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Kierkegaard and the Aesthetics of the Book

By

Troy Wellington Smith

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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in the

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Karin Sanders, Chair

Professor Mark Sandberg

Professor Chenxi Tang

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## Abstract

### Kierkegaard and the Aesthetics of the Book

by

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“Kierkegaard and the Aesthetics of the Book” considers aesthetics in the broad, classical meaning of the word, i.e., as the study of the sensory. Rather than offering a full-blown descriptive bibliography of Kierkegaard’s books, this dissertation presents three models for the phenomenology of reading: the disappearing book, the Heibergian book, and the ironic book. Each of these hypothesizes a different relationship between the book’s temporal and spatial modalities, or between the verbal text and the physical thing made up of paper, leather, and ink.

First identified by Friedrich Kittler in his *Aufschreibesysteme (Discourse Networks)*, the disappearing book cancels the book-object’s materiality via the transcendent author’s imagined voice. Chapter 1 draws on cultural, material, and intellectual history, ca. 1750–1850, to explain the rise of the disappearing book, not only in Kittler’s German states, but in Denmark, as well. The coupling of what Rolf Engelsing calls the “Leserevolution” (reading revolution) with an industrial revolution of the book led to an upsurge in printed matter during the period. With the individual copy downgraded and the ethereal text privileged, the book itself vanished (so to speak). In the philosophy of language of Herder and Anders Gamburg, the poetry of Goethe and Adam Oehlenschläger, and the aesthetics of Hegel and the youngish Johan Ludvig Heiberg, one finds additional impulses for the disappearing book.

The Heibergian book, on the other hand, is derived from the highly original theory of reading articulated in the mature J. L. Heiberg’s “Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie” (Contribution to the philosophy of the visible) (1843). Here Heiberg posits that the simulated orality of the text is a sublated moment within the visual image of the page, thus opposing the phonocentrism of the disappearing book. This aesthetic framework served as a clever justification for Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* (New Year’s gifts), which were lavishly ornamented literary collections sold in publisher’s bindings for the holiday season. Although the Heibergian book (as Klaus Müller-Wille has noted) employs the Hegelian device of *Aufhebung* (sublation), Heiberg is nonetheless contradicting Hegel’s posthumously published *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik (Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art)* (1835) and his own “Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjønne Kunster” (On painting in its relation to the other fine arts) (1838), both of which—true to the disappearing book—had denied print’s aesthetic validity. It is unclear whether Kierkegaard was aware of the “Bidrag” treatise, but he nonetheless confronts its aesthetic system by reading Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* through the lens of the disappearing book, reducing them to mere trinkets. As I go on to argue in chapter 2, Kierkegaard then attacks gift-books *tout court*, using them as a metonym for the widespread loss of inwardness in Golden Age Copenhagen.

Yet Kierkegaard did not, as one might expect, create disappearing books, but what I call ironic books. Like the fragments and nested novels of the German Romantics, Kierkegaard's ironic book oscillates between spatiality and temporality, or from the concrete tome to the ideal text. While the Heibergian book is *both* visual *and* aural, the ironic book is *either* visual *or* aural, i.e., at any given moment. Such unresolved vacillations between a dialectical term and its antithesis have been noted throughout Kierkegaard's authorship, as either a "fractured dialectic" (Paul Ricoeur) or an "ironic dialectic" (Fred Rush), and hence the term *the ironic book*. As I claim in chapter 3, Kierkegaard's ironic book is distinct from those of Friedrich Schlegel and the other Romantics, both German and Danish. While all ironic books manifest an unending flux between the outer and the inner, this so-called aesthetics of fracture corresponds to a Socratic epistemology only in the ironic book of Kierkegaard. Just as Socrates offered no positive answers and abandoned his interlocutors to discover the truth for themselves, Kierkegaard absents himself through Romantic literary techniques like frame narratives and pseudonymity, leaving his readers alone with the book, which then hints to them that they can obtain evermore exact approximations of inner truths already in their possession if they read and reread again.

With the disappearing book, one finds oneself overawed by the presence of the author, and his numinous voice renders the bibliographical artifact (more or less) imperceptible. Likewise, the *aufgehoben* (sublated) voice of the Heibergian book does not belong to the reader, but to the transcendent author. In contrast, readers of Kierkegaard's ironic book are incited to recitation, and their actual voices are substituted for the virtual voice of Kierkegaard himself, who remains a silent cipher. The achieved aesthetic effect thus complements Kierkegaard's Socratic maieutic, as readers hear themselves echoing truths that they then recognize as their own. As his unique take on the ironic book reveals, Kierkegaard was conscious of the fact that the sensorium mediates all ethical-religious communication between human beings, even if such exchanges can only ever be indirect.

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*In memoriam*

Alice Phair Walkling (1928–2023)

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## A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

Whenever possible, I used *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, the latest critical edition of Kierkegaard's writings, in composing this dissertation. Contrary to popular belief, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter* does not encompass the entirety of the Kierkegaardian corpus, and so on one occasion I was forced to turn to *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. Although I have employed the electronic editions of *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, I provide page references to the primary sources in these volumes, with the caveat that these numbers may not always line up perfectly with the print edition (as experience has taught me). Naturally, I availed myself of the *K* or *Kommentarer* volumes that accompany each primary source volume of *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, but, for some inexplicable reason, [sks.dk](http://sks.dk) did not include page references for the *Kommentarer* volumes, and so I had to share links to the relevant sections instead. As I was bringing this project to a close, [sks.dk](http://sks.dk) was shut down, and all of my *Kommentarer* links were rerouted to the homepage [tekster.kb.dk](http://tekster.kb.dk), which includes the portal to Det Kongelige Bibliotek's new electronic edition of *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*. Oddly enough, the *Kommentarer* volumes of this current edition offer page numbers for the "Tekstredegørelse" sections, but not for the "Tekstkommentarer." Therefore, I cite page numbers in the case of the former, and links in the case of the latter.

All translations are my own, unless a published translation is credited in the note. When quoting Scandinavian- and German-language primary sources, I provide both the original and an English translation of the passage in question, whereas I quote exclusively from the published English translations of texts originally written in modern Romance languages. The Bible is also quoted only in translation, with the rare exception of an interpolation of the original koine. As a rule, I translated Scandinavian-language primary sources myself, while I relied on the published English translations of German-language primary sources when these were available and deemed accurate. For the renderings of Latin phrases within Kierkegaard's texts, I depended on the Kierkegaard's Writings series of Princeton University Press.

# INTRODUCTION

The anthropomorphism of books and the bibliomorphism of people both have a longstanding history, in everyday parlance, as well as in literature.<sup>1</sup> We can speak of a book's "spine" or "headband," or claim to "read" our ingenuous colleagues "like a book." Milton declares in the *Areopagitica* of 1644 that he "who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye."<sup>2</sup> And Heinrich Heine, in the 1821 drama *Almansor*, chillingly proclaims that "dort wo man Bücher / Verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen" (there where books are burned / People are also burned in the end).<sup>3</sup>

The Danish philosopher and litterateur Søren Kierkegaard likened humans to books throughout his authorship. Behind the pseudonym Johannes *de silentio* in 1843's *Frygt og Bæven* (Fear and trembling), he contrasts the inimitable Knight of Faith with "en Godtkjøbs-Udgave af Abraham" (a bargain edition of Abraham).<sup>4</sup> Under the guise of Johannes Climacus in the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* (Concluding unscientific postscript) of 1846, Kierkegaard mocks those who want to "blive en Bog eller et objektivt Noget" (become a book or something objective).<sup>5</sup> That same year, in his own name, he decries those "falske Udgaver af Mennesker" (false editions of human beings) in *En literair Anmeldelse* (A literary review).<sup>6</sup> They who "ere ganske som de Andre" (completely like the others), Kierkegaard writes in the *Christelige Taler* (Christian talks) of 1848, are "falske Eftertryk" (false pirated copies).<sup>7</sup> And, in 1850's *Indøvelse i Christendom* (Training in Christianity) the Kierkegaardian pseudonym Anti-Climacus states that the Apostle "Peder er den elskeligste Udgave af den menneskelige Medlidenhed" (Peter is the most loving edition of human sympathy),<sup>8</sup> but Christ had not "tilladt en priisbilligere Udgave af det at være Efterfølger: en Beundrer" (permitted a cheaper edition of being a successor: an admirer).<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps this figurative language flowed from Kierkegaard's pen because the book, like a human being, is both "flesh" and "spirit,"<sup>10</sup> or, in other words, it is both a physical and an intellectual entity. This same ambivalence is central to Kierkegaard's philosophical anthropology. In a bravura lecture on *Sygdommen til Døden* (The sickness unto death) given in 2020, Jamie Aroosi noted that, for Anti-Climacus, subjectivity (i.e., spirit) unfolds over time, while an objective

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1. The concept of bibliomorphism would seem to originate with Leah Price, who writes, "Just as it-narratives anthropomorphize the book at its moments of greatest vulnerability, Dickens bibliomorphizes persons when other characters are treating them no better than objects." Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 128.

2. John Milton, *Areopagitica*, in *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 240.

3. *Almansor. Eine Tragödie*, in *Heinrich Heines sämtliche Werke*, ed. Ernst Elster (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, n.d.), 2:259, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uva.x004373035>.

4. *Frygt og Bæven. Dialektisk Lyrik*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret, 2014), 4:147.

5. *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler. Mimisk-pathetisk-dialektisk Sammenskrift, Existentielt Indlæg*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:91.

6. *En literair Anmeldelse. To Tidsaldre, Novelle af Forfatteren til "en Hverdagshistorie," udgiven af J. L. Heiberg*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:33.

7. *Christelige Taler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 10:72.

8. *Indøvelse i Christendom*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 12:126.

9. *Indøvelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 12:241.

10. See Matt. 26:41, John 6:63, Acts 2:17, Rom. 8:4, Gal. 5:17, and 1 Tim. 3:16.

account of the self (i.e., flesh) deals with space.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, Aroosi stressed that these temporal and spatial modalities cannot be reconciled with each other,<sup>12</sup> and that the Anti-Climacean conception of the human being resembles a book, since a book is either experienced spatially as an object or temporally as a text.<sup>13</sup> (Like Leah Price, I distinguish between the book-object and the text,<sup>14</sup> or between the “material thing” and the “linguistic structure.”)<sup>15</sup> Putting himself at odds with the dominant aestheticians of the day, Kierkegaard would discover in the book this same oscillation between space and time.

As theories of reading have evolved over the course of Western history, the bibliographical object has shifted in and out of focus. The book at hand was nearly lost from sight under what Daniel Selcer, in his *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription*, calls “the Platonic model.” This paradigm “understands the book and its pages as a mere container for a text that transcends it.” Selcer contrasts this Platonism with an “early modern materiality,” which he detects in the works of Leibniz, Bayle, Descartes, and Spinoza.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, according to the media theorist Friedrich Kittler, the book’s physical existence was foregrounded at both ends of the early modern intellectual spectrum, from children’s primers to scholarly dissertations.<sup>17</sup> In the philosophy of the period, writes Selcer, “the material figure of the book . . . does not refer to the capacity of a codex to evoke, through a series of conventional signs, a meaning that transcends the marks on its pages and thereby transports its readers to imaginary realms . . . . Instead, the material figure of the book refers to the codex in its very corporeality.”<sup>18</sup>

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11. Jamie Aroosi, “The Responsibility to Revolt: Søren Kierkegaard and the Politics of Love,” St. Olaf College, November 12, 2020, <https://www.stolaf.edu/multimedia/play/?e=3194>, 6:00.

12. On these same grounds, Lessing emphasized the incommensurability of the literary and the visual arts in the *Laokoon (Laocoön)* treatise of 1766. By his lights, poets can portray a series of actions in time, but not a static object in space, whereas a painter or a sculptor must be content with depicting only a single, singular moment, rather than a succession of them: “Gegenstände, die aufeinander, oder deren Teile aufeinander folgen, heißen überhaupt Handlungen. Folglich sind Handlungen der eigentliche Gegenstand der Poesie. . . . Die Malerei kann in ihren koexistierenden Kompositionen nur einen einzigen Augenblick der Handlung nutzen, und muß daher den prägnantesten wählen, aus welchem das Vorhergehende und Folgende am begreiflichsten wird.” (Subjects which or the various parts of which succeed each other may in general be called *actions*. Consequently, actions form the proper subjects of poetry. . . . Painting, in her coexisting compositions, can use only one single moment of the action, and must therefore choose the most pregnant, from which what proceeds and follows will be most easily apprehended.) Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon, oder: Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), 114–15; Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. W. A. Steel, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 81. See also Paul Guyer, “18th Century German Aesthetics,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 1997–, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/#Les>.

13. Aroosi, “Responsibility to Revolt,” 8:25.

14. Price, *Books in Victorian Britain*, 17.

15. Price, *Books in Victorian Britain*, 20. See also Karin Sanders, “Bogen som ting og skulptur,” *Edda* 100, no. 4 (2013): 315, [https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen\\_som\\_ting\\_og\\_skulptur](https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen_som_ting_og_skulptur).

16. Daniel Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription*, Philosophy, Aesthetics and Cultural Theory (London: Continuum, 2010), 200.

17. According to Kittler, “The sixteenth-century conception of language directed children toward the many languages of creation, toward the materiality and opacity of signs” (39). Likewise, as he writes elsewhere, “The Republic of Scholars is endless circulation, a discourse network without producers or consumers, which simply heaves words around” (4), as “the printing presses and professors simply republished the whole world of books” (156). Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks: 1800 / 1900*, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

18. Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book*, 4.

Circa 1800, Germanic aesthetics came under the sway of a radically different bibliographical figure, which Kittler would later name “the disappearing book.”<sup>19</sup> This “contingent phenomenon within the evolution of discursive practices in Europe”<sup>20</sup> reimagined the book as a Derridean “transcendental signified,” a signified divorced not only from the materially embedded sign, but even from the workings of language itself.<sup>21</sup> In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Socrates favors speech over writing because only the former is analogous to *λόγος* or the transcendental signified, insofar as it is transient and invisible. Inscribed discourse, on the other hand, is antithetical to *λόγος*, for it is static and tangible.<sup>22</sup>

Despite—or, perhaps, because of—a boom in print culture, Platonic phono- and logocentrism reached a high-water mark in the German states and in Scandinavia at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The sufficiently literate now experienced the book as “a virtual orality” that overrode the paper, leather, and ink of the physical item.<sup>24</sup> Literature “wrote around its written character” or even “obliterate[d] it.”<sup>25</sup> Instead of feeling the heft of the volume, readers of the disappearing book sensed a numinous presence, or imagined that they heard the author’s voice.<sup>26</sup>

As I argue in chapter 1, a confluence of factors— artistic, cultural, economic, legal, philosophical, social, technological, and theological—led to the institutionalization of the disappearing book in Germany and in Denmark from approximately 1750 to 1850. A key example of this development can be found in Hegel. In his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik (Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art)*, the Swabian philosopher curtly defined poetry—broadly understood—as sound, explicitly dismissing print as “gleichgültige Zeichen” (arbitrary signs).<sup>27</sup> Later, the Danish

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19. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 54.

20. David E. Wellbery uses this phrase to describe “hermeneutic understanding,” but it is equally applicable to the related concept of the disappearing book. David E. Wellbery, foreword to *Discourse Networks*, by Kittler, x.

21. Jacques Derrida, “Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva,” in *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 19.

22. Socrates claims that inscription “will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own.” Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, eds. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 275a. See also Plato, *Letters*, 344c–e.

23. Derrida defines logocentrism as the “absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning.” Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Fortieth Anniversary Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 12.

24. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

25. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 105.

26. Kittler’s classic example in *Discourse Networks* is Faust’s reading of the Nostradamus manuscript in Goethe’s drama. Nostradamus’ “imaginary presence makes scholarly brooding on signs as superfluous as the voice does writing. Everything takes its course as if his book was no longer a book. Described and designated signs are supposed to be able to hear the reader.” (5). See *Goethe’s Faust: Part One and Selections from Part Two*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), lines 354–517.

27. “Die Poesie ist ihrem Begriffe nach wesentlich *tönend*, und dies Erklingen darf ihr, wenn sie *vollständig* als Kunst heraustreten soll, um so weniger fehlen, als es ihre einzige Seite ist, nach welcher sie mit der äußeren Existenz in realen Zusammenhang kommt. Denn gedruckte oder geschriebene Buchstaben sind freilich auch noch äußerlich vorhanden, jedoch nur gleichgültige Zeichen für Laute und Wörter.” (Poetry is by nature essentially musical, and if it is to emerge as fully art it must not lack this resonance, even more so because this is the one aspect in virtue of which it really comes into connection with external existence. For printed or written letters, it is true, are also existent externally but they are only arbitrary signs for sounds and words.) G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 3:320; G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:1036. Knox does not retain Hegel’s emphasis.

critic Johan Ludvig Heiberg would absorb the *Ästhetik*<sup>28</sup> and cleave closely to Hegel's views on poetry in the 1838 essay "Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjøne Kunster" (On the art of painting in its relation to the other fine arts).<sup>29</sup>

Logo- or phonocentrism was not exclusive to the field of aesthetics in Denmark. In an 1802 lecture entitled "Om en Theorie af Læsekunsten eller Forsøg til en Legologie" (On a theory of the art of reading or an attempt at a science of reading), the philosopher and pedagogue Anders Gamborg argued that "Læsekunsten" depended on the link between the written character(s) and the phoneme, as only the latter was tied to inwardness.<sup>30</sup> Much more famously, the polymath pastor Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig would later tout "det levende Ord" (the living word) of a recited Apostle's Creed over the mummified letter of scripture.<sup>31</sup>

Kittler lumps every author writing in German around 1800 into a shared "discourse network" of the disappearing book,<sup>32</sup> but there were in fact alternative biblio-aesthetic models

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28. Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* were published posthumously between 1835 and 1838, but Heiberg, on a trip to Berlin, borrowed the notes that one of Hegel's students had taken on these lectures, which he (sc. Heiberg) then drew upon in his unpublished *Grundlinien zum System der Aesthetik als speculativer Wissenschaft* (Outlines to the system of aesthetics as speculative science) of 1824. Jon Stewart, *The Heiberg Period: 1824–1836*, tome 1 of *A History of Hegelianism in Golden Age Denmark* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 2007), 180.

29. "Hvad man kunde kalde Kunstens Materie eller Material, er nemlig ikke her et Ydre for Kunsten, men er i uopløselig Eenhed med den. Thi dette Material er Toner og Ord, og disse ere allerede fra Fødselen [*sic*] af underkastede Skjønhedens Lov, umiddelbart anviste til naturligt Element for denne." (What one could call the matter of art or material is here not an outer surface for art, but is in an insoluble unity with it. For this material is tones and words, and these are already from birth subjected to the law of beauty, and immediately shown to be in its natural element.) "Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjøne Kunster," in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1861), 2:302.

30. "Det talende Menneske kan vel og forstaae Skrift uden lydelig (höjt) at opsigte Ordene; men han forstaaer den dog ikke saaledes som den Dövstumme. For denne er de skrevne Ord umiddelbare Repræsentanter af Begreber og Forestillinger; for det talende Menneske ere de derimod nærmest og umiddelbar Repræsentanter af artikulerede Lyde; og de repræsentere kun begreber og Forestillinger middelbar formedelst Lydene." (The speaking person can surely understand writing without reading aloud to recite the words; but he does not understand it like the deaf-mute, after all. For the latter, the written words are immediate representations of concepts and ideas; for the speaking person they are, on the contrary, closest to immediate representations of articulated sounds; and they only represent concepts and ideas indirectly, by means of the sounds.) Anders Gamborg, "Om en Theorie af Læsekunsten eller Forsøg til en Legologie," *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabers-Selskabs Skrifter* 2, no. 2 (1803): 239.

31. Grundtvig's "'matchless discovery' was the distinction between the 'Living Word' in the sacraments as well as in the Apostles' Creed and the written word in its various forms." The phrase "det levende Ord" appears in the Grundtvigian corpus as early as 1812, in an article entitled "Om Censur." Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, by Søren Kierkegaard, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 2:190; "Om Censur. Med særdeles Betragtning af Sjællands Klerkemøde," in *Grundtvigs værker*, ([Aarhus]: Grundtvig Centeret, 2019), part 2, <http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/tekstvisning/6435/0#%220%22:0,%22v0%22:0,%22k%22:2>.

32. "German literary historiography normally distinguishes between Classicism (*Klassik*) and Romanticism (*Romantik*) as two differently oriented movements in literary and cultural history around the turn of the nineteenth century. The former term is more restricted in its temporal scope and cast of players insofar as it refers principally to the joint endeavors of Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and a few other figures during the last decade of the eighteenth century, whereas Romanticism extends well into the nineteenth century and includes a large number of writers, from Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, and the philosophers Johan Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling to Joseph Eichendorff, Clemens Brentano, and E. T. A. Hoffman, to mention only some of the major names. In Hegel, the two movements are sometimes thought to converge, or find their dialectical synthesis. . . . The first part of Kittler's book fits well with the scholarship produced in the English-speaking world. Beneath the title '1800' it collectively treats most of the Classical and Romantic writers mentioned as participating in a common enterprise, or rather a common discourse network." Wellbery, foreword to *Discourse Networks*, xvi.

emerging at this time in Germany and in Denmark, which I have termed the ironic book and the Heibergian book. In 1843, the same J. L. Heiberg published a treatise entitled “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie” (Contribution to the philosophy of the visible), which originally appeared in his *Intelligensblade* no. 28.<sup>33</sup> The book envisioned here has extension in space and yet is ideal. It is defined as an image, but one in which the author’s voice, via the Hegelian technology of *Aufhebung* (sublation),<sup>34</sup> is “both annulled and preserved.”<sup>35</sup> This so-called Heibergian book is, however, only pseudo-Hegelian, insofar as it diverges from the *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*. No longer subscribing to Hegel’s phonocentrism, Heiberg installs the eye—rather than the ear—as the predominant sense-organ, as vision sublates the simulated orality of the text.

In “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie,” Heiberg attempted to reconcile his Hegelianism with his bibliophilic interests. By that time, he had already released a *Nytaarsgave* (New Year’s gift)—a literary collection in elegant trade binding for the holiday season—and would offer three more from 1844 to 1846.<sup>36</sup> We will investigate Kierkegaard’s attack on Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* in chapter 2. Instead of deconstructing the quasi-Hegelian Idealism of these Heibergian books,<sup>37</sup>

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33. “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:351.

34. According to Heiberg, “Paa Grund af sit umaadelige Omfang er da Synet endog i den mærkværdige Stilling, at det kan træde i Stedet for Hørelsen, eftersom baade Musik og Tale kunne gjøres synlige ved Skrift, og baade tilegnes og nydes igjennem Øiet, naar kun dette har erhvervet sig tilstrækkelig Færdighed i at læse Skriften. Ved denne Oversættelse af det Hørlige i det Synlige griber altsaa Synet endnu meget længere ind i Aandeverden, end det ifølge sin oprindelige Natur formaaer, ja rækker ligesaa langt som Hørelsen, paa en Maade endog med større Sikkerhed, formedelst det Permanente i Skriften, hvorved den flygtige Lyd er hævet over sin Forgængelighed.” (On the grounds of its tremendous range, vision, then, is in fact in the remarkable position that it can take the place of hearing, since both music and speech can be made visible by writing, and both are appropriated and enjoyed through the eye, but only when this has acquired sufficient skill in reading. By this translation from the audible to the visible, vision intervenes even farther into the world of the spirit, even farther than its original nature allows; yes, it reaches just as far as hearing, yet in a manner with greater certainty, on account of the permanence of writing, by which the fleeting word is raised above its evanescence.)

Klaus Müller-Wille offers a helpful gloss on this passage: “Synen anses vara det högsta av alla sinnen. I sin dialektiska argumentation försöker Heiberg visa att synen är kapabel att ‘upphäva’ (i den hegelianska meningen ‘aufheben’) all andra sinnen. I detta sammanhang hänvisar Heiberg just till skriftmediet och läsandets akt.” (Sight is thought to be the highest of all senses. In his dialectical argumentation, Heiberg attempts to show that sight is capable of ‘sublating’ [in the Hegelian meaning of *aufheben*] all other senses. In this connection, Heiberg refers precisely to written media and the act of reading.)

Although Heiberg does not use the words *aufheben*, *aufgehoben*, or *Aufhebung*—or, for that matter, their Danish equivalents—in the “Bidrag,” it seems likely that he, if anyone, would have been thinking in terms of the Hegelian technique of sublation. According to Jamie Turnbull: “The Danish word for sublation is *Ophævelse*, which comes from the verb *ophæve*. This did not really exist as a noun before Kierkegaard’s time, but it was rather an attempt to imitate in Danish the German word *Aufhebung*, or in verbal form *aufheben*. . . . The philosophical use of the term came from German philosophy and was introduced into Danish by Johan Ludvig Heiberg.” “Synlige Philosophie,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:358; Klaus Müller-Wille, “‘De er rigtig nok godt indbunden.’ Om bokens poetik hos Johan Ludvig Heiberg och Søren Kierkegaard,” in *Mellem ånd og tryksvæerte. Studier i trykkekulturen og den romantiske litteratur*, ed. Robert W. Rix (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2015), 83–84; Jamie Turnbull, “Mediation/Sublation,” in *Individual to Novel*, tome 4 of *Kierkegaard’s Concepts*, eds. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 131.

35. Thus does William McDonald define *aufgehoben* (sublated). William McDonald, “Søren Kierkegaard,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard/#Aesth>.

36. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Nye Digte* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1841); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1844* (Copenhagen: Bing); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1845* (Copenhagen: Bing); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1846* (Copenhagen: Reitzel).

37. Cf. Klaus Müller-Wille, who writes, “Enligt min åsikt syftar Kierkegaards kritik mindre på böckernas ytlighet än på de komplexa teckenteoretiska och estetiska frågeställningar som Heiberg utvecklade i relation till bokens materialitet.” (In my view, Kierkegaard’s critique aims less at the externality of the books than at the



Kierkegaard faults the *Nytaarsgaver* for their materialism. Indeed, there is no hard evidence—to my knowledge—that Kierkegaard ever read the “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie.” And if he did, his polemic is a willful misreading, as it makes no reference to the aesthetic theory behind the *Nytaarsgaver*, but merely dismisses these *recherché* bibelots as silly toys or trifles.<sup>38</sup>

Like the Heibergian book, Hegel’s dialectics are supposed to stop at a final synthesis or sublation, but what Paul Ricoeur dubs Kierkegaard’s “fractured dialectic”<sup>39</sup> or “anti-dialectic” emerges “out of those unresolved contradictions he [sc. Kierkegaard] called paradoxes.”<sup>40</sup> Fred Rush is, I believe, the first to argue that this Kierkegaardian dialectic can be traced back to the “ironic dialectic” of the Jena Romantic Friedrich Schlegel,<sup>41</sup> and yet Rush does not link his discovery to Ricoeur. If the Heibergian book is founded on a *both-and*, or a dialectic of sublation, the ironic book is based on an *either/or*, or a dialectic of fracture. Put another way, the Heibergian book is simultaneously a visual object in space and voice or spirit in time. The ironic book, on the other hand, can be the one or the other, but never both at once.<sup>42</sup>

Several writers in Germany and Denmark were to challenge the monistic aesthetics of Classicism and Idealism—otherwise known as the disappearing book—with the fractured dialectic of the ironic book. Deploying self-reflexive literary techniques, they redefined the reading experience as an irresolvable flux between the spatial and the temporal, or between outwardness and inwardness. For example, Jean Paul Richter and even the twenty-five-year-old J. L. Heiberg reminded their respective readers of the book’s physical presence (in space), but they did so—with an ironic nudge—via the ideal means of language (in time).<sup>43</sup>

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complex theory of signs and aesthetic questions posed, which Heiberg develops in relation to the book’s materiality) (86). Thus, Müller-Wille concludes in the same essay that “vänder han [sc. Kierkegaard] Heibergs tidiga komisk-ironiska talang mot Heibergs senare konservativ-akademiska medieteorier där aspekten av bokens materialitet bara betonas för att stödja en hegeliansk estetik” (he [sc. Kierkegaard] turns Heiberg’s earlier comic-ironic talent against Heiberg’s later conservative-academic media theory, where the aspect of the book’s materiality is emphasized merely to support a Hegelian aesthetic) (90).

38. Pretending to be J. L. Heiberg, the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene writes in *Forord* (Prefaces) that his *Nytaarsgave* “i alle Maader vil kunne tjene som en smagfuld Præsent, der endog vil kunne anbringes paa Juletræet selv ved Hjælp af en Silkesløife, der er anbragt i det forgyldte Futteral” (in every manner will serve as a tasteful present, which can be placed on the Christmas tree itself by the help of a silk bow, which is attached to the gilded case). *Forord. Morskabslæsning for enkelte Stænder efter Tid og Leilighed*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:478.

39. Paul Ricoeur, “Philosophy after Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jonathan Rée and Jane Chamberlain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 10ff.

40. Ricoeur, “Philosophy after Kierkegaard,” 15.

41. According to Rush, “Hegelian dialectic dictates conditions for its own systematic closure.” Meanwhile, “Schlegel’s ironic dialectic does precisely the opposite, specifying systematically constraints on non-closure” (10), and Kierkegaard “targets Hegel’s conceptions of dialectic . . . with roughly Schlegelian resources” (213). Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

42. Contemporary German media theory characterizes the phenomenology of reading as an oscillation. See Aleida Assmann, “Die Sprache der Dinge. Der lange Blick und die wilde Semiose,” in *Materialität der Kommunikation*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 238–39; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2, 109; Susanne Strätling and Georg Witte, “Die Sichtbarkeit der Schrift zwischen Evidenz, Phänomenalität und Ikonizität. Zur Einführung in diesen Band,” in *Die Sichtbarkeit der Schrift*, ed. Susanne Strätling and Georg Witte (Munich: Fink, 2006), 7; Sybille Krämer, “Zur Sichtbarkeit der Schrift oder: Die Visualisierung des Unsichtbaren in der operative Schrift. Zehn Thesen,” in Strätling and Witte, *Sichtbarkeit der Schrift*, 76.

43. Jean Paul Richter, *Siebenkäs. Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornenstücke oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2016), 111; *Julespøg og Nytaarsløier*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1862), 1:463, 1:477.

Friedrich Schlegel's storied fragment series, the *Lyceum-Fragmente* and the *Athenaeum-Fragmente*, are also ironic books, as their writers and readers were supposed to draw closer and closer to *das Unbedingte* (the absolute), without ever being able to define it. Since more and more fragments yielded a better and better approximation of the absolute,<sup>44</sup> Friedrich accepted contributions from his brother, August Wilhelm; his sister-in-law, Caroline Schlegel née Böhmer; his lover, Dorothea Veit; and his friends, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Novalis.<sup>45</sup> Practicing communal "Symphilosophie" and "Symposie,"<sup>46</sup> these collaborators shuttled between the superficiality of the page and the ideality of *das Unbedingte*,<sup>47</sup> in an ironic or non-teleological dialectic.

Like the Jena Romantics, Kierkegaard links the aesthetics of reading to the science of epistemology, but there remains a crucial difference between their ironic books; namely, whereas the Romantics pursued the absolute, Kierkegaard and his readers turn inward, recollecting a truth within themselves.<sup>48</sup> Just as the absolute cannot be bestowed directly by an author or won once and for all, inner truth is not obtained in a closed or teleological dialectic.<sup>49</sup> To the contrary, Kierkegaard would suggest that such truth can only be adumbrated, by reading and rereading, in

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44. According to Fred Rush, Friedrich Schlegel believed that the absolute "evades *any particular* understanding" (41), but that "finite discursive beings can . . . 'approximate' (*annähern*)" it by producing "a plentitude of different structures that find their roots in the absolute," such as fragments (46).

45. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 14.

46. Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Fragmente (Lyceum-Fragmente)*, in "*Athenaeum*"-*Fragmente und andere frühromantische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Endres (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2018), 71.

47. "The absolute (*das Unbedingte*) is not a being or a thing (*Ding*) alongside other things." In other words, it is ideal. Asko Nivala, "Mediality and Intermediality in Friedrich Schlegel's Early Romantic Thought," in *Afterlives of Romantic Intermediality: The Intersection of Visual, Aural, and Verbal Frontiers*, ed. Leena Eilittä and Catherine Riccio-Berry (Lanham: Lexington, 2016), 87.

48. Indeed, both the Socratic and Christian Kierkegaards would affirm that we are already in possession of the truth, one way or another. According to Jamie Turnbull, "Socrates' maieutics can be said to consist in asking questions in order to *remind* the recipient of what he already knows" (19). Turnbull thus defines Kierkegaard's unique project as Christian-Socratic: "The role of the Christian Socrates is to tease out the absolute paradox: a truth *latent within* but which *did not originate in*, human nature" (20). Jamie Turnbull, "Communication/Indirect Communication," in *Classicism to Enthusiasm*, tome 2 of *Kierkegaard's Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

49. In some notes for a lecture series that he never delivered, Kierkegaard explained why an author cannot straightforwardly impart ethical-religious truth to the reader: "Det Ethiske veed ethvert Msk. / Hvorledes forandres nu Meddelelsens Dialektik. / 1) Gjenstanden gaaer ud; thi da alle veed den, saa er her ingen Gjenstand at meddele, – at ville gjøre et Forsøg paa saaledes at meddele det Ethiske er netop u-ethisk. / 2) Meddelelsen gaaer ud – thi naar Enhver veed det, saa kan den Ene jo ikke meddele den Anden det. / 3) Modtageren gaaer ud – thi naar Meddelelsen gaaer ud, gaaer ogsaa Modtageren. / Der bliver kun een Meddeler: Gud." (Every person knows the ethical. / Now how is the dialectic of communication changed? / [1] The object goes out; for since all know it, here, then, is no object to communicate—to want to try like this to communicate the ethical is precisely unethical. / [2] The communicator goes out—for if everyone knows it, then the one indeed cannot communicate it to the other. / [3] The recipient goes out—for if the communicator goes out, the recipient goes, too. / There remains only one communicator: God.) "Den ethiske og den ethisk-religieuse Meddelelses Dialektik," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 27:395.

an open, ironic, or fractured dialectic.<sup>50</sup> Much like the anonymous Romantic fragment,<sup>51</sup> Kierkegaard's own strategies of abdication—most notably pseudonymity—are designed to hold the dialectic open, with no author-figure serving as what Roland Barthes would call “a stop clause” or “final signification.”<sup>52</sup>

Chapter 1 will describe the emergence of the disappearing book from a complex matrix of cultural, material, and intellectual history, ca. 1750–1850. Drawing on two concepts from German sociology, Jürgen Habermas' “bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit” (the bourgeois public sphere) and Rolf Engelsing's “Leserevolution” (reading revolution),<sup>53</sup> I argue that a rise in demand for books, coupled with increased production, diminished the significance of the individual copy, causing the book to disappear, so to speak.<sup>54</sup> Instead of a physical artifact, the reader now encountered a freely circulating authorial voice or spirit. In the second half of the period defined above, an industrial revolution of the book was spearheaded by the steam press and the papermaking machine, and bibliographical objects became even more widespread. Paradoxically, the greater availability of the book meant that it was increasingly overlooked, as any given copy in an edition was interchangeable and could easily be replaced. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the programs of prominent intellectuals also furthered the disappearing book. The philosophy of language of Herder and Anders Gamborg, the poetry of Goethe and Oehlenschläger, and the aesthetics of Hegel, Heiberg, and even Kierkegaard's pseudonym A show a marked preference for the invisibility of the oral over the visibility of written.

