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**DE GRUYTER**

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## The Young Kierkegaard as a Student of Liunge's *Kjøbenhavnsposten*

**Abstract:** Kierkegaard is well known for his quick wit and sharp polemics against his opponents. One of his favorite targets was the poet, dramatist, and philosopher, Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860). Perhaps the best-known element of his critique was Heiberg's outspoken Hegelian campaign. Before Kierkegaard's famous criticisms of Heiberg, he learned the craft of literary polemics by reading the lively discussions in the Danish journals of the time. In this article it is argued that the role of the journal *Kjøbenhavnsposten* for Kierkegaard has never been appreciated. This journal was edited by Andreas Peter Liunge (1798–1879), who was a great adversary of Heiberg and his *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*. The article shows that the often satirical use of Hegel by *Kjøbenhavnsposten* to criticize Heiberg anticipates Kierkegaard's strategy of critique with regard to Heiberg and other figures in the Danish Hegelian movement.

Kierkegaard is well known for his quick wit and sharp polemics against his opponents. One of his favorite targets was the poet, dramatist, and philosopher, Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860). Perhaps the best-known element of his critique was Heiberg's outspoken Hegelian campaign. Before Kierkegaard's famous criticisms of Heiberg in, for example, "A Word of Thanks to Professor Heiberg,"<sup>1</sup> *The Concept of Anxiety*,<sup>2</sup> and *Prefaces*, he learned the craft of literary polemics by reading the lively discussions in the Danish journals of the time.

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1 SKS 14, 55–57 / COR, 17–21 (originally in *Fædrelandet*, no. 1168, March 5, 1843, columns 9373–9376). See also the draft response entitled "How does 'one' Treat *Either/Or*" that is found among Kierkegaard papers: "Hvorledes behandler 'man' Enten-Eller;" *Papirer* IV B 46, pp. 202–204.

2 See Jon Stewart, "Heiberg's Article on History and Kierkegaard's Critique," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2022, pp. 503–526.

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In this article I wish to argue that the role of the journal *Kjøbenhavnsposten* for Kierkegaard has never been appreciated. This journal was edited by Andreas Peter Liunge (1798–1879),<sup>3</sup> who was a great adversary of Heiberg. *Kjøbenhavnsposten* began publication in 1827 at the same time as Heiberg's *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*. As the proximity of the titles suggests, Liunge's journal was conceived as a critical response to Heiberg's. As is well known, Heiberg's *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post* was a major pillar in Danish Golden Age culture.<sup>4</sup> The two journals quickly became rivals, and their respective editors were constantly in a polemical dialogue with one another. When Heiberg tried to spread the word about the value of Hegel's philosophy in his journal, Liunge used every opportunity to diminish the importance of Hegel in his. Their satirical tit-for-tat articles ensured that Hegel constantly had a place in the cultural discussion in Denmark at the time. I wish to show that the often satirical use of Hegel by *Kjøbenhavnsposten* to criticize Heiberg anticipates Kierkegaard's strategy of critique with regard to Heiberg and the other figures in the Danish Hegelian movement.

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3 See Jette D. Søllinge and Niels Thomsen, *De Danske Aviser 1634–1989*, vols. 1–3, Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag 1988, vol. 1, 1634–1847, pp. 147–150. Ole Stender-Petersen, *Kjøbenhavnsposten—organ for “det extreme Demokrati” 1827–1848*, Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag 1978. Christian Kirchhoff-Larsen, *Den danske presses historie*, vols. 1–3, Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard 1942–62, vol. 3, pp. 102–125. Note that over the years the orthography of the title changes slightly from *Kjøbenhavnsposten* (1827) to *Kjøbenhavns-Posten* (1828–1832) to *Kjöbenhavnsposten* (1833–1837) and then back to *Kjøbenhavnsposten* (from 1838 on).

4 See Christian Molbech, “Johan Ludvig Heiberg,” in his *Dansk poetisk Anthologie*, vols. 1–4, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1830–40, vol. 4, pp. 287–289, pp. 293–294. Uffe Andreasen, “Efterskrift,” in the photomechanical reproduction of Heiberg's journal, *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, ed. by Uffe Andreasen, vols. 1–4, Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab 1980–84, vol. 4, pp. 549–576. Peter Vinten-Johansen, “Johan Ludvig Heiberg and his Audience in Nineteenth-Century Denmark,” in *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Berlin and New York: Verlag Walter de Gruyter 2003 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 10), pp. 343–355. Henning Fenger, *The Heibergs*, trans. by Frederick J. Marker, New York: Twayne 1971, pp. 118–132. Morten Borup, *Johan Ludvig Heiberg*, vols. 1–3, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1947–49, vol. 2, pp. 93–132. Kirchhoff-Larsen, *Den danske presses historie*, vol. 3, pp. 5–32. Søllinge and Thomsen, *De Danske Aviser 1634–1989*, vol. 1, 1634–1847, pp. 145–146.

## I Peder Hjort's Response to Heiberg's Criticism of Oehlenschläger

Peder Hjort (1793–1871) was an important author and literary critic of the Golden Age.<sup>5</sup> In a series of nine installments from February 26 to April 18, 1828, *Kjøbenhavnsposten* published his article, entitled “Remarks on Doctor Heiberg's Statements in the *Flyvende Post* about Oehlenschläger and his Works.”<sup>6</sup> This article was reprinted many years later in Hjort's *Kritiske Bidrag til nyere dansk Tænkemådes og Dannelses Historie*.<sup>7</sup> In the article Hjort tries to defend the poet Adam Oehlenschläger against the reproaches found in Heiberg's article “Response to Mr. Oehlenschläger's Publication, ‘On the Criticism in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, concerning *The Varangians in Constantinople*.”<sup>8</sup> In his article Hjort also refers to

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5 For an account of Hjort's life, see Morten Borup, *Peder Hjort*, Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger 1959. Olaf Carlsen, *Aus Peder Hjorts Jugend*, Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard 1945. P. Christian Zahle, *Peder Hjort. Et Tilbageblik*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1893. See Hjort's own highly readable account in his “Fortale” to *Kritiske Bidrag til nyere dansk Tænkemådes og Dannelses Historie, Kirkelig-etisk Afdeling: 1ste Hefte*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1856, pp. i–xxxvii.

