromm mentions a few conditions that apply to the learning and exercising of an art. He mentions what is required of someone to become a master of an art. It requires insights and goal-oriented efforts. When

you should learn an art, you need to be fully comfortable in both theory and practice, and if you manage to combine them, you can become a master in the art. Obviously, it is necessary that the art becomes a matter of the heart. It is a condition for any art, regardless of whether it is the question of the art of painting, the art of writing, or as in our cases, the art of reading and the art of learning. Discipline, patience, and concentration are required to turn something into a good art. Fromm also pointed out that it is common not to start learning an art immediately. You will often have to take a detour. First, you must possibly learn several other things, often apparently irrelevant, before dealing with the art itself – as when we now are thinking about the text. If you succeed in turning something to a matter of the heart, and if you practice discipline, patience, and concentration throughout your life, you can succeed in an art.

Two other things may be required to succeed: belief and courage. A belief often requires courage. You may be required to take a risk, and you may even have to go through pain and hardship. It may be necessary to take certain values as omistical, and that you dare to take a leap and bet all you can on those values. It is not easy to become a master of an art, but you can try. Even if you do not succeed, those who will follow could benefit from your endeavour.

Those were some initial thoughts about the concept of the art of learning. They can develop in this and the following books. The arts, of learning and reading, *Ars Discendi* and *Ars Legendi*, are to be developed by this approach. An art of reading is part of an art of learning. By some, this can be seen as apparently irrelevant. Most will learn other things if they are interested in learning. When you develop study or teaching skills, you will not develop reading for a long period of time. You are often doing something else. But you need to be fully at home both in the theory about reading and the practice of reading to be able to practice an art of