Chapter 2 focuses on the so-called Heibergian book and Kierkegaard's attack upon it. Kierkegaard is said to have turned against Heiberg because of “Litterær Vintersød,” the critic's condescending review of *Enten – Eller*.<sup>55</sup> In this piece, Heiberg had suggested that Kierkegaard's monumental two-volume novel remained only so much paper and ink to him.<sup>56</sup> Ignoring (or otherwise ignorant of) the aesthetic framework of the Heibergian book, Kierkegaard struck back in kind, satirizing Heiberg's *Nytaarsgaver* as mere trinkets in *Begrebet Angest* (The concept of anxiety), *Forord* (Prefaces), *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, *En literair Anmeldelse*, and

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50. “Tag en Bog, den maadeligste, der er skreven, men læs den med den Lidenskab, at det er den eneste, Du vil læse: Du læser tilsidst Alt ud af den : saa meget, som der var i Dig selv, og mere læste Du Dig dog aldrig til, om Du saa læste de bedste Bøger.” (Take a book, the most mediocre one that has ever been written, but read it with the passion that it is the only book you will read; you will at last read everything out of it, i.e., as much as was in you yourself, and you really will never read more, even if you then read the best books.) *Studier paa Livets Vei. Studier af Forskjellige*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:338.

51. “Anonymity effaces the authors only in order, through what is referred to as ‘symphilosophy’ or ‘sympoetry,’ to better assure the universality of the vision of the whole.” Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *Literary Absolute*, 45.

52. “To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing.” Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 279; emphasis mine.

53. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 25–26; Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” in *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 203.

54. Kittler links the extensive reading of the *Leserevolution* to the discourse network of 1800, and thus to the disappearing book. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 137–38.

55. Henning Fenger, *Kierkegaard, the Myths and Their Origins: Studies in the Kierkegaardian Papers and Letters*, trans. George C. Schoolfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 147–48; Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, *Modern European Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 304.

56. [Johan Ludvig Heiberg], “Litterær Vintersød,” *Intelligensblade*, March 1, 1843, 288.

“Krisen og Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv” (The crisis and crisis in an actress’s life). I would even argue that Kierkegaard’s *Taler* are aimed obliquely at Heiberg’s holiday presents, as these talks reject superficial novelty in favor of the inwardness of voice. Going beyond Heiberg, the chapter concludes by linking Kierkegaard’s pasquinade of bibliophilism to his broader critique of a Golden Age Copenhagen that concerned itself only with surfaces.

Chapter 3 identifies the ironic dialectic of Friedrich Schlegel with the fractured dialectic of Kierkegaard, as both are antithetical to the teleological or closed dialectic of Hegel. The epistemological irresolution of Kierkegaard’s dialectics of communication finds its aesthetic complement in the ironic book. Jean Paul, E. T. A Hoffmann, and the young J. L. Heiberg were among the authors who provided Kierkegaard with prototypes for the ironic book. By alluding to its physical existence, or to its paratextual or narratological superstructure, the ironic book oscillates between the text and the book-object, the ear and the eye, or time and space. (With the Heibergian book, on the other hand, the former is sublated by the latter.) There remains, however, a key distinction between Kierkegaard’s ironic books and the fragments of the Jena Romantics (i.e., Schlegel et al.). Whereas Schlegel and his coterie shuttle between the materiality of the inscribed fragment and the ideality of the absolute, Kierkegaard and his reader alternate between the outwardness of the page, and the inwardness of a maieutic truth.

The dissertation concludes with a postscript, in which I locate my overarching argument within the fields of Kierkegaard studies and book history.

# CHAPTER 1: THE DISAPPEARING BOOK

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, what Friedrich Kittler would later call the “disappearing book” negated its physical form in order to manifest itself to the reader, in inwardness, as the author’s simulated voice.<sup>1</sup> The first section of this chapter draws on cultural and material history, ca. 1750–1850, to explain the advent of this phenomenon. I will begin by unpacking two relevant sociological developments, namely, “bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit” (the bourgeois public sphere) and the “Leserevolution” (reading revolution), both of which stoked the production of print and shifted the reader’s focus from the embodied book to the transcendent text.<sup>2</sup> Along these same lines, we shall follow the book’s transition from treasured handcraft to mass-produced commodity over the course of the industrial revolution. The second section of this chapter will demonstrate that the period’s intellectual history also contributed to the rise to the disappearing book, as revealed by a survey of German and Danish philosophy of language, poetry, and aesthetics.

## A CULTURAL-MATERIAL HISTORY OF THE BOOK

The expansion of print culture and the advancements in technology between approximately 1750 and 1850 radically undermined the ontology of the book, leading to its dematerialization. As book production soared along with literacy rates, these once dear possessions became everyday articles; and, in the second half of the period in question, the individual copy became something readily replaceable or even disposable, largely thanks to industrial uniformity.

### *BÜRGERLICHE ÖFFENTLICHKEIT*

In his monograph *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*), the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas defines *bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* as a series of interlocking institutions, many of which, incidentally, would foster the ubiquity of the book. Although it has its roots in earlier centuries, the bourgeois public sphere truly flourished, according to Habermas, in the Germany, France, and Great Britain of the 1700s. It was also then that the bourgeois public sphere took shape in other countries, such as Denmark, but Habermas’ study, for better or for worse, restricts itself to the major Western European powers. We can immediately perceive the significance of *bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* by contrasting it with its predecessor; whereas the early modern public sphere was the sum total of the ruling authority’s judgements, the

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1. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks: 1800 / 1900*, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 54.

2. Leah Price distinguishes between “text” and “book” (17), the former being “a linguistic structure,” the latter “a material thing” (20). Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). See also Karin Sanders, “Bogen som ting og skulptur,” *Edda* 100, no. 4 (2013): 315, [https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen\\_som\\_ting\\_og\\_skulptur](https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen_som_ting_og_skulptur).

comparatively liberated bourgeois public sphere was now demanding that those in power justify themselves before a public consisting of private persons.<sup>3</sup>

The classic manifesto for the flourishing print culture of the bourgeois public sphere is Immanuel Kant's *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* (*An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'*). Here Kant declares that the basis of Enlightenment is the freedom to reason publicly,<sup>4</sup> which means to do so in print, primarily if not exclusively.<sup>5</sup> Kant's dictate could be applied to the discussion of any issue, political or otherwise. Indeed, the bourgeois public sphere was not only a challenge to the powers of the state. Those vital staples of the public sphere, coffee houses and salons—in Great Britain and France, respectively—were first and foremost sites of literary debate; political issues were only taken up later.<sup>6</sup>

*Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* questioned not only the fossilized class structure of *l'Ancien Régime*, but also its ancient (Aristotelean) poetics. In its plasticity and subjectivity, the novel is just one example of how the yoke of an aristocratic neoclassicism was thrown off by the bourgeois public sphere.<sup>7</sup> No longer dependent on a small circle of noble patrons, writers now wrote for the middle-class book-buying public.<sup>8</sup>

Like Germany, England, and France, Denmark saw its seat of literary judgment move from the courts to the burgeoning free market of the bourgeois public sphere over the course of the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The shift began in the 1720s. By this time, writes Hans Hertel, “havde København fået alle oplysningstidens nye medier og samværsformer: dagblade, tidsskrifter, kaffehuse, borgerlige klubber, foreninger osv., fra 1760'erne også lejeviblioteker og

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3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 25–26.

4. “Zu dieser Aufklärung aber wird nichts erfordert als *Freiheit*; und zwar die unschädlichste unter allem, was nur Freiheit heißen mag, nämlich die: von seiner Vernunft in allen Stücken *öffentlichen Gebrach* zu machen.” (For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is *freedom*. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all – freedom to make *public use* of one's reason in all matters.) Immanuel Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in *Was ist Aufklärung? Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Meiner, 1999), 21–22; Immanuel Kant, *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* trans. H. B. Nisbet (London: Penguin, 2009), 3. See also Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 104ff.

5. “Ich verstehe aber unter dem öffentlichen Gebrauche seiner eigenen Vernunft denjenigen, den jemand *als Gelehrter* von ihr vor dem ganzen Publikum der *Leserwelt* macht.” (But by the public use of one's reason I mean that use which anyone may make of it *as a man of learning* addressing the entire *reading public*.) Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung*, 22; Kant, “*What is Enlightenment?*” 4.

6. Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 32.

7. Ian Watt writes that “the novel arose in the modern period, a period whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and mediaeval heritage by its rejection—or at least its attempted rejection—of universals” (12). He continues, “Previous literatures had reflected the general tendency of their cultures to make conformity to traditional practice the major test of truth: the plots of classical and renaissance epic, for example, were based on past history or fable, and the merits of the author's treatment were judged largely according to a view of literary decorum derived from the accepted models in the genre. This literary traditionalism was first and most fully challenged by the novel, whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience—individual experience which is always unique and therefore new” (13). Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

8. Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 43.

9. “Også i rent ydre henseende går litteraturen over til en borgerlig eksistensform: den taber tilknytningen til hoffere og fyrstelige patroner, og i stedet træder boghandelen med fri produktion og fri konkurrence.” (Also, in a purely outward respect, literature goes over to a bourgeois form of existence; it loses the connection to courts and princely patrons, and bookselling takes their place with free production and open competition.) Sven Møller Kristensen, *Guldalderetiden*, vol. 1 of *Digteren og samfundet. I Danmark i det 19. århundrede*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), 27.

læseselskaber” (Copenhagen had gotten all of the Age of Enlightenment’s new media and forms of gathering: newspapers, journals, coffeehouses, civic clubs, associations, etc., from the 1760s also lending libraries and readings societies).<sup>10</sup> All of these institutions encouraged reading, of course, but they also undercut the reverence for the printed word by turning books and newspapers into something common or even unhygienic. One might expect that lending libraries would win the book some respect, since their very existence suggests that books were beyond the means of many readers, but thanks to the anxieties swirling around the promiscuous circulation of bibliographic resources, libraries and reading societies actually did much to harm the book’s reputation as a cultural artifact.<sup>11</sup>

Along with these brick-and-mortar establishments, the legal basis for the bourgeois public sphere in Denmark also appeared in the eighteenth century, as a form of copyright was initiated in 1741,<sup>12</sup> and, in 1770, King Christian VII—at the urging of the shadow regent, the court doctor Johan Friedrich Struensee—signed the freedom of the press into law. This milestone occasioned a poem in the king’s honor from Voltaire, who had been corresponding with Christian through the foreign minister Andreas Peter Bernstorff. Struensee, however, soon had to limit the press’s liberties, and further restrictions were added later.<sup>13</sup> In 1799, anonymity was forbidden, as were writings that questioned the political or theological status quo.<sup>14</sup> By the 1830s, international

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10. Hans Hertel, “Agenten i Klareboderne og revolutionen i Købmagergade,” in *Litteraturens vaneforbrydere. Kritikere, forlæggere og lystlæsere – det litterære liv i Danmark gennem 200 år*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1999), 182.

11. For example, in Friedrich Schlegel’s 1799–1800 *Gespräch über die Poesie (Dialogue on Poetry)*, the solicitous Antonio says to Amalia, “Mit Erstaunen und mit innerm Grimm habe ich oft den Diener die Haufen zu Ihnen herumtragen sehen. Wie mögen Sie nur mit ihren Händen die schmutzigen Bände berühren” (242)? (With astonishment and inner anger, I have often seen your servant carry piles of volumes in to you. How can you touch with your hands those dirty volumes) (95)? Later, we learn that the servant “die Haufen aus der Leihbibliothek bringt” (246) (is bringing . . . the stacks of books from the loan library) (98). Such concerns over the hygiene of library-use would become increasingly widespread over the course of the nineteenth century. According to Leah Price, “In an age when books (rather like cars or college textbooks today) were bought with an eye to resale value, every owner who calculated how much demand there would be for his possession should misfortune lead him to the auctioneer or the pawnbroker was also a reader picturing those other readers who would succeed him . . . . In the opposite direction, the margins of the page could form a repository for the traces of earlier readers, whether owners of books or borrowers of library stock. Yet those traces were not necessarily articulate or even intentional; in post-1850 public libraries especially, concerns about jam smears and mucus upstaged meetings of mind by contamination of bodies” (176–77). Friedrich Schlegel, *Gespräch über die Poesie*, in “*Athenaeum*”-*Fragmente und andere frühromantische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Endres (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2018); Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, in *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, trans. and ed. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968).

12. Rietje van Vliet, “Print and Public in Europe 1600–1800,” in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 255.

13. “I 1770 afskaffede *Struensee* med et slag al censur, men allerede han selv måtte indføre begrænsninger i trykkefriheden, og værre blev det siden.” (In 1770, *Struensee* abolished all censorship with the stroke of a pen, but already he himself had to impose restrictions on the freedom of the press, and it became worse later.) Aleks. Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie, 1482 til 1945* ([Copenhagen]: Gyldendal, 1974), 114.

14. “Efter hans [sc. Struensees] fald blev trykkefriheden i princippet opretholdt, men i praksis skete der væsentlige indgreb. Kulminationen blev nået med forordningen af 27. september 1799. Den forbød al anonymitet, at udbrede had og misnøje med konstitutionen og kongens regering, at nedbryde læren om Guds tilværelse og om sjælens udødelighed, at fornærme venskabelige magter o.s.v., o.s.v.” (After his [sc. Struensee’s] fall, the freedom of the press was maintained in principle, but in practice there were essentially crackdowns. The culmination was reached with the order of September 27, 1799. It forbade all anonymity, the spreading of hate and displeasure with the constitution and the king’s government, the undermining of the doctrine of God’s existence and of the immortality of the soul, the insulting of friendly powers, etc.) Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie*, 120.

political material was only allowed in designated newspapers, and Privy Councilor Poul Christian von Stemann was threatening to subject every article to bureaucratic censorship. These worrisome developments led to the founding of *Selskabet for Trykkefrihedens rette Brug* (The society for the proper use of the freedom of the press), whose mission it was to establish libraries throughout the kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

So, although the press was besieged in Denmark for the first half of the nineteenth century, a bourgeois public sphere had already been set firmly in place by this time, thanks not only to copyright but also the above-mentioned literary hubs. Furthermore, the mere precedent of a free press generated discussion in the public sphere itself (such as the publications of *Selskabet for Trykkefrihedens rette Brug*)<sup>16</sup>—that is, until 1849, when the new state constitution restored the press to its rights and the practice of censorship was forever forbidden.<sup>17</sup>

The freedom of the press followed naturally from the principle of *laissez-faire*, which called for open competition in not just the trade of raw commodities, but in that of more rarified ones, as well. Thus, in Denmark in the 1800s, the infrastructure of the public sphere expanded rapidly, as bibliographical businesses of all sorts sprouted up, primarily on Købmagergade in Copenhagen.<sup>18</sup> The fruits of Enlightenment were then disseminated ever more efficiently

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15. “Tilsynet med pressen blev forvaltet således, at udenrigspolitik stof kun måtte bringes i særligt begunstigede blade, hvor Berlingske Tidende kom til høre. Regeringens mishag mod bladene – hvorunder det tidligere nævnte Fædrelandet, der grundlagdes i 1834 og blev trykt hos Bianco Luno, hørte – kom ofte til udtryk, og Stemann var højest utilfreds med de forvorne skriverier, der nedbrød respekten for konge og kancelli, så han fordømte den tiltagende ‘skrivefrækhed.’ Da han ønskede absolut censur, d.v.s. at alle artikler skulle godkendes af embedsmændene, forskrækkede det mange liberale borgere, der dannede et ‘trykkefrihedsselskab’ som havde til formål at virke for ‘trykkefrihedens rette brug’ samt at oprette biblioteker.” (The supervision of the press was managed so that foreign affairs material was only allowed to be brought out in especially favored papers, which included *Berlingske Tidende*. The government’s displeasure with the papers—including the aforementioned *Fædrelandet*, which was founded in 1834 and printed with Bianco Luno—was often expressed, and Stemann was highly dissatisfied with the brazen scribblings, which subverted respect for kings and chancellery, as he denounced the “writing impudence.” When he wanted absolute censorship, i.e., that all articles should be approved by the civil servants, it frightened the many liberal citizens, who formed a “society for the freedom of the press,” which was intended to work for “the proper use of the freedom of the press,” and also for setting up libraries.) Robert Pedersen, *Bianco Luno. Skildringer af mennesker og miljø i og omkring et københavnsk bogtrykkeri, 1831–1991* (Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1991), 14–15.

16. As Michel Foucault has observed, an injunction, rather than being “a massive censorship,” can instead manifest itself as “a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse.” Michel Foucault, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 34.

17. “Hvor pressen før 1849 blev forfulgt af regeringen, fastslog Grundloven ikke alene trykkefrihed, men også at der aldrig mere skulle indføres censur.” (Where before 1849 the press was persecuted by the government, the constitution not only established the freedom of the press, but also that censorship should never be imposed again.) Pedersen, *Bianco Luno*, 74.

18 “Det var revolutionen i Købmagergade. Her og i de tilstødende gader samledes efterhånden de fleste bladredaktioner, trykkerier, forlag, lejev biblioteker og boglader med udenlandske bøger, tidsskrifter og kunsttryk. Her i latinerkvarteret lå også cafeer med stort bladhold, her kom fra 1820 Studenterforeningen og læseselskaber som Athenæum og Academicum med egne biblioteker og læsestuer, og herfra bredte systemet sig til provinsen. . . . H. Chr. Bakke, M. H. Bing, Gerhard Bonnier, Ludvig Jordan, C. A. Reitzel og Chr. Steen & Søn . . . levede af både at sælge og udgive bøger, tit romaner fra dagspressens føljetoner, til egne og andres lejev biblioteker. Dem var der 22 af i København anno 1841 (ud af 40 boglader) og 3–4 gange så mange i provinsen.” (It was the revolution on Købmagergade. Here and in the adjacent streets, the majority of newspaper editorial offices, printing houses, publishers, lending libraries, and bookshops, with foreign books, journals and art prints, gradually assembled. Here also in the Latin Quarter were cafes with great selections of newspapers; from 1820, the Student Association and reading societies like the Athenæum and Academicum came here, with their own libraries and reading rooms, and from here the system spread to the provinces. . . . H. Chr. Bakke, M. H. Bing, Gerhard Bonnier, Ludvig Jordan, C.



throughout the country and beyond, first by horse-powered modes of transportation, and then by an expanding steam-powered network both by land and at sea.<sup>19</sup> By this time, books had become something of an Aladdin's lamp; even if a supernal spirit dwelled within them, they were, to outward appearances, rather ordinary, even forgettable.

### LESEREVOLUTION

According to Rolf Engelsing and his successors, reading underwent a sea-change in the German states and other parts of Europe in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Previously, readers had dutifully trudged through the same books (chiefly the Bible), over and over again, but now they were shifting from an "intensive" to an "extensive" style of reading, quickly flipping through novels and newspapers for diversion, rather than upbuilding.<sup>20</sup> Among the factors contributing to the reading revolution in Protestant Germany—as well as, we can assume, in the Protestant Nordic countries—were the new public sphere and the far reach of the Enlightenment,<sup>21</sup> in addition to the well-established custom of independent Bible-study, which endowed the practice of reading with a religious coloring and a powerful impetus.<sup>22</sup>

I should add, however, that although Engelsing's *Leserevolution* is a useful schema for understanding the transformation of reading in Northwestern Europe in the eighteenth century, it is not without its critics. Describing the theory as "highly disputable," Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier contend that a great deal of extensive reading took place in so-called intensive periods (e.g., the Renaissance), and that the novel reading of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in fact intensive reading *par excellence*.<sup>23</sup>

Cavallo and Chartier are no doubt correct in these assertions, but even if extensive reading had early modern precedents, and intensive reading, through secular rather than religious institutions, continued well into the 1800s, a revolution in reading nonetheless took place in eighteenth-century Western Europe. Undeniably, there were drastic changes as to the *who*, the *what*, and the *how* of reading. To wit, the reading public went from "largely élitist, homogenous and closed" to being "independent of social class, heterogeneous and open."<sup>24</sup> Furthermore,

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A. Reitzel and Chr. Steen & Søn . . . lived off of both selling and publishing books, often novels from the *feuilletons* of the daily press, for their own and others' lending libraries. There were 22 lending libraries in Copenhagen in the year 1841 [out of 40 bookshops] and three to four times as many in the provinces.) Hertel, "Agenten i Klareboderne," 184.

19. "Men fra 1800 kom der fart i brev-, avis- og pakkeposten med chaussee-brolagte landeveje, karrioler, diligencer efter amerikansk mønster, fra 1815 den højmoderne kuglepost, fra 1819 kombineret med dampskibe og fra 1840'rne med jernbaner." (But from 1800, letter-, newspaper-, and package-post, with paved highways, carriages, diligences according to the American model, gained momentum; from 1815, the highly modern bullet-post; from 1819, combined with steamships and from the 1840s with railroads.) Hertel, "Agenten i Klareboderne," 183.

20. Robert Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?" in *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 203.

21. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, introduction to *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia C. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 22.

22. Reinhard Wittmann, "Was There a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?" in Cavallo and Chartier, *History of Reading*, 294.

23. Cavallo and Chartier, introduction, 25.

24. Alberto Martino, *Die Deutsch Leihbibliothek. Geschichte einer literarischen Institution (1756–1914)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990), 52, quoted in Wittmann, "Reading Revolution," 290.

between approximately 1789 and 1815, women and children were incorporated into this public.<sup>25</sup> Workers, following the lead of aristocrats, became avid readers of literature at this time.<sup>26</sup> Yet instead of reading what was prescribed to them by those in positions of power, this new generation of readers now turned to what appealed to them personally.<sup>27</sup> Whereas one had once been expected to read and reread a fixed canon of classical authors regardless of whether one enjoyed them, the quantity and quality of books appearing around 1800 put one under no such obligation, as the new poetics eschewed antiquated rules in favor of taste and subjectivity.<sup>28</sup>

Typically, educational reforms arose alongside of or even after this initial expansion of the reading public. Although children's primary education was made mandatory much earlier in Denmark than in England or France<sup>29</sup>—in 1814, to be exact<sup>30</sup>—these reforms still came on the heels of the Scandinavian kingdom's own *Leserevolution*. That is not to say that the "School-Law" had no effect on the size or voracity of the Danish reading public. It most certainly did.<sup>31</sup>

With this transformation of the public and its habitudes, there was also an evolution in the book's role as a social status symbol—or, one might say instead, a devolution. Robert Darnton describes the situation vividly: "The shift from intensive to extensive reading coincided with a desacralization of the printed word. The world began to be cluttered with reading matter, and texts began to be treated as commodities that could be discarded as casually as yesterday's newspaper."<sup>32</sup> As I argue in the next subsection, the industrial revolution of the book would further this overcrowding, but even before printers were applying steam-power to presswork, the extensive readers of the *Leserevolution* had triggered a spike in publications, causing the book's cultural cachet to plummet.

In Germany and in Denmark, authors were wary of this seemingly indiscriminate printing boom, regardless of whether they were precariously placed or firmly established. For example, in

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25. As Habermas explains, "Women and dependents were factually and legally excluded from the political public sphere, whereas female readers as well as apprentices and servants often took a more active part in the literary public sphere than the owners of private property and the family heads themselves" (56). Thus, according to Martyn Lyons, "Women formed a large and increasing part of the new novel-reading public" (315). Lyons adds that "the emergence of a flourishing industry in children's literature was part of the process Philippe Ariès has called the 'invention of childhood' – the definition of childhood and adolescence as discrete phases of life with unique problems and needs" (327). Martyn Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," in Cavallo and Chartier, *History of Reading*.

26. Wittmann, "Reading Revolution," 291.

27. Wittmann, "Reading Revolution," 312.

28. James Wald, "Periodicals and Periodicity," in Eliot and Rose, *History of the Book*, 424.

29. "This expansion of the reading public was accompanied by the spread of primary education. Progress in education, however, tended to follow, rather than precede, the growth of the reading public. Primary education only became effectively free, general and compulsory in England and France after the 1880s, when those countries were already almost completely literate." Lyons, "New Readers," 313–14.

30. "In 1814 a national School Law was passed, with compulsory education as the most important component. This obviously had a major impact on literacy rates in Denmark, and even though it might still be argued to what extent the population was literate, the major part of the population was able to read by the middle of the century." Laura Skouvig, "Broadside Ballads, Almanacs and *Illustrated News*: Genres and Rhetoric in the Communication of Information in Denmark 1800–1925," in *Information History in the Modern World: Histories of the Information Age*, ed. Toni Weller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 94, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Information\\_History\\_in\\_the\\_Modern\\_World/6\\_FGEAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Information_History_in_the_Modern_World/6_FGEAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1).

31. "Skolelovene af 1814 begyndte at slå igennem, så folk læste mere, og bogproduktionen gik op." (The school-laws of 1814 began to be generally accepted, so people read more, and book production went up.) Pedersen, *Bianco Luno*, 29.

32. Darnton, "History of Books," 203.

1759, Johann Georg Hamann, behind an anonym, would suggest in his *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten (Socratic Memorabilia)*, “Wenn wir mehr hätten, als uns die Zeit hat schenken wollen; so würden wir selbst genöthiget werden unsere Ladungen über Bord zu werfen, unsere Bibliotheken in Brand zu stecken, oder es wie die Holländer mit dem Gewürz zu machen.” (If we possessed more than time has chosen to give us, we ourselves would be compelled to throw our cargoes overboard, to set fire to our libraries, or to proceed like the Dutch with their spices.)<sup>33</sup> There are perhaps other ways to pare down one’s book collection, but Hamann’s point is that the more time we waste on superfluous books, the less time we can devote to the essential ones, and therefore the former must be actively weeded out if the latter are to receive their due. Almost a century later, in 1843’s *Frygt og Bæven* (Fear and trembling) and 1846’s *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler* (Concluding unscientific postscript to the philosophical fragments), Kierkegaard—who was a great reader and admirer of Hamann<sup>34</sup>—would propose these same measures against a surfeit of books and ideas.<sup>35</sup>

This publishing spree was condemned by other authors of the Danish Golden Age as well. In 1811, Kierkegaard’s one-day foe, the polymath pastor Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, complained in an article entitled “Om en Bogsamling for Sjællands Præster” (On a book collection for the priests of Zealand) of “den Syndflod af Bøger, hvormed Gud har straffet Tidens Vanart” (this deluge of books, by which God has punished the viciousness of the age).<sup>36</sup> A flood of Biblical proportions would indicate that the reading revolution is above all a spiritual peril, and that it is not handled as easily as Hamann suggests.

Another of Kierkegaard’s future enemies, J. L. Heiberg, declared in 1833’s *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid* (On the significance of philosophy for the present age) that it was not “den saakaldte Overbefolkning” (the so-called overpopulation) that posed the greatest danger to “det Bestaaende” (the establishment), but rather “det er Overbefolkningen i Ideernes Verden, som er farlig for den bestaaende Form” (it is the overpopulation in the world of

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33. *Hamann’s Socratic Memorabilia: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. and ed. James C. O’Flaherty (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 150–51.

34. See Sergia Karen Hay, “Hamann: Sharing Style and Thesis: Kierkegaard’s Appropriation of Hamann’s Work,” in *Literature and Aesthetics*, tome 3 of *Kierkegaard and His German Contemporaries*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 97–113; and Ronald Gregor Smith, “Hamann and Kierkegaard,” *Kierkegaardiana* 5 (1964): 52–67, <https://tidsskrift.dk/kierkegaardiana/article/view/31505/28963>.

35. In *Frygt og Bæven* (Fear and trembling), the pseudonym Johannes *de silentio* writes, “Da engang i Holland Priserne paa Kryderier bleve noget flauere, da lod Kjøbmandene et Par Ladninger sænke i Havet for at skruer Prisen op. . . . Er det noget Lignende, vi behøve i Aandens Verden?” (Once, when in Holland the prices for spices had dropped, the merchants had a couple of loads sunk in the sea in order to drive up the price. . . . Do we not need something similar in the world of the spirit?) And, in *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* (Concluding unscientific postscript), the pseudonym Johannes Climacus follows suit: “Ja, kan man stundom med en vis Lettelse tænke paa, at Cæsar lod hele det alexandrinske Bibliothek brænde, saa kunde man virkelig velmenende ønske Menneskeheden at hiin Overflod af Viden atter toges bort, at man atter kunde faae at vide, hvad det er at leve som Menneske.” (Yes, if now and then one can think, with a certain relief, that Caesar let the whole Library of Alexandria burn, then one could really well-meaningly wish for humanity that this profusion of knowledge would be taken away again, that one could again get to know what it is to live as a human being.) *Frygt og Bæven. Dialektisk Lyrik*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret, 2014), 4:208; *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler. Mimisk-pathetisk-dialektisk Sammenskrift, Existentielt Indlæg*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:232.

36. “Om en Bogsamling for Sjællands Præster,” in *Grundtvigs værker*, ([Århus]: Grundtvig Centeret, 2019), <http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/tekstvisning/8538/0#{%220%22:0,%22v0%22:0,%22k%22:0}>.

ideas that is dangerous for the existing form).<sup>37</sup> More than a nuisance, an overabundance of books might even pose a threat to the state. Whereas Grundtvig treated the glut of printed matter as a violation of the metaphysical order, this problem, for Heiberg, is to be addressed from the vantage of *Realpolitik*.

Still, here for once Grundtvig and Heiberg see eye-to-eye, as they both insinuate what is quite explicit in the iconoclastic Hamann and Kierkegaard: that this profusion of printed matter needs to be winnowed down. The book was no longer the boon it had been in the age of incunabula (the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* notwithstanding). Quite to the contrary, most books, even those with innocuous content, are now a public ill, as they can only divert our attention from the few that are edifying.

For vivid illustrations of the *Leserevolution*'s devaluation of the book, we need look no further than the life and works of Hans Christian Andersen, as they are marked by a shaken faith in the sacredness of the printed word. Let us begin in Andersen's humble childhood home in Odense, in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Here it is important to qualify Engelsing's theory of a *Leserevolution*, which may have held true for the bourgeoisie of the urban centers, but, for the common people in the countryside, books were almost invariably cherished possessions, especially when they were related to religion, as often was the case.<sup>38</sup> Andersen's freethinking father may have preferred to read aloud from the *Arabian Nights* and the plays of the Enlightenment satirist Ludvig Holberg,<sup>39</sup> but we can only assume that the budding poet was brought up to adore the printed word, since the family could not have afforded an abundance of books on a shoemaker's earnings.

While seeking his fortune on the Copenhagen stage, the adolescent Andersen was given the part of a troll in Carl Dahlén's ballet *Armida*, and his reaction to seeing his name in the program is unmistakably reverential. Looking back on this day in 1855's *Mit Livets Eventyr* (My life's fairytale), he writes, "Det var et Moment i mit Liv, at mit Navn nu stod trykt, en Nimbus af Udødelighed syntes jeg laae deri; hele Dagen hjemme maatte jeg see paa de trykte Bogstaver, jeg tog Ballet-Programmet med i Seng om Aftenen, laae ved Lyset og stirrede paa mit Navn, lagde det hen for at tage det igjen; det var en Lyksalighed!" (It was a high point in my life that my name now stood in print; a nimbus of immortality seemed to lie therein. I had to look upon the printed letters the whole day at home; I took the ballet program to bed with me in the evening, lay by the light, and stared at my name, laid it aside only to take it up again. That was bliss!)<sup>40</sup> The poignant irony here is that the young Andersen believes that his name—and perhaps even his very soul or self—has been preserved forever in what would technically be called a piece of ephemera, so great is his belief in the sacrality of print, even in its most transient forms.

Andersen's youthful fantasy of being immortalized in paper and ink soon ran aground. Despite his painstaking efforts to find subscribers for his first book, *Ungdoms-Forsøg* (Attempts of youth), very few copies of it were purchased. The printer sold the remaindered ones to a bookseller, who tried to repackage the debut in 1827 under the title *Gjenfærdet ved Palnatokes Grav, en original Fortælling; og Alfsol, en original Tragoedie* (The ghost at Palantoke's grave, an

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37. *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, in Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1861), 1:384–85.

38. Lyons, "New Readers," 343.

39. Elias Bredsdorff, *Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of His Life and Work, 1805–75* (New York: Noonday, 1994), 20.

40. H. C. Andersen, *Mit Livs Eventyr*, in *Samlede Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1855), 21:44, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/\\_/\\_S1JAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/_S1JAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1).

original narrative; and elf-sun, an original tragedy),<sup>41</sup> but without much success, either. As a result, the sheets were repurposed as wrapping paper or pulped.<sup>42</sup>

Andersen's friend, Henriette Wulff, informed him in a letter that same year that a fragment of *Alfsol* had been used by a storekeeper to wrap up a purchase made by her children.<sup>43</sup> From what is evident in *Fodreise fra Holmens Canal til Østpynten af Amager i Aarene 1828 og 1829* (Journey on foot from Holmen's canal to the east point of Amager in the years 1828 and 1829) and a trio of fairytales, Andersen probably imagined that the children were buying groceries. "Exalted when substituted for food," writes Leah Price, "paper is degraded when associated with it."<sup>44</sup>

In the first chapter of the *Fodreise* novella, Andersen is likely riffing on Grundtvig's diluvial imagery from "Om en Bogsamling for Sjællands Præster," as the narrator pictures Satan commanding his minions: "Messieurs! Drager ud over den hele Verden og forfører Adams Sønner

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41. As Philip Gaskell reminds us, "Edition statements should be received with caution. The term 'edition' has always been used in the trade for 'impression' or 'issue' as well as for edition in the bibliographical sense; a book that is advertised as a 'new edition' may indeed represent a new setting of type, but it may be a reimpression from standing type with or without correction, an impression from plates, or simply a reissue of the original sheets with a new title-page." Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 1995) 317; Bredsdorff, *Andersen*, 42.

42. Bredsdorff, *Andersen*, 42.

43. Wulff writes, "Først sendte jeg mit Bud hen i Grønnegade for at begjære en *Alfsol*; man svarede mig, de havde ingen. Jeg tænkte: 'Ere de alt udsolgte?' og bad min Mand tale til Schowelin, som er Boghandleren, om den, og han sagde, at den var trykket paa Begjæring, jeg troer 1821; men da De ikke var kommen og havde afhentet den – eller Den, De havde overladt det – havde han nu 3 Gange averteret den til Salg' men der var ikke solgt eet Exemplar af den; han havde derfor sendt den til en Kræmmer, som han leverede Maculatur, og som havde faaet hele Oplaget. For 2 Aar siden havde den ogsaa været averteret, da blev der heller ikke solgt et eneste Exemplar, hvorfor han allerede den Gang havde solgt 150 Exemplarer til Maculatur og Resten nu. Besynderligt nok – et Par Dage efter kom vor Ungdom ind til en Kræmmer Cohen paa Østergade for at kjøbe Noget, og Det, de kjøbte, blev svøbt ind et Stykke Papir, hvorpaa der stod *Alfsol*; men de tænkte dog ikke paa, det var Deres, førend min Mand kom hjem og fortalte os, hvad jeg nu har sagt Dem." (First, I sent my messenger over to Grønnegade, requesting an *Alfsol*; they replied to me that they had none. I thought, "Is it sold out?" and asked my husband to talk to Schowelin, who is the bookdealer, about it, and he said that it had been printed on request, in 1821, I believe; but since you or the one you had left it to had not come to fetch it, he had advertised it three times for sale now; but there was not one copy of it sold; therefore, he sent it to a shopkeeper, supplying him with wastepaper, and he got the whole print run. It also had been advertised two years ago, when there had not been a single copy sold, either, for which reason he had already sold 150 copies as wastepaper and the rest now. Strangely enough—a couple of days later, our young ones went in to a shopkeeper Cohen on Østergade in order to buy something, and what they bought was wrapped in a piece of paper on which there stood *Alfsol*; but they did not think that it was yours, though, before my husband came home and told us what I now have told you.) Henriette Wulff to Andersen, April 1, 1827, in *Breve til Hans Christian Andersen*, ed. C. St. A. Bille and Nikolaj Bøgh (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1877), 581–82, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Breve\\_til\\_Hans\\_Christian\\_Andersen/iEM8AQAAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Breve_til_Hans_Christian_Andersen/iEM8AQAAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1).