6 Peder Hjort, “Anmærkninger til Doktor Heiberg's Ytringer i den *flyvende Post* om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker. I[a]. Til Kritiken over Væringerne i Miklagard,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 17, February 26, 1828, pp. 65–68; “I[b]. Til Kritiken over Væringerne i Miklagard,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 18, February 29, 1828, pp. 69–71; “II[a]. Til Principet for hans Kritik og sammes Anvendelse,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 20, March 7, 1828, p. 77–80; “II[b]. Til Principet for hans Kritik og sammes Anvendelse,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 22, March 14, 1828, pp. 85–88; “III[a]. Til hans saakaldte ‘Udkast til en heel Æsthetik af Poesien,’” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 24, March 21, 1828, pp. 93–96; “II[b]. Til hans saakaldte ‘Udkast til en heel Æsthetik af Poesien,’” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 26, March 28, 1828, pp. 101–104; “IV[a]. Til Dommene over Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 30, April 11, 1828, pp. 117–120; “IV[b]. Til Dommene over Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 31, April 15, 1828, pp. 121–123; “IV[c]. Til Dommene over Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 32, April 18, 1828, pp. 125–127. See Tonny Aagaard Olesen, “Heiberg's Critical Breakthrough in 1828: A Historical Presentation,” in *Johan Ludvig Heiberg: Philosoph, Litterateur, Dramaturge, and Political Thinker*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum 2008 (*Danish Golden Age Studies*, vol. 5), pp. 303–306. Borup, *Peder Hjort*, pp. 120–121. Carl Henrik Koch, *En flue på Hegels udødelige næse eller om Adolph Peter Adler og om Søren Kierkegaards forhold til ham*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1990, pp. 21–22.

7 Peder Hjort, “Anmærkninger til Doktor Heiberg's Ytringer i den *flyvende Post* om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker,” in his *Kritiske Bidrag til nyere dansk Tænkemådes og Dannelses Historie. Litterærhistorisk Afdeling*, vols. 1–3, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1862–67, vol. 2, pp. 3–75.

8 Heiberg, “Svar paa Hr. Oehlenschlägers Skrift: ‘Om Kritiken i *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, over Væringerne i Miklagard,’” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1828 (I, no. 7, January 25, [pp. 37–40]; II, no. 8, January 28, [pp. 41–44]; III, no. 10, February 4, [pp. 50–52]; IV, no. 11, February 8, [pp. 54–56]; V, no. 12, February 11, [pp. 59–60]; VI, no. 13, February 15, [pp. 61–64]; VII, no. 14, February

Heiberg's use of Hegel. Hjort had attended Hegel's lectures in Berlin in 1821, at which time Hegel even invited Hjort into his home.<sup>9</sup> It can be imagined that it must have pained Hjort to see Heiberg parading as Denmark's foremost Hegel expert and making a travesty of Hegel's philosophy. This was perhaps Hjort's motivation for bringing out the Hegelian or pseudo-Hegelian elements in Heiberg's dramatic criticism and theory of poetic genres.

The philosophical elements in Hjort's discussion are introduced in the third installment, on March 7. Hjort begins by quoting the following passage from Heiberg's *On Human Freedom*:

What is doubtful at one standpoint becomes obvious at another; what was true at the one standpoint becomes false at another, and philosophy's method is and must be a constant chain of contradictions. In unceasing antinomies it goes from plus to minus and from minus to plus; every new region into which it steps is the inverted world of that in which it found itself before, or—as it is expressed in ordinary speech—it proves today the opposite of what it proved yesterday, it turns white into black and black into white, good into evil and evil into good.<sup>10</sup>

Taken out of its context, this of course sounds absurd, and this is clearly Hjort's intention by quoting it. The passage in Heiberg is obviously to be understood as using the term "contradiction" in Hegel's sense of dialectical opposition. Hjort's satirical implication is that Heiberg's criticism of Oehlenschläger is so full of contradictions (in the usual sense of the word) that it can be said to follow this absurd approach as stated in *On Human Freedom*.

Yet Hjort agrees that aesthetic criticism should be grounded on some philosophical idea or principle. Criticism should apply "the highest philosophical principles to the objects of art."<sup>11</sup> Hjort's claim is that Heiberg, however, has applied his absurd, i.e., contradictory, philosophical method to Oehlenschläger's works. Given this, the result can be nothing other than more absurdity. Hjort cites several short passages from Heiberg's criticism in order to point out the

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18, [pp. 65–68]; VIII, no. 15, February 22, [pp. 69–72]; IX, no. 16, February 25, [pp. 73–76]). (Reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1–11, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1861–62, vol. 3, pp. 194–284.)

9 See Borup, "Den Store Rejse" in his *Peder Hjort*, pp. 41–85. See also Peder Hjort, "Minder fra en Reise," *Nyt dansk Maanedsskrift*, vol. 1, 1871, pp. 132–146. Peder Hjort, "Breve fra Udlandet," *Nyt dansk Maanedsskrift*, vol. 1, 1871, pp. 245–256.

10 Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Om den menneskelige Frihed. I Anledning af de nyeste Stridigheder over denne Gjenstand*, Kiel: Universitets-Boghandlingen 1824, p. 4. (Reprinted in Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1–11, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1861–62, vol. 1, pp. 3–4.)

11 Hjort, "Anmærkninger til Doktor Heibergs Ytringer i den flyvende Post om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker," *Kjøbenhavn-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 20, March 7, 1828, p. 77.

inconsistencies. After this list, he satirically writes that all of this “could without a doubt be easily misunderstood if it were lacking its due contradiction.”<sup>12</sup> While Heiberg’s quoted statements might sound absurd, says Hjort ironically, this is just a mistaken appearance. In fact, when they are seen in their proper dialectical place vis-à-vis their opposite statements, then their truth will be obvious. Hjort makes use of the same strategy to point out what he regards as another contradiction in Heiberg’s criticism of Oehlenschläger. After explaining this contradiction, he writes,

It will be very instructive when someday the Doctor [sc. Heiberg] has time to continue the logical investigations which began with his instruction to young gamblers (in *Der Zufall* or whatever that piece was called) to see by what principles of unity such boldly executed oppositions [*Modsætninger*] might be reconciled; for at present, they would doubtless appear to simple scholars and domestic philosophers to be clumsy contradictions [*Modsigelser*].<sup>13</sup>

Here Hjort refers satirically to Heiberg’s *Contingency Regarded from the Point of View of Logic* from 1825, where gambling is discussed as an example of the nature of the concept of contingency.<sup>14</sup> Hjort also ironically refers to “simple scholars and domestic philosophers” who have not had the honor of studying Hegel’s philosophy. This is of course aimed at what Hjort perceives as Heiberg’s arrogance and condescension towards Danish philosophy, which Heiberg believes did not know anything prior to his introduction of Hegel’s philosophy.

Hegel is mentioned again in a new installment of the article on March 14. Hjort critically examines Heiberg’s history of aesthetic criticism. It is noted that Heiberg neglects a handful of very significant German and French literary critics in his account. Hjort takes up Lessing explicitly as a leading figure during the period of the Enlightenment, whom Heiberg has overlooked. In this context, Hjort writes, Lessing “never sought to set up a system on a borrowed sentence from Wolff or Baumgarten in the way that Heiberg, from a few lines in Hegel, wants to spin out an entirely new aesthetics; but it was precisely one of Lessing’s greatest merits that he acted while others just talked.”<sup>15</sup> Hjort praises Lessing for academic

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Der Zufall, aus dem Gesichtspunkte der Logik betrachtet. Als Einleitung zu einer Theorie des Zufalls*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1825. (Reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, pp. 325–359; in English in *Heiberg’s Contingency Regarded from the Point of View of Logic and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 2008 (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 4), pp. 51–75.)

