

Heiberg's Speculative Poetry as a Model for Kierkegaard's Concept of Controlled Irony

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In a late journal entry looking back on Johan Ludvig Heiberg's critical review of *Either/Or*,¹ Kierkegaard, with a sense of injured pride, writes that prior to and including the 1843 publication of *Either/Or*, he "had steadfastly expressed nothing but respectful devotion for Prof. Heiberg."² It is well known that in his early years Kierkegaard was highly influenced by Heiberg's works on criticism and aesthetics.³ Kierkegaard published his first short articles in Heiberg's journal, *Kjøbenhavn's flyvende Post*.⁴ In

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¹ Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Litterær Vintersæd," *Intelligensblade*, vol. 2, no. 24, 1843, pp. 285-292.

² *JP*, vol. 6, 6748, p. 395; *Pap. X-6 B* 171, p. 261. Translation slightly modified.

³ See, for example, P.M. Mitchell, "Aesthetic Irony, Heiberg and His School. Søren Kierkegaard," in his *A History of Danish Literature*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1957, pp. 135-149; Henning Fenger, "Kierkegaard—A Literary Approach," *Scandinavica*, vol. 3, 1964, pp. 1-16 (reprinted in *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 2003 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 10), pp. 301-318); Sejer Kühle, "Søren Kierkegaard og den heibergske Kreds," *Personalthistorisk Tidsskrift*, 68, series 12, vol. 2, 1947, pp. 1-13; George Pattison, "Søren Kierkegaard: A Theatre Critic of the Heiberg School," *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 23, 1983, pp. 25-33 (reprinted in *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, op. cit., pp. 319-329).

⁴ Kierkegaard, "Another Defense of Woman's Great Abilities," *EPW*, pp. 3-5 (originally in *Kjøbenhavn's flyvende Post. Interimsblad*, no. 34, December 17, 1834); "The Morning Observations in *Kjøbenhavn's posten* no. 43," *EPW*, pp. 6-11 (originally in *Kjøbenhavn's flyvende Post. Interimsblad*, no. 76, February 18, 1836); "On the

them he, among other things, defends Heiberg and his journal against their critics. His debut book, *From the Papers of One Still Living* (1838), was originally submitted for publication in Heiberg's journal *Perseus*,¹ and contains Hegelian references and jargon which were obviously intended to curry favor with Heiberg and facilitate the work's acceptance for publication in his Hegelian review. *Either/Or* contains a long account of Scribe's *First Love*,² a work translated and produced by Heiberg for the Royal Theater, and a Hegelian analysis of the dialectic of content and form in drama, which must have been dear to Heiberg's heart.³

While all of these works can be said to display a clear Heibergian influence, it is less obvious, however, how Kierkegaard showed Heiberg "respectful devotion" in *The Concept of Irony* (1841). I wish to argue that Kierkegaard evidences a profound debt to Heiberg in the work's last section. Specifically, I wish to claim that Heiberg's account of the contemporary crisis, which he presents in *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, is one of Kierkegaard's models for his critical account of Romantic irony. Moreover, Heiberg's proposed solution to the crisis of contemporary nihilism and relativism provided Kierkegaard with a model for a corrective conception of irony, i.e., controlled irony or irony as a controlled element,⁴ which has been one of the most notoriously difficult concepts to interpret in Kierkegaard's *corpus*.

For those readers unfamiliar with Heiberg, this might seem to be a rather innocuous thesis. However, the highly controversial nature of

Polemical of *Fædrelandet*," *EPW*, pp. 12-23 (originally in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post Interimsblad*, nos. 82-83, March 12-15, 1836); "To Mr. Orla Lehmann," *EPW*, pp. 24-34 (originally in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post Interimsblad*, no. 87, April 10, 1836).

¹ See Johnny Kondrup, "Tekstredøgørelse" to *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer*, in *SKS*, vol. K1, pp. 68-72.

² *EO1*, pp. 231-279; *SKS*, vol. 2, pp. 225-270.

³ *EO1*, pp. 47-59; *SKS*, vol. 2, pp. 55-66.

⁴ Heiberg's importance for *The Concept of Irony* has been noted before by K. Brian Söderquist, "Kierkegaard's Contribution to the Danish Discussion of 'Irony,'" in *Kierkegaard and his Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, op. cit., pp. 78-105. See also his *The Isolated Self: Truth and Untruth in Søren Kierkegaard's On the Concept of Irony*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 2007 (*Danish Golden Age Studies*, vol. 1), pp. 176-188.

this thesis will not be lost on those who know something of Heiberg and Kierkegaard's complex relation to him. Indeed, this claim will strike many Kierkegaard readers as immediately implausible given the context and nature of Heiberg's treatise.¹ Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, published in the spring of 1833,² was an endorsement of Hegelian philosophy. Given Kierkegaard's celebrated later criticism of Hegelianism, his indebtedness to a Hegelian text at this juncture indicates his response to Hegel's work was more nuanced than it is often presented as being. It would thus seem odd that Kierkegaard, with his famous criticism of Hegelianism, would seek inspiration in this text for his concept of "controlled irony."

Moreover, the main goal of Heiberg's treatise is to portray the contemporary crisis of religion and culture, which, he argues, must be overcome by the tools provided by Hegel's philosophy. In this work, he gives no account of irony as such. Thus, again, it is by no means obvious why this text might potentially be important for Kierkegaard's development of this concept given that it apparently treats an entirely different topic.

Finally, it would seem that Heiberg plays a very negligible role in *The Concept of Irony* since Kierkegaard refers to him only three times directly, and none of these references seems particularly substantive. For example, with the first reference Heiberg is not even mentioned by name, but Kierkegaard refers to his play *The Elves*.³ In another reference Heiberg is mentioned in the last lines of the book when Kierkegaard refers to

¹ While there have been no studies to date that connect Heiberg explicitly with the concept of controlled irony, P.M. Mitchell has suggested in a general way the importance of Heiberg's irony, primarily in the theater, for Kierkegaard. See P.M. Mitchell, "Aesthetic Irony, Heiberg and His School. Søren Kierkegaard," in his *A History of Danish Literature*, op. cit., pp. 135-149.

² Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1833 (reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-3. Copenhagen: J.H. Schubothes Boghandling 1841-1843, vol. 2, pp. 129-191; *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1861-1862, vol. 1, pp. 381-460; English translation in *OSP*, pp. 85-119.)

³ *CI*, p. 26; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 88.

H.L. Martensen's book review of Heiberg's *New Poems*.¹ This is then a reference to Martensen's text and thus seems to concern Heiberg only indirectly. Only the third and final reference to Heiberg, which appears in the section "Irony as a Controlled Element, the Truth of Irony,"² would seem to offer even marginal support for the aforementioned assertion.

Despite what might appear as the immediate implausibility of the claim, I wish to argue that Heiberg and Kierkegaard are engaged in a rather similar project in their respective works: *The Concept of Irony* and *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*. They address the same contemporary problem and propose a quite similar solution to it. The points of similarity are so compelling that there can be no doubt that Kierkegaard was highly influenced by Heiberg's treatise even though it is neither cited nor referred to in *The Concept of Irony* directly.

I. Heiberg's and Kierkegaard's Analyses of the Crisis of the Age

The section on controlled irony plays a profoundly important role despite its limited size. In the first part of *The Concept of Irony* (and some of the second part) Kierkegaard explores Socratic irony in great detail. In the second part he turns his attention to the other main historical manifestations of irony, namely, the irony of the German Romantics, such as, Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and K.W.F. Solger. It may be the case that Kierkegaard conceived the work as having three parts and not two, with the third part being constituted by a detailed analysis of his own concept of controlled irony. But given his well-known difficulties in completing his dissertation,³ he was obliged to make the final section merely perfunctory. Much of what is said there has the character of a suggestive comment and not a carefully worked-out analysis or argument.

¹ *CI*, p. 329; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 357. See H. Martensen, "Nye Digte af J.L. Heiberg. (1841. 8. 249 S. Reitzel.)," *Fædrelandet*, no. 398, January 10, 1841, columns 3205-3212; no. 399, January 11, 1841, columns 3213-3220; no. 400, January 12, 1841, columns 3221-3224.

² *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

³ See, for example, Alastair Hannay, "Serious about Irony: The Dissertation," in his *Kierkegaard: A Biography*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press 2001, pp. 127-153.

However, its placement at the end of work and its introduction of a new conception of irony, intended to serve as a corrective to Romantic irony, indicate that this section's importance cannot be judged by the number of pages it fills. Moreover, this is the section where Kierkegaard explains "the truth of irony" after having spent several pages criticizing what he perceives to be the misguided irony of German Romanticism. His sketchy account of controlled irony has resulted in widely divergent interpretations regarding exactly what the concept ultimately amounts to.¹ I wish to argue that reading this section in conjunction with Heiberg's aforementioned text sheds some light on some otherwise rather cryptic passages and ultimately provides important insight into the nature of the concept of controlled irony.

In the second part of the work, Kierkegaard explores under the label of "irony" the different forms of subjectivism, relativism and nihilism, that were rampant during this period. Here he quite consciously follows in the footsteps of Hegel, who criticized the characteristic excesses and abuses among his contemporaries in the general context of what he called "subjective freedom."² Hegel often refers to his opponents by

¹ See, for example, Richard M. Summers, "'Controlled Irony' and the Emergence of the Self in Kierkegaard's Dissertation," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Irony*, ed. by Robert L. Perkins, Macon Georgia: Mercer University Press 2001, pp. 289-315; Oscar Parceró Oubiña, "'Controlled Irony'...Are you Serious? Reading Kierkegaard's Irony Ironically," *Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook*, 2006, pp. 241-260; Anders Moe Rasmussen, "Gives der en 'behersket Ironi'?" *Kredsen*, vol. 61, no. 1, 1995, pp. 71-86; Eivind Tjønneland, "Beherschte Ironie als Vermittlungsbegriff," in his *Ironie als Symptom. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit Søren Kierkegaards Über den Begriff der Ironie*, Frankfurt am Main, et al.: Peter Lang 2004, pp. 263-288; Andrew Cross, "Neither either nor or: The Perils of Reflexive Irony," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, ed. by Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino, New York: Cambridge University Press 1998, pp. 125-153; Joakim Garff, "Om Begrebet Ironi," in his "Den Sønløse." *Kierkegaard læst æstetisk/biografisk*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1995, pp. 32-59; Henri-Bernard Vergote, "L'ironie maîtrisée," in his *Sens et répétition. Essai sur l'ironie kierkegaardienne*, vols. 1-2, Paris: Cerf/Orante 1982, vol. 1, pp. 178-181; Bo Kampmann Walter, "Den beherskede ironi," in his *Øjeblik og tavshed. Læsninger i Søren Kierkegaards forfatterskab*, Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag 2002, pp. 69-73.

² See the chapters "The Actualization of Rational Self-Consciousness through its own Activity" and "Individuality which Takes Itself to be Real In and For Itself" from the "Reason" Chapter (*PbS*, pp. 211-262; *Jub.*, vol. 2, pp. 271-334) and "Spirit that is Certain of Itself. Morality" from the "Spirit" Chapter (*PbS*, pp. 364-409;

means of vague references such as “the law of the heart,” “the unhappy consciousness” or “the beautiful soul.” Readers familiar with the German Romantic movement would have recognized these terms as references to some of the same figures that Kierkegaard treats in *The Concept of Irony*: Schlegel, Tieck and Solger.¹ Moreover, Hegel identifies “irony” as one of the pernicious forms of subjectivism that he wishes to criticize.² There can be no doubt that Kierkegaard is influenced by Hegel’s critique of Romanticism since he refers to it repeatedly throughout the dissertation.