44. Price, *Books in Victorian Britain*, 31.

NB: For an early example of this degrading association in the Danish context, see P. T. Wandal's *De tre Skræddere eller Forsøg til en nedrig komisk Fortælling i Rim* (The three tailors or an attempt at a low comic narrative in rhyme): "Gammelstrands højrøstede Matroner . . . forkynde Pris / Med højen Røst, dog tidt i snøvlø Toner, / Paa holstensk Sild, paa Flækkesild, Radis, / Paa Reddiker og paa Citroner; / . . . løbende Boglader, / Som tidlig gjør bekjendt / I alle Stadens Gader, / Den Mængde raaden Frugt af Pøbelvittighed, / Som koster ej Broer Rimsmed Pande Sved, / Saasnart den kommer er paa Prent." (The loud matrons of Gammelstrand . . . proclaim the prices / With loud voices, though often through their noses, / For Holstein herring, for smoked herring, / For black radishes and for lemons; / . . . running bookshops, / Which make known early on / In all the town's streets, / The mass of rotten fruit of the rabble's witticisms, / Which do not cost brother rhyme-smith any sweat, / As soon as it comes, it is in print.) P. T. Wandal, *De tre Skræddere eller Forsøg til en nedrig komisk Fortælling i Rim* (Copenhagen, 1792), quoted in Rasmus Nyerup, *Almindelig Morskabslæsning i Danmark og Norge igjennem Aarhundreder* (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1816), 235.

til at blive slette Skribenter; fra dem selv skal da Vandfloden udgaae, der fordærver Jorden.” (Messieurs! Set out over the whole world and seduce the sons of Adam into becoming bad writers; the flood that will corrupt the world shall issue, then, from them themselves.)<sup>45</sup> Here Andersen parodies the idea that the *Leserevolution* entailed a spiritual danger. Whereas Grundtvig envisions a perilous surge of unwanted books, Andersen will soon remind his reader that a bookshop’s stock is constantly being culled, and the unwanted wares are often repurposed.

In the second chapter, the narrator comes across a pale woman and a woman in the traditional dress of Amager, both of whom struggle for his attention. The *Amagerkone* wins out when she prophesizes that his book—the *Fodreise*—will go mostly unread and be used by the grocer to wrap produce.<sup>46</sup> Reappearing in the tenth chapter, she rationalizes her dire augury according to the prevailing conditions of the *Leserevolution*—which, naturally, was a revolution in writing as well as in reading—as she tells the narrator, “Verden har Poeter nok! nu skriver jo alle Mennesker.” (The world has enough poets! Now everybody writes, of course.)<sup>47</sup>

When the *Amagerkone* threatens the narrator with an irreverent—and necessarily extensive—style of reading, in which a book can be casually tossed away if the reader loses interest, she is more Romantic than classical, if only sociologically so.<sup>48</sup> Proto-Romanticism (e.g.,

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45. H. C. Andersen, *Fodreise fra Holmens Canal til Østpynten af Amager i Aarne 1828 og 1829* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Grafisk Kunst, 1940), 25.

46. “Til sidst, efter at have forsøgt ethvert Middel, trak hun i Raseri en lille Bog op af Lommen (det var min Fodreise); med et satanisk Smil malede hendes spidse Pegefinger luende Ziffre paa Bogens Ryg. ‘Vaas’ stod der. / ‘Det skal der staa saalænge Bindet varer, udrød hun: saaledes vil man benævne Din Bog; kaste den bort, naar man har læst halvandet Blad; snart vil Høkeren, som Prometheus’ Grib, sønderrive dens Indre, og om Sukker og Sæbe sende den ud i den store By.’” (At last, after having tried every means, in a rage she pulled a little book out of her pocket [it was my *Fodreise*]; with a satanic smile, her sharp pointer finger scrawled flaming figures on the book’s spine. “Drivel” stood there. / “It shall stand there as long as the book lasts,” she exclaimed. “So will they call your book; throw it away when they have read one and a half sheets; soon, the huckster, like the vulture of Prometheus, will tear its bowels to pieces, and send it out into the great city around sugar and soap.”) Andersen, *Fodreise*, 28–30.

47. Andersen, *Fodreise*, 109.

48. Cf. Nate Kramer, who writes, “These two women . . . represent for the poet a choice between the classical and romantic” (48). The *Amagerkone* insists to the narrator, “De Gamle maa Du studere” (You must study the ancients) (27) and will thrice quote classical Latin, and the pale woman may resemble the “lang og bleg . . . døende Heloise” (long and pale . . . dying Heloise) (26) of the proto-Romantic Rousseau, but this interpretation is contradicted both by the description of the *Amagerkone* and by her speeches. First of all, she is referred to as the *Amagerkone* because she “lignede i Klæderne” (resembled in her clothes) (26) one of these rustic women, which would align her with the *folkelighed* of National Romanticism, and not the elitism of classicism. Furthermore, the narrator writes, “Hendes Øine, den søde Jordbærmund og den snevre Midie, Alt var den første Elskerinde i en Roman værdigt.” (Her eyes, the sweet strawberry mouth and the narrow waist, everything was worthy of the first beloved in a novel) (26). The *Roman*, of course, is more of a Romantic than a classical genre. Lastly, although the *Amagerkone* tells the narrator, “Kun i en classisk Slaabrok kan Du naae til Maalet” (Only in a classical robe can you reach the goal), this declaration is separated by only a dash from the following: “Og er det endelig det Overnaturlige, det Hoffmannske i Livet, Du stræber efter, ogsaa det skal Du da see store Glimt af hos mig.” (And if it is the supernatural, the Hoffmannesque in life, you are aiming for, you shall also then see great flashes of it with me) (28). This speech reminds us that it was the über-Romantic E. T. A. Hoffmann’s *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (The elixirs of the Devil) that the narrator “puttede . . . i Lommen, for dog at have lidt Phantasie i Reserve” (put . . . in his pocket in order still to have a little fantasy in reserve) (25) before setting out on his journey. It should by now be clear that the *Amagerkone* is at least as Romantic as she is classical, and that Kramer’s allegorical interpretation miscarries because of this ambiguity. Nor does the pale woman unequivocally represent the Romantic, either, as in her “Øine man tydeligt læste sidste Act af en Tragødie” (eyes one clearly read the last act of a tragedy) (26), and tragedy, unlike the novel identified with the *Amagerkone*, is a thoroughly classical genre. Nate Kramer, “‘Ud maate jeg’: Andersen’s *Fodreise* as Transgressive Space,” *Scandinavian Studies* 85, no. 1 (Spring 2013): doi:10.1353/scd.2013.0000.

*Sturm und Drang*) and Romanticism arose symbiotically with the *Leserevolution*. Assimilating popular genres and founding a genius-cult of individuality and novelty,<sup>49</sup> Romanticism fostered a rhizomatic literary culture, in contrast to the hierarchical, dendritic model of classicism. Coming from and holding the keys to the stock exchange,<sup>50</sup> the *Amagerkone* is not the classical muse but “publishing capitalism”<sup>51</sup> incarnate: omnivorous and uncommitted—perhaps cynically so—to any one movement, be it classical, Romantic, or otherwise. Like the *Amagerkone*, Copenhagen publishers insisted that their authors have a foundation of classical knowledge,<sup>52</sup> but these entrepreneurs of the written word did not look down on pastiches à la Hoffmann, if, that is, there was a market for that sort of thing. It is little wonder, then, that the narrator runs off with the pale woman—who, in my estimation, is not the Romantic muse but the poetic as such<sup>53</sup>—since she is unencumbered by an unpoetic concern for the bottom line.

Having illustrated the *Leserevolution*'s desanctification of the printed word through the *Fodreise*, Andersen would return to this theme in three of his later fairytales: “Nissen hos Spekhøkeren” (The pixie with the grocer) (1853), “Det nye Aarhundredes Musa” (The muse of the new century) (1861), and “Tante Tandpine” (Aunt toothache) (1872). In “Nissen hos Spekhøkeren,” a poor student visits the titular grocer, his landlord, in order to buy candles and cheese, “og blev staaende midt i Læsningen af det Blad Papir, der lagt om Osten. Det var et Blad,

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49. Eric A. Blackwell writes, “The [eighteenth] century spawned a great mass of popular novels, most of which had no literary and certainly no poetic pretensions. These books belong to that substratum of literature that the Germans call *Trivialliteratur*, and everybody read them. They catered on the one hand to the lust for exciting adventures, for thrills and shudders and titillations, and on the other to the sentimental strain that there is in all of us—combined in many cases with a moralistic or pseudomoralistic streak . . . . These popular novels varied in tenor according to the differing climates of taste in England, France, and Germany. But many of their motifs were taken up by novelists with more serious artistic purpose. This was certainly true in Germany, where German *Trivialromane* had a considerable influence on the novels of the Romantics.” Despite these imitative poetics, originality remained the measure of genius. Sven Møller Kristensen writes, “Men med førromantikken i det 18. århundrede kommer synden ind i verden, kravet om originalitet, hvormed man mente oprindelighed og ægthed, ikke særhed. Fra nu af samler interessen sig om, at digterværket er ens eget, at det har en personlig form. Efterligningen af klassiske mønstre forkættes.” (But with the proto-Romanticism in the eighteenth century, sin comes into the world, the demand for originality, by which one meant primitivity and authenticity, not eccentricity. From now on, the interest is centered on that the work of poetry is one’s own, that it has a personal form. Imitation of classical models is criticized.) Eric A. Blackall, *The Novels of the German Romantics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 62; Møller Kristensen, *Guldalderiden*, 110.

50. “Den ene kom fra Børsen, og lignede i Klæderne en Amagerkone.” (The one came from the stock exchange and resembled an *Amagerkone* in her clothes) (26). This same woman later boasts, “Nøglerne til Børsen ere i mine Hænder.” (The keys to the stock exchange are in my hands) (27).

51. “With the arrival of what can be called ‘publishing capitalism’ . . . in Britain as well as in France and Germany, publishers looked for male or female writers capable of reaching the largest possible number of readers.” Jean-Yves Mollier and Marie-Françoise Cachin, “A Continent of Texts: Europe 1800–1890,” in Eliot and Rose, *History of the Book*, 306.

52. “Blandt de danske digtere i denne periode findes der kun to eller tre, der unddrog sig den mindste fordring: examen artium.” (Amongst the Danish poets in this period, there were only two or three who evaded the minimum demand: *examen artium*.) Møller Kristensen, *Guldalderiden*, 34.

53. According to Andersen’s narrator, “Underlige brogede Phantasiebilleder svævede rundt om” (Curious colored fantasy-images floated around) the pale woman (28). She has perhaps been confused with Romanticism because this movement is known for its worship of the imagination, but, for many a nineteenth-century aesthetician, the imagination is identified with the poetic as such, rather than with a particular literary movement. “For Coleridge,” writes Michael Ferber, “as he lays it out in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), the imagination is a mediating and unifying power of the mind: it unites the other faculties and unites the mind itself with nature. It is creative, and ‘poetic’” (54). Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

revet ud af en gammel Bog, der ikke burde rives istykker, en gammel Bog, fuld af Poesi” (and remained standing in the middle of reading from the sheet of paper which had been wrapped around the cheese. It was a sheet ripped out of an old book which ought not to have been ripped into pieces; it was an old book, full of poetry).<sup>54</sup> Ignominiously tied to food, the book is later redeemed when food is foregone for it (Price). After telling the student that he “gav en gammel Kone nogle Caffebønner for” (gave an old woman some coffee beans for) the book, the grocer suggests, “vil De give mig otte Skilling, skal De have Resten” (if you give me eight shillings, you shall have the rest)!<sup>55</sup> To this generous offer, the student replies, “Lad mig faae den istedetfor Osten! jeg kan spise Smørrebrødet bart!” (Let me get it instead of the cheese! I can eat the *smørrebrød* bare!)<sup>56</sup>

In the last two decades of his life, Andersen would return to the destructive recycling of books and literary manuscripts, namely, in “Det nye Aarhundredes Musa” and “Tante Tandpine.” Here we find the author becoming increasingly pessimistic about the fate of materially embodied literature. Even if the titular pixie of “Nissen” made the pragmatic declaration that he “kan ikke reent slippe Spekhøkeren for Grødens Skyld” (cannot completely let go of the grocer for the sake of the porridge), the good creature nonetheless chooses “den vidunderlige Bog” (the wonderful book) purchased by the student when “hver vilde redde det Bedste” (each wanted to save the best) from the conflagration of the premises.<sup>57</sup> This hopefulness is quite alien to the narrator of “Det nye Aarhundredes Musa,” who remarks cynically, “I vor travle Tid . . . Poesien næsten staaer En i Veien.” (In our busy times . . . poetry almost stands in one’s way.)<sup>58</sup> And, in an ironic rebuff to all tightfisted philistines, he quips, “Nogle lade sig vel nøie med den, de kunne faae i Tilgift, eller ere tilfredsstillende med at læse en Stump paa Kræmmerhuset fra Urteboden; den er billigere, og Billigheden i vor travle Tid, maa der tages Hensyn til.” (Some are content with what gets thrown into the bargain or are satisfied reading a bit on the cone from the vegetable stall; it is cheaper, and cheapness must be taken into account in our busy times.)<sup>59</sup>

The trope of the *de trop* book culminates in despair with “Tante Tandpine,” whose main text is a manuscript authored by a deceased student and found in a grocer’s barrel by the frame narrator.<sup>60</sup> This student had no hopes of ever seeing his book into print because it was not written in verse (or so he claims), and now it will forever remain a fragment because the rest of its pages have presumably been destroyed,<sup>61</sup> all because a grocer once again misused a book as wrapping paper for his wares.<sup>62</sup> In 1872, at the dawn of the Modern Breakthrough, Andersen was an atavism

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54. “Nissen hos Spekhøkeren,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker. Eventyr og historier*, ed. Laurids Kristian Fahl et al. ([Copenhagen?]: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2003), 2:67.

55. “Nissen,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 2:67.

56. *Smørrebrød* are open-faced sandwiches, considered to be Danish national fare. “Nissen,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 2:67.

57. “Nissen,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 2:71.

58. “Det nye Aarhundredes Musa,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 2:382.

59. Andersen plays on both valences of the word *billig* (2:382). It can mean either “ikke dyr” (not expensive) or “med rimelighed” (with reasonableness). *Ordbog over det danske sprog*, s.v., “billig,” <https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=billig>.

60. “Hvorfra vi har Historien? . . . Vi har den fra Fjerdingsden, den med de gamle Papirer i.” (From where did we get the story? . . . We got it from the firkin, the one with those old papers in it.) “Tante Tandpine,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 3:343.

61. The student writes, “Jeg nedskrev hvad her staaer skrevet. Det er ikke paa Vers og det skal aldrig blive trykt —. / Ja her holdt Manuskriptet op.” (I wrote down what stands written here. It is not in verse, and it shall never be printed—. / Well, the manuscript stops here.) “Tante Tandpine,” in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 3:352.

62. The narrator thus explains the abrupt end to the story: “Min unge Ven, den vordende Urtekrammersvend, kunde ikke opdrive det Manglende, det var gaaet i Verden, som Papir om Spegesild, Smør og grøn Sæbe.” (My



of the Danish Golden Age and its idealist culture. For someone like him, the subordination of spiritual sustenance to physical sustenance was the height of degradation for the former, just as it was in Price's Victorian Britain.

So, to conclude this subsection and to segue into the next, we might pause to consider why Andersen became increasingly less sanguine about the fate of the book, as in "Nissen" the wonderful poetry was spared from the blaze, but in the bleak vision of "Tante Tandpine" nothing escapes the dustbin of history, not even the poet's flashes of genius.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, although Andersen published the *Fodreise* in 1829, when the wound of *Ungdoms-Forsøg* was still fresh, it is here that he offers his most reflective deliberations on the scrapping of books.<sup>64</sup> While the narrator of "Tante Tandpine" laments the inevitable destruction of each and every book (along with everything else), the narrator of the *Fodreise* anticipates the desecration of his novella but rationalizes it as just another casualty of the *Leserevolution's* not-unrelated ideologies of Romanticism and capitalism, as embodied in the *Amagerkone*.

To understand why Andersen drops the stoical front he presented in *Fodreise*, we should first note that—perhaps unlike some political revolutions—the *Leserevolution* did not occur once and for all, but that it actually gained momentum as the years went by. Not only did the reading public continue to broaden considerably, but the industrial technologies of book production and distribution also became available on a wider and wider scale.<sup>65</sup> Hence, it is to this industrial revolution that we now must turn.

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION OF THE BOOK

In his 1841 *Kort Fremstilling af Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie* (Short presentation of the art of printing), the Danish critic Peder Ludvig Møller cites Johann Gottfried von Herder, who scoffs at those who claim that, since Gutenberg, opinions on the Church and the constitution of the state have been in motion, to the point at which everything is now beginning to totter.<sup>66</sup> These Luddites

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young friend, the future grocer's assistant, could not procure what was lacking; it had gone into the world as paper around salt herring, butter, and green soap.) "Tante Tandpine," in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 3:352.

63. "Bryggeren er død, Tante er død, Studenten er død, ham fra hvem Tankegnisterne gik i Bøtten. / Alt gaaer i Bøtten. / Det er Enden paa Historien, – Historien om *Tante Tandpine*." (The brewer is dead; Auntie is dead; the student is dead, he from whom the sparks of thought went into barrel. / Everything goes into the barrel. / That is the end of the story, — the story of *Auntie Toothache*.) "Tante Tandpine," in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 3:353.

64. For example, when the narrator visits a library in the year 2129, his novella is not the only book missing: "Jeg søgte meget ivrigt efter min *Fodreise*, men ak! ikke manges stor Forjængers kunde jeg finde." (I searched with alacrity for my *Fodreise*, but alas! Not even many great predecessors could I find.) Andersen, *Fodreise*, 47.

65. Writing on Europe, Mollier and Cachin state, "If we . . . compare the 1850s–1890s with the 1750s–1790s, the difference is obvious. The explosion of book production and of all kinds of print production actually took place in the nineteenth century, and more precisely after 1850, after what has long been called the 'industrial revolution. . . . People were aware of a rapid change in their habits or, to put it another way, of witnessing a kind of 'cultural revolution,' a silent but violent one, in all that concerned the written word.'" And in Denmark, writes Aleks. Frøland, "Bogproduktionen steg støt mellem 1830 og 1890." (Book production rose steadily between 1830 and 1890.) Mollier and Cachin, "Continent of Texts," 303; Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie*, 164.

66. I have been unable to find the relevant passage in the Herderian corpus, but Møller paraphrases it as follows: "Medens den berømte Tydsker *Herder* yttre, at ved den [sc. Bogtrykkerkunsten] alle tænkende Mennesker i alle Verdensdele er bleven en samlet og synlig Kirke, havde enkelte misfornøiede og sygelige Naturer stemplet den som 'Grunden til alle moralske og politiske Uordener,' seet i den kun 'en Tilbagevenden til Barbariet.'" (While the famous German *Herder* expresses that by it [sc. art the of printing] all thinking people in all parts of the world have become an assembled and visible church, a few displeased and sickly natures have stamped it as "the cause for all

were, in fact, quite right. Moveable type was nothing less than a perpetual dynamo.<sup>67</sup> And even if the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution were not caused directly by the printing press, these epochs were, nevertheless, profoundly informed by the press's media.<sup>68</sup> Still, at the time Herder died in 1803, printing had not yet completed its industrial revolution; indeed, this second revolution had hardly begun. For all of the upheavals it had engendered, printing's constellation of technologies had changed very little in the three-hundred-plus years since its advent in the West; but this, too, was about to change.

At the end of the eighteenth century, bookmaking remained essentially a handcraft, and printing continued to be done on wooden handpresses; the process was largely as Gutenberg had left it in the mid- to late-fifteenth century. After 1800, however, a number of innovations began to accelerate book production in order to satisfy an ever-growing demand for print,<sup>69</sup> making what had once been a prized possession into a much more quotidian good, in spite of the fact that most books remained relatively expensive.<sup>70</sup>

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moral and political disorders," seen in it only "a regression to barbarity.") P. L. Møller, *Kort Fremstilling af Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie* ([Copenhagen]: Selskabet for Trykkefrihedens rette Brug, 1841), 106–07.

67. "Eller . . . Aarsag til en uafbrudt Bevægelighed, evig Veksel i Overbeviisninger og Meninger, et virkeligt Bevægelsesprincip." (Or . . . cause for uninterrupted movement, an eternal exchange of convictions and opinions, a true principle of motion.) Møller, *Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie*, 107.

68. Elizabeth Eisenstein writes that, with the Reformation, "historians confront a movement that was shaped at the very outset (and in large part ushered in) by the new powers of the press." And although Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin adamantly declare, "It is not part of our intention to revive the ridiculous thesis that the Reformation was the child of press," they nevertheless admit that printed "books played a crucial part in the development of Protestantism in the 16th century." Furthermore, Robert Darnton's formidable research aspires to what he calls "a total history of the book as a force on the eve of the [French] Revolution." Elizabeth J. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 303; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing*, trans. David Gerard, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London: Verso, 2010), 288; Robert Darnton, "Lost and Found in Cyberspace," in *Case for Books*, 63.

69. "There were also social changes that led to a greater demand for printed matter, all of which were inextricably linked to one another: increasing literacy rates; better education; the huge increase in the size and number of manufacturing and retail businesses; and improvements in communication, particularly through the introduction of the railway network and the penny post." Rob Banham, "The Industrialization of the Book, 1800–1970," in Eliot and Rose, *History of the Book*, 273.

70. According to Reinhard Wittmann, "In the last third of the eighteenth century, book prices proved to be an obstacle to the rapid expansion of the reading public, especially the prices of the much sought-after *belles-lettres*. During this period, prices increased around eight- or ninefold, which was attributable to bookseller's [*sic*] practices, net retailing and low break-even quantities, but also to ever-increasing demand. For the price of one novel, a family in Germany (like Britain) could afford to feed itself for two weeks." Wittmann's parenthetical aside on Great Britain is corroborated by Ian Watt, who writes, "But—significantly—novels were in the medium price range. . . . The prices of novels, then, though moderate compared to larger works, were still far beyond the means of any except the comfortably off." Wittmann, "Reading Revolution," 303; Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, 41–42.

Although it was preceded by stereotype,<sup>71</sup> as well as by lithography and a perfected xylography,<sup>72</sup> the Fourdrinier papermaking machine was the first invention since Gutenberg's to transform bookmaking on a grand scale. After being awarded an English patent in 1801, the Fourdrinier was on the market by 1807. While paper had been mechanically manufactured since the late 1700s, this new machine was seven times as productive as manual techniques, which rendered machine-made paper commercially advantageous for the first time. Contemporary reports indicate that this apparatus lowered the price of books.<sup>73</sup> After 1830, handmade paper fell widely out of use in Europe, where it was reserved almost exclusively for deluxe editions.<sup>74</sup>

While stereotyping and electrotyping saved the sometimes-prohibitive labor costs of resetting type for a new edition, or spared printers from having to buy more type to replace that which had been left standing, the expense of type was mitigated in 1822 by the type foundry machine, as it provided a trebled efficiency over typesetting by hand.<sup>75</sup> In 1832, binding was also mechanized and economized, with the introduction of the stitching machine and the gilding press.<sup>76</sup>

As groundbreaking as these advancements in binding, typesetting, and papermaking were, the most radical shift in the book's ontology is usually pinpointed to the year 1814, a year after Kierkegaard's birth. It was then that Friedrich Koenig's flatbed cylinder machine employed steam

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71. According to Aleks. Frøland, "Stereotypering, opfundet allerede i 1739, men tilbageholdt af frygt for dens konsekvenser, kom i brug efter 1805. . . . I 1837 blev galvanoplastikken taget i brug i typografisk øjemed." (Stereotyping, already invented in 1739, but held back out of fear for its consequences, came into use after 1805. . . . In 1837, Galvano-plastic started to be used for typographic purposes.) Cf. Rob Banham, who writes, "Stereotyping using casts made in sand or plaster had been in use since the 1700s, and the technique of 'dabbing' to make stereotype copies of woodcuts and wood-engravings had probably been around for even longer. . . . However, a reliable means of stereotyping forms of type was not in place until a method of casting plates from plaster of Paris molds was patented in 1784 by Alexander Tilloch. . . . Their invention did not really take off until Earl Stanhope approached them in 1800 wanting to develop and use their process. In 1803, a printer named Wilson under the patronage of Stanhope, set up as a stereotype printer. . . . Around 1828–9 the papier mâché method of casting stereotype plates was rediscovered (having previously been used as early as the seventeenth century) by Claude Genoux in France." Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie*, 159; Banham, "Industrialization of the Book," 279.

72. "Med hensyn til illustrationstryk havde *Thomas Bewick* i 1790'erne forbedret xylografien, og i samme årti opfandt *Alois Senefelder* litografien." (With respect to the printing of illustrations, *Thomas Bewick* had improved xylography in the 1790s, and in the same decade *Alois Senefelder* invented lithography.) Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie*, 159.

73. Banham, "Industrialization of the Book," 273–74.

74. Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography*, 215.

75. Niels Thulstrup, *The Copenhagen of Kierkegaard*, ed. Marie Mikulová Thulstrup, trans. Ruth Mach-Zagal, *Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 11 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1986), 45.

76. Aleks. Frøland notes, "Hvad endelig indbinding angår, blev en hæftemaskine opfundet i 1832, og samtidig hermed gjorde forgylderpressen sin entré." (Finally, concerning binding, a stitching machine was invented in 1832, and at the same time the gilding press made its entry.) Cf. James Raven, who reports that the "the first industrial binding machines operated from 1827." Frøland, *Dansk boghandels historie*, 159; James Raven, "The Industrial Revolution of the Book," in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147.

NB: According to Gaskell, the mechanization and application of steam power to the binding industry came only gradually, "partly no doubt because of the difficulties arising from the complexity of many of the processes, but perhaps also because the low wages paid to the women who performed all but the heaviest tasks in early-nineteenth-century binderies meant that there was little incentive to change." And, as Ingrid Ilsøe has demonstrated, even though the gilding press came to Denmark in the 1840s, publishers continued to send their sheets to Leipzig or Berlin to be bound because the labor was cheaper there. Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography*, 235; Ingrid Ilsøe, "Printing, Book Illustration, Bookbinding, and Book Trade in Denmark, 1482–1914: A Survey of the Most Important Contributions to the History of the Danish Book during the Last 35 Years," trans. Ruth Bentzen, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 60 (1985): 274.

power to print the entire run (i.e., 4,000 copies) of *The Times* of London in a single night.<sup>77</sup> An iron handpress had been invented sometime around 1800 by Earl Stanhope, but it did not yield a major advantage over the wooden handpress in terms of speed.<sup>78</sup> Koenig's machine cost nearly ten times as much as the Stanhope, but it could print 1,100 sheets per hour, whereas the iron handpress only managed about 300.<sup>79</sup>

As Price remarks, the book lost its "artisanal particularity" under this regime of mechanical reproduction, and book collecting was deprived of its *raison*.<sup>80</sup> Price's point is, I think, that the exigencies of presswork during the handpress period meant that each copy in a print run could be textually unique,<sup>81</sup> but now, with the Koenig, any copy was much more likely to be identical with the rest of its cohort. What is more, all subsequent "editions" could now be printed from stereo- or electrotypes of the original setting.<sup>82</sup> What justification was there for running out to buy a first edition, if the steam-press and plates could always produce an identical impression if the book sold out?<sup>83</sup>

Even those who had never stepped foot in a pressroom would have been at least dimly aware of the book's industrialization. Previously, the relatively few copies of each edition had been imposing and expensive quartos and folios; now, by the 1820s, larger print runs of smaller, cheaper formats were the rule.<sup>84</sup> As the book-object veered towards a vanishing point, readers, rather than investing in a corporeal volume, were now buying into an economy of seemingly disembodied texts.

Although many book-buyers welcomed the industrialized book, there was still a strange dissonance when, in an era beholden to Kant's definition of genius as originality,<sup>85</sup> even Goethe's

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77. Wald, "Periodicals and Periodicity," 426.

NB: Still, here we might heed the admonitory words of James Raven: "We need, nonetheless, to be cautious about dividing a modern from an ancient book trade at the point that power-driven machinery first printed a newspaper." Indeed, Rob Banham writes that the price of the Koenig "was prohibitive for most book printers. By the 1830s, some large book-printing firms were running steam presses. However, for most book printers, smaller, hand-powered cylinder presses remained the norm until the middle of the nineteenth century at which point they began to move over to steam presses that were specifically developed for book printing (such as the Wharfedale)." Raven, "Industrial Revolution," 148; Banham, "Industrialization of the Book," 276.

78. Banham, "Industrialization of the Book," 274–75.

79. Banham, "Industrialization of the Book," 276.

80. Price, *Books in Victorian Britain*, 30.

81. "The first folio of Shakespeare boasted some six hundred different typefaces, along with non-uniform spelling and punctuation, erratic divisions and arrangement, mispaging, and irregular proofing. No two copies were identical." Adrian Johns, "The Book of Nature and the Nature of the Book," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 264.

82. In bibliographical parlance, the term *edition* implies a significant resetting of type. Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography*, 313.

83. Elizabeth Eisenstein has claimed that the Gutenberg Revolution's paradigm shift from "scribal culture" to "typographical fixity" also downgraded the significance of the single copy, and perhaps, some might argue, it did so in a far more radical sense than the industrial revolution of the book would. Be that as it may, it is naive to presume that every copy of an edition printed on a handpress will be identical, and so a hand-printed book, like a manuscript, can also be a unique artifact, even if there are many copies of the same edition extant. With the industrialized book, on the other hand, such variations are much less likely to occur. Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 113–21.

84. "Beginning in the 1820s, the transformation in printing capacity ensured the advance of further developments in publishing and bookselling. The production of very cheap books in large quantities and in slighter formats replaced the earlier, economically necessary publication of editions in small numbers, often in cumbersome multivolumes, at relatively high prices." Raven, "Industrial Revolution," 151.

85. "Man sieht hieraus, daß Genie I) ein T a l e n t sei, dasjenige, wozu sich keine bestimmte Regel geben läßt, hervorzubringen: nicht Geschicklichkeitsanlage zu dem, was nach irgend einer Regel gelernt werden kann; folglich

books were only mass-produced “copies of copies.”<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, in the case of certain less exalted authors, this spiritless industrial reproduction was said to be in lockstep with the uninspired genesis of their work. (That was the crux of Møller’s critique of Christian Molbech, which we will read for ourselves below.) And yet, regardless of an author’s reputation, the virtual identicalness of each copy in a print-run would have deflected attention away from the particular material manifestation of the book-object and redirected it towards the Platonic textuality of the work or edition.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, while the *Leserevolution* (ca. 1750) first generated the disappearing book, the so-called second Gutenberg Revolution proliferated it, as a steam-press was set up in Copenhagen a little over a decade after the Koenig had made its debut in London. As was the case in Britain, steam-power’s impact on the book in Denmark was, at first, merely symbolic; the first cylindrical printing machine in the kingdom was used to print newspapers, not books, as a so-called *hurtigpresse*<sup>88</sup> was delivered to Copenhagen’s *Adresseavisen* in 1825.<sup>89</sup> Another ten years would pass before, finally, more *hurtigpresser* were imported, this time to the printers Rostock and Schultz, respectively. The next year (i.e., 1836), *Berlingske Tidende*, another Copenhagen paper, began running a *hurtigpresse*.<sup>90</sup> While Copenhagen had all five of Denmark’s high-speed printing machines in 1835, by 1849 the kingdom could boast of 25 such presses, five of which were in its

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daß O r i g i n a l i t ä t seine erste Eigenschaft sein müsse.” (From this one sees: That genius [1] is a **talent** for producing that for which no determinate rule can be given, not a predisposition of skill which can be learned in accordance with some rule, consequently that **originality** must be its primary characteristic.) Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 242; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), 186.

86. I borrow the phrase from Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

87. Daniel Selcer describes “the Platonic model” as “a perspective that understands the book and its pages as a mere container for a text that transcends it.” Daniel Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription*, Philosophy, Aesthetics and Cultural Theory (London: Continuum, 2010), 200.

88. The “Hurtig-*presse*” is defined as a “*presse* (trykkemaskine), der bevæges ved mekanisk drivkraft; spec. om trykkemaskine m. cylindrisk tryk af en flad trykform” (press [printing machine], which is moved by mechanical power; specifically, a printing machine with cylindrical printing from a flat form). *Ordbog over det danske Sprog*, s.v. “Hurtig-*presse*,” <https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?select=Hurtigpresse&query=Hurtig-presse>.

89. “Danmark fik sin første hurtigpresse – på Adresseavisen i København.” (Denmark got its first *hurtigpresse*—at *Adresseavisen* in Copenhagen.) Hertel, “Agenten i Klareboderne,” 184.

90. “Genauso bezeichnend ist es allerdings, dass es zehn Jahre dauerte, bevor die zweite »Hurtigpresse« nach Kopenhagen gelangte. Als Durchbruchsjahr für die neue Technik gilt 1835, in dem sowohl die Rostocksche Druckerei als auch die Druckerei Schultz Schnellpressen anschafften, um die Zeitungen *Dagen* und die Publikationen der *Selskab til Trykkefrihedens rette Brug* zu drucken. Ab 1836 folgt die *Berlingske Tidende*.” (Mind you, it is just as characteristic that it took ten years before the second *hurtigpresse* reached Copenhagen. The breakthrough year for the new technology is 1835, in which the printers Rostock and Schultz both got high-speed printing machines, in order to print the newspaper *Dagen* and the publications of the *Selskab til Trykkefrihedens rette Brug* [Society for the proper use of the freedom of the press]. From 1836, *Berlingske Tidende* follows.) Klaus Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher. Hans Christian Andersens Materialästhetik* (Paderborn: Fink, 2017), 215.

NB: Despite these acquisitions, Denmark would remain on the technological periphery in a certain sense. In 1841, in *Kort Fremstilling af Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie*, P. L. Møller writes, “Saadanne Hurtigpresser kom 1822 til Tydskland og ere nu ogsaa indførte her i Danmark, om end ikke i deres fuldkomneste Skikkelse.” (Such *hurtigpresser* came in 1822 to Germany and have now also been introduced here in Denmark, if not in their most complete form.) Møller, *Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie*, 153.

provinces.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the first paper-machine in the Nordic region was in operation by 1829, when J. C. Drewsen established his business at Strandmøllen, north of Copenhagen.<sup>92</sup>

Like his competitors, the printer Bianco Luno first used a *hurtigpresse* for a newspaper (i.e., *Fædrelandet*) in 1840. Luno's machine had been made in Denmark,<sup>93</sup> and he would go on to buy more from the same manufacturer over the course of the decade.<sup>94</sup> Significantly, Luno employed *hurtigpresser* not just for newspapers, but for books, too. For instance, from 1840 onwards, Andersen's fairytales were printed on these high-speed machines because by that time there was enough demand to justify a large print run.<sup>95</sup> In addition to many of Kierkegaard's works, Luno was also responsible for those of Hans Vilhelm Kaalund, J. L. Heiberg, Bernhard Severin Ingemann, Frederik Paludan-Müller, and Adam Oehlenschläger,<sup>96</sup> although the extent to which *hurtigpresser* were used for these books is unclear.

Luno printed at least one of P. L. Møller's books, namely the above-mentioned *Kort Fremstilling af Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie*. Proudly, almost defiantly, it bears the phrase "trykt, med Hurtigpresse, i Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri" (printed, with the *hurtigpresse*, in Bianco Luno's printing house).<sup>97</sup> As an independent scholar of sorts, the entrepreneurial Møller is associated with

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91. "I 1835 var der fem hurtigpresser, alle i København, i 1849 var der 25, heraf fem i provinsen." (In 1835, there were five *hurtigpresser*, all in Copenhagen; in 1849, there were 25, five of which were in the provinces.) Jens Bjerring-Hansen, "Holberg, hurtigpressen og 'læserevolution' i guldalderen. En fjernlæsning af den danske kanon," in *Mellem ånd og tryksværte. Studier i trykkekulturen og den romantiske litteratur*, ed. Robert W. Rix (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2015), 48.