<sup>15</sup> Hjort, “Anmærknninger til Doktor Heibergs Ytringer i den flyvende Post om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 22, March 14, 1828, p. 87.

bravery in his critical works, and then contrasts this picture with that of Heiberg as a critic:

Heiberg, on the other hand, only knows how to assume distinguished philosophical faces and polite, agreeable airs, to make a big deal out of something simple, in which his clever eye easily detects the error; and to unfold hazy theories in order to conceal the fact that he does not examine thoroughly either the poetical or the technical nature of poetry.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to Lessing, who is a serious critic, Heiberg makes a pretentious show of having some knowledge of philosophy, which purportedly grounds his theory. But the whole thing is absurd given that, at this time, Hegel's thoughts on aesthetics in his lectures had still yet to be published. Heiberg's attempt to extrapolate such a theory based on a few scattered lines is, for Hjort, pure folly.

At the end of this installment, Hjort uses Hegel himself against Heiberg. He criticizes Heiberg for making grand judgments about the state of poetry in Denmark based solely on an analysis of Oehlenschläger. However, there are, Hjort points out, many other important contemporary Danish poets, such as N.F.S. Grundtvig, Bernhard Severin Ingemann, Just Mathias Thiele, Caspar Johannes Boye, and Nicolai Søtoft. Heiberg would thus do well to look to the broad spectrum of Danish poetry of the day before passing judgment on Oehlenschläger. Here Hjort invokes Hegel's image of the Owl of Minerva from the *Philosophy of Right*:

If one is a friend of the poet and of literature, as Doctor Heiberg ought to be, then one should consider *Hegel's* great words about philosophy: "When philosophy paints its gray in gray, a shape of life has grown old, and it cannot be rejuvenated, but only recognized, by the gray in gray of philosophy; the Owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk." But if this is true of all of philosophy, then how much more is it true of such a small part as aesthetic criticism.<sup>17</sup>

This is particularly piquant since Heiberg had quoted the same passage in an article just some months before.<sup>18</sup> Here Hjort cleverly makes use of Hegel to criticize Heiberg. This leaves Heiberg in an awkward position: either he has to

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, Berlin: Nicolai 1821, p. XXIV. (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by H.B. Nisbet, ed. by Allen Wood, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1991, Preface, p. 23; *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe in 20 Bänden*, ed. by Hermann Glockner, Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag 1928–41, vol. 7, pp. 36–37.)

<sup>18</sup> Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Anmeldelse af 'Lucubrationen eines Staatsgefangenen,'" *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, II, no. 68, August 24, 1827, [p. 281].

grant that Hegel is right in order to maintain his own outspoken Hegelianism, but this would mean that his own approach to Danish poetry is wrong; or he would have to contradict Hegel in order to show that his own approach is right, but this would mean renouncing his Hegelianism and the central role that this plays in the theory of aesthetics that he wants to advance. Heiberg cannot come out of the dilemma well either way.

Hjort returns to Hegel in the following installment on March 21. He explains Heiberg's use of Hegel's dialectic:

The principle of this "whole aesthetic of poetry," namely, the doctrine of the departure of the immediate and its return to itself through reflection, is borrowed from Hegel's philosophy; it is the small, surely golden capital, with which the Doctor has bankrolled his aesthetic-philosophical venture. This doctrine is one of the greatest and most fruitful results of the investigations of German philosophy since the appearance of Kant. He first raised dialectic to an independent philosophical discipline; but the actual method, the application of the logical triad throughout the system, is the work of Hegel.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Hjort seems quite positively disposed towards Hegel's method, which marks a stark contrast to his harsh criticism of Heiberg's "philosophical method of contradiction."<sup>20</sup> Given this, one might think that Hjort would be more forgiving of Heiberg's attempt to use triads in his work-in-progress system of aesthetics. Hjort's critical point is that Heiberg's application of the dialectical method is "light-minded and sophistic."<sup>21</sup> So his criticism falls squarely on Heiberg. This chimes with his evocation of the Owl of Minerva motif from Hegel that he uses against Heiberg.

Hjort takes Heiberg's theory of genres to be an example of a misuse of the dialectical method. Specifically, he argues that it is absurd to place Heiberg's beloved genre of vaudeville so high in the hierarchy of genres. He claims that Heiberg "borrowed from Hegel's philosophy" the dialectical movement from immediacy to reflection and finally to their unity.<sup>22</sup> Each literary or dramatic genre is then assigned by Heiberg to one of these stages. It is argued that Heiberg simply has a prejudice against tragic poetry since he has a personal attraction to comedy. But it is absurd that he tries to ground this prejudice in a dialectical development of genres in order to give it the appearance of objectivity. Hjort thus finds Heiberg's use of the Hegelian dialectic highly problematic.

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19 Hjort, "Anmærkninger til Doktor Heibergs Yttringer i den *flyvende Post* om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 2, no. 24, March 21, 1828, p. 93.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 94.



At the end of this installment, Hjort returns to his criticism of Heiberg's placement of vaudeville near the very apex of the system of genres. Hjort regards vaudeville generally as a trivial and frivolous form of art. Tragedy has an important role to play in cultural life since it reminds people of more serious matters. In this sense Hjort thinks that Heiberg completely fails to understand this important function of art. He asks rhetorically, "Should it be necessary to waste a single word on refuting such absurd opinions? Could it really be the case that people in Denmark are so immersed in the petty pleasures of life that they have forgotten why life is really lived and have lost the clear consciousness of what art is really supposed to give us? I cannot believe this."<sup>23</sup> Hjort thus argues that with his light vaudevilles, Heiberg is leading his fellow Danes not to reflection but to an abyss of flippancy and triviality, where the deeper questions of human life are never posed. According to this view, vaudeville in no way encourages reflection.

In the installment of his article dated April 11, Hjort makes another brief reference to Hegel. He argues that Heiberg's expectation that Oehlenschläger be a philosopher and ground his work in philosophy is wholly inappropriate.<sup>24</sup> There are substantial differences between poets and philosophers, and there is no reason to impose the theories from the one discipline onto the other. It is still possible to be an outstanding doctor, painter, or astronomer, without knowing Hegel's philosophy, and so why is there a special obligation for poets to familiarize themselves with it? The incongruence in this is evident when the roles are reversed. It would be absurd to reproach Hegel for being a bad poet since he did not write poetry in his philosophical works.