Jub., vol. 2, pp. 459-516); G.W.F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung 1821, § 140, pp. 137-153 (reprint: *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, ed. by Eduard Gans, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot 1833, in *Hegel’s Werke*, vol. 8, § 140, pp. 188-207; *Jub.*, vol. 7, § 140, pp. 204-223; English translation: *PR*, § 140, pp. 170-184); Hegel, “Über Solger’s nachgelassene Schriften und Briefwechsel. Herausgegeben von Ludwig Tieck und Friedrich von Raumer. Erster Band 780 S. mit Vorr. XVI S. Zweiter Band 784 S. Leipzig, 1826,” in *Vermischte Schriften*, vols. 1-2, ed. by Friedrich Förster and Ludwig Boumann, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot 1834-1835, vols. 16-17 in *Hegel’s Werke*, vol. 16, pp. 436-506 (*Jub.*, vol. 20, pp. 132-202; English translation in *Miscellaneous Writings of G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Evanston: Northwestern University Press 2002, pp. 354-400).

¹ See Otto Pöggeler, *Hegels Kritik der Romantik*, Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität 1956 (for Solger, see pp. 263-298); Ferruccio Andolfi, “Die Gestalten des Individualismus in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*,” *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, 1991, pp. 211-225; Gary Shapiro, “Notes on the Animal Kingdom of the Spirit,” *Clio*, vol. 8, 1979, pp. 323-338; Donald Phillip Verene, “Two Forms of Defective Selfhood: The Spiritual Animal Kingdom and the Beautiful Soul,” in his *Hegel’s Recollection. A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1985, pp. 92-103; Donald Phillip Verene, “Hegel’s Spiritual Zoo and the Modern Condition,” *Owl of Minerva*, vol. 25, 1994, pp. 235-240; J.Y. Calvez, “L’âge d’or. Essai sur le destin de la ‘belle âme’ chez Novalis et Hegel,” *Études Germaniques*, vol. 9, 1954, pp. 112-127; D.O. Dahlstrom, “Die schöne Seele bei Schiller und Hegel,” *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, 1991, pp. 147-156; Moltke S. Gram, “Moral and Literary Ideals in Hegel’s Critique of ‘The Moral View of the World,’” *Clio*, vol. 7, 1978, pp. 375-402; Emanuel Hirsch, “Die Beisetzung der Romantiker in Hegels *Phänomenologie*. Ein Kommentar zu dem Abschnitte über die Moralität,” *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft*, vol. 2, 1924, pp. 510-532.

² See Ernst Behler, “Hegels Polemik gegen die Ironie,” in his *Ironie und literarische Moderne*, Paderborn, et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh 1997, pp. 115-149.

The Hegelian, Heiberg, was also highly interested in the phenomenon of modern subjectivity and irony.¹ The self-declared task of his work, *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, was to overcome what he perceived as the contemporary crisis. Heiberg outlines the characteristic features of the crisis as a loss of religious belief, a marginalization of art, and a neglect of philosophy. Heiberg used the term “crisis” to characterize an outlook that Hegel had previously identified as a form of “subjective freedom” and Kierkegaard would later refer to as “Romantic irony.” We recognize it today under terms such as subjectivism, relativism and nihilism. Heiberg starts by pointing out the logical inconsistencies involved in the position of the relativist:

One can doubt God; as atheist, one can completely deny Him. All this is possible, but one can neither doubt nor deny the truth. If one denies God, then it is because one regards the truth to be in this negation. One can act badly; like a criminal, one can sacrifice good for evil. But even this happens with the recognition of the truth in the sense that one posits the truth or the good in that which the law calls the opposite. One can claim that man can know nothing, that the truth, therefore, is not for man; but even then one must regard this proposition not only as a truth but as the only truth, i.e., as truth itself. Both in the theoretical and in the practical, one can reason away the infinite and live in merely finite determinations; but then one posits truth in the finite and regards the infinite as its opposite.²

This is a traditional argument against relativism which aims to demonstrate that such a position is self-contradictory and thus self-refuting. While not an original argument in itself, it tells us about Heiberg's understanding of the present crisis. The argument is a

¹ With regard to irony specifically, one can mention Heiberg's works, “Om Solger,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, no. 14, [pp. 67-68]; *CPL*, pp. 91-93. *Udsigt over den danske skjønne Litteratur. Som Ledetraad ved Forelæsninger paa den kongelige militære Høiskole*. Copenhagen 1831, §§ 173-174, pp. 49-50 (reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 3, pp. 91-94).

² Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1833, p. 22; *OSP*, pp. 98f.

straightforward case against relativism and nihilism, one form of which is irony, i.e., the denial that there is any enduring truth in actuality by means of a distanced and cynical disposition towards it. Heiberg's characterization of the proponent of this position as one who lives "in merely finite determinations" fits well with Kierkegaard's descriptions of the Romantics. Thus, Heiberg and Kierkegaard are analyzing much the same phenomena, and both generally follow Hegel in their assessment of the problem. The main difference is that Kierkegaard wants to focus on a single specific form of subjectivism, i.e., irony, whereas Hegel and Heiberg are interested in a broader outlook of which irony is only one aspect.

Given that both Heiberg and Kierkegaard are addressing themselves to the same problem and that their assessment of that problem is quite similar, it is natural that their respective proposals for a solution will have some similarities. It is to these that we now turn.

II. Poetry and Philosophy and "Controlled Irony"

The first claim that could be regarded as having a connection to Heiberg is when Kierkegaard explains that it is necessary for a poet who exercises controlled irony "to be a philosopher to a certain degree."¹ One of the main features of Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age* is the Hegelian hierarchy of disciplines, which comprise absolute spirit. According to Hegel, absolute spirit, the highest form of collective human cognition, consists of philosophy, religion and art.² Philosophy

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

² See Hegel, *Phil. of Mind*, § 385; *Jub.*, vol. 10, p. 39 (translation slightly modified): "The development of Spirit is in three stages: (1) In the form of self-relation: within it, it has the ideal totality of the Idea—i.e., it has before it all its notion contains: its being is to be self-contained and free. This is *Spirit Subjective*. (2) In the form of reality: realized, i.e., in a world produced and to be produced by it: in this world freedom presents itself under the shape of necessity. This is *Spirit Objective*. (3) In that unity of mind as objectivity and of mind as ideality and concept, which essentially and actually is and forever produces itself, mind in its absolute truth. This is *Spirit Absolute*." For Hegel's doctrine of absolute spirit, see *Phil. of Mind*, §§ 553-577; *Jub.* vol., 10, pp. 446-476.