92. Drawing from Johnny Kondrup, Jens Bjerring-Hansen writes, "I 1829 begyndte J.C. Drewsen på Strandmøllen, der fra 1820 var dampdrevet, således som den første i Norden at producere det maskinfremstillede papir." (In 1829, J. C. Drewsen began as the first in the Nordics to produce machine-made paper at Strandmøllen, which from 1820 was steam-powered.) Cf. Philip Gaskell, who claims that Denmark had papermaking machines in operation as early as 1826. Johnny Kondrup, *Editionsfilologi* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2011), 349; Bjerring-Hansen, "Holberg, hurtigpressen og 'læserevolution'", 49; Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography*, 228–29.

93. Müller-Wille writes that "ab 1840 erscheint auch die bei Bianco Luno gedruckte Zeitung *Fædrelandet* täglich auf einer Schnellpresse gedruckt" (from 1840, *Fædrelandet*, the newspaper printed by Bianco Luno, appears daily, printed on a high-speed printing machine). Robert Pedersen explains how Luno acquired this technology: "J. G. A. Eickhoff var den første fabrikant af hurtigpresser i Danmark, men da Bianco Luno lærte ham at kende, var han en ung kleinsmed. Eickhoff fik sin uddannelse i Lauenburg, der dengang hørte under Danmark, men var derefter flyttet til København, hvor han arbejdede i forskellige virksomheder. I 1837 var han med til at bygge den første danske hurtigpresse. To år senere, da han skulle udføre sit mesterstykke, der skulle bevise hans faglige dygtighed, valgte han at bygge endnu en hurtigpresse, og den blev opstillet hos Bianco Luno." (J. G. A. Eickhoff was the first manufacturer of *hurtigpresser* in Denmark, but when Bianco Luno became acquainted with him, he was a young metalworker. Eickhoff received his education in Lauenburg, which then belonged to Denmark, but moved afterwards to Copenhagen, where he worked in various occupations. Two years later, when he was to execute his masterpiece, which should prove his technical ability, he chose to build yet another *hurtigpresse*, and this was set up at Bianco Luno.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 215; Pedersen, *Bianco Luno*, 246–47n9.

94. "Den forsigtige forretningsmand bandt sig stærkt økonomisk i slutningen af 1840'erne, thi dels erhvervede han ejendommen Christiansminde, og dels købte han fire hurtigpresser på to år." (The prudent businessman strongly committed himself at the end of the 1840s, for, on one hand, he acquired the property Christiansminde, and, on the other, he bought four *hurtigpresser* in two years.) Pedersen, *Bianco Luno*, 40.

95. "Andersens Märchensammlungen, die in relativ hohen Auflagen erscheinen, ab 1840 auf Druckmaschinen bei Bianco Luno produziert werden." (Andersen's fairytale collections, which appeared in relatively high print runs, were printed on printing machines at Bianco Luno's as of 1840.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 215.

96. "Nye kunder kom til, de fleste af datidens kendte forfattere, herunder H. C. Andersen, Kaalund, Heiberg, Ingemann, Paludan-Müller, Kierkegaard og Oehlenschläger, fik deres værker trykt hos Luno." (New customers arrived, the majority of the noted authors of that age, including H. C. Andersen, Kaalund, Heiberg, Ingemann, Paludan-Müller, Kierkegaard, and Oehlenschläger, got their works printed with Luno.) Pedersen, *Bianco Luno*, 37.

97. Møller, *Bogtrykkerkunstens Historie*, t.p.

the *hurtigpresse* in the historical imagination.<sup>98</sup> Despite being *persona non grata* in the academy,<sup>99</sup> Møller was able to pursue a career as a poet and scholar in a market democratized by the *hurtigpresse*.

But even amongst authors who, like Møller, profited from the industrialization of the book, the steam-press, as this revolution's metonym, invoked a strong ambivalence. Both Andersen and Heiberg complained of being swamped by competitors, who were drawn to the market by this new technology.<sup>100</sup> Møller, on the other hand, rather than objecting to the *hurtigpresse* as a threat to his bread-and-butter, took a philosophical—or, more specifically, an ontological—tack against it. As the publisher of a bibliophilic literary annual—a *Nytaarsgave* (New Year's gift)—which appeared under the title of *Gæa* from 1845 to 1847,<sup>101</sup> Møller would demonstrate a keen sense for the bibliographical medium's visual possibilities—possibilities that could only be realized in each copy of the work, and not in some Platonic otherworld.

By converting the book into a mass-produced industrial good, the second Gutenberg revolution had degraded the individual copy to the point at which it seemed infinitely replaceable, whereas before, in the days of the handpress, the copy had been a precious handcrafted artifact.

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98. According to Hans Hertel, Møller “var . . . med da den nye damppresse fra omkring 1830 overførte litteraturens og pressens industrielle revolution til Danmark, vendte op og ned på litteraturspredningen og avlede alskens nye typer forlæggere og bladudgivere, redaktører og litterater” (took part when the new steam press from around 1830 transmitted literature's and the press's industrial revolution to Denmark, turned the diffusion of literature upside down, and produced all sorts of new types of publishers, journalists, editors, and litterateurs) (54). Hertel adds, “Møller er en central overgangskikkelse – også som *social* type fra tiden da det frie marked og den industrielle revolution slog igennem i litteraturen med dampkraft. Med bogens, avisens og tidsskriftets rolle som massemedier og forlystelsesindustri blev ‘den frie litterat’ for alvor professionel.” (Møller is a central transition figure—also as *social* type from the time when the free market and the industrial revolution broke through in literature with steam power. With the book, the newspaper, and the journal's role as mass media and entertainment industry, “the independent man of letters” became professional in earnest) (64). Hertel, “Bohømen som kritiker: P. L. Møller mellem romantik og realisme,” in *Litteraturens vaneforbrydere*.

99. Although he had hopes of becoming Adam Oehlenschläger's successor to the chair of aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen, Møller was passed over in favor of Carsten Hauch. He blamed Kierkegaard for having associated him with the disreputable *Corsaren*, a republican satirical newspaper on which he had served as a *sub rosa* editor. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, historical introduction to *The Corsair Affair and Articles Related to the Writings*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), xxvi–xxix.

100. In “Agenten i Klareboderne,” Hertel writes, “Etableringen af det frie litteratur- og pressemarked blev en magtkamp mellem de nye grupper der ville have del i ordet og omsætningen, og de gamle professionelle der forsvarede deres status ved at angribe ‘dilettantismen.’ Knap var hurtigpressen kommet til København, før åndsaristokraten J. L. Heiberg var på krigsstien med vaudevillen *Recensenten og Dyret* (1826). Den satiriserer over udannede folk som bogtrykker Klatterup og bogbinder Pryssing, der vil være forlæggere, og amatørkritikere og bladsmørere som evighedsstudenten Trop, der roser for meget og tillader sig at udgive æstetiske skrifter.” (The establishment of the free literature and press market became a power struggle between the new groups who wanted to have a share of the floor and business, and the old professionals who defended their status by attacking “dilettantism.” Hardly had the *hurtigpresse* come to Copenhagen before intellectual aristocrat J. L. Heiberg was on the warpath with the vaudeville *Recensenten og Dyret* [The reviewer and the beast] [1826]. It satirizes uncultured folk like the book-printer Klatterup and the bookbinder Pryssing, who want to be publishers, and amateur critics and scribblers like the eternal student Trop, who praises too much and permits himself to publish aesthetic writings) (184). In the same article, Hertel continues, “Med sin romantiske geniæstetik er Andersen i 1869 lige så utilpas ved konkurrence som Heiberg i 1826. Han raser mod amatørerne, men hvad der dybest anfægter ham er fagets *professionalisering*.” (With his Romantic genius aesthetic, Andersen is just as uneasy with competition in 1869 as Heiberg was in 1826. He rages against the amateurs, but what most deeply affects him is the craft's *professionalization*) (187).

101. P. L. Møller, ed., *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog* (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845); P. L. Møller, ed., *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog* (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1846); P. L. Møller, ed., *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog* (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1847).

Now, each and every material instance of a given work was but an imperfect imitation of an ethereal textuality that transcended it.<sup>102</sup> So, by 1847, Møller was warning his reader of “den industrielle og merkantile Tidsaand” (the industrial and mercantile *Zeitgeist*),<sup>103</sup> which results in “litterære Maskinarbeide, som i den nyeste Tid især viser sig i Feuilleton- og Journalpressen” (literary machine-work, which most recently shows itself particularly in the *feuilleton* and journal press),<sup>104</sup> but also, quite naturally, in the book, as well. Møller makes this observation in his character sketch of the Danish historian and philologist Molbech. One of the epigraphs to this text is a remark by the Danish linguist “R[asmus] Rask”: “C. M. udgiver mange Bøger.” (C[hristian] M[olbech] publishes many books.)<sup>105</sup> In the 1840s, this is a quip, not a compliment. Now even a mediocre scribbler had license to publish a shelfful of titles, in ever-greater print runs, thanks largely to the Fourdrinier brothers and Koenig. All but the most brilliant authors risked being lost in the offal of countless poetasters. While Molbech was eminently capable of producing the immanent book-object, he and his sort were incapable of creating the transcendent *chef d’oeuvre*. As we shall see in chapter 2 (such as in Heiberg’s critique of Kierkegaard’s *Enten – Eller* [Either/or]), these allegedly inferior writers had one thing in common: None of them was able to make his readers forget the physical reality of the book.

## AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE BOOK

Applying the ethereal criterion of what would become known as the disappearing book to Johan Ludvig Heiberg’s *Nye Digte* (New poems) and *Urania*,<sup>106</sup> Kierkegaard finds these *Nytaarsgaver* to be gaudy and materialistic. Although he does not follow up on this pasquinade of “Præsenter-Literatur”<sup>107</sup> by suggesting an alternative aesthetic paradigm, the disappearing book is his implicit standard, as it would have been for most authors during the Danish Golden Age. This dematerialization of the book is central to what Kittler terms “the discourse network of 1800.” While the media theorist defines this network with evidence drawn almost exclusively from the German states, I would suggest that we can speak of a pan-Germanic discourse network that

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102. The “Platonist view,” writes David Greetham, privileges “the ideality of an irrecoverable originary form, from which all subsequent physical manifestations or embodiments are but shadows, lacking their own authenticity.” David Greetham, “What is Textual Scholarship?” in Eliot and Rose, *History of the Book*, 25.

103. P. L. Møller, “Christian Molbech (født 1783). Et Litteraturbillede,” in *Kritiske Skizzer fra Aarene 1840–47* (Copenhagen: Philipsen, 1847), 2:156.

104. Møller, “Molbech,” 2:130.

105. The other epigraph is by Nicolaus Notabene, the pseudonym Kierkegaard used for *Forord* (Prefaces). Diverging syntactically from Kierkegaard’s original text, it reads, “At skrive en Bog i vore Tider er det letteste af Alt, naar man efter Skik og Brug tager 10 ældre, der handle om den samme Materie, og derudaf sammenskriver en 11te, der handler om den samme Materie.” (To write a book in our time is the easiest thing of all, when one, according to custom and use, takes ten older ones that deal with the same material, and compiles an eleventh one out of them, which deals with the same material.) Søren Kierkegaard, [Nicolaus Notabene, pseud.], *Forord. Morskabslæsning for enkelte Stænder efter Tid og Leilighed* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1844), 56, quoted in Møller, “Molbech,” 2:127.

106. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Nye Digte* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1841); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1844* (Copenhagen: Bing); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1845* (Copenhagen: Bing); Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1846* (Copenhagen: Reitzel).

107. *En literair Anmeldelse. To Tidsaldre, Novelle af Forfatteren til “en Hverdagshistorie,” udgiven af J. L. Heiberg, Kbhv. Reitzel. 1845*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:20.



includes both Germany and Scandinavia, not least of all because of the disappearing book's prevalence on both sides of the Baltic, in such fields as philosophy of language, poetry, and aesthetics. If the self-canceling book was an ideal shared by Germans and Danes alike, then it follows that Kierkegaard's critique of the *Nytaarsgaver* would have been based on this figure, if only tacitly. In chapter 2, I add that Kierkegaard has deliberately or unknowingly overlooked the pseudo-Hegelianism underpinning the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*.<sup>108</sup>

## PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, speech is defined by Socrates as "the living, breathing discourse of the man who knows," whereas writing only "can be fairly called an image" of speech."<sup>109</sup> While the mature J. L. Heiberg would favor writing for its relative permanence in "Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie" (Contribution to the philosophy of the visible),<sup>110</sup> Plato, in founding what would become known as logocentrism, privileged speech over writing precisely for its transience and invisibility, as these qualities promote inward retention. Since writing endures externally, it actually detracts from learning, as Socrates indicates in his retelling of the dialogue between Thamus, king of Egypt, and the god Theuth, who had invented writing.<sup>111</sup>

If the high-water mark of logocentrism in Western history was the year 1800, with the apotheosis of the disappearing book,<sup>112</sup> then the early modern period represents a low ebb. As Daniel Selcer attests in his monograph *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of*

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108. Heiberg spells out this aesthetic theory in the "Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie" treatise of 1843. Klaus Müller-Wille has noted the Hegelianism of this piece—or, as I would have it, pseudo-Hegelianism (for reasons which shall become clear further along). "Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie," *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:358; Klaus Müller-Wille, "'De er rigtig nok godt indbunden.' Om bokens poetik hos Johan Ludvig Heiberg och Søren Kierkegaard," in Rix, *Mellem ånd og tryksværte*, 83–84. See also Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 59.

109. Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 276a.

110. "Ved denne Oversættelse af det Hørelige i det Synlige griber altsaa Synet endnu meget længere ind i Aandeverden, end det ifølge sin oprindelige Natur formaaer, ja rækker ligesaa langt som Hørelsen, paa en Maade endog med større Sikkerhed, formedelst det Permanente i Skriften, hvorved den flygtige Lyd er hævet over sin Forøgængelighed." (By this translation from the audible to the visible, vision intervenes even farther into the world of the spirit, even farther than its original nature allows; yes, it reaches just as far as hearing, yet in a manner with greater certainty, on account of the permanence of writing, by which the fleeting word is raised above its evanescence.) "Bidrag," in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:358.

111. "The story goes that Thamus said much to Theuth, both for and against each art, which it would take too long to repeat. But when they came to writing, Theuth said: 'O King, here is something that, once learned, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory; I have discovered a potion for memory and for wisdom.' Thamus, however, replied: 'O most expert Theuth, one man can give birth to the elements of an art, but only another can judge how they can benefit or harm those who will use them. And now, since, you are the father of writing, your affection for it has made you describe its effects as the opposite of what they really are. In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. Your invention will enable them to hear many things without being properly taught, and they will imagine that they have come to know much while for the most part they will know nothing. And they will be difficult to get along with, since they will merely appear to be wise instead of really being so.'" *Phdr.* 274e–275b.

112. For Kittler, 1800 is shorthand for the mid-to-late-eighteenth to the early-nineteenth century.

*Material Inscription*, certain notable seventeenth-century books refused to dissolve into an imagined orality, reflexively alluding to their physical existence. Leibniz, Bayle, Descartes, and Spinoza all underscored the book's corporeality through this method.<sup>113</sup> An "early modern materialism" implies a departure from the "Platonic" conception of the book as a receptacle for a transcendent text.<sup>114</sup>

Kittler attributes the rise of the disappearing book to the social and technological developments described in the two previous sections.<sup>115</sup> As the book became a much more everyday object, with the uniformity of any other factory ware, its physical form was eclipsed by its ideal content. One can also trace the disappearing book back to the period's intellectual history. For example, the philosophy of language written in German and in Danish around 1800 is characterized by three typically logocentric tenets: (1) The spoken word, in its evanescence and transparency, is analogous to the ideal; (2) writing, in its permanence and opacity, is an inferior substitute for speech; (3) alphabetic writing, in its phoneticism, is akin to speech and thereby superior to all other non-oral means of communication.

Published in 1772, in the midst of the *Leserevolution*, Herder's *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (Treatise on the origin of languages) is representative of the period's logocentrism,<sup>116</sup> such as in the declaration that writing can only "unvollkommen" (imperfectly) capture the "lebendigtönend" (living-sounding) tones of the spoken word.<sup>117</sup> For Herder, speech was approximate to the ideal; poets "bei den Morgenländern" (in the Eastern countries) recognized this fact, since there "Othem Gottes . . . das Ohr aufhaschete, und die toten Buchstaben, die sie hinmaleten, waren nur der Leichnam, der lesend mit Lebensgeist beselet werden mußte (the ear . . . seized the breath of God, and the dead letters, which they wrote with painstaking care, were only the body that must be given a soul by the act of reading with the spirit of life)!<sup>118</sup> In the East, according to Herder, writing has but an ancillary function, as it serves as a mnemonic for oral delivery. Only in recitation is the inscription enlivened by God, soul, and spirit.

Here Herder is probably not referring to East Asia or ancient Egypt. There, to the contrary, the writing systems were thought to circumvent orality altogether. From Hegel's limited

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113. Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book*, 4.

114. Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book*, 200.

115. Kittler connects the extensive reading of the *Leserevolution* to the discourse network of 1800, and hence to the disappearing book, through the character of Veronika in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der goldne Topf* (The golden pot): "The father (as if to confirm Rolf Engelsing's sociology of reading) practices an intensive reading, . . . ; the daughter, meanwhile, reads the latest novels, which in the discourse network of 1800 are written by 'life'" (137–38). See E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Der goldne Topf. Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2019), 37–38.

116. Kittler names the *Abhandlung* "the founding document of the anthropology of language" (39), but Michael N. Forster claims that, in this essay, Herder actually adopts "a rather conventional Enlightenment picture of the relation of thought and outer language," namely that meaning "or inner language . . . is prior to and the basis of outer language" (58). According to Forster, the British Empiricists also conceived of thought and meaning as independent of and preceding the form in which they were expressed (55–56). Furthermore, Forster continues, Herder would later eschew this Enlightenment concept of an "inner language" preceding and constituting an "outer language" (58). In what Forster defines as "Herder's philosophy of language"—from which the *Abhandlung* is excluded—the German philosopher maintains that thought depends on and is circumscribed by language, and that a word's meaning is its usage (31). Nevertheless, the *Abhandlung* is, in Forster's estimation, Herder's "best known work in the philosophy of language by far" (92), and so, for our purposes, it will serve as a gauge for the period's logocentrism. Michael N. Forster, *After Herder: Philosophy of Language in the German Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

117. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, ed. Hans Dietrich Irmscher (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015), 12.

118. Herder, *Abhandlung*, 13.

perspective, Chinese characters and Egyptian hieroglyphics were but immediate representations of ideas, rather than representations of vocalizations that represent ideas in turn.<sup>119</sup> Toeing the logocentric line, Hegel argues that this disconnect from the spoken word was detrimental, as only speech—or an inscription that simulated it—could facilitate learning.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, as we shall see, any means of communication allegedly unrelated to orality—such as sign language—was denigrated.

As with the German states, a logocentric philosophy of language characterized the Denmark of the period; Heiberg’s “Bidrag” proved a notable exception. On November 12, 1802, Anders Gamborg, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, gave a paper entitled “Om en Theorie af Læsekunsten eller Forsøg til en Legologie” (On a theory of the art of reading or an attempt at a science of reading) before *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabers-Selskab* (The Royal Danish Society of Sciences and Letters). Gamborg had not only intently followed the philosophical developments in Germany; he even managed to prefigure the position of one of his renowned German contemporaries. Gamborg may not cite Herder or Kant directly, but he does draw on their theories, and that would indicate that they were part of a common frame of reference

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119. “Näher bezeichnet die *Hieroglyphenschrift* die *Vorstellung* durch räumliche Figuren, die *Buchstabenschrift* hingegen *Töne*, welche selbst schon Zeichen sind. Diese besteht daher aus Zeichen der Zeichen, und so, daß sie die concreten Zeichen der Tonsprache, die Worte, in ihre einfachen Elemente auflöst, und diese Elemente bezeichnet” (472). (In particular, hieroglyphics uses spatial figures to designate *ideas*; alphabetic writing, on the other hand, uses them to designate vocal notes which are already signs. Alphabetic writing thus consists of signs of signs—the words or concrete signs of vocal language being analysed into their simple elements, which severally receive designation) (215). In his next move, Hegel dismissively conflates Chinese characters with hieroglyphics: “Nur dem Statarischen der chinesischen Geistesbildung ist die hieroglyphische Schriftsprache dieses Volkes angemessen . . . . Es fehlt um der hieroglyphischen Schriftsprache willen der chinesischen Tonsprache an der objectiven Bestimmtheit, welche in der Articulation durch die Buchstabenschrift gewonnen wird” (473). (It is only a stationary civilization, like the Chinese, which admits of the hieroglyphic language of that nation . . . . The hieroglyphic mode of writing keeps the Chinese vocal language from reaching that objective precision which is gained in articulation by alphabetic writing) (216). G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, 3rd ed. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1830),

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Encyclop%C3%A4die\\_der\\_philosophischen\\_Wissen/Fg1RAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Encyclop%C3%A4die+der+philosophischen+Wissenschaften+im+Grundrisse&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Encyclop%C3%A4die_der_philosophischen_Wissen/Fg1RAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Encyclop%C3%A4die+der+philosophischen+Wissenschaften+im+Grundrisse&printsec=frontcover); *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).

NB: It is unlikely that Hegel’s opinion of hieroglyphics was backed by a thorough understanding of the writing system. According to Michael N. Forster, Jean-François “Champollion first deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics in the 1820s . . . but really only published the results in 1832 in his *Grammaire égyptienne* and *Dictionnaire égyptien*. Academic Egyptology really only began after Richard Lepsius’ expedition of 1842.” Michael N. Forster, *German Philosophy of Language: From Schlegel to Hegel and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 247n77.

120. “Das hieroglyphische Lesen [ist] für sich selbst ein taubes Lesen und ein stummes Schreiben; das Hörbare oder Zeitliche und das Sichtbare oder Räumliche hat zwar jedes seine eigene Grundlage zunächst von gleichem Gelten mit der andern; bey der Buchstabenschrift aber ist nur Eine Grundlage und zwar in dem richtigen Verhältnisse, daß die sichtbare Sprache zu der tönenden nur als Zeichen sich verhält; die Intelligenz äußert sich unmittelbar und unbedingt durch Sprechen. – Die Vermittlung der Vorstellungen durch das Unsinnlichere der Töne zeigt sich weiter für den folgenden Uebergang von dem Vorstellen zum Denken, – das Gedächtniß, – in seiner eigenthümlichen Wesentlichkeit.” (Hieroglyphic reading is of itself a deaf reading and a dumb writing. It is true that the audible [which is in time] and the visible [which is in space], each have their own basis, one no less authoritative than the other. But in the case of alphabetic writing there is only a *single* basis: the two aspects occupy their rightful relation to each other: the visible language is related to the vocal only as a sign, and intelligence expresses itself immediately and unconditionally by speaking.—The instrumental function of the comparatively non-sensuous element of tone for all ideational work shows itself further as peculiarly important in memory which forms the passage from representation to thought.) Hegel, *Encyclopädie*, 476; Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, 218.

for a Danish learned audience. Tellingly, in a note to his presentation, Gamborg remarks, “Man definierer sædvanligen Ord ved *artikulerede* Lyde.” (Words are usually defined as *articulated* sounds.)<sup>121</sup> That is, words are not unarticulated sounds, but this definition bypasses the possibility that words can also be inscribed or signed.<sup>122</sup> Here Herder is probably the immediate influence on Gamborg, if Kant is not serving as a go-between.<sup>123</sup>

For Herder and Kant, sign language could only represent a concept superficially, which meant that those with hearing impairments were cut off from the noumenal realm of reason.<sup>124</sup>

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121. Anders Gamborg, “Om en Theorie af Læsekunsten eller Forsøg til en Legologie,” *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabs-Selskabs Skrifter* 2, no. 2 (1803): 237n.

122. According to Michel Foucault, other nineteenth-century linguists, in both Denmark and Germany, would delimit their field of inquiry to the spoken word: “With [Rasmus] Rask, [Jacob] Grimm, and [Franz] Bopp, language is treated for the first time . . . as a totality of phonetic elements. Whereas, for general grammar, language arose when the noise produced by the mouth or the lips had become a letter, it is accepted from now on that language exists when noises have been articulated and divided into a series of distinct sounds. The whole being of language is now one of sound. . . . A whole mystique is being born: that of the verb, of the pure poetic flash that disappears without a trace, leaving nothing behind it but a vibration suspended in the air for one brief moment. By means of the ephemeral and profound sound it produces, the spoken word accedes to sovereignty. . . . Language . . . has acquired a vibratory nature which has separated it from the visible sign and made it more nearly proximate to the note in music.” Another major linguist of the day, Wilhelm von Humboldt, writes in “Über Denken und Sprechen” (On thinking and speaking), “Der Sprache suchende Mensch sucht Zeichen, unter denen er, vermöge der Abschnitte, die er in seinem Denken macht, Ganze als Einheiten zusammenfassen kann. Zu solchen Zeichen sind die unter der Zeit begriffenen Erscheinungen bequemer, als die unter dem Raume. . . . Die schneidendsten unter allen Veränderungen in der Zeit sind diejenigen, welche die Stimme hervorbringt. . . . Die Sprachzeichen sind daher notwendig Töne.” (The person seeking language seeks signs, under which he can, by dint of the sections that he makes in his thinking, combine the whole as unities. For such signs, the figures understood in time are easier than those understood in space. . . . Among all the changes in time, the most piercing are those which the voice produces. . . . That is why language-signs are necessarily tones.) Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 286; Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Über Denken und Sprechen,” in *Schriften zur Sprache*, ed. Michael Böhler (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2021), 3–4.

123. Cf. Klaus Müller-Wille, who writes, “Wie eng sich Gamborg in seiner Argumentation an Immanuel Kant orientiert, zeigt ein längerer Abschnitt über den Elementarunterricht für Taubstumme.” (A longer section on elementary education for the deaf-mute shows how closely Gamborg orients himself in his argumentation to Immanuel Kant.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 54.

124. In *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Ideas for a philosophy of the history of humanity), Herder reiterates the logocentric dogma: “Gehör und Sprache hangen zusammen . . . / Wie sonderbar, daß ein bewegter Lufthauch das einzige, wenigstens das beste Mittel unsrer Gedanken und Empfindungen seyn sollte!” (Hearing and language are joined together . . . / How odd, that a moving breath of air should be the only, at least the best, medium for our thoughts and feelings) (2:272–73)! From this premise, it is only a short distance to the following crass declaration: “Die Taub- und Stummegebohrnen, ob sie gleich Jahre lang in einer Welt von Gebärden und andern Ideenzeichen lebten, betrogen sich dennoch nur wie Kinder oder wie menschliche Thiere. Nach der Analogie dessen was sie sahen und nicht verstanden, handelten sie; einer eigentlichen Vernunftverbindung waren sie durch allen Reichthum des Gesichts nicht fähig worden. Ein Volk hat keine Idee, zu der es kein Wort hat.” (Those born deaf and mute, if they lived for years in a world of gestures and other idea-signs, they nonetheless behave like children or human animals. They act according to the analogy of what they saw and did not understand; they did not become capable of a true connection of reason through all the richness of the face. A people has no idea of what it has no word for) (2:273).

Apparently following Herder in 1798’s *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*), Kant writes: “Und durch dieses Mittel, dessen Gebrauch durch das Stimmorgan, den Mund, geschieht, können sich Menschen am leichtesten und vollständigsten mit andern in Gemeinschaft der Gedanken und Empfindungen bringen . . . . Die Gestalt des Gegenstandes wird durchs Gehör nicht gegeben und die Sprachlaute führen nicht unmittelbar zur Vorstellung desselben, sind aber eben darum, und weil sie an sich nichts bedeuten, ausser allenfalls innere Gefühle, nicht Objecte, die geschicktesten Mittel der Bezeichnung der Begriffe, und Taubgebohrne, die eben darum auch stumm (ohne Sprache) bleiben müssen, können nie zu etwas Mehrerem als

Like his German counterparts, Gamborg demands a middle term between the visual signifier and the conceptual signified, i.e., the phoneme. The phoneme is, of course, phenomenal, but, in its invisibility and evanescence, it approaches the ideal.<sup>125</sup> Hence, in order to read, one must be able to reproduce the sounds represented by the various combinations of letters; or, in other words, readers need not only good eyesight, but also the power of speech.<sup>126</sup> “Den Dövstumme kan vel læres at forstaae Skrift” (The deaf-mute can probably be taught to understand writing), Gamborg explains, “men han kan dog ikke læse den, før han faaer lært at tale” (but he still cannot read it before he has been taught to speak).<sup>127</sup> Rather problematically, Gamborg then likens the deaf person’s supposedly fruitless attempts at reading to the reading of Chinese characters or hieroglyphics, in that, in all three cases—or so Gamborg believes—there would be no phoneme (real or imagined) to facilitate the reader’s acquisition of the concept signified by the signifier. The Danish philosopher thus anticipates Hegel’s aforementioned denigration of nonalphabetic writing.<sup>128</sup>

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einem *Analogon* der Vernunft gelangen” (49). (And it is by means of just this medium, which is set in motion by the vocal organ, the mouth, that human beings are able most easily and completely to share thoughts and feelings with others . . . . The shape of the object is not given through hearing, and the sounds of language do not lead immediately to the idea of it, but just because of this, and because they are nothing in themselves or at least not objects, but at most signifying only inner feelings, they are the best means of designating concepts. And people born deaf, who for this very reason must remain mute [without speech], can never arrive at anything more than an *analogue* of reason) (47). Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Riga: Hartknoch, 1784–91), [125. “Mit Betonung der \*mittelbaren\* Repräsentation, die allein durch einen über die lautliche Stimme definierten Schriftgebrauch gewährleistet werde, bezieht sich Gamborg aber direkt auf Kant. Dieser greift die philosophische Debatte um die Taubstummen nämlich in seiner \*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht\* \(1798\) auf. Im Rahmen einer Eloge auf das Ohr und auf den allein über diesen Sinn definierten Sprachgebrauch kommt Kant im §18 direkt auf die zentrale Vorstellung der mittelbaren Repräsentation zu sprechen, die ihn sogar dazu führen wird, den Taubgeborenen kurzerhand das Vermögen zur Vernunft abzuerkennen.” \(With emphasis on the \*indirect\* representation, which is ensured through an application of writing which is defined by the phonetic register, Gamborg refers directly to Kant. The latter continued the philosophical debate about the deaf-mute in his \*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht\*, to be exact. Within the framework of a eulogy to the ear and the use of language defined by this sense alone, Kant appears to speak directly of the central presentation of the indirect representation in §18, which even leads him, without further ado, to strip those born deaf of the power of reason.\) Müller-Wille, \*Sezierte Bücher\*, 55.](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Ideen_zur_Philosophie_der_Geschichte_der/tWgzcawnHsAC?hl=en&gbpv=1;ImmanuelKant,Anthropologie_in_pragmatischer_Hinsicht(Konigsberg:Nicolovius,1798),https://www.google.com/books/edition/Anthropologie_in_pragmatischer_Hinsicht/RSiwuZpQmb0C?hl=en&gbpv=1;ImmanuelKant,Anthropology_from_a_Pragmatic_Point_of_View,trans.RobertB.Louden(Cambridge:CambridgeUniversityPress,2006).</a></p>
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126. “Da den, der læser, saaledes ved ethvert Ord maa bemærke ikke allene dets Bogstaver og Stavelser, men ogsaa vide at angive de enkelte eller sammensatte Lyde og Artikulationer, der svare til de enkelte Stavelser og Ord: saa følger, at den, der skal læse, nødvendigviis maa kunne see og tale. Han skal fremføre artikulerede Lyde i Overenstemmelse med skrevne Ord (d. e. hörlige Ords synlige Figurer).” (Since the one who reads must not only observe the letters and syllables of each word, but also know how to give the individual or compound sounds and articulations that correspond to individual syllables or words: so, it follows that the one who shall read necessarily must be able to see and to speak. He shall put forward articulated sounds in agreement with written words [i.e., the visible figures of the audible words].) Gamborg, “Legologie,” 239.

127. Gamborg, “Legologie,” 239.

128. “Skrift er for den Dövstumme det samme som Hieroglyfers, sinesisk Skrift og Pasigrafie er for det talende Menneske. Det talende Menneske kan vel og forstaae Skrift uden lydelig (höjt) at opsigte Ordene; men han forstaaer den dog ikke saaledes som den Dövstumme. For denne er de skrevne Ord umiddelbare Repræsentanter af Begreber og Forestillinger; for det talende Menneske ere de derimod nærmest og umiddelbar Repræsentanter af artikulerede Lyde; og de repræsentere kun Begreber og Forestillinger middelbar formedelst Lydene.” (Writing for the deaf-mute is the same as hieroglyphics, Chinese writing, and pasigraphy for the speaking person. The speaking person can

I am not necessarily suggesting that Hegel read Gamborg. A more probable explanation is that both philosophers were actors in a pan-Germanic discourse network, a complex arising from the overlapping cultural and material histories of the German states and the Kingdom of Denmark.<sup>129</sup> Sharing this network's logocentric logic, both Gamborg and Hegel touted phonetic writing for the ease with which it dissolved into sound, as they believed that learning could only be effected through the corporeal or spiritual ear.

## POETRY

This subsection will be devoted to emergence of the disappearing book in the poetry of the German states and Denmark circa 1800. Since such a topic could constitute a dissertation in itself, this inquiry will be limited to the two defining works of the Golden Age and the *Goethezeit*, namely Adam Oehlenschläger's "Guldhornene" (The gold horns) (1802) and Goethe's *Faust* (1808). Although a case could be made for a genealogical relationship between these two poems, my point instead is that their affinities can more productively be traced back to Denmark and Germany's isomorphic histories of the book and reading, or, in other words, to the pan-Germanic discourse network.<sup>130</sup>

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surely understand writing without reading aloud to recite the words; but he does not understand it like the deaf-mute, after all. For the latter, the written words are immediate representations of concepts and ideas; for the speaking person they are, on the contrary, closest to immediate representations of articulated sounds; and they only represent concepts and ideas indirectly, by means of the sounds.) Gamborg, "Legologie," 239.

129. "Germany was at that time not a united 'Reich,' but a conglomerate of small, independent states, just as Denmark was a minor state—partly consisting, by the way, of the German-speaking provinces Holstein and Schleswig. Moreover, Danish culture at that time was deeply influenced by German: the language of the court, the aristocracy and the army was German, and literature and culture came mainly from or via Germany." Johnny Kondrup, "The Danish Golden Age as an Age of Crisis," in *The Crisis of the Danish Golden Age and Its Modern Resonance*, ed. Jon Stewart and Nathaniel Kramer (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2020), 19.