Heiberg's Hegelianism is not mentioned again in the remainder of the article. The dispute between Heiberg, Oehlenschläger, and Hjort was an important episode in the history of Danish literary criticism. It provided Heiberg with the opportunity to develop further his system of aesthetics and criticism. Hjort's article suggests that Heiberg was a provocateur, who irritated several people with his Hegelian views. According to Hjort, Heiberg, in his enthusiasm for his own pseudo-Hegelian aesthetics, had imposed upon Oehlenschläger's work a structure entirely foreign to it in order to make an assessment of it, and then unsurprisingly he found this work wanting for not having such a structure. Hjort believes that this procedure is completely unfair to Oehlenschläger and provides precious little insight into his

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>24</sup> Hjort, "Anmærkninger til Doktor Heibergs Ytringer i den *flyvende Post* om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 30, April 11, 1828, p. 116.

work. Given Hjort's criticism of Heiberg, it is easy to see why *Kjøbenhavnsposten* was the best venue for publication of his critical article.

Hjort's irony about the poverty of Danish philosophy, which only has "simple scholars" to show, who have failed to understand Hegel's philosophy anticipates Kierkegaard's critique of Heiberg's Hegelianism.<sup>25</sup> Kierkegaard employs this strategy in *Prefaces*, where his pseudonymous author Nicolaus Notabene proposes to found a philosophical journal, just like Heiberg.<sup>26</sup> But since, unlike Heiberg, he does not understand Hegel and modern philosophy, Notabene will ask his readers to explain it to him. He thus plays the role that Heiberg ascribed to the ignorant Danish philosophers. Notabene sarcastically begs Heiberg to enlighten him and not to be too harsh on him for his ignorance.

## II *Kjøbenhavnsposten's* "On Occasion of *Flyvende Post's* No. 42"

Liunge's *Kjøbenhavnsposten* published an article entitled "On Occasion of *Flyvende Post's* No. 42" in three installments on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1828.<sup>27</sup> The article was signed by the pseudonym  $\Sigma$  (sigma), but it was presumably penned by the journal's editor Liunge himself. It carries as its motto the line from Juvenal's *Satires*: "*Facit indignatio versum*" (Indignation will drive me to verse).<sup>28</sup> This work was a response to Heiberg's satirical article "A Brief Contribution to the Natural History of Ducks," which was published on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1828, in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*.<sup>29</sup> Liunge's motto thus presumably refers to the anger he felt after reading Heiberg's article, which then prompted him to write a response. The two articles by Heiberg and Liunge represent a part of the ongoing polemical and satirical exchange between *Kjøbenhavnsposten* and *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*.

25 Hjort, "Anmærkninger til Doktor Heibergs Yttringer i den *flyvende Post* om Øhlenschläger og dennes Værker," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 20, March 7, 1828, p. 79.

26 SKS 4, 508–526 / P, 45–67.

27  $\Sigma$ , "I Anledning af *Flyvendepostens* No. 42," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 49, June 17, 1828, pp. 193–195; no. 50, June 20, 1828, pp. 197–199; no. 52, June 27, 1828, pp. 209–211.

28 Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires*, trans. by Peter Green, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1967, Satire 1, p. 68, lines 79–80: "Thought talent be wanting, yet / Indignation will drive me to verse, such as I—or any scribbler."

29 Johan Ludvig Heiberg [Doctoren fra No. 89 i forrige Aargang], "Et lidet Bidrag til Ændernes Naturhistorie," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, no. 42, May 26, 1828, [pp. 178–179]. (Reprinted in *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 10, pp. 434–438.)

In his article, Heiberg pretends to be a doctor who does an experiment with ducks.<sup>30</sup> The doctor describes three kinds of ducks in a satirical way, imitating descriptions of biologists and zoologists. The first of these reads as follows: “No. 1. *Anas Copista* [sc. Copyist Duck] in Danish Lyng- or Liung-Duck [*Lyng- eller Liung-And*], a somewhat fat bird with a light-yellow tuft on its head.”<sup>31</sup> Heiberg thus humorously associates Liunge with a duck and calls him a “copyist.” The bite of this criticism is found in the fact that Liunge himself had in fact previously worked professionally as a copyist. The critical implication is of course that a copyist is someone who is unoriginal and only copies from others. The doctor’s experiment consists in throwing to each of the three ducks a string with dumplings of meal soaked in alcohol, which each of them swallow in turn, thus finding themselves bound together by the string: “*Anas Copista*, who had been the first, now swallowed the dumpling for a second time, and then the other two, so that now everything was hanging by a double string; in fact, *Anas Copista*, whose turn it is again, is already starting for the third time.”<sup>32</sup> The point expressed satirically here seems to be that Heiberg has baited Liunge with something that he wrote in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, and then Liunge has in turn taken this up and landed in difficulties because of it.

Given this, it can hardly be a surprise that Liunge felt sufficiently provoked to write a response. In his article, he begins by pointing out to the reader that Heiberg took the image of the ducks from Jean Paul’s *Vorschule der Aesthetik*. To prove this charge, Liunge quotes the following in German, “For example, in the witty little work about the Philistines, the followers of speculative philosophy are engraved in copper as a chain of ducks, which are linked together on the thread tied to a piece of bacon, which each takes over undigested from the other. The author then writes these speculators thus: Speck—cul—anten.”<sup>33</sup> This

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30 Here Heiberg revives the character of the doctor, who had written a satirical letter to Liunge that had appeared in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post* the previous year. [Heiberg], “Epistel fra Doctoren til Hr. A. P. Liunge,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, no. 89, November 5, 1827, [pp. 365–368]. (*Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 10, pp. 408–420.)

31 [Heiberg], “Et lidet Bidrag til Ændernes Naturhistorie,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, no. 42, May 26, 1828, [p. 178]. (*Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 10, p. 435.)

32 [Heiberg], “Et lidet Bidrag til Ændernes Naturhistorie,” *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, no. 42, May 26, 1828, [p. 179]. (*Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 10, p. 437.)

33 Σ, “I Anledning af Flyvendepostens No. 42,” *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 49, June 17, 1828, p. 193. The article quotes *Vorschule der Aesthetik nebst einigen Vorlesungen in Leipzig über die Parteien der Zeit*, Zweite, verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage, vols. 1–2, Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta 1813, vol. 2, (§ 52. Das Wortspiel), p. 401n: “Z.B. in der witzigen kleinen Schrift: über die Philister sind die Nachbeter der spekulativen Philosophie als eine Kette von Enten in Kupfer gestochen, welche

is an untranslatable play on words. The German word “*Speck*” means bacon; the French word “*cul*” means buttocks or ass; and the ending “-anten” is close to the German “*Ente*,” meaning duck. Liunge’s point is that it is Heiberg who is the “copyist,” borrowing from Jean Paul without any reference. Liunge also notes the irony of Heiberg’s use of this story from Jean Paul, which is actually a criticism of the blind followers of speculative philosophy. Liunge asks the rhetorical question: “Whom do you think now, among us [in Denmark], one is justified, before all others, to call by the name a ‘follower of speculative philosophy?’”<sup>34</sup> The target of Jean Paul’s story is exactly people like Heiberg, who are advocates of speculation, but Heiberg ignores this and has the audacity to use the story to criticize Liunge. This kind of a reproach anticipates Kierkegaard, who is always quick to charge Heiberg (and his fellow Hegelian Hans Lassen Martensen) for their lack of originality.