occupies the top of the hierarchy since it is purely conceptual knowing or understanding the concept as concept. By contrast, religion, which occupies the second position, understands the concept not conceptually but rather with picture thinking, i.e., with images, stories, symbols, etc. Finally, art's understanding of the concept requires a concrete empirical object. Thus, its thinking of the concept is not conceptual but relies on experience of objects. Heiberg follows this model with some modest deviations such as adding poetry as a new element, apparently independent of art. He claims, "Indeed, art, poetry and religion contain the same truth as philosophy, but not in the truth's own form: the truth is in the former as substance and has there its different contingent forms; but the Concept is the truth in the latter, and the Concept has only one form, just like material."¹ Similarly, he writes, "Thus, art, poetry and religion receive their justification in philosophy, and philosophy documents its own validity by documenting theirs, for which reason it was said above that philosophy itself cannot do without them."² Heiberg's treatise evoked the anger of theologians with the suggestion that religion and art are grounded in philosophy and indeed in order to understand them, one must be a philosopher.³

In his discussion Heiberg distinguishes two groups of poets: the realists and the idealists. While the former are fixated on the concrete,

¹ Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, pp. 24f; *OSP*, pp. 99f.

² Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 28; *OSP*, p. 102.

³ See the critical responses to Heiberg's treatise: Frederik Ludvig Bang Zeuthen, "Oplysninger til Prof. J.L. Heibergs Skrift: *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nærværende Tid*," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 7, no. 76, April 18, 1833, pp. 301-302; no. 77, April 19, 1833, pp. 305-306. Kts [Jakob Peter Mynster], "Om den religiøse Overbeviisning, (Bemærkninger, tilfældigen foranledigede)," *Dansk Ugeskrift*, vol. 3, nos. 76 and 77, 1833, pp. 241-258 (reprinted in Mynster's *Blandede Skrifter*, vols. 1-6. Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1852-57, vol. 2 (1853), pp. 73-94); Anonymous, "Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift *om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 7, no. 155, 1833, pp. 617-618; Anonymous [Eggert Christopher Tryde], "Om *Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*. Et Indbydelses-Skrift til en Række af filosofiske Forelæsninger. Af Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Kbhavn. 54 S. 8^o," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende*, nos. 41-43, 1833, pp. 649-660, pp. 681-692, pp. 697-704; Anonymous [Eggert Christopher Tryde], "Svar fra Anmelderen af Professor Heibergs Skrift, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, paa Forfatterens Erklæring i *Litteraturtidenden* No. 46," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende*, no. 49, 1833, pp. 820-828 (all translated in *OSP*).

the latter transcend the realm of particular, empirical entities and present the deeper underlying truth behind them. He explains,

...all true poetry is penetrated by the speculative Idea or the truth. Indeed, it is always *idealist* since it lets the finite lose itself in the infinite or presents the finite, not for its own sake, but as a vehicle for the presentation of the infinite....Realism is the view, which stops with *things* which are finite; idealism, by contrast, is the conviction of their sublation in *the Idea*, in the infinite.¹

Thus, when Heiberg says that poets should be philosophers, he means specifically idealist philosophers. He continues,

Thus, even though poetry is idealist in itself and in spite of all those who produce it, one can nonetheless divide up poets into realists and idealists, and only the latter are conscious both of what poetry is and what they themselves are. The idealists or speculative poets are themselves philosophers and produce philosophy just like the actual philosophers, only with the difference which poetry's contingent form stipulates. But the contingent form, which disappears in philosophy itself while it is present in poetry, is inessential here (as in all art in general), while it is essential in religion. For this reason the speculative poet can regard the difference between poetry and philosophy as inessential and present philosophy in his works.²

Here Heiberg presents his own aesthetic version of Hegel's doctrine of absolute knowing. According to Hegel, it is the philosopher who stands atop the hierarchy of knowledge with the ability to transcend the specialized sciences and grasp the deeper speculative truth of the whole. Heiberg adds the speculative poet, who presents the truth of the whole in his poetry by transcending the finite, empirical elements. Just as Hegel was in a philosophical polemic with empiricism in the form of contemporary philosophers such as Krug,³ so also Heiberg sees the

¹ Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 38; *OSP*, pp. 108f.

² Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 38f; *OSP*, p. 109.

³ Hegel, "Wie der gemeine Menschenverstand die Philosophie nehme,—dargestellt an den Werken des Herrn Krug," *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1802, pp. 91-115 (reprinted in *Vermischte Schriften*, vols. 1-2, ed. by Friedrich Förster and Ludwig Boumann, vols. 16-17 (1834-35) in *Hegel's Werke*, vol. 16, pp. 50-69; in *Jub.*, vol. 1, pp. 191-212).

speculative poet as waging a conflict against the empirical or realist poets, who have not grasped the philosophical Idea and hope to seduce their readers with quaint or sentimental accounts of finite things and events. Ultimately, Heiberg's claim is that a philosophical understanding of the world is what is required to help the present age recover from its crisis. This means that the crisis in the arts and in poetry can only be overcome with idealist poetry, which allows one to grasp the speculative truth of the whole. This account has clear affinities with Kierkegaard's claim that the ironic poet must become a philosopher to a certain degree. This is perhaps why Kierkegaard, in the section on controlled irony, continually refers to "the poet" (and not, for example, the novelist or the philosopher) as his positive model of an ironist.

Kierkegaard continues to play on this in his analysis and description of controlled irony. He claims that the poet who wishes to use controlled irony must have what he calls "a totality-view" of the world [*Total-Anskuelse af Verden*].¹ The concept seems to follow Hegel's speculative philosophy, which attempts to present a view of the whole, i.e., all the individual categories in their necessary mutual relations to one another. Given that these categories and their relations have to do with concepts, one must be a philosopher, i.e., one who thinks in concepts, in order to understand them fully.² In order to have such a view, according to Kierkegaard, the poet must overcome his "immediate position of genius."³ Similarly, for Hegel and Heiberg, the idealist philosopher must overcome the immediacy of experience to grasp the underlying truth of the Idea. The individual must transcend immediacy and attain a higher truth in reflection and speculation.