130. German-Danish cultural relations during the period are often mistakenly imagined as a one-way street leading from Germany to Denmark, although perhaps this misconception is somewhat forgivable, as the birth of Danish Romanticism and the beginning of the Golden Age are virtually synonymous with the importation of German Romanticism to Denmark via the Norwegian Henrik Steffens. According to Bruce H. Kirmmse, Steffens, before joining Friedrich Schlegel's Romantic circle in Jena, had imbibed Schellingian *Naturphilosophie* while earning his doctorate in mineralogy at the University of Kiel (81). (The Duchy of Holstein, in which Kiel was located, was ruled by the Danish king only in his capacity as the Duke of Holstein; strictly understood, it did not belong to the Kingdom of Denmark, and was part of the German confederation [59].) Upon his return to Copenhagen in 1802, Steffens presented a series of lectures that were attended by practically every major figure in the first generation of the Golden Age, including Jakob Peter Mynster and Hans Christian Ørsted (81). Sven H. Rossel adds that among them was the young Oehlenschläger, who, after his now-famous conversation with Steffens, radically revised a completed manuscript, which was then published as *Digte* (Poems) on Christmas Day 1802 (178). (The title page is postdated to the following year, as was customary for holiday publications.) The *pièce de résistance* of this collection was "Guldhornene," widely considered to be the program poem of Danish Romanticism. Given this historical narrative, it might seem counterintuitive that "Guldhornene" actually precedes the publication of part I of Goethe's *Faust* by five years or so. There was, however, Goethe's *Faust. Ein Fragment* (Faust: A fragment), which first appeared in 1790, and whose eponymous anti-hero also laments the dusty materiality of the Republic of Scholars (3ff.), just as the Faust of 1808 would. Oehlenschläger evidently read *Faust. Ein Fragment* in or before 1805. In the preface to the German translation of his *Aladdin* (the original Danish of which, with a dedication to Goethe, was first published in 1805), Oehlenschläger would write in regard to his own dramatic poem, "Auf die Idee, dem Gedichte eine philosophische Natur-Bedeutung zu geben, hat mich theils Göthes Faust, theils die Fragmente des leider zu früh gestorbenen Novalis, theils und vornehmlich das Märchen selbst, gebracht." (For the idea of giving a poem a philosophical nature or significance, I acquired in part from Goethe's *Faust*, in part from the

The *locus classicus* of Kittler’s discourse network of 1800 is the first scene of part one of Goethe’s *Faust*, where the eponymous protagonist finds himself surrounded by books, but none of them will yield up the spirit of its author. Kittler calls this discourse network the “Republic of Scholars,” where the written word is but impoverished, perishable matter.<sup>131</sup> Much to his chagrin, Faust is

Beschränkt mit diesem Bücherhauf  
Den Würme nagen, Staub bedeckt.

Confined with books, and every tome  
Is gnawed by worms, covered with dust.<sup>132</sup>

The Republic of Scholars simply swaps around inscribed signs, without authorial originality or readerly receptivity.<sup>133</sup> It is a discourse network not of the spirit but of the letter. Faust, on the other hand, would prefer to

Schau alle Wirkenskraft und Samen  
Und tu nicht mehr in Worten kramen.

Envisage the creative blazes  
Instead of rummaging in phrases.<sup>134</sup>

Unfortunately for him, the systematic conventions of the Republic of Scholars prevent authors from making themselves present to their readers.<sup>135</sup> Faust despairs of ever encountering another personality in these moldering heaps.

Like Faust, the Nordic antiquarians of Oehlenschläger’s “Guldhornene” also find themselves trapped in the Republic of Scholars. Just as Faust was rich in letters but poor in spirit, so, too, are the savants of “Guldhornene”:

De higer og søger  
i gamle Bøger

(They hunt and search  
in old books.)<sup>136</sup>

Seek though they may, the immediacy of the pagan past will never reveal itself to these near-sighted bookworms:

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fragments of Novalis, who unfortunately died too early, in part and above all from the fairytale itself) (1:xix). Ultimately, the direction of influence between Goethe and Oehlenschläger is beside the point. What I am arguing for instead is that both *Faust* and “Guldhornene” are paradigmatic of—rather than foundational for—a pan-Germanic discourse network and its disappearing book. Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Sven H. Rossel, “From Romanticism to Realism,” in *A History of Danish Literature*, ed. Sven H. Rossel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Goethe, [Johann Wolfgang von]. *Faust. Ein Fragment*, 8th ed. (Leipzig: Göschen, 1790), <https://www.google.com/books/edition/Faust/hagXZWcJyKcC?hl=en&gbpv=1>; preface to *Aladdin, oder die Wunderlampe. Ein dramatisches Gedicht*, in *Adam Öhlenschläger’s Dramatische Werke* (Vienna: Grund, 1820), [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Dramatische\\_Werke/24BkAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Adam+%C3%96hlenschl%C3%A4ger%E2%80%99s+Dramatische+Werke&pg=PP7&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Dramatische_Werke/24BkAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Adam+%C3%96hlenschl%C3%A4ger%E2%80%99s+Dramatische+Werke&pg=PP7&printsec=frontcover).

131. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 4.

132. *Goethe’s Faust: Part One and Selections from Part Two*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), lines 402–03.

133. “The Republic of Scholars is endless circulation, a discourse network without producers or consumers, which simply heaves words around.” Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 4.

134. *Goethe’s Faust*, lines 384–85.

135. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 4.

136. Adam Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” in *100 Danish Poems from the Medieval Period to the Present Day*, ed. Thomas Bredsdorff and Anne-Marie Mai (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2011), 136.

Oldtids Bedrifter  
 anede trylle;  
 men i Mulm de sig hylle  
 de gamle Skrifter.  
 Blikket stirrer,  
 Sig Tanken forvirrer.  
 I Taage de famle.

(The deeds of the past  
 could cast a spell,  
 but the old writings  
 wrap themselves in darkness.  
 The gaze stares,  
 the thought disappears.  
 They fumble in fog.)<sup>137</sup>

The philologists find themselves at the same impasse as Faust; they are stultified by the reflexive circulation of materially embedded discourse—what the Republic of Scholars takes to be learned communication.

Ultimately, both the poet-speaker of “Guldhornene” and Faust himself will eschew the lifelessness of the inscribed artifact in favor of a direct encounter between spirit and spirit. One such meeting occurs when Faust takes up a manuscript in Nostradamus’ own hand. The text now becomes something new, as its signs enter into a bilateral exchange with the reader, and “a virtual orality emerges.”<sup>138</sup> The significance of the manuscript *qua* medium comes into focus when one recalls that the historical Faust (ca. 1466–ca. 1538) lived in the wake of Gutenberg (ca. 1400–1468), whose press enabled scholars to widen the circulation of their works, but only as what Kittler calls “copies of copies.” Many of these early printed books are signed, of course, but, in a far more profound sense, they remain anonymous, as they lack the spirit inherent in the autographic manuscript. For Kittler, manual inscription functions as a metonym for authorial presence.<sup>139</sup> Canceling its materiality, the Nostradamus volume proffers a simulated auralty, bordering on the “transcendental signified.”<sup>140</sup>

Like his creator,<sup>141</sup> the Goethean Faust bases his theory of translation on the doctrine of the transcendental signified, which affirms the existence of an ideal poetic substance independent of

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137. Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” 136.

138. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

139. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

140. For the logocentrist, speech represents the ideal, whereas writing only represents speech. And yet, speech is privileged by Socrates as “a discourse that is *written down*, with knowledge, in the soul of the listener” (*Phdr.* 276a; my emphasis). Famously, Jacques Derrida will draw out the implications of Plato’s scriptorial metaphor for speech in his *De la grammatologie (Of Grammatology)*: “We would wish rather to suggest that the alleged derivativeness of writing, however real and massive, was possible only on one condition, that the ‘original,’ ‘natural,’ etc. language [*langage*] had never existed, that it had never been intact, untouched by writing, that it had itself always been writing.” Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Fortieth Anniversary Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 61.

141. As Goethe would later write in *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit* (From my life: Poetry and truth), “Ich ehre den Rhythmus wie den Reim, wodurch Poesie erst zur Poesie wird, aber das eigentlich tief und gründlich Wirksame, das wahrhaft Ausbildende und Fördernde ist dasjenige, was vom Dichter übrig bleibt, wenn er in Prosa übersetzt wird. Dann bleibt der reine vollkommene Gehalt. . . . Ich will noch, zu Gunsten meines Vorschlags, an Luthers Bibelübersetzung erinnern.” (I value both rhythm and rhyme, whereby poetry first becomes poetry; but what is really, deeply, and fundamentally effective, what is really permanent, is what remains of the poet when he is translated into prose. Then the pure, perfect substance remains. . . . I will only, in support of my position, mention Luther’s translation of the Bible.) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Eduard von der Hellen, Jubiläums-Ausgabe (Stuttgart, 1904–5), 24:56–57, quoted in Friedrich Kittler, *Aufschreibesysteme. 1800 • 1900*, 4th ed. (Munich: Fink, 2003), 88; and Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 71.



the signifier.<sup>142</sup> Cogitating on the opening verse of the Gospel of John,<sup>143</sup> Faust first changes Luther’s “Wort” (word) to “Sinn” (mind), then to “Kraft” (force), and, finally, to “Tat” (act).<sup>144</sup> While the Republic of Scholars would only translate according to authorized reference sources, Faust intrepidly pursues the essential meaning of the word himself. This word is none other than *Wort*—or, in the original koine, *λόγος*. Even in his rendition of this signifier of signifiers, Faust subordinates sign to referent in pursuit of the extra-lingual. Resisting any one definition, *λόγος* is equivalent to the *Tat* of writing itself. Freed from the Republic of Scholars and its chains of signification, the once-wearied academic is enlivened by a sort of “free writing,” un beholden to philology or theology.<sup>145</sup>

Oehlenschläger’s “Guldhornene” is also a free translation of sorts. Although the poem could be said to be an ekphrasis of the Golden Horns of Gallehus, its poet-speaker does not translate the shorter horn’s runic inscription.<sup>146</sup> This omission is, I argue, intentional, and it is consonant with a preference for the transcendental signified over the signifier. Had the poet-speaker rendered these runes word-for-word, he would have fallen into the same trap as the historians he mocks; that is, he would have been seeking glimmers of a glorious past in gloomy scholarship. Hence, the poet-speaker (or, to be more specific, his prosopopoeia of what I take to be the Nordic *Volksgeist*) stresses that these Iron Age horns were not discovered by professional archeologists. Instead, two representatives of the Danish folk, a country maiden and a peasant lad, are each rewarded with one of the treasures:

<p>“I som raver i blinde, skal finde et ældgammelt Minde der skal komme og svinde! Dets gyldne Sider skal Præget bære af de ældste Tider.</p>	<p>(“You who stagger blind shall find an ancient relic, which shall come and disappear! Its golden sides shall bear the stamp of the oldest times.</p>
<p>Af det kan I lære Med andagtsfuld Ære I vor Gave belønne. Det skønneste Skønne, en <i>Møe</i> skal Helligdommen finde!”</p>	<p>From it you can learn if you reward us for our gift with devout honor. The beauty of beauties, a <i>maid</i> shall find the shrine!”<sup>147</sup></p>

And, one hundred years later, another horn is uncovered:

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142. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 11.

143. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1 (Revised Standard Version).

144. *Goethe’s Faust*, lines 1226–37.

145. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 14.

146. The inscription could be translated as “Jeg Lægæst, holtijaz, gjorde hornet” (I, Lægæst, *holtijaz*, made the horn), with *holtijaz* possibly meaning either “skovbo” (forest dweller) or “fra Holt” (from Holt). *Den store danske*, s.v. “Guldhornene,” by Morten Axboe and Merete Harding, [https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Guldhornene?\\_gl=1\\*1p5wakh\\*\\_up\\*MQ..&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuI7up\\_\\_M\\_wIVyf3ICh1\\_iwSrEAAYASAAEgLK4\\_D\\_BwE](https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Guldhornene?_gl=1*1p5wakh*_up*MQ..&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuI7up__M_wIVyf3ICh1_iwSrEAAYASAAEgLK4_D_BwE).

147. Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” 138.

[“]Naturens Søn,  
 ukiendt i Løn,  
 men som sine Fædre  
 kraftig og stor,  
 dyrkende sin Jord,  
 ham vil vi hædre,  
 han skal *atter* finde!”

([“]The son of nature,  
 unrewarded,  
 but like his fathers  
 great and powerful,  
 cultivating his soil,  
 him we will honor,  
 he shall find *once more!*”)<sup>148</sup>

Taken together, these two episodes, while based on historical fact,<sup>149</sup> unite the three elements of the Kittlerian trinity. “Nature, Love, Woman,” writes Kittler, “the terms were synonymous with the discourse network of 1800.”<sup>150</sup> Close to or even constructed as “Nature,” a peasant unearths the second horn; and the maiden who comes across the first obviously represents “Woman” writ large, and she “paa Elskov grubler” (is brooding on love).<sup>151</sup>

These horns are not books, of course, but they are textual objects, and Oehlenschläger wrote “Guldhornene” soon after their disappearance.<sup>152</sup> The poem, therefore, can be read as a variation on the disappearing book.<sup>153</sup> This familiar theme is evoked not only in Oehlenschläger’s choice of subject matter; by resisting the temptations of a traditional ekphrasis, in which the horns’ designs would be described and their runes rephrased in Danish, the poet emphatically chooses the spirit over the letter, in accordance with the ideal of the disappearing book.

## AESTHETICS

Fichte envisioned a poetry beyond the reach of language in his “Ueber Geist und Buchstab in der Philosophie. In einer Reihe von Briefen” (“On the Spirit and the Letter in Philosophy: In a Series of Letters”), which was published in the 1798 issue of *Philosophische Journal*.<sup>154</sup> Here Fichte

148. Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” 143.

149. “Det lange horn blev fundet af Kirsten Svendsdatter i 1639. . . . 15–20 m fra det første findested fandt Erich Lassen i 1734 det ufuldstændige korte horn.” (The long horn was found by Kirsten Svendsdatter in 1639. . . . Fifteen to twenty meters from the first finding place, Erich Lassen found the imperfect short horn in 1734.) *Den store danske*, s.v. “Guldhornene.”

150. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 73.

NB: The disappearing book arose at this nexus, as the woodblock animals that had been teaching children to read since the Reformation were now replaced by what Kittler calls “the Mother’s Mouth,” in a new kind of primer (39). Kittler describes how these books employed the phonetic method of the Bavarian school councilor Heinrich Stephani, shifting the pedagogical locus from the printed page—the traditional domain of the father—to the mother’s lap, where children could enjoy a playful orality (32).

151. Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” 141.

152. At the time of the poem’s composition, the horns had been melted down, unbeknownst to Oehlenschläger. John L. Greenway, *The Golden Horns: Mythic Imagination and the Nordic Past* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 2.

153. The Nordic *Volksgeist* alludes explicitly to the horns’ disappearance: “I som raver i blinde, / skal finde / et ældgammelt Minde, / der skal komme og svinde!” (You who stagger blind / shall find / an ancient relic / which shall come and fade away!) Oehlenschläger, “Guldhornene,” 139.

154. According to David Simpson, this issue was not made available until 1800, and, while the work is dated 1794, it was not written until a year later (275n1). Fichte’s letters are a tacit rejoinder to Schiller’s *Ueber die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (*On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*), but Schiller notoriously refused to let them appear in his journal *Die Hören*, and thus their publication was

would declare, “Diese innere Stimmung des Künstlers ist der Geist seines Products; und die zufälligen Gestalten, in denen er sie ausdrückt, sind der Körper oder der Buchstabe desselben.” (This inner mood of the artist is the spirit . . . of the work he creates, and the contingent forms in which he expresses it are the embodiment or the letter . . . of it.)<sup>155</sup> In other words, as the signified passes from author to reader, the signifier serves as but a conduit for what surpasses it (i.e., *der Geist*).

Once again, it will be instructive to juxtapose the discourse network of 1800 with the early modern Republic of Scholars. For Spinoza, writes Selcer, “‘the word of God’ is radically immanent,” insofar as it has materialized as a scroll or codex.<sup>156</sup> Scriptures can indeed lead us to a more devout life,<sup>157</sup> and yet this dynamic materialism of the letter is quite different from Fichte’s notion of an authorial spirit—or, in the context of Golden Age Denmark, the Grundtvigian “levende Ord” (living word)<sup>158</sup>—precisely because a Spinozan reading is grounded on the surfaces of the book-object itself.

Conversely, for a Platonist like Fichte, the book becomes as transparent as the air itself, and the author’s spirit addresses itself to the reader in a voice heard only in inwardness, unhindered by the distractions of the physical world. The Fichtean author “lieh der todten Masse” (lent . . . dead matter), i.e., the letter, “seine Seele, dass diese sie auf uns übertragen möchte; unser Geist ist das letzte Ziel seiner Kunst, und jene Gestalten sind die Vermittler zwischen ihm und uns, wie die Luft es ist zwischen unserem Ohre und der Saite” (his soul . . . so that it could communicate itself to us. Our spirit is the final goal of his art, and those forms are the intermediaries between him and us, as the air is the intermediary between our ear and the string).<sup>159</sup> In this simile, the author’s ideal poetic production is likened to the string of a musical instrument, which emits sound waves to the reader through a virtually imperceptible medium. As the intelligentsia redefined poetry as an aural medium and ignored its writtenness, the average reader became more susceptible to the hallucinations of the disappearing book.

Yet that did not stop Heiberg from drastically retooling Hegelian aesthetics to suit his own bibliophilic purposes in “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie.” Earlier, however, he had uncritically adopted Hegel’s logocentrism in 1838’s “Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjøne Kunster” (On painting in its relation to the other fine arts).<sup>160</sup> Heiberg, as we shall see, was not the only Danish aesthetician to assume a staunchly Hegelian stance at one stage of his career. Before looking more closely at this tendency, we should first survey just what Hegel had to say about poetry and the book.

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delayed (74). The reasons for this disagreement between Schiller and Fichte are beyond the scope of this dissertation. David Simpson, ed. *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

155. “Ueber Geist und Buchstab in der Philosophie. In einer Reihe von Briefen,” in *Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s sämtliche Werke*, ed. J. H. Fichte (Berlin: Veit, 1846), 8:294; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “On the Spirit and the Letter in Philosophy,” trans. Elizabeth Rubenstein, in Simpson, *Aesthetic and Literary Criticism*, 90.

156. Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book*, 188.

157. Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book*, 189.

158. Grundtvig’s “‘matchless discovery’ was the distinction between the ‘Living Word’ in the sacraments as well as in the Apostles’ Creed and the written word in its various forms.” Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 2:190.

159. “Ueber Geist und Buchstab,” *Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s sämtliche Werke*, 8:294; Fichte, “Spirit and the Letter,” 90.

160. “Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjøne Kunster,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:302. See also Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 57–58.

In his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik (Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art)*, Hegel adamantly declared that poetry ought to be recited, just as a piece of music had to be played.<sup>161</sup> Prizing the oral over the inscribed, Hegel was essentially endorsing the disappearing book. In fact, in these same lectures, he put poetry on a continuum with music.<sup>162</sup>

Hegel's was not a naive phonocentrism. He did not privilege the spoken word for its animal warmth, but because it was supposedly at a single remove from—and analogous to—the ideal, whereas writing was thought to be doubly distant. Still, Hegel conceded that both phoneme combinations and combinations of letters were only signs for “die Wörter”—and here he can only mean the words in their transcendent or Platonic sense. While inscribed signifiers were only arbitrarily connected to the sounds they represented and—more importantly—to the words themselves (again, in the idealist sense used above), there was, on the other hand, an essential relation between *die Wörter* and their vocalized signifiers. During a poetry recital, the signs (i.e., the phonemes) themselves were thought to participate in a dialectic of tone, rhythm, and meaning. Print, on the other hand, is of no interest to the hardcore Hegelian aesthetician, as there can be no meaningful affinity between the external sign (i.e., the letter or combination of letters) and what this sign ultimately represents.<sup>163</sup> Heiberg, however, would eventually liberate himself from this

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161. “Die Werke der Poesie müssen gesprochen, gesungen, vorgetragen, durch lebendige Subjekte selber dargestellt werden wie die Werke der Musik.” (Poetic works must be spoken, sung, declaimed, presented by living persons themselves, just as musical works have to be performed.) G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 3:320; G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:1036.

162. “Durch diese Erfüllung nämlich mit geistigen Vorstellungen wird der Ton zum Wortlaut und das Wort wiederum aus einem Selbstzwecke zu einem für sich selbständigkeitslosen Mittel geistiger Äußerung.” (The musical note being thus replete with spiritual ideas becomes the sound of a word, and the word, instead of then being an end in itself, becomes in itself a dependent means of spiritual expression.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:228; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:963.

163. “Die Poesie ist ihrem Begriffe nach wesentlich *tönend*, und dies Erklingen darf ihr, wenn sie *vollständig* als Kunst heraustreten soll, um so weniger fehlen, als es ihre einzige Seite ist, nach welcher sie mit der äußeren Existenz in realen Zusammenhang kommt. Denn gedruckte oder geschriebene Buchstaben sind freilich auch noch äußerlich vorhanden, jedoch nur gleichgültige Zeichen für Laute und Wörter. Sahen wir nun zwar die Wörter schon früher gleichfalls als bloße Bezeichnungsmittel der Vorstellungen an, so gestaltet doch die Poesie wenigstens das zeitliche Element und den Klang dieser Zeichen und erhebt sie dadurch zu einem von der geistigen Lebendigkeit dessen, wofür sie die Zeichen sind, durchdrungenen Material, während der Druck auch diese Beseelung in eine für sich genommen ganz gleichgültige, mit dem geistigen Gehalt nicht mehr zusammenhängende Sichtbarkeit fürs Augen umsetzt und die Verwandlung des Gesehenen in das Element der zeitlichen Dauer und des Klingens unserer Gewohnheit überläßt, statt uns das tönende Wort und sein zeitliches Dasein wirklich zu geben. Wenn wir uns deshalb mit dem bloßen Lesen begnügen, so geschieht dies teils um der Geläufigkeit willen, mit welcher wir das Gelesene uns als gesprochen vorstellen, teils aus dem Grunde, daß die Poesie allein unter allen Künsten schon im Elemente des Geistes ihren wesentlichsten Seiten nach fertig ist und die Hauptsache weder durch die sinnliche Anschauung noch das Hören zum Bewußtsein bringt. Doch gerade dieser Geistigkeit wegen *muß* sie als Kunst nicht ganz die Seite ihrer wirklichen Äußerung von sich abstreifen, wenn sie nicht zu einer ähnlichen Unvollständigkeit kommen will, in welcher z. B. eine bloße Zeichnung die Gemälde großer Koloristen ersetzen soll.” (Poetry is by nature essentially musical, and if it is to emerge as fully art it must not lack this resonance, all the more because this is the one aspect in virtue of which it really comes into connection with external existence. For printed or written letters, it is true, are also existent externally but they are only arbitrary signs for sounds and words. Earlier we did regard words as likewise means for indicating ideas, but poetry imposes a form, at least on the timing and sound of these signs; in this way it gives them the higher status of a material penetrated by the spiritual life of what they signify. Print, on the other hand, transforms this animation into a mere visibility which, taken by itself, is a matter of indifference and has no longer any connection with the spiritual meaning; moreover, instead of actually giving us the sound and timing of the word, it leaves to our usual practice the transformation of what is seen into sound and temporal duration. Consequently, if we are satisfied with reading merely, this happens partly on account of the

Hegelian orthodoxy in the “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie” essay and with his *Nytaarsgaver* business.

For Hegel, the work of art was not merely its sensuous manifestation; more importantly, it was also the thoughts that this manifestation generated in the audience.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, the artwork itself “steht in der *Mitte* zwischen der unmittelbaren Sinnlichkeit und dem ideellen Gedanken” (stands in the *middle* between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought).<sup>165</sup> Hegel’s aesthetics are based on a hierarchy of decreasing materiality, with poetry at the apex.<sup>166</sup> Painting and music, the two other forms of Romantic art, had only begun to liberate the ideas of the spirit from their perceptible media, in which they (i.e., the ideas) had been entrenched in symbolic and classical art.<sup>167</sup> This emancipation of the ideal was consummated in poetry, for poetry’s visible or even the audible signs are not its subject matter, as these are—in and of themselves—devoid of interest.<sup>168</sup> With the sensuous finally subordinated, the “eigentliche Äußerlichkeit und Objektivität” (proper external characteristic and objectivity) of poetry is “das *innere Vorstellen und Anschauen selbst*” (the *inner* imagination and intuition itself).<sup>169</sup>

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readiness with which we imagine as spoken what is seen, partly because poetry alone of all the arts is in its essential aspects already completely at home in the spiritual element and does not bring the chief thing to our minds through either ear or eye. But, precisely on account of this spirituality, poetry as art must not entirely strip itself of this aspect of actual external expression, at any rate if it wants to avoid the imperfection of e.g. a black and white sketch substituted for a painting produced by a master of colour.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:320–21; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:1036–37.

164. “Aus einem sinnlich Konkreten ein Abstraktum, ein Gedachtes und somit etwas wesentlich anderes macht, als dasselbe Objekt in seiner sinnlichen Erscheinung war.” (Out of something sensuously concrete it makes an abstraction, something thought, and so something essentially other than what that same object was in its sensuous appearance.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 1:59; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:37.

165. Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 1:60; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:38.

166. “Dadurch ist das eigentliche Element poetischer Darstellung die poetische *Vorstellung* und geistige Veranschaulichung selber, und indem dies Element allen Kunstformen gemeinschaftlich ist, so zieht sich auch die Poesie durch alle hindurch und entwickelt sich selbständig in ihnen. Die Dichtkunst ist die allgemeine Kunst des in sich freigewordenen, nicht an das äußerlich-sinnliche Material zur Realisation gebundenen Geistes, der nur im inneren Raume und der inneren Zeit der Vorstellungen und Empfindungen sich ergeht.” (Therefore the proper element of poetical representation is the poetical *imagination* and the illustration of spirit itself, and since this element is common to all the art-forms, poetry runs through them and all develops itself independently in each of them. Poetry is the universal art of the spirit which has become free in itself and which is not tied down for its realization to external sensuous material; instead, it launches out exclusively in the inner space and the inner time of ideas and feelings.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 1:123; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:89.

167. “Was endlich die *dritte*, geistigste Darstellung der romantischen Kunstform anbetrifft, so haben wir dieselbe in der *Poesie* zu suchen. Ihre charakteristische Eigentümlichkeit liegt in der Macht, mit welcher sie das sinnliche Element, von dem schon Musik und Malerei die Kunst zu befreien begannen, dem Geiste und seinen Vorstellungen unterwirft.” (Finally, as for the *third*, most spiritual presentation of Romantic art, we must look for it in *poetry*. Its characteristic peculiarity lies in the power with which it subjects to spirit and its ideas the sensuous element from which music and painting began to make art free.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 1:122; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:88.

168. “Doch ist dies sinnlich Element, das in der Musik noch unmittelbar eins mit der Innerlichkeit war, hier von dem Inhalte des Bewußtseins losgetrennt, während der Geist diesen Inhalt sich für sich und in sich selbst zur Vorstellung bestimmt, zu deren Ausdruck er sich zwar des Tones, doch nur als eines für sich wert- und inhaltlosen Zeichens bedient. Der Ton kann demnach ebensogut auch bloßer Buchstabe sein, denn das Hörbare ist wie das Sichtbare zur bloßen Andeutung des Geistes herabgesunken.” (Yet this sensuous element, which in music was still immediately one with inwardness, is here cut free from the content of consciousness, while spirit determines this content on its own account and in itself and makes it into ideas. To express these it uses sound indeed, but only as a sign in itself without value or content. The sound, therefore, may just as well be a mere letter, since the audible, like the visible, has sunk into being a mere indication of spirit.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 1:122–23; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1:89.

169. Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:229; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:964. In his translation, T. M. Knox does not follow Hegel’s emphasis *in toto*.

Asserting that poetry could be translated or prosified without a significant loss of meaning, Hegel was in agreement with Goethe,<sup>170</sup> who, as we saw above, had argued for a poetic content prior to and independent of any specific linguistic articulation. Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising that Hegel would later come to contradict himself in these same lectures, as he claimed that it really made no difference whether poetry was presented orally or in writing, for neither sound nor script was the true poetic substance.<sup>171</sup> Unlike the other arts, poetry does not require one specific material form because its medium is spirit—or self-conscious subjectivity—itself.<sup>172</sup>

So, in the end, the disappearance of the book did not necessarily occur in the mouth of a recitator. The period in question is known for silent reading, after all.<sup>173</sup> Rather, the book vanishes whenever it goes from being a corporeal thing (in space) to being a verbal text (in time). While the printed word was the coin of the realm for the Republic of Scholars, the currency of the discourse network of 1800 was poetry—not in the form of books, but in that of the transcendental signified. Ironically, more physical copies were now in circulation than ever before, but that was precisely the impetus for an idealist aesthetics that ignored the book-object.

So much for Hegel *vis-à-vis* the book. Now to complete our outline of the pan-Germanic discourse network with two key examples from Danish aesthetics. In the aforementioned “Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjønnede Kunster,” Heiberg, following Hegel, lauds music and, above all else, poetry, for its synthesis of the material and the ideal.<sup>174</sup> Hegel’s definition of

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170. “Es kann auch ohne wesentliche Verkümmern seines Wertes in andere Sprachen übersetzt, aus gebundener in ungebundene Rede übertragen und somit in ganz andere Verhältnisse des Tönens gebracht werden.” (It can even be translated into other languages without essential detriment to its value, and turned from poetry into prose, and in these cases it is related to quite different sounds from those of the original.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:229–30; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:964.

171. “Deshalb bleibt es auch für das eigentlich Poetische gleichgültig, ob ein Dichtwerk gelesen oder angehört wird.” (Consequently in the case of poetry proper it is a matter of indifference whether we read it or hear it read.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:229; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:964.

172. “Das Talent zur Dichtkunst, insofern dieselbe sich der gänzlichen Verkörperung ihrer Gebilde in einem besonderen Material enthebt, ist solchen bestimmten Bedingungen weniger unterworfen und dadurch allgemeiner und unabhängiger. Es bedarf nur der Gabe phantasiereich Gestaltung überhaupt.” (Poetry is exempt from the complete embodiment of its productions in a particular material, and therefore a talent for it is less subject to such specific conditions and so is more general and independent. All that it requires is a gift for richly imaginative formulations.) Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 3:271; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:997.

173. Martyn Lyons implicitly associates the extensive reading of the *Leserevolution* with the decline of reading out loud: “This love of the recital of familiar pieces, of the orality and music of poetry, was part of a traditional, or ‘intensive,’ relationship between the reader/listener and the printed word. This relationship was disappearing in the nineteenth century.” Lyons, “New Readers,” 343.

174. “Hvad man kunde kalde Kunstens Materie eller Material, er nemlig ikke her et Ydre for Kunsten, men er i uopløselig Eenhed med den. Thi dette Material er Toner og Ord, og disse ere allerede fra Fødselen af underkastede Skjønhedens Lov, umiddelbart anviste til naturligt Element for denne, hvorimod Steen, Marmor, Træer, Farvestoffer, ja selv den menneskelige Personlighed have en medfødt Raahed, hvorved de gjøre Skjønheden Modstand, og derfor først maae undertvinges, tildannes, opdrages af denne.” (What one could call the matter of art or material, is here not an outer surface for art, but is in an insoluble unity with it. For this material is tones and words, and these are already from birth subjected to the law of beauty, and immediately shown to be in its natural element, whereas stone, marble, wood, pigments, yes, even the human figure has an inborn rawness that resists beauty, and therefore must first be subdued, fashioned, and brought up from this.) “Om Malerkunsten,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:302.

NB: Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* were published posthumously between 1835 and 1838, which would have given Heiberg time to familiarize himself with at least some of their contents before writing “Om Malerkunsten i dens Forhold til de andre skjønnede Kunster,” which appeared in no. 2 of his journal *Perseus* in 1838. Yet this is something of a moot point, since, although Hegel was not lecturing on aesthetics during Heiberg’s stay in Berlin, Heiberg still managed to borrow some notes taken by a student of Hegel’s on the subject, which served as

poetry is salient in what Heiberg calls “*den substantielle Kunst*” (*substantial art*). Here, just as with Hegel, the book-object drops out of sight as the spatial gives way to temporal.<sup>175</sup>

Perhaps eager to impress Heiberg, Kierkegaard appropriates this Hegelian model in “De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier eller det Musikalsk-Erotiske” (The immediate erotic stages or the musical-erotic), an essay attributed to the pseudonym A in 1843’s *Enten – Eller*.<sup>176</sup> With its perfect synthesis of form and content, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*—according to A—towers above all other classic works of art.<sup>177</sup> The pseudonym starts by placing poetry on a scale with music,<sup>178</sup> but he ultimately elevates language to a spiritual medium because it demotes the sensuous element to a mere means of signification.<sup>179</sup> In this gesture, A and his creator are tracking the Heiberg of “Om Malerkunst” and, in turn, the Hegel of *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*.

In the “Bidrag” treatise, Heiberg performs a *volte-face* from the Hegelian disappearing book to an ocular aesthetic that gives print pride of place. Interestingly, Heiberg employs Hegel’s technique of *Aufhebung* (sublation) to arrive at this non-phonocentric—and thus un-Hegelian—conclusion.<sup>180</sup> Overlooking the conceptual architecture of the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*,

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the basis for his unpublished *Grundlinier til Systemet der Aesthetik als speculativt Videnskabeligt* (Outlines to the system of aesthetics as speculative science) in 1824. Jon Stewart, *The Heiberg Period: 1824–1836*, tome 1 of *A History of Hegelianism in Golden Age Denmark* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 2007), 180.

175. “Substansen er nemlig den idealistisk prægede Materie. Rummet, denne Betingelse for det Realistiske, forsvinder, og kun den idealistiske Tid bliver tilbage; det Synlige er ikke længere Fremstillingens Gjenstand, men derimod det Hørlige.” (The substance is namely the characteristic ideal material. Space, the condition for the realistic, disappears, and only the idealistic time remains behind. The visible is no longer the object of representation, but rather the audible.) “Malerkunsten,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:302.

176. Jon Stewart goes so far as to claim that Kierkegaard had a “pro-Hegelian period” from *Afen endnu Levendes Papirer* (From the papers of one still living) through the writing of *Enten – Eller*. He is correct to an extent, but I maintain that Kierkegaard also exhibited appreciable intellectual independence from Hegel in *Enten – Eller*, at least in ethics if not in aesthetics. Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard’s Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, *Modern European Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 237; Troy Wellington Smith, “Either Mediation / Or Repentance: Kierkegaard’s Deconstruction of the Goethean Bildungsroman” (paper, American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, Baltimore, MD, January 6, 2017).

177. “Den fuldendte Eenhed af denne Idee og den dertil svarende Form have vi nu i Mozarts Don Juan. . . . Derfor staaer Mozart ved sin Don Juan øverst blandt hine Udødelige.” (The complete unity of this idea and the corresponding form we now have in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. . . . Therefore, by his *Don Giovanni*, Mozart stands at the top of those immortals.) *Enten – Eller. Et Livs-Fragment*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:64–65.

178. “Gaaer jeg nu ud fra Sproget, for ved Bevægelse igjennem dette ligesom at lytte mig Musikken ud, saa viser Sagen sig omtrent saaledes. Antager jeg, at Prosa er den Sprogform, der er mest fjernet fra Musikken, saa bemærker jeg allerede i det oratoriske Foredrag, i den sonore Bygning af Perioder en Anklang af det Musikalske, der træder stærkere og stærkere frem igjennem forskjellige Trin i det poetiske Foredrag, i Versets Bygning, i Rimet, indtil endelig det Musikalske har udviklet sig saa stærkt, at Sproget hører op og Alt bliver Musik.” (Now, if I go out from language, to sound out music by a motion through the former, then the matter appears approximately like this: If I assume that prose is the form of language that is furthest from music, then I will already notice in the oratorical delivery, in the sonorous building of units, a ring of the musical, which appears more and more strongly through the various steps in the poetic delivery, in the building of verse, in rhyme, until finally the musical has developed so strongly that language ceases and everything becomes music.) *Enten – Eller*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:75.

179. “Sproget er, som Medium betragtet, det absolut aandeligt bestemte Medium, det er derfor Ideens egentlige Medium. . . . I Sproget er saaledes det Sandselige som Medium nedsat til blot Redskab, og bestandig negeret. Saaledes er det ikke med de andre Medier.” (Language is, considered as a medium, the absolute spiritually determined medium; it is therefore the Idea’s proper medium. . . . In language, the sensuous as medium is thus reduced to a mere tool and constantly negated. It is not like this with the other media.) *Enten – Eller*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:73.