The article goes on to criticize Heiberg’s use of the term “irony,” which would presumably have attracted the young Kierkegaard’s attention. Liunge explains that Heiberg talks a lot about irony and regards himself as “this divinity’s special favorite,”<sup>35</sup> yet he seems to overlook the fact that his hero Hegel criticized Romantic irony:

In general, one wants to say, your weakness is to want to be *noble*, which by the way does not prevent you, like others of the true nobility, from being *condescending*, which your article on natural history gives testimony for. But I cannot believe that for the sake of nobility you should use a word, which some years ago was so vulgar that all kinds of people ran with it, as you yourself know from your *Hegel*.<sup>36</sup>

The word referred to is “irony,” which Hegel himself discusses in the *Philosophy of Right* as a part of his criticism of Friedrich von Schlegel and Solger.<sup>37</sup> Liunge’s use of the possessive pronoun in “your *Hegel*” is telling. The implication is that Hegel is critical of irony, yet the Hegelian Heiberg is a great proponent of it. This would seem to be an obvious contradiction in Heiberg’s program. The fact that Liunge can just say “your *Hegel*” without any further explanation shows that he can

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*sich am Faden eines Stückchen Speckes, den unverdauet jede wieder von der andern übernimmt, aneinander fädeln. Diese Spekulanten schreibt der Verfasser darauf so: Speck—cul—anten.*

<sup>34</sup> Σ, “I Anledning af Flyvendepostens No. 42,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 2, no. 49, June 17, 1828, p. 193.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193–194.

<sup>37</sup> Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, § 140, pp. 149–153. (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 140, pp. 180–184; *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe in 20 Bänden*, vol. 7, pp. 217–223.)

assume that his readers all know about Heiberg's attempts to promote Hegel's philosophy and that Heiberg had made Hegel an important element in his own agenda in, for example, aesthetics and literary and dramatic criticism. It is precisely this same assumption that Kierkegaard makes about his readers when he criticizes Heiberg.

In the rest of the first installment of his article, Liunge tries to defend Oehlenschläger's drama *Correggio* against Heiberg's criticisms. The second installment continues in the same spirit, this time defending Oehlenschläger's *Freia's Altar*. It criticizes Heiberg's attempt to bring his dramatic criticisms into a systematic structure, based on Hegel's philosophy.<sup>38</sup> Liunge writes, addressing Heiberg, "I often hear it asked how it happens that when you philosophize, it is as if you have not found any inner source of ideas at all to philosophize with; people wonder that when you write about aesthetics, you don't at all seem to be in possession of your principles, I mean the principles that you want to adopt."<sup>39</sup> Although Heiberg makes it an important point to have a system of philosophy and aesthetics, his actual criticisms and judgments seem not to reflect this and instead appear to be rather arbitrary. Moreover, Liunge again implies, Heiberg is the real copyist since he is simply borrowing ideas from Hegel instead of creating his own original theory.

Liunge mocks Heiberg by writing that "he floats in a dream about what he one day will become when he can finally have the chance to study *die Aesthetik als Wissenschaft*."<sup>40</sup> Heiberg tried previously to create a speculative system of aesthetics based on what he believed to be the basic principles of Hegel's philosophy. Heiberg's *Outline of a System of Aesthetics as a Speculative Science* is a text written in German under the title, *Grundlinien zum System der Aesthetik als speculativer Wissenschaft*. Heiberg never published this work, and his posthumous editors omitted it from their edition of his collected prose writings.<sup>41</sup> Fortunately, it is readily accessible today in the outstanding new edition of Klaus Müller-Wille.<sup>42</sup> Since it was not published, Liunge was presumably unaware of it. However, Heiberg continued the project of creating a Hegelian aesthetics in a

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38 Σ, "I Anledning af Flyvendepostens No. 42," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 49, June 17, 1828, p. 195; no. 50, June 20, 1828, p. 197.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

41 To date, with the exception of his letters, there is still no edition of Heiberg's *Nachlass*.

42 Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "*Grundlinien zum System der Aesthetik*" (1824) und andere kunstphilosophische Schriften, ed. and trans. by Klaus Müller-Wille, Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2022 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 43), pp. 129–268.

piecemeal fashion in many of his articles in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, where he tries to develop individual parts of his system.<sup>43</sup>

Liunge's reference to Heiberg's finally having "the chance to study *die Aesthetik als Wissenschaft*,"<sup>44</sup> refers to the fact that Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* were only to appear posthumously in 1835–38 and were thus not accessible to Heiberg in 1824.<sup>45</sup> In his letter to Hegel,<sup>46</sup> however, Heiberg indicates that he has borrowed lecture notes on this subject from one of Hegel's students, but Hegel was not lecturing on aesthetics when Heiberg himself was in Berlin in 1824. Liunge criticizes Heiberg for talking a lot about the necessity of a system of aesthetics, while never managing to publish one. He further mocks the arrogance of Heiberg, who, it is implied, mistakenly believes that he determines public opinion about the dramatic pieces that are performed on the Danish stage.

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43 For example, Heiberg's "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]. "Om Solger," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, no. 14, February 16, 1827 [pp. 67–68]. "Svar paa Hr. Oehlenschlägers Skrift: 'Om Kritiken i *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, over Væringerne i Miklagard,'" *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, 1828 (I, no. 7, January 25, [pp. 37–40]; II, no. 8, January 28, [pp. 41–44]; III, no. 10, February 4, [pp. 50–52]; IV, no. 11, February 8, [pp. 54–56]; V, no. 12, February 11, [pp. 59–60]; VI, no. 13, February 15, [pp. 61–64]; VII, no. 14, February 18, [pp. 65–68]; VIII, no. 15, February 22, [pp. 69–72]; IX, no. 16, February 25, [pp. 73–76]). "Om Skjønhed i Naturen. Forelæst i Studenteforeningen," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, I, no. 18, March 3, 1828, [pp. 81–84]; II, no. 19, March 7, 1828, [pp. 85–87]. See the works translated in *Heiberg's Contingency Regarded from the Point of View of Logic and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart and in Heiberg, "Grundlinien zum System der Aesthetik" (1824) und andere kunstphilosophische Schriften, ed. and trans. by Klaus Müller-Wille.