Another striking point of similarity is Kierkegaard's use of Goethe in this context.⁴ Kierkegaard continues by explaining that the understanding of the world also involves a self-understanding of the poet. He continues,

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

² This may be a vague allusion to Hans Christian Andersen, who was criticized by Kierkegaard in *From the Papers of One Still Living* for lacking a life view.

³ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

⁴ See Carl Roos, *Kierkegaard og Goethe*, Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag 1955, p. 114; Steffen Steffensen, "Kierkegaard und Goethe," *Nerthus*, vol. 3, 1972, pp. 19-55, see pp. 20-21; Wilhelm Anz, "Die religiöse Unterscheidung. Über das Verhältnis von Dichtung und Existenzdialektik bei Søren Kierkegaard," *Kierkegaard Symposium in Orbis Litterarum*, tome 10, fasc. 1-2, Copenhagen: Munksgaard 1955, pp. 5-17, see pp. 11-13.

“If this is the case, then the individual poetic work will not have a merely external relation to the poet; in the individual poem, he will see an element in his own development.”¹ Then he introduces Goethe as a model example of controlled irony in this sense: “The reason Goethe’s poet-existence was so great was that he was able to make his poet-life congruous with his actuality. But that in turn takes irony, but, please note, controlled irony....In Goethe, irony was in the strictest sense a controlled element; it was a serving spirit to the poet.”² Kierkegaard’s use of Goethe as a positive example in this work contrasts notably with his less than enthusiastic references to him in later writings.

This positive assessment can be understood as another example of Kierkegaard’s appropriation of Heiberg’s *On the Significance of Philosophy*. In that work, Heiberg not only idolizes Goethe as the great poetic figure of the age who corresponds to Hegel as the great philosophical figure,³ but he also singles out Goethe as the paradigm case of a speculative poet. While Heiberg praises Dante and Calderón, it is Goethe who stands the highest among the select group of speculative poets:

With respect to *Goethe*...[n]ot only are some of his most significant works, such as *Wilhelm Meister*, *Tasso* and in particular *Faust*, didactic poems...but the speculative Idea penetrates the composition of almost all his works, even those, which cannot actually be characterized by this name. For in his *Tasso* it is uncertain whether he prefers the poet or the diplomat, and all of his portrayals both of characters and of events are kept as subordinate moments in the unity, as finitudes, which are only valid inside their limits. Only when they are seen in this way, are they seen in their sublation, and therefore in their truth. However, he effects this sublation, unlike Dante and Calderón, with a very abstract perception of the finite in universality.

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

² *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

³ Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 36; *OSP*, p. 107: “Goethe and Hegel are undoubtedly the two greatest men the modern age has produced. No others deserve to the same degree to be called the representatives of our age, for their works contain the entire life of spirit of our age, as existing and present, i.e., encompassing the future in unity with the past.” According to Heiberg, Goethe and Hegel both point to the solution to the crisis of the present age in their respective spheres of activity.

On the contrary, no one goes into more details of nature and human life than he. No one lingers with greater desire on all our finite determinations and relations. Indeed, he has taught us that poetry, without becoming either trivial or unpopular, can go much more deeply into these details, determinations and relations than had previously been suspected. What is grandiose, what is imposing, in Goethe is thus seen in the love with which he seems to lose himself in these finitudes, while he suddenly surprises us by standing above them and recognizing them for what they are.¹

Heiberg indicates that the genius of the speculative poet lies in the ability to shift perspective from the details of the finite world to the macrolevel which contains an overview. Thus, the speculative poet never allows himself to get lost in the realm of the finite and the particular but always has the speculative view of the whole clearly in focus. So also with Kierkegaard, controlled irony does not, like Romantic irony, get lost in a gratuitous criticism of every individual particular but instead keeps a larger perspective of truth and beauty.

While both Kierkegaard and Heiberg use Goethe as a model for the solution to the then current problem of Romantic irony, relativism and nihilism, it is still an open question whether they are really attracted to the same thing in him. Does Kierkegaard's solution of "controlled irony" really bear any resemblance to Heiberg's notion of "speculative poetry"? I wish to argue that while they have completely different names, the two concepts are strikingly similar. This can be seen from the respective descriptions of them.

After lauding Goethe as a poet who makes use of controlled irony, Kierkegaard uses Heiberg himself as his second example, thereby implicitly comparing the Danish poet with his German predecessor:

As poet, professor Heiberg takes the same position [sc. as Goethe], and while almost every line of dialogue he has written can provide an example of irony's inner economy in the play, all his plays exhibit the conscious striving to assign to every particular line its place in the whole. Here, then, the irony is controlled, is reduced to an element."²

¹ Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, pp. 45f.; *OSP*, p. 113.

² *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

Kierkegaard thus admires Heiberg for exactly the same reasons Heiberg admires Goethe. Both Heiberg and Goethe have the ability to portray finite particularities in such a way that their true meaning is revealed. They can explore limitations and finitude without undermining all truth and validity. By presenting each particular thing in its proper place, they expose a deeper speculative truth. Both are thus masters of what Kierkegaard terms controlled irony.

III. *The Categories of Logic and “Controlled Irony”*

Kierkegaard, in this same context, goes on, in an entirely enigmatic manner, to use a Hegelian analysis of the categories in order to criticize the Romantics: “The essence is nothing other than the phenomenon; the phenomenon is nothing other than the essence.”¹ It is no accident that Kierkegaard makes this remark immediately after mentioning Heiberg. It refers to Hegel’s critique of different forms of dualism, for example, Kant’s *an sich*/representation or noumena/phenomena split.² According to Kant, the thing in itself is the ground for the appearances or representations that are shaped by the categories of human cognition. We can never know the thing in itself since we can never catch a glimpse of things without the categories we impose on them. Hegel, however, argues that it is a mistake to posit the truth beyond the reach of human cognition. He claims that concepts, such as essence and phenomena, are necessarily dialectically related to one another. It is the nature of essence that it expresses itself or appears as phenomena. It is also the nature of phenomena that they are grounded in essence. Thus, the two elements are necessarily related and indeed form a single concept. Heiberg endorsed this view in his main work on Hegel’s logic, the *Outline of the Philosophy of Philosophy or Speculative Logic*.³ His formulation very

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

² See, for example, *EL*, §§ 40-60; *Jub.*, vol. 8, pp. 123-163.

³ Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik. Som Ledetraad ved Forelæsninger paa den kongelige militaire Høiskole*. Copenhagen: Andreas Seidelin 1832; *HSL*, pp. 39-213.

much resembles that used by Kierkegaard: "The essence *is* only in the phenomenon or in its own reflection (the phenomenon *has* essence); and the phenomenon *is* only in the essence or in its own reflection (the essence *has* the phenomenon)."¹

Kierkegaard goes on to mention two of the modal categories in much the same Hegelian spirit: "Possibility is not so prudish as to be unwilling to enter into any actuality, but actuality is possibility."² His criticism is aimed at the Romantic view that the world is full of wonderful possibilities which unfortunately cannot be realized due to repressive mechanisms. Regretfully we are consigned to live in the miserable, unimaginative world of actuality with no hope of attaining anything better. Romantic irony results because the world of actuality is flawed and corrupt in comparison to the unattainable ideal. Kierkegaard follows Hegel's and Heiberg's criticism of this view, claiming that it is conceptually confused. For Hegel, these categories are also necessarily related.³ Actuality is realized possibility. Heiberg also treats these categories in his *Speculative Logic*,⁴ where he argues that dualism leads nowhere, but when possibility is conceived as the necessary opposite of actuality, the dialectical movement can progress: "The opposition of impossibility to possibility sublates itself; only in its opposition to actuality does it become real."⁵ Hegel, Heiberg and Kierkegaard are all in agreement that one must discern the ideal in the actual.

Kierkegaard uses these logical categories—essence/phenomenon and possibility/actuality—to illustrate the virtues of controlled irony. Romantic irony relishes the lack of commitment and melancholy of pure possibility without actuality, and empty phenomena without any corresponding essence; it plays irresponsibly in the sphere of phenomena

¹ Heiberg, *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik*, § 85, Remark 3; *HSL*, p. 93.

² *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

³ See *SL*, pp. 541-553; *Jub.*, vol. 4, pp. 680-696. *EL*, §§ 142-149; *Jub.*, vol. 8, pp. 319-337.

⁴ Heiberg, *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik*, §§ 100-104; *HSL*, pp. 114-121.

⁵ Heiberg, *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik*, § 104, Remark 1; *HSL*, p. 119.

while denying that there is anything fixed or true behind it. Kierkegaard cites Heiberg's works as an example of how irony can be used in a way that does not undermine all truth and validity but, on the contrary, illustrates the truth in the phenomena. This is precisely the same point that Heiberg made about the greatness of Goethe as a speculative poet in the passages cited above, and thus it is no coincidence that in the next sentence after the account of these categories, Kierkegaard mentions Goethe: "Goethe, both the striving and the victorious Goethe, has always acknowledged this view, has continually articulated this view very energetically."¹

Heiberg argues, along Hegelian lines, that one of the characteristic features of modern alienation is that we have become skeptical about the world around us. Everything seems finite, and therefore contingent and false. The result is a world-view which places absolute values, such as God, beauty and truth, somewhere outside the world we know. Heiberg writes, "Religion, art, and poetry, since they were not able *to posit themselves in* the undertakings of the age, necessarily had to *posit themselves beyond them*."² The absolute values are exiled to a transcendent beyond which we can never reach. From this point of view, it is only a short step to simply eliminate this transcendent sphere, since it has no effect on or meaning for our existence anyway. This is, for Heiberg, the position of relativism or nihilism that culture has reached in the present age.

To overcome this crisis, philosophy must restore those transcendent elements to the world of actuality. He writes, "Thus, the infinite, having departed from our finite relation, can only be won back by seeing these relations in their *truth*, i.e., recognizing them as striving toward philosophy."³ He explains,

Only philosophy can go into the many details of our finite goals....Only it can see their tendency toward the infinite and, with this knowledge, clarify their obscure aspects. Only it is in a position to sublimate them without destroying them; on the contrary, in their sublimation to the infinite it affirms their validity. In this manner our finite undertaking becomes grafted into

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

² Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 26; *OSP*, p. 101.

³ *Ibid.*

the infinite, the human into the divine, and the limitation has disappeared; our sciences become philosophy, and our state wins back its regulating form. But just as philosophy confirms the legitimacy of our finite undertakings, specifically by showing how the infinite is their goal, so also, by the same action, it reinvests the infinite in its rights by determining it as the goal, and thereby, as it were, giving it an estate in the actual world.¹

Philosophy restores truth and meaning not by erecting some abstract ideal in the beyond but by showing that there is truth and meaning in the sphere of the actual all around us. The goal is thus to educate our minds to perceive the infinite truth in the world of finite things.

Kierkegaard avails himself of these metaphysical categories in his description of controlled irony. He writes,

Irony as a controlled element manifests itself in its truth precisely by teaching how to actualize actuality, by placing the appropriate *emphasis on actuality*. In no way can this be interpreted as wanting to deify actuality...or as denying that there is, or at least ought to be, a longing in every human being for something higher and more perfect. But this longing must not hollow out actuality; on the contrary, life's content must become a genuine and meaningful element in the higher actuality whose fullness the soul craves.²

Controlled irony refuses to limit itself to either the purely empirical or empty and illusive ideals. Rather, it attempts to unite these spheres by recognizing the ideal in the phenomena. Kierkegaard thus follows Hegel and Heiberg by arguing that the truth does not lie in the beyond, in a transcendent sphere, but in actuality.

IV. History, Appropriation and "Controlled Irony"

Kierkegaard goes on to mention the historical element which is so important to Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy*: "Actuality

¹ Heiberg, *Om Filosofiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, p. 27; *OSP*, pp. 101f.