180. “Synen anses vara det högsta av alla sinnen. I sin dialektiska argumentation försöker Heiberg visa att synen är kapabel att ‘upphäva’ (i den hegelianska meningen ‘aufheben’) all andra sinnen. I detta sammanhang hänvisar Heiberg just till skriftmediet och läsandets akt.” (Sight is thought to be the highest of all senses. In his

Kierkegaard, in a series of satires, dismisses these gift-books as contentless baubles, for they do not disappear but stay put on the shelf. Such attacks were probably motivated by Heiberg's failure to sufficiently appreciate *Enten – Eller*,<sup>181</sup> in which Kierkegaard, in the Mozart essay, had pseudonymously upheld the disappearing book. In the next chapter, both bibliographical praxis and aesthetic theory will be brought to bear on the *Nytaarsgaver*, and Kierkegaard's dogged campaign against them will be plotted out step-by-step.

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dialectical argumentation, Heiberg attempts to show that sight is capable of 'sublating' [in the Hegelian meaning of *aufheben*] all other senses. In this connection, Heiberg refers precisely to written media and the act of reading.) Müller-Wille, "Om bokens poetik," 83–84.

181. Henning Fenger, *Kierkegaard, the Myths and Their Origins: Studies in the Kierkegaardian Papers and Letters*, trans. George C. Schoolfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 147–48; Stewart, *Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, 304.



## CHAPTER 2: THE HEIBERGIAN BOOK

In chapter 1, we surveyed the cultural and material preconditions that gave rise to the “disappearing book,”<sup>1</sup> namely “bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit” (the bourgeois public sphere),<sup>2</sup> the “Leserevolution” (reading revolution),<sup>3</sup> and “the industrial revolution of the book.”<sup>4</sup> To review, the disappearing book supposedly negated its physical form in order to enable a transcendent encounter between the reader’s and the author’s respective spirits.<sup>5</sup> In both the German states and the Kingdom of Denmark, the disappearing book was equally a result of the period’s intellectual history, as it arose from developments in the fields of philosophy of language, poetry, and aesthetics. Indeed, when evaluating the books of his contemporaries, Kierkegaard would hold them to the measure of the disappearing book, but here the stakes were more than just bibliographical. In satirizing the superficiality of Golden Age print culture, Kierkegaard was also critiquing the culture writ large, including two of its leading institutions, the theater and the church.

The first section of this chapter will be devoted to Heiberg’s unflattering review of *Enten – Eller* (Either/or), “Litterær Vintersæd” (Literary winter crops). For Heiberg, *Enten – Eller* was only “to store og tykke Bind eller af 54 store og tættrykte Ark” (two large and thick volumes or 54 large and closely printed sheets).<sup>6</sup> By the aesthetic criterion of the disappearing book, this stubborn materiality would make Kierkegaard’s debut a disappointment, as it failed to become spirit for Heiberg.

In his satire on Johan Ludvig Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* (New Year’s gifts)—literary anthologies dressed up in trade bindings for the holiday season—Kierkegaard gave as good as he got. Although Henning Fenger and Jon Stewart ascribe Kierkegaard’s subsequent campaign against the German Idealist Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to Heiberg’s lukewarm reception of *Enten – Eller*,<sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard actually targets the *Nytaarsgaver* by doubling down on an Idealist

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1. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks: 1800 / 1900*, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 54.

2. Jürgen Habermas provides the classic definition of this concept. Jürgen Habermas, author’s preface to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger, with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), xvii.

3. Robert Darnton writes, “Following a notion of Rolf Engelsing, they [sc. German scholars] often maintain that reading habits became transformed at the end of the eighteenth century. Before this ‘Leserevolution,’ readers tended to work laboriously through a small number of texts, especially the Bible, over and over again. Afterwards, they raced through all kinds of material, seeking amusement rather than edification. The shift from intensive to extensive reading coincided with a desacralization of the printed word. The world began to be cluttered with reading matter, and texts began to be treated as commodities that could be discarded as casually as yesterday’s newspaper.” Note that Darnton uses the word *text* where I would use the word *book*. Robert, Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” in *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 203.

4. See James Raven, “The Industrial Revolution of the Book,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143–61.

5. For Friedrich Kittler, the first scene of Goethe’s *Faust* is emblematic of this meeting: “Among the copies of copies that fill the libraries of scholars, the author Nostradamus (who, not accidentally, is also a magician) manifests himself in the inimitable character of his manuscript. His imaginary presence makes scholarly brooding on signs as superfluous as the voice does writing. Everything takes its course as if his book were no longer a book. . . . A Spirit manifests itself to another . . . or (as Faust says) speaks.” Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5. See *Goethe’s Faust: Part One and Selections from Part Two*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), lines 482–513.

6. [Johan Ludvig Heiberg], “Litterær Vintersæd,” *Intelligensblade*, March 1, 1843, 288.

7. Henning Fenger, *Kierkegaard, the Myths and Their Origins: Studies in the Kierkegaardian Papers and Letters*, trans. George C. Schoolfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 147–48; Jon Stewart,

position, namely, that of the disappearing book. In other words, Kierkegaard claims that these gift-books remained mere knick-knacks for him. Perhaps unfairly, he charges the *Nytaarsgaver* with a showy materialism, a merely immediate sensuousness, but Heiberg's mature biblio-aesthetics—which I have named the Heibergian book—were Idealist, if only quasi-Hegelian. Raising the eye above the ear, the Heibergian book inverted the Hegelian hierarchy of the senses, but it did so through Hegel's patented technology of *Aufhebung* (sublation), as Klaus Müller-Wille has aptly demonstrated.<sup>8</sup>

The third section will present Kierkegaard's *Taler* (Talks) as his proposed alternative to the *Nytaarsgaver*.<sup>9</sup> Particular attention will be paid to the first talks that he published, "Troens Forventning. Nytaarsdag" (The expectancy of faith: New Year's Day) and "Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra" (All good and all perfect gifts come from above) in the collection *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843* (Two upbuilding talks, 1843). As I will argue, this nexus of "Nytaarsdag" and "Gave" reveals that Kierkegaard probably had the gaudy *Nytaarsgaver* in mind as the antithesis of his unassuming booklet. In this chapter, my reading of the *Taler* will be straightforward, as I will treat them only as "textbook" examples of the disappearing book—and thus as a reproach to Heiberg. In the next chapter, the *Taler* will be repositioned as so-called ironic books, which exhibit a "fractured"<sup>10</sup> or "ironic"<sup>11</sup> dialectic—or, in other words, an oscillation—between "a virtual orality"<sup>12</sup> and the concrete bibliographical object.

For all of its personal bitterness, Kierkegaard's pasquinade against the *Nytaarsgaver* had a substantive point behind it, namely, that a book must ultimately address itself to inwardness. Thus, in this chapter's fourth and final section, I claim that the disappearing book was not just more ammunition for Kierkegaard's skirmishes with Heiberg. Indeed, Kierkegaard targets overwrought bibliophilism in other contexts, as well. And rather than simply reproaching deluxe editions—both

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*Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, Modern European Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 304.

8. "Synen anses vara det högsta av alla sinnen. I sin dialektiska argumentation försöker Heiberg visa att synen är kapabel att 'upphäva' (i den hegelianska meningen 'aufheben') all andra sinnen. I detta sammanhang hänvisar Heiberg just till skriftmediet och läsandets akt." (Sight is thought to be the highest of all senses. In his dialectical argumentation, Heiberg attempts to show that sight is capable of 'sublating' [in the Hegelian meaning of *aufheben*] all other senses. In this connection, Heiberg refers precisely to written media and the act of reading.) Klaus Müller-Wille, "'De er rigtig nok godt indbunden.' Om bokens poetik hos Johan Ludvig Heiberg och Søren Kierkegaard," in *Mellem ånd og trykksværdte. Studier i trykkekulturen og den romantiske litteratur*, ed. Robert W. Rix (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2015), 83–84.

9. To accentuate the simulated orality of this genre—which lends these books the capacity to disappear—I have, subverting a long tradition of Kierkegaard translation, chosen to render *Taler* as "talks," rather than as "discourses." See *Dansk-engelsk ordbog*, by Jens Axelsen, 12th ed. (CD-ROM, 2009), s.v. "tale." Cf. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

10. The term originates with Ricoeur, but Michael O'Neill Burns defines it cogently as "a non-totalizable account of dialectical structure that does not emerge from, or arrive at, a synthetic unity of opposites." Paul Ricoeur, "Philosophy after Kierkegaard," in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jonathan Rée and Jane Chamberlain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 10ff; Michael O'Neill Burns, *Kierkegaard and the Matter of Philosophy: A Fractured Dialectic* (London: Rowan & Littlefield, 2015), 61.

11. Fred Rush uses a different term for the same dialectical figure: "Hegelian dialectic dictates conditions for its own systematic closure." Meanwhile, "Schlegel's ironic dialectic does precisely the opposite, specifying systematically constraints on non-closure." Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10.

12. Again, the engagement between Faust and the spirit in the first scene of Goethe's drama is analogous to reading experience circa 1800: "Described or designated signs are supposed to be able to hear the reader, and thus a virtual orality emerges." Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

real and imaginary—for their shallowness, Kierkegaard in fact passes a summary judgement on the culture of Golden Age Copenhagen, which had devolved into a series of beguiling surfaces.

## “LITTERÆR VINTERSÆD”

Before turning to Kierkegaard’s caricatures of the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*, we would do well to closely examine Heiberg’s review of *Enten – Eller*, as the trope espoused in this piece, i.e., the disappearing book, would be turned back against Heiberg by Kierkegaard. In an unsigned article entitled “Litterær Vintersæd,” which appeared in his organ *Intelligensblade* on March 1, 1843, Heiberg had the latest poetic efforts in Danish pass muster before him. His first words on *Enten – Eller* are worth quoting at length, as they would come to define the terms of the subsequent *Nytaarsgave* fracas:

Fremdeles er i disse Dage, ligesom et Lyn ved klar Himmel, et Monstrum af en Bog slaet pludseligt ned i vor Læseverden; jeg mener den af to store og tykke Bind eller af 54 store og tættrykte Ark bestaaende *Enten – Eller* af *Victor Eremita*. Det er derfor nærmest med Hensyn paa Volumet, at Bogen maa kaldes et Monstrum, thi den imponerer allerede ved sin Masse, inden man endnu veed, hvad Aand der boer i den, og jeg tvivler ikke paa, at dersom Forfatteren vilde lade den see for Penge, vilde han faae ligesaa Meget ind som ved at lade den læses for Penge.

(Furthermore, in these days, like a bolt from the blue, a monster of a book has fallen into our reading world; I mean the two large and thick volumes or 54 large and closely printed sheets of *Enten – Eller* by *Victor Eremita*. It is therefore most of all in respect to volume that this book may be called a monster, for it impresses one already by its mass before one even knows what spirit dwells in it, and I do not doubt that if the author would let it be seen for money, he would get just as much as by letting it be read for money.)<sup>13</sup>

Rather than launching into a discussion of the *Geist* residing within *Enten – Eller*, Heiberg begins by cataloging the physical specifications of the book, and even jokes that its dimensions might be worth more attention than its words. By reducing Kierkegaard’s first masterpiece to a freak of the printshop, Heiberg could—for the time being, at least—ignore the enormous intellect behind it. The critic—who was also a first-rank poet himself—deploys the disappearing book in a defensive strategy against an ascendant rival. These two weighty tomes,<sup>14</sup> Heiberg seems to suggest, can never cancel their own materiality, nor can they become spirit. In a riposte to Heiberg, which we shall come to shortly, Kierkegaard implies that the recalcitrant concreteness of *Enten – Eller* had more to do with its reader than with the contents themselves.

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13. [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 288.

14. “Formatet er oktav, ca. 130 x 210 mm. Omfanget af første bind er 496 sider . . . . Omfanget af andet bind er 376 sider.” (The format is octavo, ca. 130 x 210 mm. The extent of the first volume is 496 pages . . . . The extent of the second volume is 376 pages.) Jette Knudsen and Johnny Kondrup, “Tekstreddegørelse. *Enten – Eller*,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret, 2014), K2–3:7.

Suggesting to his public that they should finally look past *Enten – Eller*'s imposing physical form,<sup>15</sup> Heiberg then lingers excessively on the title page: “Man føler sig underligt greben af selve Titelen” (One feels curiously seized by even the title), Heiberg admits, “idet man applicerer den paa sit eget Forhold til Bogen, og spørger sig selv: ‘Skal jeg *enten* læse den, *eller* lade det være’” (as one applies it to one’s own relation to the book, and asks oneself, “Shall I *either* read it, *or* let it be”)?<sup>16</sup> Kierkegaard was no doubt still seething over this arch treatment in 1846, when he complained of “Indvendinger, som . . . egentligen aldrig ere komne videre end til Bindet og Titelbladet” (objections that . . . really never go further than the binding and the title page) in his *En litterair Anmeldelse* (A literary review).<sup>17</sup>

Throughout much of “Litterær Vintersæd,” Heiberg resorts to the neuter indefinite pronoun *man* (one, they), so as to distance himself from his own observations. And although Heiberg’s name appeared on the front page of this issue of *Intelligensblade* as editor, the review, as noted above, was technically anonymous, and it was further anonymized by the use of *man*. According to Heiberg, this *man* will—or can—only read such a gargantuan book non-linearly, popping in and out at random passages in order to decide what might be worth further inspection.<sup>18</sup> After perusing volume one, however, *man* concludes that the author has more time on his hands than they do,<sup>19</sup> and so, with a “Basta! Jeg har nok af Enten, jeg skal ikke have Noget af Eller” (Enough! I have had enough of Either, I shall not have any of Or), they slam the book shut!<sup>20</sup> After this last declaration from *man*, Heiberg washes his hands of the anonymous cipher.<sup>21</sup>

But then, rather than unambiguously offering his own perspective on *Enten – Eller*, Heiberg proceeds to introduce a new cast member: “*Enkelte* ville imidlertid være nysgjerrige efter at erfare hvad det er for et *Eller*, som Forf. sætter imod et saadant *Enten*, og de begynde idetmindste at blade i det andet Bind.” (*A few*, however, will be curious to learn what *Or* the author sets against one such *Either*, and they will begin to at least leaf through the second volume.)<sup>22</sup> Heiberg’s choice of words proved fateful here, as an incensed Kierkegaard would pick up on the phrase *at blade i* in his “Taksigelse til Hr. Professor Heiberg” (Thanksgiving to Professor Heiberg), which he published in the Copenhagen newspaper *Fædrelandet* on March 5, 1843, four days after “Litterær Vintersæd” appeared. By reducing the reading of *Enten – Eller* to a physical manipulation of its pages, Heiberg, alias *man*, had dealt Kierkegaard a grave insult. The implication was that the book,

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15. “Denne store Masse er en foreløbig Ubehagelighed, som man har at sætte sig ud over.” (This great mass is a passing unpleasantness, which one must ignore.) [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 288.

16. [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 288–89.

17. *En litterair Anmeldelse. To Tidsaldre, Novelle af Forfatteren til “en Hverdagshistorie,” udgiven af J. L. Heiberg. Kbhv. Reitzel. 1845*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:25.

18. “Og nu *springer* man virkelig i Bogen, læser lidt hist og lidt her, for at faae en Mundsmag, der enten kan lokke til nøiere Bekjendtskab eller bevæge til at afbryde det allerede stiftede.” (And now one really *jumps* into the book, reads a little here and there, to get a taste that can either tempt one to a closer acquaintance, or to interrupt what was already established.) [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 289.

19. “Man befunder sig altsaa for det Første i *Enten*, og her befunder man sig for det Første ikke godt, thi man mærker, at man har ikke nær saa god Tid som Forfatteren.” (Consequently, one finds oneself to begin with in *Enten*, and here, to begin with, one does not feel good, for one senses that one does not have nearly as much time as the author.) [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 289.

20. [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 291.

21. “Den, hvis Fremgangsmaade med Bogen jeg her har beskrevet, er ‘Man;’ Andet har jeg ikke sagt.” (The one, whose procedure with the book I have described here is “One”; I have said nothing else.) [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 291.

22. [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 291.

rather than becoming an intellectual object, remained a mere thing for Heiberg.<sup>23</sup> That meant that the work had failed according to the Idealist benchmark of what the media theorist Friedrich Kittler would later term “the discourse network of 1800,” where “a man’s book counted only when it disappeared as a book.”<sup>24</sup>

Let us now turn to “Taksigelse til Hr. Professor Heiberg,” as it will shed light on Kierkegaard’s indignation over Heiberg’s dealings in *Nytaarsgaver*. Kierkegaard was not only offended that his book was reduced to just paper and ink by Heiberg; on top of that, he had witnessed Heiberg publish what were—in Kierkegaard’s estimation—toy-books addressed to sensuous immediacy. Who was Heiberg, then, to treat someone else’s book as though it were lacking in spiritual depths?

Like its title, the opening of this “Taksigelse” is steeped in irony, if not outright sarcasm. Addressing Heiberg in the character of Victor Eremita, the pseudonymous editor of *Enten – Eller*, Kierkegaard writes, “At virkelig et ‘man,’ der er saa talrigt, at Modsætning dertil kun er ‘Enkelte,’ kan bære sig saa uforsvarligt ad, som De beskriver det i Deres sidste Numer af Intelligensbladene med Hensyn til Læsning af *Enten – Eller*, det vilde jeg ikke have troet, hvis det ikke var Dem, Hr. Professor! der sagde det.” (That a “one” that is so numerous that the only opposite of it is only “a few,” really could behave as irresponsibly as you describe in your latest issue of the *Intelligensblade* with respect to the reading of *Enten – Eller*, I would not have believed it, if it had not been you, Professor, who said it!)<sup>25</sup> In this open letter, Kierkegaard puts on the pretense of thanking Heiberg for rebuking *man* for their shiftless habits, all the while insinuating that Heiberg could not have done much better himself, as his review of *Enten – Eller* appeared on March 1, 1843, a mere nine days after the 872-page *magnum opus* dropped.<sup>26</sup>

If, for the sake of clarity, we were to abandon the ironic distinction between Heiberg and *man* that Kierkegaard pretends to doggedly uphold, then we might conclude that Kierkegaard is confronting Heiberg for his hasty reading of *Enten – Eller*:

Men det er dog immer Noget, især i vore magre Tider, immer nok til at gaae stadigere frem, og fornegte sin Lyst til at gaae i Spring, sin Vane til at læse, som man læser en Avis. Naar man der finder en Fortale til et Værk, saa læser man den, naar man i den læser: »A’s Papirer

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23. Following Heidegger, Bill Brown formulates “thingness” as follows: “We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us.” Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4.

24. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 54.

25. “Taksigelse til Hr. Professor Heiberg,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:55.

26. In 1846, Kierkegaard was still embittered over the fleeting attention *Enten – Eller* had received. His pseudonym Johannes Climacus writes in the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, “En Forfatter udgiver et Skrift, han tænker som saa, nu har jeg en Maanedes-Tid Frist, indtil Dhrr. Recensenter faae det gjennemlæst. Hvad skeer? Tredie Dagen efter udkommer et hastværksrecenserende Anskrig, som ender med et Løfte om en Anmeldelse.” (An author publishes a publication; he thinks as such: Now I have a month’s respite until Mr. Reviewer gets it read through. What happens? Three days later a rush-job outcry of a review comes out, which ends with a promise of a write-up.) “Litterær Vintersæd” had in fact concluded on such a note: “Men de sidst omtalte ‘enkelte’ Læsere, som ikke indbefattes under ‘Man,’ ville af Respect for den Forfatter, som har skrevet et saadant *Eller*, atter tage hans *Enten* for sig, og læse det nøiagtigt igjennem. Derefter ville de danne sig en bestemt Anskuelse af den Betydning, som tilkommer hele Bogen, og endelig vil maaske en Enkelt af de Enkelte forelægge Publicum denne Anskuelse.” (But the last aforementioned “few” readers, who are not included under “one,” will out of respect for the author who has written such an *Or*, again take up his *Either*, and read through it carefully. After that, they will form a definite view of the significance that is due to the whole book, and finally, perhaps an individual of the few will present this view to the public.) *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler. Mimisk-pathetisk-dialektisk Sammenskrift, Existentielt Indlæg*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:19–20; [Heiberg], “Vintersæd,” 292.

indeholde en Mangfoldighed af Tilløb til en æsthetisk Livsanskuelse« (cfr. Pag. XVIII.), saa bliver man ikke sig selv vigtig ved at opdage, at første Deels enkelte Dele ere fragmentariske; man aner heller ei *at bladre i* anden Deel en organiserende Magt; thi man har ikke glemmt, at Fortalen paa en beskeden, og sømmelig og tilstrækkelig Maade har sagt det.

(But it is still always something, particularly in our meager times, to always go constantly forward and deny one's desire to go in leaps, as one is accustomed to do when one reads a newspaper. When one finds a preface to a work, then one reads it; when one reads: "A's papers contain a manifold of approaches to the aesthetic life-view" (cf. *pagina xviii*), then one does not make oneself important by discovering that the first part's individual parts are fragmentary; nor does one sense an organizing power by *leafing through* the second part, for one has not forgotten that the preface, in a modest and seemly manner, has said that sufficiently.)<sup>27</sup>

As I suggested above, Kierkegaard turns Heiberg's own words back against him (although he spells *at blade i* differently: *at bladre i*). Since Heiberg had admitted to paging through *Enten – Eller*, Kierkegaard alleges that he has mistreated the novel by reading it like a newspaper.<sup>28</sup> Although, in the eighteenth century, the novel and the newspaper were two of the media that took the place of the Bible and devotional literature after the *Leserevolution*,<sup>29</sup> the novel is best enjoyed with an intensive absorption, whereas the newspaper requires only an extensive or superficial glance.<sup>30</sup>

Rather than accepting Heiberg's putdown, Kierkegaard accuses him of a willful misreading of *Enten – Eller*. If the novel failed to capture the critic's attention, then that was because he did not read it in the right spirit.<sup>31</sup> In fact, he read it with barely any spirit at all, as *man* and *Enkelte*—

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27. "Taksigelse til Hr. Professor Heiberg," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:55; my emphasis.

28. On *Enten – Eller* as a novel, see Louis Mackey, *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet* ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 273–75; F. J. Billeskov Jansen, *Studier i Søren Kierkegaards litterære Kunst* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1987), 21–43; George Pattison, "Kierkegaard as Novelist," *Journal of Literature and Theology* 1, no. 2 (1987): 210–12; Sylvia Walsh, *Living Poetically: Kierkegaard's Existential Aesthetics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 63–64n1, 91n, 98; Judith Purver, "Without Authority: Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works as Romantic Narratives," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2007): 401–23, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110192926.2.401>; Eric Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 29–30; and Troy Wellington Smith, "*Enten – Eller. Et Livs-Fragment*," in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, <https://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=5344>. Cf. Aage Henriksen, *Kierkegaards Romaner* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1954), 8–9.

29. Indeed, as Hegel had opined in a posthumously published quip, "Das Zeitungslesen des Morgens früh ist eine Art von realistischem Morgensegen." (The reading of the newspaper early in the morning is a sort of realist morning benediction.) "Aphorismen aus der Jenenser und Berliner Periode," in *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Leben*, comp. Karl Rosenkranz (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1844), 543, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Georg\\_Wilhelm\\_Friedrich\\_Hegel\\_s\\_Leben/XzIFZar8tDQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=zeitungslesen](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel_s_Leben/XzIFZar8tDQC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=zeitungslesen).

30. "What is more, the most 'intensive' sort of reading developed at the very moment of the 'revolution in reading,' thanks to authors such as Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Goethe and Richardson. In their works the novel takes hold of its readers, absorbing them into a reading process that it governs just as firmly as the religious text had done." Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, introduction to *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia C. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 25.

31. In the second numbered preface of *Forord* (Prefaces), Kierkegaard skewered the Danish book review industry (4:479–84), and, in the fourth, he reproached Heiberg for his frivolous treatment of *Enten – Eller*: "Hvad mon 'man' nu vil sige om denne Bog? Min kjære Læser, dersom Du ikke paa anden Maade skulde kunne faae det at

whom Kierkegaard, perhaps unjustly, treats as straightforward stand-ins for Heiberg himself—were said to have merely flipped through the two-volume novel. According to the aesthetic criterion of the disappearing book, this emphasis on tactility implicitly downplays *Enten – Eller*'s intellectual and artistic merits.

Indeed, Kierkegaard might be accused of a misprision himself. In his assault on the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*, he seems to conveniently ignore the Idealist aesthetics that their editor enlisted in their defense—although it is also possible that Kierkegaard was unaware of Heiberg's biblio-aesthetic system altogether. Whatever the case may be, it is safe to say that Kierkegaard dismisses the *Nytaarsgaver* as mere toys, the verbal qualities of which were better left unmentioned, as we shall see below. Again, the irony is that Heiberg, by May 15, 1843, had invented an ingenious Idealist justification for his bibliophilism in the treatise “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie” (Contribution to the philosophy of the visible) in *Intelligensblade*, no. 28. Here the Danish polymath argues that the book's simulated orality can be understood as a sublated dialectical moment within the reader's visual perception of the page.<sup>32</sup>

This solution, however, is only pseudo-Hegelian at best. While it does employ Hegel's technology of sublation, it also violates the letter of the *Ästhetik*, where Hegel had pronounced the book to be of no artistic interest.<sup>33</sup> Kierkegaard does not, therefore, take up arms against the

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vide, saa er nok vor literaire Telegraphbestyrer Prof. Heiberg saa god igjen at være Rodemester og tælle Stemmerne ligesom i sin Tid med Hensyn til *Enten – Eller*, og derpaa meddele det i *Intelligensbladet*.” (I wonder what ‘one’ will now say about this book? My dear reader, if you should not be able to get to know otherwise, then our literary telegraph manager Prof. Heiberg will certainly be good enough to again be census taker and count the votes just as in his time with respect to *Enten – Eller*, and then report it in *Intelligensbladet*) (4:486–87). *Forord. Morskabslæsning for enkelte Stænder efter Tid og Leilighed*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*.

32. Heiberg's speculation reads as follows: “Paa Grund af sit umaadelige Omfang er da Synet endog i den mærkværdige Stilling, at det kan træde i Stedet for Hørelsen, eftersom baade Musik og Tale kunne gjøres synlige ved Skrift, og baade tilegnes og nydes igjennem Øiet, naar kun dette har erhvervet sig tilstrækkelig Færdighed i at læse Skriften. Ved denne Oversættelse af det Hørelige i det Synlige griber altsaa Synet endnu meget længere ind i Aandeverden, end det ifølge sin oprindelige Natur formaaer, ja rækker ligesaa langt som Hørelsen, paa en Maade endog med større Sikkerhed, formedelst det Permanente i Skriften, hvorved den flygtige Lyd er hævet over sin Forgængelighed.” (On the grounds of its tremendous range, vision, then, is in fact in the remarkable position that it can take the place of hearing, since both music and speech can be made visible by writing, and both are appropriated and enjoyed through the eye, but only when it has acquired sufficient skill in reading. By this translation from the audible to the visible, vision intervenes even farther into the world of the spirit, even farther than its original nature allows; yes, it reaches just as far as hearing, yet in a manner with greater certainty, on account of the permanence of writing, by which the fleeting word is raised above its evanescence.) “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1861), 2:358.

33. “Die Poesie ist ihrem Begriffe nach wesentlich *tönend*, und dies Erklingen darf ihr, wenn sie *vollständig* als Kunst heraustreten soll, um so weniger fehlen, als es ihre einzige Seite ist, nach welcher sie mit der äußeren Existenz in realen Zusammenhang kommt. Denn gedruckte oder geschriebene Buchstaben sind freilich auch noch äußerlich vorhanden, jedoch nur gleichgültige Zeichen für Laute und Wörter. Sahen wir nun zwar die Wörter schon früher gleichfalls als bloße Bezeichnungsmittel der Vorstellungen an, so gestaltet doch die Poesie wenigstens das zeitliche Element und den Klang dieser Zeichen und erhebt sie dadurch zu einem von der geistigen Lebendigkeit dessen, wofür sie die Zeichen sind, durchdrungenen Material, während der Druck auch diese Beseelung in eine für sich genommen ganz gleichgültige, mit dem geistigen Gehalt nicht mehr zusammenhängende Sichtbarkeit fürs Augen umsetzt und die Verwandlung des Gesehenen in das Element der zeitlichen Dauer und des Klingens unserer Gewohnheit überläßt, statt uns das tönende Wort und sein zeitliches Dasein wirklich zu geben. Wenn wir uns deshalb mit dem bloßen Lesen begnügen, so geschieht dies theils um der Geläufigkeit willen, mit welcher wir das Gelesene uns als gesprochen vorstellen, theils aus dem Grunde, daß die Poesie allein unter allen Künsten schon im Elemente des Geistes ihren wesentlichsten Seiten nach fertig ist und die Hauptsache weder durch die sinnliche Anschauung noch das Hören zum Bewußtsein bringt. Doch gerade dieser Geistigkeit wegen *muß* sie als Kunst nicht ganz die Seite ihrer wirklichen Äußerung von sich abstreifen, wenn sie nicht zu einer ähnlichen Unvollständigkeit

*Nytaarsgaver* for being Hegelian,<sup>34</sup> but for not being Hegelian *enough*; they are found wanting against the benchmark of the disappearing book, and the disappearing book, of course, is in part derived from Hegel's aesthetics.

## NYTAARSGAVER

While Heiberg is generally credited with introducing Hegel to Denmark,<sup>35</sup> he does not conform to Hegel's system as far as the book is concerned. Hegel had no place for print in his aesthetics, and yet, in Heiberg's "Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie" essay, the aural temporality of the ideal text is *aufgehoben* in the page *qua* spatial image, as Müller-Wille has it. Overturning Hegel's phonocentrism via the Hegelian method of sublation,<sup>36</sup> Heiberg devises a brilliant *apologia* for the

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kommen will, in welcher z. B. eine bloße Zeichnung die Gemälde großer Koloristen ersetzen soll." (Poetry is by nature essentially musical, and if it is to emerge as fully art it must not lack this resonance, all the more because this is the one aspect in virtue of which it really comes into connection with external existence. For printed or written letters, it is true, are also existent externally but they are only arbitrary signs for sounds and words. Earlier we did regard words as likewise means for indicating ideas, but poetry imposes a form, at least on the timing and sound of these signs; in this way it gives them the higher status of a material penetrated by the spiritual life of what they signify. Print, on the other hand, transforms this animation into a mere visibility which, taken by itself, is a matter of indifference and has no longer any connection with the spiritual meaning; moreover, instead of actually giving us the sound and timing of the word, it leaves to our usual practice the transformation of what is seen into sound and temporal duration. Consequently, if we are satisfied with reading merely, this happens partly on account of the readiness with which we imagine as spoken what is seen, partly because poetry alone of all the arts is in its essential aspects already completely at home in the spiritual element and does not bring the chief thing to our minds through either ear or eye. But, precisely on account of this spirituality, poetry as art must not entirely strip itself of this aspect of actual external expression, at any rate if it wants to avoid the imperfection of e.g. a black and white sketch substituted for a painting produced by a master of colour.) G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 3:320–21; G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:1036–37.

34. Cf. Klaus Müller-Wille, who argues in "Om bokens poetik" that Kierkegaard was piqued by the alleged Hegelianism of the *Nytaarsgaver*: "Enligt min åsikt syftar Kierkegaards kritik mindre på böckernas ytlighet än på de komplexa teckenteoretiska och estetiska frågeställningar som Heiberg utvecklade i relation till bokens materialitet." (In my view, Kierkegaard's critique aims less at the externality of the books than at the complex theory of signs and aesthetic questions posed, which Heiberg develops in relation to the book's materiality) (86). Thus, he concludes in the same essay, "Slutligen vänder han [sc. Kierkegaard] Heibergs tidiga komisk-ironiska talang mot Heibergs senare konservativ-akademiska medieteorier där aspekten av bokens materialitet bara betonas för att stödja en hegeliansk estetik." (Finally, he [sc. Kierkegaard] turns Heiberg's earlier comic-ironic talent against Heiberg's later conservative-academic media theory, where the aspect of the book's materiality is emphasized merely to support a Hegelian aesthetic) (90).

35. Karl "Rosenkranz mentions the poet and critic Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860) as the first Dane to visit Hegel's lectures and to create a Hegelian journal in Denmark." Jon Stewart, *The Heiberg Period: 1824–1836*, tome 1 of *A History of Hegelianism in Golden Age Denmark* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 2007), 50.

36. This elevation of the ear over the eye is, of course, not unique to Hegel. The precedent of Plato's *Phaedrus* is well known (274c–79b), but a more immediate precursor can be found in classic German aesthetics, namely in Lessing's *Laokoon* (*Laocoön*) of 1766, in which poetry is ranked above painting for its greater imaginative range: "Freilich kann Milton keine Galerien füllen. Aber müßte, solange ich das leibliche Auge hätte, die Sphäre desselben auch die Sphäre meines innern Auges sein, so würde ich, um von dieser Einschränkung frei zu werden, einen großen Wert auf den Verlust des erstern legen." (True, Milton can fill no galleries. But if, so long as I had my bodily eye, its sphere must also be the sphere of my inward eye, then would I, in order to be free of this limitation, set a great value on the loss of the former.) Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon, oder: Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), 110; Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*,



*Nytaarsgaver*. Often illustrated or ornamented within, these literary collections appeared in decorated paper publisher's bindings, whereas most other books published during the period were sold in sheets, to be bound at the buyer's discretion.<sup>37</sup> Heiberg was by no means the sole author-editor in the *Nytaarsgave* business. In fact, he only began to publish his *Nytaarsgaver* in the 1840s, when the phenomenon had already started to taper off.<sup>38</sup> Why, then, should we assume that Kierkegaard's satire of this holiday institution is aimed at Heiberg?

Heiberg is implicated in Kierkegaard's *Nytaarsgave* polemic for the following three reasons: Most obviously (1), Kierkegaard's pseudonyms will—sometimes, at least—unequivocally name Heiberg in relation to these gift-books; on a subtler note (2), *Nytaarsgaver* were normally anthologies of poetry and prose by various authors, but Heiberg, with *Nye Digte* (New poems),<sup>39</sup> his gift for the New Year 1841, broke with this convention, and filled the volume exclusively with his own work;<sup>40</sup> and lastly (3), although Heiberg's *Urania. Aarbog for 1844* (*Urania: Yearbook for 1844*) featured contributions by the theologian Hans Lassen Martensen, the poet Christian Winther, and “Forfatteren til *En Hverdags-Historie*” (Author of *En Hverdags-Historie*)<sup>41</sup>—who was none other than Heiberg's mother, Thomasine Gyllembourg—it was an infuriating article by Heiberg himself that would etch this *Nytaarsgave* in Kierkegaard's memory.

In the aforementioned article, “Det astronomiske Aar” (The astronomical year), Heiberg, who was a dilettante astronomer, rebuffs the pseudonym Constantin Constantius, author of *Gjentagelsen* (Repetition), for having failed to distinguish between repetition in the natural world and that in the realm of the spirit. For Heiberg, this former form of repetition is paramount:

Denne Sympathiseren med Naturen, idet man forarbejder dens Gjentagelser til et Nyt og Forskjelligt, er en af Hovednøglerne til den sande Livsvisdom; den er Basis for alle Anviisninger til at nyde Livet og til at vedligeholde Ungdommen tiltrods for Aarenes Antal. Ingen har følt Dette inderligere end Göthe.

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trans. W. A. Steel, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 78–79. See also Paul Guyer, “18th Century German Aesthetics,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 1997–, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/#Les>.

37. According to Richard Purkarthofer, “Usually the books would come from the printer, if it is a book size publication, in cardboard boards covered with blue paper. . . . And for small, thin publications, only in wrappers which could be removed by the bookbinder. . . . Individuals would go to their bookbinder and have it bound according to their own taste.” Richard Purkarthofer, “A Soothing Litany on Things Close at Hand: Some Thoughts Concerning Howard V. Hong's Last Rare Book Collection,” interview by Kristen Eide-Tollefson, *Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter* 65 (April 2016): 16.