44 Σ, "I Anledning af *Flyvendepostens* No. 42," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 49, June 17, 1828, p. 195; no. 50, June 20, 1828, p. 198.

45 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, I–III, ed. by Heinrich Gustav Hotho, vols. 10.1–3 (1835–38), in *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vols. 1–18, ed. by Ludwig Boumann, Friedrich Förster, Eduard Gans, Karl Hegel, Leopold von Henning, Heinrich Gustav Hotho, Philipp Marheineke, Karl Ludwig Michelet, Karl Rosenkranz, Johannes Schulze, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot 1832–45. For an interesting account of the role of Hegel's aesthetics on the Golden Age and specifically Fru Gyllembourg, see Frederike Felcht, "Der Schlaf der Teemaschine und die Komplizenschaft der Dinge. *En Hverdags-Historie* (1828), *Mesalliance* (1834) und Hegels Ästhetik," in *Diskursmimesis. Thomasine Gyllembourgs Realismus im Kontext aktueller Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by Joachim Schiederemair and Klaus Müller-Wille, Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag 2015, pp. 12–36.

46 [Hegel], *Briefe von und an Hegel*, vols. 1–4.2, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister, Hamburg: Felix Meiner 1952–54; vols. 4.1–4.2 ed. by Friedhelm Nicolin, Hamburg: Felix Meiner 1977–81, vol. 3, 487, Heiberg an Hegel, February 20, 1825. *Breve og Aktstykker vedrørende Johan Ludvig Heiberg*, vols. 1–5, ed. by Morten Borup, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1946–50, vol. 1, Letter 124, p. 162. (In English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 2005 (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 1), p. 71.)

It is clear that in this article Liunge mentions Hegel and speculative philosophy in order to criticize this element of Heiberg's program. In this regard he anticipates Kierkegaard's use of the same strategy. Here Liunge also makes use of irony himself by pretending to praise Heiberg's dramatic criticism. For example, Liunge sarcastically writes, "From everything that I have said, you will be able to see how completely I applaud your judgment of *Freia's Altar* on the whole."<sup>47</sup> Here Liunge anticipates Kierkegaard's use of irony to criticize Heiberg, for example, in Kierkegaard's response to Heiberg's book review of *Either/Or*.<sup>48</sup> In his article "A Word of Thanks to Professor Heiberg," Kierkegaard presents the author of the work, Victor Eremita, as ironically thanking Heiberg for his insightful comments and corrections: "For all this I thank you, Professor! I rejoice that learning is so swiftly imitated. I thank you for wanting to communicate it so quickly. If I were to choose the person in literature whom I would thank first of all, I would choose you, Professor!"<sup>49</sup> Liunge uses the same strategy to bring out what he takes to be Heiberg's arrogance.

### III A Brief Article in *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, "Hegel's Philosophy"

On August 8, 1828, *Kjøbenhavnsposten* printed a short article simply entitled "Hegel's Philosophy."<sup>50</sup> This anonymous piece, which was presumably the work of the journal's editor Liunge, presents a French book review of the then recently published second edition of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* from 1827.<sup>51</sup> Liunge apparently came across the work in the *Revue Encyclopédique*,<sup>52</sup> and since it was quite critical of Hegel, he decided to print some excerpts

47 Σ, "I Anledning af *Flyvendepostens* No. 42," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 52, June 27, 1828, p. 209.

48 Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Litterær Vintersæd," *Intelligensblade*, vol. 2, no. 24, March 1, 1843, pp. 285–292. (In English as Jon Stewart, "Johan Ludvig Heiberg's 'Literary Winter Crops' and Kierkegaard's Polemic," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2020, pp. 325–337.)

49 Søren Kierkegaard [Victor Eremita], "Taksigelse til Hr. Professor Heiberg," *Fædrelandet*, no. 1168, March 5, 1843, columns 9373–9376. (*SKS* 14, 57 / *COR*, 20.) See Jon Stewart, *Søren Kierkegaard: Subjectivity, Irony and the Crisis of Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015, pp. 122–123.

50 Anonymous, "Hegels Philosophie," *Kjøbenhavns-Posten*, vol. 2, no. 64, August 8, 1828, p. 259.

51 Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Zweite Ausgabe, Heidelberg: August Oßwald 1827.

52 Anonymous, "*Encyclopedie [sic] der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. –Encyclopédie des sciences philosophiques, ou résumée de ses cours, par le Dr. Hegel. *Deuxième édition*."

from it, again in order to antagonize Heiberg. The French review was anonymously published, and its author is unknown.

The article in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* consists of excerpts translated into Danish from the review. The first of these begins with a positive word of recognition: "Hegel, Professor at the Berlin University, is regarded as one of the most outstanding of the German philosophers living today. It cannot be denied that he is a profound thinker and that his ideas are often new and original."<sup>53</sup> After this gesture of politeness, the rest of the article is a harsh condemnation of Hegel. The author targets three specific points: Hegel's academic jargon, purported mysticism, and advocacy of monarchy.

Regarding the first point, the excerpt continues, "However, most often he [sc. Hegel] expresses himself in an unclear and incomprehensible manner, at least for us. The Germans, who are used to an obscure language in philosophical works, are not shocked by Hegel's enigmatic sentences. In France, one finds them meaningless."<sup>54</sup> This reaction is understandable given the tradition of Franco-phone philosophy during the Enlightenment with figures such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and D'Alembert, who were all brilliantly clear and straightforward writers. By contrast, the rise of technical philosophical jargon that developed in Germany in connection with the beginnings of the professionalization of the field with Kant must have seemed like needless obfuscation to the French. The language of the *Encyclopaedia* would have seemed even more obscure if the reader was unfamiliar with the tradition of German idealism, in which Hegel was working.

The reviewer then moves to the second point of critique, Hegel's purported mysticism: "What is the worst is that Hegel has mixed his philosophy together with mysticism, which nowadays confuses the minds of some of the best German thinkers. With this mixture of philosophy and mysticism, Hegel, when applying his philosophical ideas to politics and religion, comes to results, which, with the mildest of designations, must be called absurd."<sup>55</sup> The charge of mysticism was occasionally made against Hegel.<sup>56</sup> In fact some years later, Hans Lassen

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Heidelberg, 1827; Osswald. In 8<sup>o</sup>," *Revue Encyclopédique, ou Analyse raisonnée des productions les plus remarquables dans les sciences, les arts industriels, la littérature, et les beaux-arts*, tome 38, May 1828, pp. 412–413.