² *CI*, p. 328; *SKS*, vol. 1, pp. 356f.

hereby acquires its validity, not as a purgatory...but as history in which consciousness successively matures, yet in such a way that salvation consists not in forgetting all this but in becoming present in it.”¹ This recalls Hegel’s and Heiberg’s conception of spirit becoming aware of itself through history and thus gaining freedom and self-knowledge. Kierkegaard underscores the goal of the individual to be aware of this historical movement and in his or her own life to become “present in it.” Kierkegaard issues a kind of ethical imperative to his readers, enjoining them not to rest in abstract knowing alone but to appropriate it in their own lives: “if our generation has any task at all, it must be to translate the achievement of scientific scholarship into personal life, *to appropriate it personally*.”² That “scientific scholarship” is intended as a reference to Hegel’s philosophy is clear from what Kierkegaard goes on to say a few lines later: “When scientific scholarship mediates all the opposites, then the point is that this full-bodied actuality ought truly to become visible.”³ Hegel’s dialectical method is of course known for its mediation of opposites, such as essence/phenomena or possibility/actuality. Kierkegaard’s point is that this should lead to some concrete, empirical result in the world and not merely remain an abstract thought. One of the opposite terms must have a foot in actuality. In any case, the aforementioned moral injunction is an echo of Heiberg’s *Introductory Lecture to the Logic Course*, when he says, “Thus, the demand of the age calls to all but doubly to the chosen, whose destiny it is to hasten ahead of the masses, each in his individual circle of activity, and plant the flag of culture in a heretofore untrodden soil.”⁴ Like Kierkegaard, Heiberg contends that abstract thinking is worthwhile only if and when it is applied to the actual world.

¹ *CI*, pp. 328f.; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 357.

² *CI*, p. 328; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 356.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Indlednings-Foredrag til det i November 1834 begyndte logiske Coursus paa den kongelige militaire Høiskole*, Copenhagen: J.H. Schubothes Boghandling 1835, p. 35 (reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-3, Copenhagen: J.H. Schubothes Boghandling 1841-1843, vol. 2, p. 268; *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1861-1862, vol. 1, p. 506; in English in *IL*, p. 66).

With this moral injunction Kierkegaard introduces his concept of appropriation. One must take the abstract idea, and, by appropriating it personally into one's own life, one makes the idea actual. It enters into actuality through a conscious decision and action of the individual. Needless to say, this is one of the central concepts in Kierkegaard's authorship, which he comes to develop later in different forms, such as repetition or reduplication. It is one aspect of his thought that has occasioned many to regard him as a forerunner of existentialism. It is thus noteworthy that it may have originated with Heiberg.

It is also noteworthy that Kierkegaard continually refers not to the ironist but to *the poet* and uses three poets, Shakespeare, Goethe and Heiberg, as his models. On this point Kierkegaard again follows Heiberg who, at variance from Hegel's system, inserts poetry as another element in absolute spirit, at times putting it on a par with absolute knowing. Thus, the philosopher and the poet lead the way to human salvation. This is the reason that, for Kierkegaard, the ironist is a poet who also needs to be a philosopher.¹ On this point Kierkegaard is more Heibergian than Hegelian.

Kierkegaard advocates irony as a means of liberation with much the same rhetorical zeal that Heiberg claims Hegel's philosophy and speculative poetry will provide salvation for the present age. One of Kierkegaard's original theses to the dissertation, which is repeated here in the final section is "no genuinely human life is possible without irony."² He adds that irony is "the absolute beginning of personal life" and is "the bath of regeneration and rejuvenation, irony's baptism of purification that rescues the soul from having its life in finitude."³ Perhaps most provocative, Kierkegaard plays on John 14:6, where Christ says "I am the way, the truth and the life," by writing "Irony as the negative is the way; it is not the truth but the way."⁴ Irony is not the truth since it has no positive content, but it is necessary in order to come to the truth since it helps recognize and expose what is false. Thus irony is not the end

¹ *CI*, p. 325; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 353.

² *CI*, p. 326; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 355.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *CI*, p. 327; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 356.

station but a necessary transitional phase in the critical and reflective life. While Romantic irony, remaining in this phase dismisses all truth and all actuality, controlled irony allows one to see the truth of actuality.

Here Kierkegaard seems to present a Hegelian dialectic of stages. One begins in immediacy, moves to reflection, and finally ends up in speculation. Irony represents the second stage which is necessary for criticizing the irrational, the corrupt and the false in the world of immediacy. Kierkegaard writes of one who is not acquainted with irony: "He does not know the refreshment and strengthening that come with undressing when the air gets too hot and heavy and diving into the sea of irony, not in order to stay there, of course, but in order to come out healthy, happy buoyant and to dress again."¹ Thus, Kierkegaard indicates, like Hegel, that there is a third positive stage after the second negative one. The goal is not to use irony indiscriminately, criticizing and destroying everything, thus ending with nothing, but rather to destroy only what is false and corrupt and to recognize what is true and rational.

A central aspect of Heiberg's Hegelianism was precisely this interpretation and organization of diverse phenomena into three stages: immediacy, reflection and speculation. This tendency is in evidence in some of his articles in his journal, *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*.² In one article he notes, "Already in the few numbers of this weekly journal which have been published so far, there has been occasion to draw attention to the triple standpoint of the human spirit: an immediate or perceptive, a reflecting or dialectical, and a speculative one."³ In another article, he claims that this is no mere abstract scheme but a fact about actuality itself: "this threefold moment runs not merely through the human spirit but through everything that is the object of philosophy; indeed, philosophy consists of nothing other than demonstrating this

¹ *CI*, p. 326f.; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 355.

² See, for example, [Johan Ludvig Heiberg], "En engelsk Opiumspisers Bekjendelser," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, I, no. 9, [pp. 45-47]; II, no. 10, [pp. 49-51]; III, no. 11, [pp. 53-54] (reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, pp. 513-531); [Johan Ludvig Heiberg], "Til Herr Philister," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, I, no. 2, [pp. 19-20], II, no. 3, [pp. 21-24]; see [pp. 23-24] (in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 3, pp. 145-161, see pp. 157-159).