38. “Digteren H. P. Holst (1811–1893) samlede i alt fire årgange af *Nytaarsgave fra danske Digtere* forelagt af Guldalder tidens mest betydende forelægger, C. A. Reitzel. ‘Nytaarsgavernes’ tid var ved at være forbi. Kontinuiteten var brudt, men finalen fra Reitzel i årene 1835–1838, var storslået.” (The poet H. P. Holst [1811–93] assembled in all four volumes of *Nytaarsgave fra danske Digtere*, published by the most important publisher of the Golden Age, C. A. Reitzel. The age of the New Year's gifts was about to be at an end. The continuity was broken, but the finale from Reitzel in the years 1835–38 was magnificent.) Bjarne Nielsen Brovst, *Guldalderens Nytaarsgaver og H. C. Andersen* (Herning: Kristensen, 2005–6), 207.

39. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Nye Digte* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1841).

40. Bent Rohde and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn describe “J. L. Heibergs *Nye Digte* fra 1841, indbundet i hvidt glanspapir, rigt dekoreret på ryg og permer, med tresidet guldsnit” (J. L. Heiberg's *Nye Digte* from 1841, bound in white glazed paper, richly decorated on the spine and covers, with three-sided gilt edges). Bent Rohde and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “Kierkegaard som bogproducent, tilrettelægger og forlægger,” in *Tekstspejle. Om Søren Kierkegaard som bogtilrettelægger, boggiver og bogsamler* ([Esbjerg]: Rosendahl, 2002), 27n.

41. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1844* (Copenhagen: Bing), [https://www.google.com/books/edition/\\_/HQYGAAAQAQAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/HQYGAAAQAQAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1).

(This sympathy with nature, as one makes its repetitions into something new and different, is one of the main keys to the true life-wisdom; it is the basis for all instructions to enjoy life and to maintain one's youth despite the number of years.

No one has felt this more deeply than Goethe.)<sup>42</sup>

Failing to notice that repetition is a religious category for Constantius, Heiberg recommends the same warmed-over cult of *Bildung* that Kierkegaard had committed himself to deconstructing in *Gjentagelsen*, and its twin, *Frygt og Bæven* (Fear and trembling),<sup>43</sup> both of which were born on October 16, 1843.<sup>44</sup>

That is one bit of irony. Another is that the Hegelian Heiberg was cultivating a bibliophilic aesthetic, although Hegel himself saw no place for the book in his aesthetic system. Yet another irony is that Kierkegaard—who is traditionally seen as a staunch anti-Hegelian<sup>45</sup>—is chastising Heiberg for his deviation from the disappearing book, and thus from Hegel. If Kierkegaard had not read “Bidrag til det Synlige Philosophie,” then his charge of materialism came from a place of ignorance. Otherwise, he was performing a strong misreading of the *Nytaarsgaver*, deliberately overlooking the dialectical Idealism of the Heibergian book.

In the following subsections, I will work through Kierkegaard's authorship chronologically, concentrating on the passages in which Heiberg's *Nytaarsgaver* are evoked either explicitly or implicitly. I do not take every quip about gilt decoration to be a veiled reference to the Heibergian bibelots, however. In the fourth and final section of this chapter, we shall find Kierkegaard tilting against other books—both real and imagined—whose ideal content is subordinated to their material form. So, while it was personal animosity that first prompted Kierkegaard to deride certain *recherche* editions, a sophisticated philosophical point would soon emerge from this furor. In Kierkegaard's authorship, fine binding and other bibliographical niceties come to function as metonyms for a widespread loss of inwardness.

Now, since we are proceeding in order of publication, there is a choice between *Begrebet Angest* (The concept of anxiety) and *Forord* (Prefaces), as these both appeared on June 17, 1844.<sup>46</sup> I suggest that we start with the former, as it contains an unflinching rebuke to Heiberg's forecited “Det astronomiske Aar.”

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42. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, “Det astronomiske Aar,” in *Urania. Aarbog for 1844*, 102.

43. Joakim Garff, “Andersen, Kierkegaard – and the Deconstructed *Bildungsroman*,” trans. K. Brian Söderquist, *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2006): 97–99, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110186567.83>.

44. “*Gjentagelsen. Et Forsøg i den eksperimenterende Psychologi af Constantin Constantius* udkom 16. okt. 1843, samtidig med *Frygt og Bæven* og *Tre opbyggelige Taler*.” (*Gjentagelsen. Et Forsøg i den eksperimenterende Psychologi af Constantin Constantius* was published on October 16, 1843, at the same time as *Frygt og Bæven* and *Tre opbyggelige Taler*.) Henrik Blicher, “*Gjentagelsen. Tekstredøgørelse*,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K4:7.

45. Niels Thulstrup is usually credited with the institutionalization of this reading. His main argument reads as follows: “Thus seen, Hegel and Kierkegaard have in the main nothing in common as thinkers, neither as regards object, purpose or method.” Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, trans. George L. Stengren (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 12.

46. “*Begrebet Angest. En simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveielse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvesynden af Vigilius Haufniensis* var færdig fra Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri 11. juni 1844. Bogen udkom 17. juni og kostede 1 rigsdaler. Samme dag udkom *Forord*.” (*Begrebet Angest. En simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveielse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvesynden af Vigilius Haufniensis* was ready from Bianco Luno's printing house June 11, 1844. The book was published on June 17, 1844, and cost one rixdollar.) Søren Bruun, “*Begrebet Angest. Tekstredøgørelse*,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K4:307.

Vigilius Haufniensis, pseudonymous author of *Begrebet Angest*, writes in his preface, “Hver Enkelt i Slægten har ligesom hver Dag sin Plage og nok i at skjøtte sig selv, og behøver ikke at omfatte hele Samtiden i sin landsfaderlige Bekymring, eller lade Æra og Epoche begynde med sin Bog, end mindre med sit Løftes Nytaars-Blus.” (Every day every individual in the generation has his nuisance, as it were, and enough in shifting for himself, and does not need to embrace the whole age in his concern, like a father of the country, or to have era and epoch begin with his book, still less with the New Year’s torch of his promise.)<sup>47</sup> Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson take this to be “a reference to J. L. Heiberg’s *Urania*,”<sup>48</sup> but it is actually an allusion to Heiberg’s mere promises of what future volumes of *Urania* would contain. These were made in “Eftertale til *Urania*” (Afterword to *Urania*), an article that appeared in *Intelligensblade* after the publication of the yearbook’s first installment.<sup>49</sup> Kierkegaard *qua* Haufniensis thus contrasts the grand, world-historical ambitions of Heiberg’s Hegelianism with the lone volume of his *Nytaarsgave*, which should seem paltry and superficial in comparison.

In “Litterær Vintersæd,” Heiberg had suggested that the repetitions of nature could serve as a model for one’s finite existence. However, in a footnote to the introduction to *Begrebet Angest*,

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47. *Begrebet Angest. En simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveielse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvesynden*, in Søren Kierkegaards skrifter, 4:313.

48. Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson, eds. and trans., *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 223n7.

49. *Ordbog over det danske sprog* defines *Nytaars-blus* as “brugt af Kierk. m. hentydning til Heib.s løfte om, hvad fremtidige udgaver af aarbogen (‘nytaarsgaven’) *Urania* skulde bringe” (used by Kierkegaard in reference to Heiberg’s promise of what future editions of the yearbook [“the New Year’s gift”] *Urania* should bring). In “Eftertale til *Urania*,” Heiberg writes, “Planen med *Urania* er nemlig at levere i hver Aargang: først en astronomisk Orienterings-Calender for det forestaaende Aar; dernæst Afhandlinger over videnskabelige Gjenstande, fornemmelig saadanne, hvis Stof er knyttet til calendariske Bestemmelser; endelig (da Bogen er en Nytaarsgave, bestemt for det æsthetisk dannede Publicum) belletristiske Bidrag af større Omfang. . . . Denne Plan var, efter min Mening, allerede i den første Aargang tydelig angiven. Men det forstaaer sig, at jo flere Aargange Bogen kommer til at opleve, desto tydeligere vil den vise sig. Hvad Afhandlingerne angaaer, da fandt jeg det passende at begynde med en Fremstilling af den calendariske Idee selv, i begge dens Phaser: den verdslige og den kirkelige. Men for at antyde, hvorledes denne Idee, naar den forfølges i det Concrete, kan give Stof til en Mængde af kommende Afhandlinger, vil jeg blot nævne følgende Gjenstande: Stjernebillederne i deres mythiske Oprindelse og poetiske Betydning; calendarisk Zoologie og Botanik, eller Dyrenes og Planternes Liv efter Døgnets og Aarets Tider; calendarisk Physiologie, eller den cosmiske Indflydelse paa Organismen, paa den vaagne Tilstand og Søvnens, paa Sundhed og Sygdom o. s. v.; calendarisk Historie, det vil sige Betragtning af de Perioder, som gjælde for Menneskehedens Udvikling.” (Namely, the plan with *Urania* is to deliver in each volume: first, an astronomical calendar of orientation for the upcoming year; next, treatises on scientific subjects, particularly those whose material is connected to the calendar’s determinations; finally [since the book is a New Year’s gift, determined for the aesthetically cultured public] belletristic contributions of greater scope. . . . This plan was, in my opinion, already clearly stated in the first volume. But, of course, the more volumes of the book that come to be, the more clearly it will appear. With respect to the treatises, I then found it suitable to begin with a representation of the idea of the calendar itself, in both its phases: the secular and the ecclesiastic. But in order to indicate how this idea, when it is pursued in the concrete, can give material for a number of future treatises, I will merely mention the following subjects: the constellations in their mythic origin and poetic significance; the calendars of zoology and botany, or the life of animals and plants according to the times of the day and the year; the calendar of physiology, or the cosmic influence on the organism, on the waking condition and sleep, etc.; the calendar of history, i.e., consideration of the periods which concern the development of humanity.) *Ordbog over det danske sprog*, s.v. “Nytaars-blus,” <https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=Nytaars-blus>; [Johan Ludvig Heiberg], “Eftertale til *Urania*,” *Intelligensblade*, February 1, 1844, 231–32.

Haufniensis contrasts the determinism of nature with the autonomy necessary to will a transcendent repetition of the spirit.<sup>50</sup> That Constantin Constantius was using the titular term “Gjentagelsen” in this latter sense, writes Haufniensis, “har Hr. Prof. Heiberg ikke bemærket, men godhedsfuldt villet ved sin Viden, der er, ligesom hans Nytaarsgave, særdeles elegant og nitid, forhjælpe dette Skrift til at blive en smagfuld og elegant Ubetydelighed” (Prof. Heiberg has not noticed, but out of kindness wanted to help with his knowledge—which, just like his New Year’s gift, is particularly elegant and dainty—this publication to become a tasteful and elegant trifle).<sup>51</sup> In other words, *Urania* mirrors the mannered cultivation of Heiberg himself, and neither the one nor the other has anything to do with the profundities of philosophy or literature, in the opinion of Kierkegaard.

Much like a hardboiled Hegelian aesthetician, Haufniensis discounts the possibility that a book’s ideal content can be enriched by its material form. Lacking a sense of transcendence, Heiberg, Haufniensis suggests, can only conceive of the book as a surface phenomenon. Heiberg is thus characterized as a shallow aesthete, along with Constantin and the pseudonym A of “Vexeldriften” (Crop rotation) in *Enten – Eller*.<sup>52</sup> Heiberg, like Constantin Constantius and A, has a merely empirical understanding of repetition, and the book, for him, is no less concrete.<sup>53</sup> That is the allegation made by Kierkegaard behind the guise of Haufniensis.

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50. “I Naturens Sphære er Gjentagelsen i sin urokkede Nødvendighed. I Aandens Sphære er Opgaven ikke at afvinde Gjentagelsen en Forandring og befinde sig nogenlunde vel under Gjentagelsen, som stod Aanden kun i et advortes Forhold til Aandens Gjentagelser (ifølge hvilke Godt og Ondt vexe ligesom Sommer og Vinter), men Opgaven er at forvandle Gjentagelsen til noget Indvortes, til Friheds egen Opgave, til dens høieste Interesse, om den virkelig, medens Alt vexler, kan realisere Gjentagelsen.” (In the sphere of nature, repetition is in its unshaken necessity. In the sphere of the spirit, the task is not to compel a change from repetition and to feel fairly well under repetition, as if the spirit only stood in an external relation to the repetitions of the spirit [according to which good and evil alternate just like summer and winter], but the task is to transform repetition into something internal, into freedom’s own task, into its highest interest, if it really can realize repetition while everything changes.) *Begrebet Angest*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:324n.

51. *Begrebet Angest*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:324n.

52. Heiberg, writes Haufniensis, “bringe[r] Sagen derhen, hvor Constantin begynder, bringe[r] den derhen, hvor, for at erindre om et nyere Skrift Æstetikeren i *Enten – Eller* havde bragt den i ‘Vexeldriften’” (brings the matter to where Constantin begins, brings it, to recollect a recent publication, to where the aesthete in *Enten – Eller* had brought it in “Vexeldriften” [Crop rotation]). *Begrebet Angest*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:324n.

53. And yet, not only does Constantin seek repetition, while A avoids it; their respective notions of this key concept are in fact quite different. On the first page of *Gjentagelsen*, Constantin recalls telling himself, “Du kan jo reise til Berlin, der har Du engang før været, og nu overbevise Dig om en Gjentagelse er mulig og hvad den har at betyde.” (You can, after all, travel to Berlin, where you have been once before, and now convince yourself as to whether repetition is possible and what it means) (4:9). Constantin, in other words, wants to prove to himself that repetition occurs in the physical world. In *Enten – Eller*, on the other hand, the pseudonym A distinguishes between this empirical repetition and a transcendent repetition. He contrasts his unique method for avoiding the boredom of an unchanging affective life with “den Vexeldrift, der beroer paa Forandringens grændseløse Uendelighed, dens extensive Dimension” (the rotation of crops that depends on the boundless infinity of change, its extensive dimension), which he refers to as “den vulgaire, den ukunstneriske” (the vulgar, the unartistic) (2:281). What A is proposing is in fact quite different. He recommends a rotation of spiritual states: “Jo opfindsommere et Menneske kan være i at forandre Drifts-Methoden, desto bedre; men enhver enkelt Forandring ligger dog indenfor den almindelige Regel af Forholdet mellem at *erindre* og at *glemme*.” (The more ingenious a person can be in changing the method of rotation, the better; but every single change still lies within the universal rule of the relation between *recollecting* and *forgetting*) (2:282). And, he continues, “Saaledes maa man ogsaa bestandigt variere sig selv; og dette er egentlig Hemmeligheden. Til den Ende maa man nødvendig have Stemningerne i sin Magt.” (One must thus also constantly vary oneself; and this is the real secret. To that end, it is necessary to have the moods in one’s power) (2:287). So, although A makes it his mission in life to avoid repetitions of the spirit, he is nonetheless concerned

## FORORD

*Forord*, authored by the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene, is a slim volume, but it bristles with a multitude of satirical barbs against Heiberg. The book consists of eight prefaces to eight non-existent books, as well as a preface to the prefaces. The conceit is that Notabene has promised his wife not to become an author, but he gets around this injunction by writing only prefaces, as he explains in the preface to the collection.<sup>54</sup> In the next chapter, we will consider how paratextual forms, such as prefaces, trigger what I am calling the ironic book. For now, let us focus on the content of the first, third, and fourth numbered prefaces of *Forord*, as these explicitly address the *Nytaarsgaver*.

It is generally accepted that Kierkegaard (*alias* Notabene) is mimicking Heiberg in preface I, even though Heiberg is nowhere mentioned by name.<sup>55</sup> The premise of this preface is that Notabene's Heiberg-double is pitching a *Nytaarsgave*, one that—for parodic purposes—is more opulent than anything ever published by the historical Heiberg. Why would Kierkegaard grant his fictional Heiberg the financial and cultural capital to produce such a bibliophilic marvel? Well, as Leah Price observes in *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*, references to a book's shiny surfaces rarely recommend the contents within.<sup>56</sup> According to Kierkegaard's pseudo-Heiberg, the bauble on offer “i alle Maader vil kunne tjene som en smagfuld Præsent, der endog vil kunne anbringes paa Juletræet selv ved Hjælp af en Silkesløife, der er anbragt i det forgyldte Futteral” (in every manner will serve as a tasteful present, which can be placed on the Christmas tree itself by the help of a silk bow, which is attached to the gilded case).<sup>57</sup> Again, it should become clear that this description is hyperbolic if one compares it to *Nye Digte* or *Urania. Aarbog for 1844*.<sup>58</sup> That, however, does not necessarily invalidate Kierkegaard's point, namely that the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver* are primarily—if not exclusively—addressed to sensuous immediacy. In other words, these books are not designed to become spirit for the reader. By refusing to disappear, they fail the period's aesthetic litmus test.

Notabene's Heiberg may presume to address “Læseverdenen” (the reading world), but it is “fornemlig enhver Familie, der festligholder Jule- og Nytaarsaften” (first and foremost every family who celebrates Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve) that is his target audience.<sup>59</sup> Since he is quite literally selling a Christmas ornament, the book will be accessible to every member of family, regardless of his or her age or level of literacy. Thus, a straightforward sensuousness has

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with them, the snide remarks of Haufniensis notwithstanding. *Gjentagelsen. Et Forsøg i den eksperimenterende Psychologi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter; Enten – Eller. Et Livs-Fragment*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*.

54. “Enden blev, at jeg lovede ikke at ville være Forfatter. Men . . . saaledes forbeholdt jeg mig Tilladelse til at turde skrive ‘Forord.’” (The ending was that I promised not to want to be an author. But . . . in this way I reserved permission for myself to dare to write “prefaces.”) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:475.

55. Notabene's Heiberg presents his “i enhver Henseende særledes elegante og nitide Nytaarsgave til et høistæret Publikum” (in every respect particularly elegant and dainty New Year's gift for a highly esteemed public) (4:478). The word *nitid*, used by Vigilius Haufniensis in *Begrebet Angest* to describe *Urania* specifically (4:324n), “often implies an allusion to J. L. Heiberg,” according to Todd W. Nichol. Todd W. Nichol, ed. and trans., *Prefaces, Writing Sampler*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 176n61.

56. “Terms like ‘penny dreadful’ and ‘shilling shocker’ took a low price as metonymic for literary worthlessness; more counterintuitively, mentions of perfumed or hot-pressed paper did the same with high.” Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 11.

57. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:478.

58. According to Todd W. Nichol, “*Urania: Aarbog for 1844* was printed on good paper stock, with each page surrounded by a black border; its binding was ornamented with gilt decoration.” Nichol, *Prefaces*, 174n30.

59. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:478.

overshadowed the book's reflective, linguistic content. One might wonder as to what will become of this *Nytaarsgave* after the Christmas tree—as in H. C. Andersen's fairytale<sup>60</sup>—is relegated to the attic, since not even its publisher seems to think that it is worth reading.

Todd W. Nichol locates Kierkegaard's source for preface III in "Eftertale til *Urania*." As we saw above, Heiberg replies to the general reception of his yearbook in this article. According to Nichol, Notabene's pen mischievously mimics Heiberg's description of *Urania* as "en Nytaarsgave, bestemt for det æsthetisk dannede Publicum" (a New Year's gift determined for the aesthetically cultured public) in the third numbered preface.<sup>61</sup> Let us compare Heiberg's piece to Kierkegaard's *Forord* for ourselves. Heiberg writes, "Da Ovenstaaende er blevet en *Eftertale* istedenfor en *Fortale*, saa bør jeg ikke slutte uden at udtrykke min Erkjendtlighed for den gode Optagelse, som er bleven *Urania* tildeel hos vort læsende Publicum. Den næste Aargang skal, som jeg haaber, ikke staae tilbage for den første, men end mere retfærdiggjøre den Velvillie, hvormed man har modtaget den nærværende." (Since the above has become an *afterword* instead of a *foreword*, I ought not to conclude without expressing my acknowledgement of the good acceptance that has been allotted to *Urania* by our reading public. The next volume, as I hope, will not stand behind the first, but will even more so justify the good will with which the present volume has been received.)<sup>62</sup> Notabene, in turn, plays up these obsequious overtures in his parody: "Dog tør jeg forsikre et høistæret Publikum, at den udviste Velvillie og Opmærksomhed ikke er bleven en Uværdig til Deel, der skulde vove at arrogere sig Noget, eller vove at være noget Andet end hvad Publikum forlanger." (Yet I dare to assure a highly esteemed public that it has not shown its good will and attention to someone who is unworthy to share it, someone who would dare to arrogate something to himself, or dare to be something other than what the public demands.)<sup>63</sup> In a pointed irony, Kierkegaard concludes preface III by having his Heiberg-puppet thank an anonymous reviewer for contributing to the *Nytaarsgave*'s success,<sup>64</sup> when the real Heiberg had, in fact, spent most of the "Eftertale" parrying the objections of two of *Urania*'s harsher critics.<sup>65</sup>

In this same preface, another irony rears its head when Notabene's Heiberg-avatar starts bragging about the sales of his *Nytaarsgave*: "At et Oplag paa 1000 Exemplarer udsælges i to Maaneder, viser tilstrækkeligen, at min Nytaarsgave har vidst at gribe Tiden." (That a printing of 1000 copies sells out in two months shows sufficiently that my New Year's gift has known how to seize the times.)<sup>66</sup> What is said to be the second, unaltered printing is now being sold for only

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60. "Grantræet," in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker. Eventyr og historier*, ed. Laurids Kristian Fahl et al. ([Copenhagen]: Gyldendal, 2003), 1:295–301.

61. Nichol, *Prefaces*, 176n61; [Heiberg], "Eftertale," 231.

62. [Heiberg], "Eftertale," 236.

63. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:485

64. "Slutteligen maa jeg takke den meget ærede Recensent for hans høist interessante Anmeldelse, hvilken vel for a stor Deel den rivende Afsætning skyldes. Naar paa en saadan skjøen Maade Litteraturen og Journalistiken arbeide Haand i Haand, o! da vil Danmarks Fremtid staae lysende for os." (Finally, I must thank the greatly honored reviewer for his highly interesting review, for which a great part of the rapid sales is probably owed. When literature and journalism work hand-in-hand in such a beautiful way, oh! Then Denmark's future will stand shining before us.) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:485.

65. [Heiberg], "Eftertale," 227ff.

66. "At et Oplag paa 1000 Exemplarer udsælges i to Maaneder, viser tilstrækkeligen, at min Nytaarsgave har vidst at gribe Tiden." (That a printing of 1000 copies sells out in two months shows sufficiently that my New Year's gift has known how to seize the times.) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:485.

an eighth of what the bookseller had charged for the first.<sup>67</sup> This seemingly generous offer should raise some questions from an economic standpoint. Why would one go to the trouble to reprint a book, only to sell it for a modicum of the original price? Was the *Nytaarsgave* outrageously overpriced to exploit holiday sentimentality? By the standards of the Golden Age book market, 1000 copies is a mammoth print run,<sup>68</sup> and to sell out in two months is nothing short of remarkable. Could it be that Notabene's Heiberg is not telling the truth?

Let us compare *Enten – Eller* to the overblown gift-book of the pseudo-Heiberg. The former was considered a commercial success, and its 525 copies sold out only after two years,<sup>69</sup> whereas all one thousand copies of this *Nytaarsgave* have supposedly disappeared from the shelves in just two months. Is Kierkegaard charging Heiberg with a crass mercantilism that panders to the spirit of the times? Perhaps, but the public might not be so gullible, after all. Notabene intimates to his reader that this Heiberg-clown did not really manage to sell off all of his playthings. He makes this insinuation by providing us with two clues.

The first clue is that the “andet Oplag er uforandret” (second printing is unchanged).<sup>70</sup> An additional impression of a successful book would sometimes be printed from standing type or stereotype plates, making it virtually identical with the first impression. Yet, in this case, the so-called second printing might actually be the first. As Philip Gaskell reminds us, “Edition statements should be received with caution. The term ‘edition’ has always been used in the trade for ‘impression’ or ‘issue’ as well as for edition in the bibliographical sense; a book that is advertised as a ‘new edition’ may indeed represent a new setting of type, but it may be a reimpression from standing type with or without correction, an impression from plates, *or simply a reissue of the original sheets with a new title-page.*”<sup>71</sup> In nineteenth-century Europe, it was common practice to recirculate a book, if its sales were lagging, with a new title page, often with a counterfactual indication of a subsequent printing or edition, in order to give the book a specious air of popularity.<sup>72</sup> The other clue betraying this Heiberg stand-in is that he has been caught advertising the remaindered copies himself at a mere fraction of their original price. Apparently, the bookseller has given up on the book, leaving the poor publisher to hawk his own wares in a desperate effort to cover the cost of printing. And if at long last this fictional Heiberg is unable to move his *Nytaarsgaver* as books, then he will have no choice but to offer them up as wrapping paper or pulp. Andersen's *Ungdoms-Forsøg* (Attempts of youth) was one of countless books from the period to meet this fate.<sup>73</sup>

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67. “Dette andet Oplag er uforandret, og sælges for den billige Priis 3Mk., eller en ottende Deel af Bogladeprisen paa første Oplag.” (This second printing is unchanged and is sold for the reasonable price of three marks, or one-eighth of the bookseller's price for the first printing.) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:485.

68. “In the early nineteenth century, Copenhagen was a city of only 100 000 inhabitants, while a book which sold 500 copies was considered a bestseller.” George Pattison, *Kierkegaard: The Aesthetic and the Religious: From the Magic Theatre to the Crucifixion of the Image* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 35.

69. “Within two years the entire edition of 525 copies had been sold, making it (by the standards of the day) a literary success.” George Pattison, “The Initial Reception of *Either/Or*,” in *Either/Or: Part II*, vol. 4 of *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995), 291.

70. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:485.

71. Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2015), 317; my emphasis.

72. According to H. C. Andersen biographer Elias Bredsdorff, “There was an advance notice of *Youthful Attempts* in the newspaper *Dagen* on 12 June 1822, and Andersen tried to enlist subscribers, but hardly any of the printed copies seemed to have been sold. To recover some of their money the printers sold all the remaining copies to a bookseller, who tried to sell them with a new title page in 1827, but he was equally unsuccessful.” Elias Bredsdorff, *Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of His Life and Work, 1805–75* (New York: Noonday, 1994), 42.

73. Bredsdorff, *Hans Christian Andersen*, 42.

Heiberg's *Nytaarsgaver* were founded on the Hegelian principle of sublation; and yet, they are not Hegelian in a strict sense, insofar as the printed book is not of aesthetic interest for Hegel—only the aural or ideal poetic text is. Rather than dispute Heiberg on this rather fine point, Kierkegaard troubles Heiberg's desired affinity with Hegel via satire. Of course, Hegel was not the only aesthete to endorse the disappearing book, but he was the most influential one for Heiberg, and arguably for Kierkegaard, as well. While Hegel demanded that the text upstage the book,<sup>74</sup> Heiberg's bibliophilic gimcracks overshadow their literary content. The Notabenean Heiberg is therefore alien to the disappearing book and exiled from the discourse network of 1800.

Now apparently speaking for himself, Notabene, in the first sentence of preface IV, describes the short-lived excitement surrounding the *Nytaarsgaver*. Counterposed to original works of genius, these literary trinkets are merely models for calligraphers to copy.<sup>75</sup> According to Nichol, even before Notabene names Heiberg, the pseudonym's use of the word *nitid* (dainty) assures us of who his target is.<sup>76</sup> When Notabene finally does call out Heiberg, the editor is conflated with his book, as Heiberg himself, in sumptuous fashion, joins the parade route of *Nytaarsgaver*.<sup>77</sup> Of Heiberg's gewgaw, Notabene quips, "Kjøber ingen anden denne Bog, saa kjøber Kunstammeret den." (If no one else buys the book, then the Chamber of Art will buy it.)<sup>78</sup> This remark will require some elucidation.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, *Det kongelige Kunstammer* (The Royal Chamber of Art) was dissolved, and its contents came to form the core collections of several newly founded public museums.<sup>79</sup> It was perhaps Andersen's 1835 fairytale "Prindsessen paa Ærten"

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74. Leah Price contrasts the "text" with the "book" (17). The text is "a linguistic structure," whereas the book is "a material thing" (20). Karin Sanders elaborates on the distinction between text and book as follows: "Det hierarkiske forhold mellem *tekst* og *bog*, hvor teksten (her forstået som det litterære indhold) anses som finere end bogens rå materialitet, handler også, om, at teksten opfattes som renere end bogen, der støvet og gammel må finde sig i forskellige affaldsfunktioner." (The hierarchical relation between *text* and *book*, where the text [understood here as the literary content] is considered to be more refined than the book's raw materiality, also suggests that the text is purer than the book, which, dusty and old, must submit to various waste functions.) Karin Sanders, "Bogen som ting og skulptur," *Edda* 100, no. 4 (2013): 315, [https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen\\_som\\_ting\\_og\\_skulptur](https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen_som_ting_og_skulptur).

75. "I December Maaned begynder som bekjendt det skrivende Forretningsfolks litteraire Nytaarsjav. Flere særdeles elegante og nitide Bøger, bestemte for Børn og Juletræer, men især tjenlige til en smagfuld Præsent, jage hinanden forbi i Adresseavisen og andre Blade, for efterat have gjort *furor* i fjorten Dage, af en høflig Kritik at anvises Plads i en eller anden Exempelsamling som begejstrende Forskrifter for alle æsthetiske Skjønkrivere; thi æsthetiske Skjønkrift er en høist alvorlig Sag, og man uddanner sig i den ved at lade Idee og Tanken fare." (It is a well-known fact that, in the month of December, the literary New Year's rush of the writing businessmen begins. Several particularly elegant and dainty books, destined for children and Christmas trees, but especially serviceable for a tasteful present, rush past each other in *Adresseavisen* and other papers; for, after having made a furor for fourteen days, they are shown, by a courteous review, a place in some collection of samples as inspiring models for all aesthetic copybook scribes; for aesthetic copybook writing is the solution, and aesthetic copybook writing is a highly serious matter, and one is trained in it by abandoning idea and thought.) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:486.

76. Nichol, *Prefaces*, 176n64.

77. "Det vilde jeg have forsvoret, er ikke Prof. Heiberg iaar med om Hesten? Jo ganske rigtigt det er Prof. Heiberg. Ja naar man er saaledes udstyret, saa kan man sagtens vise sig for den undrende Mængde; end ikke Salomon Goldkalb i al sin Pragt var saaledes paaklædt; dette her er jo det bare Guld." (I could have sworn that Prof. Heiberg is along for the ride this year. Indeed, quite so; it is Prof. Heiberg. Well, when one is fitted out like that, then one can easily appear before the wondering crowd; not even Salomon Goldkalb was dressed like that in all his glory; this here is indeed pure gold.) *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:486.

78. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:486.

79. Bente Gundestrup, "The Royal Danish Kunstammer," *Museum* 40, no. 4 (1988): 189, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0033.1989.tb01346.x>.



(The princess on the pea) that inspired Kierkegaard to make this reference to the *Kunstkammer*, where the titular pea is preserved at the end of the story.<sup>80</sup> By suggesting that Heiberg sell his *Nytaarsgave* to this defunct institution, Notabene strongly implies that this book is an artistic curio at best, at worst a piece of historical trivia. Not an intellectual object but an *objet d'art*, Heiberg's book is better off gathering dust in a dark cabinet than circulating as enlightening reading material in the public sphere. After all, as we saw in the first preface, its texts do not even receive a word in passing.

To sum up, the measuring stick that Notabene applies to Heiberg's *Nytaarsgaver* in prefaces I, III, and IV is that of the disappearing book. By ignoring the linguistic content of these books, Notabene is at liberty to treat them as empty shells and nothing more. The imputation is that their interior is too slight or paltry to address the reader in the simulated voice of a transcendent author. Reified as glimmering tchotchkes, repurposed as waste, or forgotten as useless things, the *Nytaarsgaver* can never become spirit, at least not for Kierkegaard *alias* Notabene.

#### AFSLUTTENDE UVIDENSKABELIG EFTERSKRIFT

Johannes Climacus, pseudonymous author of 1844's *Philosophiske Smuler* (Philosophical fragments) and 1846's *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, does not explicitly mention the *Nytaarsgaver* in either of these works, and yet the latter contains a passage redolent of Notabene's prefaces I and III. Here Climacus confides to his reader, "Jeg har nemlig altid tænkt mig det saaledes, at en Forfatter er En, der veed noget Mere eller veed det Samme anderledes end Læseren, derfor er han Forfatter, og ellers skal han ikke give sig af med at være Forfatter. Derimod er det aldrig faldet mig ind, at en Forfatter var en Supplikant, en Tigger ved Læserens Dør, en Bissekræmmer, der ved Hjælp af et Satans Snakketøj og lidt Guldstads paa Bindet, som rigtig stak Døttrene i Øinene, paaprakkede Familierne sin Skrifter." (I have always imagined it like this: that an author is someone who knows more or knows the same thing, but in a different way, than the reader, and therefore he is an author, and otherwise he should not dabble in being an author. On the other hand, it never occurred to me that an author was a supplicant, a beggar at the reader's door, a peddler who by the help of the Devil's gift of gab and a little gold decoration on the binding, which really caught the daughters' eye, palmed off his publications on the families.)<sup>81</sup> Climacus names neither Heiberg nor the *Nytaarsgaver*, but Kierkegaard's ideal reader would have had no difficulty in identifying them here, as Notabene, in prefaces I and III of *Forord*, had already parodied a Heiberg who importunes families with his glossy *Nytaarsgave*, destined for either the Christmas tree or the nursery.

Significantly, it is the house's daughters—of unspecified ages—who are supposed to be attracted to the gilt-decorated bindings of these books. Taken out of context from Kierkegaard's authorial project, this remark appears to disparage the intellectual capacities of girls and young women, as it implies that a publisher's wares are only sensuous objects to them. Yet, as Birgit

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80. Andersen writes, "Prindsen tog hende da til Kone, for nu vidste han, at han havde en rigtig Prindsesse, og Ærten kom paa Kunstammeret, hvor den endnu er at see, dersom ingen har taget den." (The prince took her as his wife, for now he knew that he had a real princess, and the pea came to the Chamber of Art, where it can still be seen, if no one has taken it.) The possibility that the pea has been stolen no doubt alludes to the notorious theft of the Golden Horns of Gallehus from the Chamber of Art in 1802, as described by John L. Greenway. "Prindsessen paa Ærten," in *H. C. Andersens samlede værker*, 1:98; John L. Greenway, *The Golden Horns: Mythic Imagination and the Nordic Past* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 1–2.

81. *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:272.

Bertung reminds us, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship does not communicate directly; it serves as a corrective for the position of women in Golden Age Danish society. Kierkegaard, she writes, "docerer. . . ikke kvindefjendsk tale, men der kunne derimod være tale om en indirekte meddelelse til kvinder, om at ændre det relative i deres situation" (does not make misogynistic lectures, but, on the contrary, there could be talk of an indirect communication to women to change the contingent in their situation).<sup>82</sup> Bertung elucidates Kierkegaard's especial concern for women readers as follows: "Kierkegaard kunne i høj grad tænkes også at ville provokere kvinder til at 'indrømme,' at deres liv blev levet uegentligt, at de overprioriterede den timelige side af syntesen." (To a great extent, Kierkegaard could also be considered as wanting to provoke women to "admit" that their lives have been lived inauthentically, that they over-prioritize the temporal side of the synthesis.)<sup>83</sup> In *Sygdommen til Døden* (The sickness unto death), "syntesen" is central to the philosophical anthropology of the Christian pseudonym Anti-Climacus, who writes, "Mennesket er en Synthese . . . af det Timelige og det Evige." (The human being is a synthesis . . . of the temporal and the eternal.)<sup>84</sup> Thus, on one level, Kierkegaard is attempting to divert his readers' attention away from the transient book (*det Timelige*), and towards the imperishable text (*det Evige*), but here the book also provides an object lesson in the broader distinction between passing surface phenomena and perpetual inner truths.