53 Anonymous, "Hegels Philosophie," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 2, no. 64, August 8, 1828, p. 259.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

56 See Glenn Alexander Magee, "Hegel and Mysticism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. by Frederick C. Beiser, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press



Martensen mentions this connection.<sup>57</sup> Hegel had a clear interest in the writings of the mystic author Jakob Boehme.<sup>58</sup> The French reviewer is correct in noting the influence of mysticism on German philosophy at the time.<sup>59</sup> In the work of the Hegelians Karl Rosenkranz and Karl Mager, we find a clear appreciation for the speculative strand of medieval Rhineland mysticism.<sup>60</sup> Thinkers such as Franz von Baader, Schelling, and others of Hegel's generation were influenced in differing degrees by the mystic tradition.

The author of the review finally turns to the third point of criticism: Hegel's purported conservative politics. The following passage from the third part of *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* is cited as one example of an absurdity in Hegel's philosophy:

In the perfect form of the state, in which each and every element of the notion has reached free existence, this subjectivity is not a so-called *moral person*, or a decree issuing *from a majority* (forms in which the unity of the resolving will has no *actual* existence), but an actual individual—the will of a decreeing individual—*monarchy*. The monarchical constitution is

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2008, pp. 253–280. Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2001.

57 Hans Martensen, *Mester Eckart. Et Bidrag til at oplyse Middelalderens Mystik*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1840, p. 5. (English translation: *Meister Eckhart: A Study in Speculative Theology*, in *Between Hegel and Kierkegaard: Hans L. Martensen's Philosophy of Religion*, ed. and trans. by Curtis L. Thompson and David J. Kangas, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1997, p. 154.) See Peter Šajda, "Martensen's Treatise *Mester Eckart* and the Contemporary Philosophical-Theological Debate on Speculative Mysticism in Germany," in *Hans Lassen Martensen. Theologian, Philosopher and Social Critic*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum 2012 (*Danish Golden Age Studies*, vol. 6), pp. 47–72

58 See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, vols. I–III, ed. by Karl Ludwig Michelet, vols. 13–15 (1833–36) in *Hegel's Werke*, vol. 15, pp. 194–198. (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vols. 1–3, trans. by E.S. Haldane, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1995, vol. 3, pp. 91–94; *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe in 20 Bänden*, vol. 19, pp. 194–198.) *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, I–II, ed. by Philipp Marheineke, vols. 11–12 (1832), in *Hegel's Werke*, vol. 11, p. 212. (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vols. 1–3, trans. by E.B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: The Humanities Press 1962, vol. 1, pp. 217–218; *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe in 20 Bänden*, vol. 15, pp. 227–228.)

59 See Ernst Benz, *The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy*, trans. by Blair G. Reynolds and Eunice M. Paul, Allison Park: Pickwick Publications 1983.

60 Karl Rosenkranz, *Zur Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*, Königsberg: Gebrüder Bornträger 1836, p. 39; Karl W.E. Mager, *Brief an eine Dame über die Hegelsche Philosophie*, Berlin: F.H. Morin 1837, pp. 61–73. For more detail on the contemporary German and Scandinavian debates about speculative mysticism, see the following works: Peter Šajda, "Does Hegelian Philosophy of Religion Distort Christian Dogmatics and Ethics? (The Debate on Speculative Mysticism)," in *Kierkegaard and the Nineteenth Century Religious Crisis in Europe*, Šala: Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia and Toronto: Kierkegaard Circle, Trinity College 2009 (*Acta Kierkegardiana*, vol. 4), pp. 64–83.

therefore the constitution of *developed* reason: all other constitutions belong to lower grades of the development and realization of reason.<sup>61</sup>

To the French republicans, the idea of monarchy was something that they wanted to dispose of forever. Therefore, Hegel's theory that this is the highest form of government and the highest development of reason must have struck them as ridiculous. The author comments on this quotation, "It is possible that this is Hegel's opinion...but truly sound philosophy does not lead to results like this. For it would follow from Hegel's axiom that Turkey and Spain have come to the highest level of the development of reason, and that France, England, the United States of America, etc., still find themselves in the childhood of civilization."<sup>62</sup> For the French, after the experience of the Revolution of 1789, it appeared that they were leading the march of history forward and that, by getting rid of the king, they had made the state more rational. Given the historical context, it is clear why the author of the review could not countenance Hegel's royalism, which seemed to justify the abuses of the Restoration.

Liunge cites almost the entirety of the French review; in fact, the only thing that he leaves out is a more general comment that is not critical of Hegel specifically. The appearance of the article "Hegel's Philosophy" in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* at this time does not necessarily reflect a surge of interest in Hegel in Denmark. Instead, the article seems more to serve as a tool to advance Liunge's anti-Heiberg agenda. It will be noted that here in 1828 Liunge pioneers the same strategy that Kierkegaard uses when he satirizes Heiberg tacitly by criticizing Hegel. Heiberg's name is never mentioned in the article, but the point is clearly to undermine him by undermining the Hegelian dimension of his program.

#### IV The Review of *On the Significance of Philosophy in Kjøbenhavnsposten*

The then young theologian Frederik Zeuthen (1805–74) responded to Heiberg's controversial treatise *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age* in

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<sup>61</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse, Zweite Ausgabe*, Heidelberg: August Oßwald 1827, § 542, pp. 483–484. (*Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. by William Wallace and A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1971, § 542; *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe in 20 Bänden*, vol. 10, p. 418) (Translation slightly modified.)

<sup>62</sup> Anonymous, "Hegels Philosophie," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 2, no. 64, August 8, 1828, p. 259.

Liunge's *Kjøbenhavnsposten* in April of 1833.<sup>63</sup> Although the journal had already published this article, as Liunge saw the criticisms of Heiberg's work continue to appear,<sup>64</sup> he could not allow the opportunity presented by these works to pass without a new critical word from *Kjøbenhavnsposten*. On August 9, 1833, another review appeared in the journal, entitled "A Serious Word Concerning Professor Heiberg's Work, *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*."<sup>65</sup> Although this article was published anonymously, it seems reasonable to suppose that Liunge himself might well have been the author.

At the outset, the review quotes Heiberg's controversial statement, "we must confess that religion in our age is for the most part a matter for the uncultured, while for the cultured it belongs to the past, to the road already traveled."<sup>66</sup> In contrast to Heiberg's religious critics, the author of this review does not seem morally outraged by this claim. On the contrary, he seems to accept it to be true: "The fact that this statement *can be printed* and that the one who communicates it does not *run the risk* of being stoned, is taken as proof of both the frightening truth and the alarming freedom of the press."<sup>67</sup> The author thus recognizes

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63 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. (In English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, pp. 121–130.)

64 For example, Kts. [Jakob Peter Mynster], "Om den religiøse Overbeviisning," *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, pp. 73–94; In English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, pp. 139–159.) 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°," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende*, no. 41, 1833, pp. 649–660; no. 42, pp. 681–692; no. 43, pp. 697–704. (In English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, pp. 167–190.)

65 Anonymous, "Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, pp. 617–618. (In English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, pp. 163–165.)