³ [Heiberg], "En engelsk Opiumspisers Bekjendelser," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, III, no. 11, [p. 53] (in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 526).

triplicity in everything.”¹ Heiberg characterizes those people at the second stage, i.e., reflection, by saying that they “have come to a split with themselves, with nature, with life and with God.”² Although Heiberg does not mention irony in this context, he is clearly referring to the forms of Romantic subjectivism at issue for Kierkegaard. The third stage of speculation overcomes these dualisms and alienation and thus corresponds to Kierkegaard's concept of controlled irony.

Kierkegaard further follows Heiberg in the view that this great calling is not for everyone but rather remains reserved for the few who can understand it. Kierkegaard writes,

...he lives poetically only when he himself is oriented and thus integrated in the age in which he lives, is positively free in the actuality to which he belongs. But anyone can live poetically in this way. But the rare gift, the divine good fortune to be able to let what is poetically experienced take shape and form itself poetically, remains, of course, the enviable fate of the chosen few.³

Heiberg repeatedly returns to the idea that some people have a mission to philosophize and to advance the cause of humanity, while others do not. For example in a letter to Hegel, Heiberg laments the “great *legio*” of people at the present time who have “no calling in philosophy.”⁴

It seems clear that Heiberg's account of the crisis of the age was formative for Kierkegaard's assessment of Romantic irony and his account of speculative poetry was a kind of forerunner for Kierkegaard's concept of controlled irony. The significance of this thesis is not the pedantic desire to uncover more sources of Kierkegaard's thought just for the sake of doing so but rather to help us to understand better the development,

¹ [Heiberg], “En engelsk Opiumspisers Bekjendelser,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, III, no. 11, [p. 53] (in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, pp. 526f.).

² [Heiberg], “En engelsk Opiumspisers Bekjendelser,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1827, III, no. 11, [p. 53] (in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 528.)

³ *CI*, p. 326; *SKS*, vol. 1, p. 354.

⁴ Hegel, *Briefve*, vol. 3, 487 (“Heiberg an Hegel,” February 20, 1825). *Breve og Aktstykker vedrørende Johan Ludvig Heiberg*, vol. 1-5, ed. by Morten Borup, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1946-1950, vol. 1, Letter 124, p. 163; *OSP*, p. 72.

meaning and content of that thought. This connection with Heiberg calls into question a number of intuitions that many modern readers have about *The Concept of Irony*. Most obviously, it encourages one to rethink the common view that the work is an ironic criticism of Hegel's philosophy. On the contrary, if the aforementioned thesis is correct, then Kierkegaard sought help from Hegel's most zealous Danish advocate in his account of both the problem and the solution of the issue of modern irony. This is, of course, not to say that Heiberg's views are synonymous with Hegel's since, as noted, there is, for example, nothing analogous to the concept of speculative poetry in Hegel. But nonetheless this demonstrates that Kierkegaard had no ideological inhibitions against going to the work of a declared Hegelian in search of solutions to problems that were most important to him.

1827.

N^o 1.

Kjøbenhavn

flyvende



Post.



Mandagen den 1^{te} Januar.

Redigert af J. A. Zeiberg.

Udgiven af Ferdinand Pringlau.

Et Ark Nytaarsbers.

Til Deres Majestæt Kongen.

Et Aar er endt, med Aaret meget spinder,
Eg spæker hen i Glemfets Skjød.
Et nyt gaar frem; og med det nu oprinder
Saa meget Nof, som gjennem Nutmet brød.
Men Afting ei i Tidens Strøm forgaar:
Der er et Hadigt Vaand, som tat forbinder
Det langst Fortvundnes Rinder
Med Dødtiffets unge Vaar.
Ja, vor Fortvændings Ørent og vor Grindings Stygger
Omfatter Thronen, hoor Din Milthed bær.
Høet Aar, som sig med friske Kranse smøtter,
Eg stutter tro til alre Søstres Chør,
Eg Dig og Thronen meer og meer betrygger.

Til Deres Majestæt Dronningen.

For Tidgudinderne vi pleie have,
Vi kendtlige dem troe med Dødtiffets Kranse.
Dog nei, vi see dem jo som Gratier, der svave
Om Nordens hulde Sol i hjærlig Dands.

Til D. K. S. Kronprindsesse Caroline.

Da Elfen ei at skjalne veed
Imellem Dig og Fredrik og Marie,
Saa har Du Døstet alt; jeg Høsten kan fortie.
Løb mig i Dine Hænder lægge ned
(Jeg vdmog beder, at Du det tillader)
De Nytaarsønsker, som behage vil,
Naar Du, som Datter, dem hændender til
Din høie Meder og Din Kongelige Fæder.

Til D. K. S. Prindsesse Vilhelmine.

Skjønt Høvedst, jeg har et Duens Winge;
Jeg ellers drogte Dig fra Alpelandet Breen,
Eg stulte med det Soar, Du frøe,
Mig flur til Alperne tilbagefinge.

Til D. K. S. Prinds Christian.

Et ønske Dig, min høie Prinds, til Lykke,
Et for en Diger specifik nek;
Det er, som om den spæde Kolenstok
Lykønsked Egen til dens brede Stygge.

Til D. K. S. Prindsesse Caroline Amalie.

Af Mattens Hjernelude Himmel,
Saa majestætisk høi, saa reen, saa klar,
Som ofte Gjenstand for et barnligt Ønske var,
Endskjøndt saa høi fra Jordelivets Rimmel, —
Af den, Prindsesse, Du et jerdisk Billed er.
Sid ingen Stør maae dens Glans fortunkte!
Skjønt hien for Døet, er den Sjælen nær,
Hvergang vi see dens klare Stjerner funkke.

Til D. K. S. Prinds Svedrik Carl Christian.

O, høis min høie Sang kan naae Dit Øre,
Saa gød i den Du høre
Af Danmarks høie Haab en søgte Klang!
Kan Rattergalens Xille sig forbinde
Til Harmoniens Hjerterets friske Rinde,
Saa vil Du høis min simple Sang
Som reen, men dampet Harmonie fornemme
Til Vilhelmines hjertelige Stemme.

Title Page of *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*
(The Royal Library, Copenhagen)

II. Literature and Criticism