66 Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning*, p. 16. (*Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 1, p. 396; *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 95.)

67 Anonymous, "Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid," *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, p. 617. (*Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 163.)

that there does in fact exist a “spiritual bankruptcy” at the time and that there has been a lapse in religious belief, as Heiberg sketched.<sup>68</sup>

In their responses Zeuthen and Mynster had critically pointed out that Heiberg implies that the clergy are hypocrites as well as naïve and uncultured since they continue to believe in religion.<sup>69</sup> The author in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* takes up the same point of criticism, albeit less passionately than Zeuthen or Mynster: “Is it not obvious that the reader is condemned to exclude the entire clergy from the cultured world in order not to despair of the moral worth of that honored class? It is indeed still open to debate whether the house of God is only the nursery of civilization.”<sup>70</sup> The author calls for the same respect for religious believers as for those seeking truth in the secular sphere of philosophy. There is a degree of hypocrisy in this which is visible when one considers the merciless satirical exchanges that took place between Heiberg and *Kjøbenhavnsposten*. These examples of open ridicule show that in order to engage in this kind of public debate, one needed to have both a thick skin and a clever pen. In this context, a plea for mutual respect and a concern for the feelings of others seems more than a bit hypocritical.

Kierkegaard is well known for his idolization of Socrates and his appropriation of Socratic irony.<sup>71</sup> The author of the article anticipates Kierkegaard's Socratic strategy of criticism by prefacing his assessment with a feigned ignorance: “I understand the introduction to the philosophy which has been announced and

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68 Anonymous, “Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, p. 617. (*Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 163.)

69 Zeuthen, “Oplysninger til Prof. J.L. Heibergs Skrift: *Om Philosophiens Betydning*,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 7, no. 76, April 18, 1833, p. 301. (*Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, p. 123.) Kts. [Jakob Peter Mynster], “Om den religiøse Overbeviisning,” *Dansk Ugeskrift*, vol. 3, nos. 76 and 77, 1833, p. 241. (Mynster's *Blandede Skrifter*, vol. 2, p. 73; in English in *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, p. 141.)

70 Anonymous, “Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, p. 617. (*Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 163.)

71 See for example, Jon Stewart, *Søren Kierkegaard: Subjectivity, Irony and the Crisis of Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015. Benjamin Daise, *Kierkegaard's Socratic Art*, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press 1999. Bernd Henningsen, “Søren Kierkegaard: Sokrates i København,” in his *Politik eller Kaos?* Copenhagen: Berlingske Forlag 1980, pp. 134–233. Jens Himmelstrup, *Søren Kierkegaards Opfattelse af Sokrates. En Studie i dansk Filosofis Historie*, Copenhagen: Arnold Busck 1924. Wolfdiétrich von Kloeden, *Kierkegaard und Sokrates. Søren Kierkegaards Sokratesrezeption*, Rheinland-Westfalen-Lippe: Evangelische Fachhochschule 1991. Lars Bejerholm, “Sokratisk metod hos Søren Kierkegaard och hans samtid,” *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 4, 1962, pp. 28–44.

would like to comment on this highly important text to the extent my ability allows. For although I am not learned, I can perhaps be considered a representative of the class of disciples who are eager to learn.”<sup>72</sup> Just as Socrates often ironically praises his interlocutors at the start for their superior knowledge, so also the author in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* concedes his own limited abilities in philosophy and ironically praises Heiberg’s treatise as a “highly important text.” In contrast to the great significance of Heiberg’s work, the author refers humbly to his own “insignificant voice.”<sup>73</sup> Just as Socrates often ironically proposes to become the student of his interlocutor, who claims to have great knowledge, so also here the author places himself in the role of one of the “disciples who are eager to learn.” In these points it is possible to see a clear resemblance to Kierkegaard’s later Socratic approach in his attack on Heiberg and other contemporary Hegelians in Denmark. An echo of this can be found in *Prefaces*, where Kierkegaard’s pseudonym writes,

any younger person would feel flattered by the mere thought of the literary prestige of having the honor of being a contributor to Prof. Heiberg’s journal, which no young person understands better than I, who still am often reminded of how once at the time the youthful mind felt intoxicated by daring to believe that a contribution would not be rejected.<sup>74</sup>

Kierkegaard here puts his pseudonym in the position of a humble admirer of Heiberg, whose greatest aspiration is to publish something in Heiberg’s journal. The sarcasm here is clearly aimed at what Kierkegaard perceives to be Heiberg’s exaggerated sense of self-importance with regard to his journalistic work. Heiberg’s arrogance was precisely one of the targets of Lunge’s satire.

## V Kierkegaard and the Culture of Journalistic Polemics of the Golden Age

The previous research literature has established beyond a doubt that with respect to his philosophical method Kierkegaard used Socrates as a model. However, it

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<sup>72</sup> Anonymous, “Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, p. 617. (*Heiberg’s On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 164.)

<sup>73</sup> Anonymous, “Et alvorligt Ord over Professor Heibergs Skrift om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid,” *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, 1833, vol. 7, no. 155, p. 617. (*Heiberg’s On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, p. 164.)

<sup>74</sup> SKS 4, 508–509 / P, 47.

should be noted that Kierkegaard was also inspired by sources much closer to home. He was deeply influenced by the polemics that took place in the Danish journals of the day. When he saw how *Kjøbenhavnsposten* repeatedly took Heiberg to task in humorous and intelligent ways, he found a model for his own writing.

This helps to explain the aspect of Kierkegaard's writing that has led some commentators to claim that he was not a philosopher at all.<sup>75</sup> Of course, philosophers are trained to look for arguments, and when they see subtle polemics instead, they can be inclined to be dismissive. The acceptance of Kierkegaard in the world of Anglophone philosophy was delayed for a long time due to this negative view of his writings. Today, however, scholars have made careful studies of Kierkegaard's special way of writing and have become attentive to the fact that in his many literary strategies, which might appear to be to frivolous to the philosopher, he in fact does make arguments, but of a kind that philosophers are not attentive to.<sup>76</sup> The fact that Kierkegaard chose for his works more of a literary style, modelled in part on the journalistic literature of the day, instead of a strictly philosophical style, tells much about his own disposition towards philosophy in the academic sense.

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75 See the discussions in Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2003, pp. 640–652. Alastair Hannay, "Why Should Anyone Call Kierkegaard a Philosopher?" in *Kierkegaard Revisited: Proceedings from the Conference "Kierkegaard and the Meaning of Meaning It," Copenhagen, May 5–9, 1996*, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Jon Stewart, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1997 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 1), pp. 238–253.

76 See Jon Stewart, "Kierkegaard's Use of Genre in the Struggle with German Philosophy," in his *The Unity of Content and Form in Philosophical Writing: The Perils of Conformity*, London, New Delhi, New York and Sydney: Bloomsbury 2013, pp. 81–95.