#### EN LITERAIR ANMELDELSE

In *En literair Anmeldelse*, Kierkegaard reviews *To Tidsaldre* (Two ages), Madame Gyllembourg's capstone novel, under his own name. Gyllembourg, on the other hand (like Walter Scott and Jane Austen before her), had long since continued to publish under an anonym based on an earlier work,<sup>85</sup> which in her case was *En Hverdags-Historie* (*An Everyday Story*).<sup>86</sup> *En Hverdags-Historie*

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82. Birgit Bertung, *Kierkegaard, kvinder og kærlighed – en studie i Søren Kierkegaards kvindesyn*, 2nd ed. ([Fjerritslev]: Forlag1, 2010), 73.

83. Bertung, *Kierkegaards kvindesyn*, 73.

84. *Sygdommen til Døden. En christelig psykologisk Udvikling til Opbyggelse og Opvækkelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 11:129.

85. According to Jon Stewart, "Female authors represent a special case of the use of pseudonyms which was accompanied by a special set of reasons for their employment. In the wider European context one can mention figures such as Jane Austen [*sic*] whose *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) was signed merely 'By a Lady.' Her next work *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) was signed 'By the Author of "Sense and Sensibility,"' and then her next book after that, *Mansfield Park* (1814) was signed 'By the Author of "Sense and Sensibility" and "Pride and Prejudice."' In this way readers knew that there was a single author responsible for these works without knowing who it was. This practice was followed in Denmark by Thomasine Gyllembourg. Her 'Story from Everyday Life' became a surprise success, and subsequently her works were signed 'By the Author of "A Story from Everyday Life."' The reason why women of the period made use of pseudonyms was presumably the fact that such a vocation for women was not something that was universally accepted at the time. Thus, female writers were anxious to avoid attracting attention to themselves and tried to conceal their identity. Another reason was presumably that they felt that the fact that they were women would undermine the works that they were writing since some readers would be disinclined to take seriously a work penned by a woman." Gérard Genette adds the example of Walter Scott: "Known and respected as a man of law and as a poet, he refused to sign his first novel, *Waverley*, and then signed most of the subsequent ones with the phrase (apparently in imitation of Jane Austen, but destined here for more glory – and for new imitations) 'By the Author of *Waverley*.'" Jon Stewart, *Faust, Romantic Irony, and System: German Culture in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2019), 317–18; Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 43.

86. Thomasine Gyllembourg, *An Everyday Story*, trans. Troy Wellington Smith, *The Bridge* 42, nos. 1–2 (2019): 9–46.

first appeared in another of J. L. Heiberg's periodicals, *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, in 1828.<sup>87</sup> Since then, writes Kierkegaard, "Fortællingerne senere Aar efter Aar paa en saa smuk Maade udkom ved Juletid. Thi hvad der end kan indvendes imod, at gjøre en saa tilfældig Tid til Messe-Tid og fornemlig af en saa tilfældig Grund som den, at man behøver Præsenter, som var dansk Literatur slet ikke andet end Præsenter-Literatur: *Hverdags Historien* er aldrig paa den Maade kommen ved Juletid, dens egen Betydningsfuldhed maatte forhindre en fornærmelig Misforstaaelse, hvis ikke allerede dens tarvelige beskedne Udseende forhindrede enhver endog det første Øiekasts Misforstaaelse." (The stories later came out year after year in a beautiful way during Christmas time. For whatever can be objected against making one so fortuitous time into a fair-season, and for the fortuitous reason that one needs presents, as if Danish literature were nothing other than present literature, *Hverdags-Historien* has never come out during Christmastime in this manner; its own significance must hinder an offensive misunderstanding, even if its simple, modest appearance did not hinder the misunderstanding of a first glance.)<sup>88</sup> Kierkegaard thereby establishes an dichotomy between the unassuming *Hverdags-Historien* and the ostentatious *Nytaarsgave*. Indeed, *Urania. Aarbog for 1844* distinguishes itself from most of its contemporaries with an Antiqua typeface, instead of the much more common Fraktur.<sup>89</sup> Like the other pages of this volume, the title page is surrounded by a double black line. The main title is set in a drop-shadow typeface, creating a three-dimensional, sculptural effect (fig. 1). If we compare *Urania* to the novel under review in *En literair Anmeldelse*, the difference is apparent, as *To Tidsaldre* is set in the utterly transparent Reitzel house style of mid-century (fig. 2).<sup>90</sup>

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87. Katalin Nun, *Women of the Danish Golden Age: Literature, Theater and the Emancipation of Women* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2013), 12n3.

88. Kierkegaard uses *Hverdags-Historien* as a catchall for the works published under the anonym "Forfatteren til *En Hverdags-Historie*." *En literair Anmeldelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:20.

89. "I 1838 blev 95% af alle danske bøger sat med Fraktur." (In 1838, 95% of all Danish books were set in Fraktur.) Rohde and Cappelørn, "Kierkegaard som bogproducent," 19.

90. Jens Bjerring-Hansen describes "den upåfaldende uniform, som bøgerne fra Reitzel af guldalderens forfattere var iført – neutralt oktavformat, uden illustrationer" (the unremarkable uniform, in which the books of the Golden Age's authors were dressed—neutral octavo format, without illustrations). Jens Bjerring-Hansen, "Holberg, hurtigpressen og 'læserevolutionen' i guldalderen. En fjernlæsning af den danske kanon," in Rix, *Mellem ånd og tryksvæerte*, 52.

# URANIA.

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Aarvog for 1844,

udgiven

af

**Johan Ludvig Heiberg.**

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**Kjøbenhavn.**

Trykt paa H. I. Bing & Söns Forlag

i Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

Digitized by Google

Fig. 1 J. L. Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarvog for 1844* (Copenhagen: Bing, 1844), t.p. Taylor Institution, University of Oxford; photo by Google.

# To Tidsaldre.

Novelle

af

Forfatteren til „En Hverdags - Historie.“

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Udgiven

af

Johan Ludvig Heiberg.

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Kjøbenhavn.

Forlagt af Universitetsboghandler C. A. Reitzel.

Trykt i Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

1845.

Digitized by Google

Fig. 2 [Thomasine Gyllembourg], *To Tidsaldre. Novelle*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1845), t.p. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek; photo by Google.

Why, then, does Kierkegaard suggest that *Hverdags-Historien* might be mistaken for a *Nytaarsgave*? Ironically, one of the *Hverdags-Historier*, “Castor and Pollux, was published in *Urania. Aarbog for 1844*, a volume which Kierkegaard was quite familiar with, as it also contained Heiberg’s “Det astronomiske Aar,” the very review that turned Kierkegaard against the *Nytaarsgave* industry. And, like *Urania*, *To Tidsaldre* is “udgiven af Johan Ludvig Heiberg” (edited by Johan Ludvig Heiberg).<sup>91</sup> Therefore, if one overlooks *To Tidsaldre*’s simple aspect, there is bound to be a “første Øiekasts Misforstaaelse,” as this humble *Hverdags-Historie* shares an editor with the lavish astronomical yearbook. In the end, however, *To Tidsaldre* proves to be profound, rather than superficial. As “en Frembringelse i Inderlighed” (a production in inwardness), it is everything a *Nytaarsgave* is not.

#### “KRISEN OG EN KRISE I EN SKUESPILLERINDES LIV”

Kierkegaard’s war against the *Nytaarsgaver* was for the most part waged between 1844 and 1846, in the first two phases of his authorship, which he defined as follows. In the posthumously published *Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed. En ligefrem Meddelelse, Rapport til Historien* (The point of view for my work as an author: A direct communication, report to history), he located *Begrebet Angest* and *Forord* in the first stage of his authorship, and accorded the *Efterskrift* the second stage all to itself.<sup>92</sup> *En literair Anmeldelse*, which followed on the heels of the *Efterskrift*, was left out of consideration, most likely because Kierkegaard, in his own view, wrote this work not as an author, but as a critic.<sup>93</sup> The third stage consists of “(blot religiøs Produktivitet): opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand; Kjærlighedens Gjerninger; christelig Taler – samt en lille æsthetisk Artikel: Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv” ([simply religious productivity]: *Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand; Kjerlighedens Gjerninger; Christelige Taler*—plus a little aesthetic article: “Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv”).<sup>94</sup> “Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv” (The crisis and a crisis in an actress’s life) was really a series of four articles that appeared in *Fædrelandet* between July 24 and July 27, 1848, under the cryptic pseudonym *Inter et Inter*.<sup>95</sup>

91. [Thomasine Gyllembourg], *To Tidsaldre. Novelle*, ed. Johan Ludvig Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1845), t.p., [https://www.google.com/books/edition/To\\_Tidsaldre/I2oAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=to+tidsaldre&pg=PR1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/To_Tidsaldre/I2oAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=to+tidsaldre&pg=PR1&printsec=frontcover).

92. “For at have det ved Haanden, her [er] Titlerne paa Bøgerne. *Iste Hold* (æsthetisk Produktivitet): Enten – Eller; Frygt og Bæven; Gjntagelsen; Begrebet Angest; Forord; filosofiske Smuler; Stadier paa Livets Vei – samt 18 opbyggelige Taler, som kom successive. *2det Hold*: afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift.” (To have it at hand, here are the titles of the books. *Ist group* [aesthetic productivity]: *Enten – Eller; Frygt og Bæven; Gjntagelsen; Begrebet Angest; Forord; Filosofiske Smuler; Stadier paa Livets Vei*—plus *Atten opbyggelige Taler*, which came out successively. *2nd group*: *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*.) *Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed. En ligefrem Meddelelse, Rapport til Historien*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 16:15n.

93. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, historical introduction to *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age, A Literary Review*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), x.

94. *Synspunktet*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 16:15n.

95. As Samuel McCormick states, “More than a theatrical reference or the quilting point for his work as an author, ‘Inter et Inter’ is a contracted, highly abridged pronouncement of the distinctions between Johanne Luise Heiberg, Johan Ludvig Heiberg, and Kierkegaard.” Samuel McCormick, “Inter et Inter: Between Kierkegaard and the Heibergs,” *Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter* 59 (March 2012): 3, <https://wp.stolaf.edu/kierkegaard/files/2014/03/Newsletter59.pdf>.

In “Krisen,” Kierkegaard not only offered a reprise of his first or aesthetic authorship, as he would point out himself in *Synspunktet*; he also briefly resumed hostilities against the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*. And, once more, he counterbalanced the invective against Heiberg by praising a woman in his (i.e., Heiberg’s) life, although again, she is never mentioned by name. While *En literair Anmeldelse* is a paean to the anonymous Madame Gyllembourg, the “lille æsthetisk Artikel” lauds Heiberg’s wife, the actress Johanne Luise Heiberg. Returning to the role of Juliet, which she first performed at the age of 16, Fru Heiberg, now 30 years old, has taken the opportunity to play the part “i Idealitetens rent æsthetiske Forhold til Ideen” (in ideality’s purely aesthetic relation to the idea) of “qvindelig Ungdommelighed” (feminine youthfulness), rather than relying on “qvindelig Ungdommelighed ligefrem forstaaet” (feminine youthfulness, literally understood), as she did in her debut.<sup>96</sup> *Inter et Inter* calls this artistic development “Metamorphosen” (the metamorphosis).<sup>97</sup>

In this pseudonymous author’s opinion, Fru Heiberg’s willingness to remain in the public eye, despite a contemporary cult of celebrity that prizes aloofness, is particularly commendable, as here she departs from the pattern established by her husband:

Dersom en Forfatter, som hverken har et betydeligt Fond af Ideer, ei heller er meget flittig, engang i Ny og Næ udgiver en pyntelig Examens-Skriverbog, der er særdeles nitid og med mange rene Blade elegant udstyret: saa seer Mængden med Forundring og Beundring dette pyntelige Phænomenon; den tænker, har han været saa længe om at skrive den, og staaer der saa lidt paa Siden, saa maa det være noget Overordenligt. Dersom derimod en righoldig Forfatter, der har Andet at tænke paa end paa Pyntelighed, og paa at profitere af et Sandsebedrag, anstrængende sig med større og større Flid, seer sig istand at kunne arbeide med en usædvanlig Hurtighed, saa bliver Mængden vant dertil, og tænker: det maa være Jadsk.

(If an author who has neither a considerable store of ideas, nor is very diligent, now and then publishes a decorative exam-book, which with many clean pages is particularly dainty and elegantly fitted out, then the crowd sees this decorative phenomenon with wonder and admiration; it thinks that he has been so long in writing it, and that there is so little on the page, so it must be something extraordinary. If, on the other hand, a copious author, who has other things to think about than decorativeness and profiting from an illusion, exerts himself with greater and greater industry, sees his way to being able to work with an exceptional speed, then the crowd becomes accustomed to it, and thinks: It must be slovenly work.)<sup>98</sup>

Kierkegaard’s devoted readers would recall that the word *nitid* had been used to describe J. L. Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* by both Vigilius Haufniensis and Nicolaus Notabene,<sup>99</sup> and so he is clearly under fire here. Whereas, in the first numbered preface of *Forord*, Notabene, pretending to

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96. “Krisen og Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:104.

97. “Krisen,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:94ff.

98. “Krisen,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:102.

99. According to Henrik Blicher and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “J. L. Heibergs bøger var kendt for deres nitide udstyr, hvilket SK refererer til i *Begrebet Angest* (1844) . . . og i *Forord* (1844).” (J. L. Heiberg’s books were known for their dainty get-up, which SK refers to in *Begrebet Angest* [1844] . . . and in *Forord* [1844].) Henrik Blicher and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “‘Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv.’ Tekstkommentarer,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-kks-kom-root>.

be Heiberg, tried to distract the reader from the intellectual or literary paucity of his *Nytaarsgave* by emphasizing the book's bewitching exterior, in "Krisen" this lack is taken *ad absurdum* by *Inter et Inter*, as the book he describes has no verbal content whatsoever, as it is only a blank copybook for calligraphy,<sup>100</sup> just like the *Nytaarsgaver* described by Notabene in the fourth numbered preface. Diametrically opposed to the intellectually bankrupt author who enriches himself by catering to the masses' sensualism is, of course, none other than Kierkegaard himself, who was not only tremendously productive, but also had the rare modesty never to let his books appear in extravagant publisher's bindings.

The Fru Heiberg of *Inter et Inter*'s essay is more than just a foil for her husband's insipid bibliophilism. Through her example, Kierkegaard passes judgement on the entire age. Her appearances on stage may no longer exhibit youthful femininity in the straightforward or vulgar sense,<sup>101</sup> but her performance as Juliet fascinates because she relates to the character dialectically, for Juliet is what she is not (i.e., a young girl). The *ingenue*, on the other hand, does not cogitate on the idea of a young girl; that is simply what she is.<sup>102</sup> Like a *Nytaarsgave*, her performance has an alluring surface, but no earnest depths. This void within mirrors the greater one that Kierkegaard had already detected behind the façade of Golden Age Copenhagen in *En literair Anmeldelse*.<sup>103</sup>

## TALER

*En literair Anmeldelse* was not the only work in which Kierkegaard confronted the *Nytaarsgaver* and what they represented under his own name. A more subtle critique of the *Nytaarsgaver* can also be found in Kierkegaard's *Taler*. Insofar as this oral genre is at odds with the physical book, the *Taler* are disappearing books of a kind. Conversely, the *Nytaarsgaver* are nothing but their appearance—that, at least, is Kierkegaard's assertion. The collection *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843* will be of especial interest here, as its talks are entitled "Troens Forventning. Nytaarsdag" and "Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra." As their titles indicate, these two texts anticipate Kierkegaard's direct attack on Heiberg, as the *Nytaar* and the *Gave* are understood in a manner quite different from that of the worldly *Nytaarsgaver*.

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100. Henrik Blicher and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn define the "Examens-Skriverbog" as a "skolebog med blade til brug ved eksamen i (skøn)skrivning" (schoolbook with leaves for use on the exam in [copybook]writing). Blicher and Cappelørn, "'Krisen.' Tekstkommentarer," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-kks-kom-root>.

101. "Krisen," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:106.

102. "Sagen er ganske simpel; man kan spørge saaledes: hvilken Indfatning er den væsenlige tilsvarende til en Genialitet, hvis Idee er qvindelig Ungdommelighed. De fleste Mennesker ville desto værre formodenligen svare: det er qvindelig Ungdommelighed eller at være 17 Aar gammel. Men dette er vistnok en Misforstaaelse, som strider mod det Dialektiskes egen Tankegang. Rent ideelt og dialektisk er Fordringen: at Indfatningen, eller det hvori Ideen er, forholder sig til Ideen paa en Afstand fra Ideen." (The matter is quite simple. One can ask thus: What frame corresponds essentially to a genius whose idea is feminine youthfulness? For the worst, most people would answer: It is feminine youthfulness or being 17 years old. But this is, I think, a misunderstanding, which goes against the dialectical's own way of thinking. Purely ideally and dialectically the demand is that the frame, or what the idea is in, relates to the idea at a distance from the idea.) "Krisen," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:104.

103. "Overfladiskhed er den ophævede lidenskabelige Distinktion mellem Skjulthed og Aabenbarelse, den er en Aabenbarelse af Tomhed." (Superficiality is the sublated, passionate distinction between hiddenness and revelation; it is a revelation of emptiness.) *En literair Anmeldelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:97.



In classifying the *Taler* as disappearing books, I am offering what could be called a “naïve reading” of them.<sup>104</sup> Like most other works in Kierkegaard’s authorship, the *Taler*, to one degree or another, manifest a fractured dialectic between the spatial and the temporal, or between the outer and the inner. This interpretation of the *Taler* will be justified in chapter 3, as part of an analysis the ironic book; but for now, I simply want to underscore the ethereal orality of these texts, as this feature sets them at odds with the skin-deep *Nytaarsgaver*.

I must first establish the genre of the *Tale* as a disappearing book. Most obviously, the “virtual orality” that Kittler equates with the disappearing book is foregrounded in the generic title, especially if it is translated as “talks.” Furthermore, every collection of *Taler*, as well as *Til Selvprøvelse. Samtiden anbefalet* (For self-examination. Recommended for the age) and—perhaps erroneously—*Tvende ethisk-religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger* (Two ethical-religious treatises), apostrophize “min Tilhører” (my listener) or “m. T.” for short.<sup>105</sup> When reading these talks, writes George Pattison, “it is part of my task as reader to imagine myself caught up in the dialogue between preacher and congregation.”<sup>106</sup> The *opbyggelige Taler* are, nevertheless, preceded by prefaces which refer to “**min læser**” (**my** reader),<sup>107</sup> but prefatory paratexts, as Finn Frandsen argues, can ultimately strengthen our impression of encountering the body text as pure ideality, rather than as writtenness.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the homogenous prefaces to Kierkegaard’s collections of *Taler* facilitate an immediate encounter between him and his reader,<sup>109</sup> in which the booklet is dispersed in an imagined or actual auralty.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, the preface to *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843* advises its reader to sublimate the subsequent inscriptions in sound:

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104. But this approach is distinct from George Pattison’s “relatively naïve reading of the discourses,” which “find[s] in them a descriptive account of the human condition and of the religious ‘solution’ to its internal contradictions.” George Pattison, *Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses: Philosophy, Theology, Literature* (London: Routledge: 2002), 35.

105. The title of this work implies writtenness, and so this apostrophizing of a listener is probably just a slip of the pen. *Tvende ethisk-religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 11:108.

106. George Pattison, “New Year’s Day: A Comparative Study of the First of the Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses,” *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2000): 95, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110244021.74>.

107. E.g., *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:13.

108. “Parateksten er teksten på bogens omslag, det er forfatternavnet, titlen, dedikationen, mottoet, forordet, noterne, det er dagbogen, den private eller offentlige korrespondance, forfatterens egne kommentarer til sit værk osv. – kort sagt alt det, som burde ophæve læserens illusion om at møde teksten i ‘nøgen tilstand,’ men paradoksalt nok snarere bidrager til at styrke denne illusion.” (The paratext is the text on the book’s cover, it is the name of the author, the title, the epigraph, the preface, the notes; it is the diary, the private or public correspondence, the author’s own commentaries for his work, etc.—in short, everything that should cancel the reader’s illusion of meeting the text ‘in the nude,’ but paradoxically enough sooner contributes to strengthening this illusion.) Finn Frandsen, “Forord: Kierkegaards paratekst,” in *Denne slyngelagtige eftertid. Tekster om Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. Finn Frandsen and Ole Morsing (Århus: Slagsmark, 1995), 2:367–68.

109. “Det, som straks springer i øjnene her, er de opbyggelige forords store homogenitet. Hvis vi strækker os lidt langt, kunne man sige, at der i det store og hele kun er tale om ét eneste forord i denne del af Kierkegaards forfatterskab – et makro-forord, der er ret kort, og som iscenesætter kommunikationsrummet mellem forfatter og ‘den Enkelte,’ som Kierkegaard kalder ‘*min Læser*.’” (What is most apparent here is the great homogeneity of the *Opbyggelige Taler*. If we stretch ourselves a little, one could say that, on the whole, there is only talk of one single preface in the whole of Kierkegaard’s authorship—a macro-preface, which is really short, and which stages the communication space between author and reader, “that individual” whom Kierkegaard calls “*my reader*.”) Frandsen, “Kierkegaards paratekst,” 380.

110. “Samtidig viser et andet tema sig: bogens *selv-opløsning*.” (At the same time, another theme appears: the book’s *self-dissolution*.) Frandsen, “Kierkegaards paratekst,” 2:381.

Lille, som den er, smutter den vel igjennem, da den skjætter sig selv og gaaer sin Gang og passer sit Ærinde og kjender sin gaadefulde Vei – til den finder hiin Enkelte, som jeg med Glæde og Taknemmelighed kalder *min* Læser – til den finder, hvad den søger, hiint velvillige Menneske, der læser høit for sig selv, hvad jeg skriver i Stilhed, der med sin Stemme løser Skriftegenes Fortryllelse, med sin Røst kalder frem, hvad de stumme Bogstaver vel ligesom have paa Munden, men ikke formaae at udsige uden megen Møie, stammende og afbrudt, i sin Stemning frelser de fangne Tanker, der længes efter Befrielse.

(Slight as it is, it surely scurries through when it shifts for itself and goes its way and minds its errand and recognizes its mysterious way—until it finds that individual, whom I with joy and thankfulness call *my* reader—until it finds what it seeks, that sympathetic person who reads aloud for himself what I write in silence, who with his voice releases the spell of the characters, who calls forth with his voice what the mute letters probably had just on the tip of their tongue, but were not able to enunciate without much trouble, stammering and interrupted, who in his enthusiasm redeems the trapped thoughts that long for liberation.)<sup>111</sup>

A more robust interpretation will have to wait for the next chapter, but suffice it to say that this passage could be read as a straightforward example of the disappearing book’s phonocentrism. Kierkegaard implies that his faithful reader’s task is to declaim the writing and supplant the lifeless book-object with a living orality.

Let us now turn back to *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, with its twin talks devoted to the New Year and the gift, respectively: “Troens Forventning. Nytaarsdag” and “Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra.” This book was not published on or before New Year’s Day 1843, but on May 16 of that year.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, I would maintain that *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843* presents itself as an alternative to the *Nytaarsgaver*, chiefly through its two texts’ titles and motifs, but also in its very refusal to appear during the holiday season.

Unlike most editions in Golden Age Denmark, which were sold in paper wrappers, the *Nytaarsgaver* appeared in publisher’s bindings; they were, in short, novelties. Insofar as Kierkegaard’s first series of talks is directed against “a cult of the new,”<sup>113</sup> they could be said to target the *Nytaarsgaver* specifically, not because Heiberg’s *Nytaarsgaver* were something unprecedented, but because each year saw a new design or gimmick. Since patience is linked to expectation,<sup>114</sup> “Troens Forventning,” writes Pattison, serves as a rebuke to a society that increasingly demands instant gratification.<sup>115</sup> The nascent consumer culture, which includes the *Nytaarsgaver*, is implicated here, even if it is not mentioned directly.

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111. *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:63.

112. “Hæftet udkom 16. Maj.” (The booklet was published on May 16.) Søren Bruun and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “*To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. Tekstredigørelse,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K5:9.

113. Pattison, *Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses*, 49.

114. “The virtue of patience is, moreover, closely connected with the that of expectation, which, again, features in several of the discourse titles: ‘Patience in Expectation’ (again), ‘The Expectation of Faith’ and ‘The Expectation of Eternal Happiness.’ Both patience and expectation, separately and together, point to a relation to time that accepts time’s essentially extended, open, unfinished character, and, consequently, the inevitable deferral of gratification that belongs to a life lived in time.” Pattison, *Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses*, 49.

115. “Within the limits of the discourses themselves, it might seem as if the criticism of impatience is purely a moral issue, a matter of individual orientation. In Kierkegaard’s historical context, however, I would suggest that it

“Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra” is a partial quotation of James 1:17, borrowed from the *Forordnet Alter-Bog for Danmark* (Ordained service book for Denmark).<sup>116</sup> This scriptural title is reused for two of the talks in Kierkegaard’s *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843* (Four upbuilding talks, 1843), which appeared on December 6 of that year.<sup>117</sup> Much later, in 1855, Kierkegaard frontloads the body of *Guds Uforanderlighed. En Tale* (The changelessness of God: A talk) with the text of James 1:17–22, as he did with “Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra” in *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, and with the first talk of the same title in *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. For obvious reasons, these four talks will be treated as a unit.

Kierkegaard’s transcriptions of James 1:17 read as follows: “Al god Gave og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra, og kommer ned fra Lysenes Fader, hos hvilken er ikke Forandring eller Skygge af Omskiftelse.” (Every good gift [δόσις] and every perfect gift [δώρημα] is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.)<sup>118</sup> By now, it should be obvious that the gifts in question are of a supernatural origin, the very opposite of the worldly gifts offered by Heiberg. After all, *gave*, in the Danish, can also mean “talent” or “endowment.”<sup>119</sup> Indeed, in the Revised Standard Version’s rendition of this verse, the latter word is substituted for the Greek δόσις.<sup>120</sup>

As indicated by its title, David Kangas’ “The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard’s *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)” focuses only on the “Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra” talks in *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, but there is no reason that this reading cannot also be applied to the text bearing this same title in *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, or even to *Guds Uforanderlighed*, as its body text is also preceded by James 1:17–22, as mentioned above. According to Kangas, Kierkegaard understands the absolute, or the Good, or God, as gift.<sup>121</sup> Eschewing Hegel and siding with Meister Eckhart, Kierkegaard, Kangas claims, insists on the gift’s “non-phenomenalizability.”<sup>122</sup> In other words, the gift is by no means an object in space. Accordingly, a *Nytaarsgave*—like any other gift given by one human being to another—can only be a good

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also carries a distinct political and cultural charge. Impatience, as epitomising an attitude that is unable to accept the given limitations and boundaries that circumscribe human life, is, for Kierkegaard, the key to the spirit of the age.” Pattison, *Kierkegaard’s Upbuilding Discourses*, 48.

116. Søren Bruun and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “*To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. Tekstkommentarer,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-2t43-kom-root>.

117. “Hæftet udkom 6. dec.” (The booklet came out December 6.) Søren Bruun and Kim Ravn, “*Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. Tekstredøgelse,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K5:123.

118. *Forordnet Alter-Bog for Danmark* (Copenhagen: 1830), quoted in *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:41; *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:129; *Guds Uforanderlighed. En Tale*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 13:327. English trans. James 1:17 (Authorized [King James] Version). Cf. *The Greek Testament, with English Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory* [. . .], ed. S. T. Bloomfield, 6th ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1845), 2:558, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Greek\\_Testament/FbdAAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=The+Greek+Testament,+with+English+Notes,+Critical,+Philological,+and+Explanatory&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Greek_Testament/FbdAAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=The+Greek+Testament,+with+English+Notes,+Critical,+Philological,+and+Explanatory&printsec=frontcover).

119. *Dansk-engelsk ordbog*, s.v. “gave.”

120. “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” James 1:17 (Revised Standard Version).

121. “*Gift is not a metaphor*: it signifies an excessive element which is ontological, an ontological excess. The excessive element I will identify is the *self-communication* of the Good, or God: the idea that, in giving, God always gives *Godself*. To say that the Good is a gift and that this is not a metaphor is to say that the good *is* its own communication, its own self-giving.” David Kangas, “The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard’s *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843),” *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2000): 106–07, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110244021.100>.

122. Kangas, “Logic of Gift,” 116.

from a certain vantage point, like from that of the recipient, or relative to something, such as the bookshelf on which the gilded spine will be proudly displayed. It is not the Good itself as self-given.<sup>123</sup>

Kierkegaard's *Taler*, at least according to my naïve reading, are disappearing books, as they rise above the media of paper and ink via their orality. Orality is analogous to the "transcendental signified," which Derrida defines as "a concept simply present for thought, independent of a relationship to language, that is of a relationship to a system of signifiers."<sup>124</sup> Whereas the transcendental signified resists the phenomenalization of the signifier, the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver* are hyper-phenomenal, in that they are—according to Kierkegaard—merely sensuous appearances. They cannot be considered good gifts because they are only relative goods; they are not the Good or the giving in itself.<sup>125</sup>

Kangas' reading holds true not just for the four talks based on James 1:17–22, but for all of the *opbyggelige Taler*. For instance, in the preface to *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, Kierkegaard imagines his collection seeking out its readers and offering itself to them, like a good gift, or the giving as such. According to Tilman Beyrich, this move is typical of the *opbyggelige Taler*'s prefaces, as they conceive of writing as givenness, just as Plato's *Phaedrus* does.<sup>126</sup> I would assert,

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123. "In general, the failure of (human) gift-giving consists in the fact that the gift presupposes a *condition exterior to the act of giving itself*—that is, it presupposes exteriority. In coming-into-being and through relation to its condition, gift becomes other to itself, exterior to itself: it becomes a 'third thing' exterior to the giving, an object, at best a good *from some perspective* or with respect to something else, and thus not an inherently perfect or absolute good. Insofar, then, as the gift phenomenalizes itself, it is no longer a gift, since it becomes a doubtful good and 'a doubtful good is not a good.'" Kangas, "Logic of Gift," 117.

124. Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva," in *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 19.

125. In an undated letter to his sister-in-law Henriette Kierkegaard, which accompanied what, according to Josiah Thompson, was probably a finely bound presentation copy of his latest work, *Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand* (Upbuilding talks in various spirits), Kierkegaard drew a sharp distinction between the book as *objet d'art* and the book as gift—in the higher sense of the word: "De kan et lille Øieblik beundre Bogbinderens Kunst, som De vilde beundre en hvilkensomhelst anden Kunst-Gjenstand; derpaa kan De – et længere Øieblik, hvis det er Dem kjert, glædes ved Tanken om at det er en Foræring." (You can momentarily admire the art of the bookbinder, as you would admire whatever other art-object; then you can—a longer moment, if it is dear to you—delight in the thought that it is a gift.) Fittingly, Kierkegaard does not employ the word *Gave* (as in *Nytaarsgave*), but the synonym *Foræring*. Josiah Thompson, "Søren Kierkegaard and His Sister-in-Law Henriette Kierkegaard: A Presentation Copy," *Fund og forskning* 12 (1965): 107–09, <https://doi.org/10.7146/fof.v12i1.41036>; Kierkegaard to Henriette Kierkegaard, [October 1847], in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 28:60.

126. Beyrich writes, "Einen Text so zu lesen, wie Derrida es tut, bedeutet für ihn, den Text als *Gabe* zu verstehen. . . . Die Rhetorik ihrer [des *Erbaulichen Redens*] Vorworte schließt sich dabei beinahe wörtlich an die Schriftkritik des *Phaidros*, die für Derrida eine so große Rolle spielt, an." (To read a text as Derrida does means for him to understand the text as *gift*. . . . The rhetoric of their [sc. the upbuilding talks'] prefaces follows almost word-for-word the critique of writing of the *Phaedrus*, which plays so great a role for Derrida.) Beyrich makes this point too forcefully, but we can nevertheless detect glimmers of the following passage from the *Phaedrus* in the above-quoted preface to *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, where Kierkegaard depicts his booklet as mute and dependent on readerly goodwill: "SOCRATES: You know, Phaedrus, writing shares a strange feature with painting. The offsprings of painting stand there as if they are live, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent. The same is true to written words. You'd think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever. When it has once been written down, every discourse rolls about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not. And when it is faulted and attacked unfairly, it always needs its father's support; alone, it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support." Tilman Beyrich, "Kierkegaards Gaben oder: Was es heißt, ein 'guter Leser' zu sein," *Kierkegaardiana* 22 (2002): 57,

along with Beyrich, that “alle *Erbaulichen Reden* geben sich selber als Gaben” (all *opbyggelige Taler* give themselves as gifts),<sup>127</sup> but not—note well—as sublunary gifts, like the *Nytaarsgaver*. As gifts seeking nothing in return, the *opbyggelige Taler* are modeled on the gifts of God.<sup>128</sup> In such cases, according to Kangas, “The gift is the giving of the gift.”<sup>129</sup> Earthly gifts, by contrast, will always exist as an unwieldy *tertium quid* between the giving and the Good.

In his seminal *Essai sur le don (The Gift)*, Marcel Mauss underscores the fact that with the gift comes obligation. And Marcel Hénaff, a more recent gift-theorist, attests that the inevitable asymmetry of giving means that gift-debt is ultimately unrepayable. That does not mean, however, that Pierre Bourdieu is wrong to collapse the distinction between gift-giving and economic exchange.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, it is possible that Kierkegaard’s talk-collections are posited as self-giving precisely in order to short-circuit the reciprocal gift-exchanges that undergird the *Nytaarsgave* industry. Staged as the giving of the Good *per se*, the *Taler* are Kierkegaard’s disappearing books. Dispersing themselves in the aurality of recitation, they leave behind no extraneous object to be requited.<sup>131</sup>

Hence, in “Troens Forventning. Nytaarsdag,” the first talk in *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, the spiritual good of faith, unlike mundane gifts, is not handed down from one person to another.<sup>132</sup> That faith cannot be manipulated is for the best, for if people could give each other this gift, then they could also rob each other of it. Indeed, those who attempt to grant faith to others will only deprive them of it.<sup>133</sup> The gift of faith must come from God, otherwise we would be forever indebted, not to Him, but to whomever bestowed this highest good upon us.<sup>134</sup>

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<https://tidsskrift.dk/kierkegaardiana/article/view/31134/28646>; Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 275d–e.

127. Beyrich, “Kierkegaards Gaben,” 57.

128. “Alle *Erbaulichen Reden* wollen nämlich jene ‘gute Gabe’ Gottes wiederholen, jene Gabe ohne vorherige Kalkulation, ohne Tausch, ohne alle Ökonomie.” (All *opbyggelige Taler*, to be exact, want to repeat that “good gift” of God’s, that gift without prior calculation, without barter, without all economy.) Beyrich, “Kierkegaards Gaben,” 57.

129. Kangas, “Logic of Gift,” 107.

130. Dirk Quadflieg, “Gift,” *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, 2nd ed., <https://www-oxfordreference-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199747108.001.0001/acref-9780199747108-e-328>.

131. Of course, the *Taler* were no less enmeshed in the economic networks of print culture than the *Nytaarsgaver* were. *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843* and *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843* sold for two and four marks, respectively. Bruun and Cappelørn, “*To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. Tekstredogørelse,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K5:9; Bruun and Ravn, “*Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*. Tekstredogørelse,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K5:123.

132. “Et Menneske kan gjøre Meget for et andet, men give ham Troen kan det ikke.” (A person can do a lot for another, but he cannot give him faith.) *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:22.

133. “‘Dersom jeg,’ sagde han, ‘ved mit Ønske eller ved min Gave kunde skjænke ham det høieste Gode, da kunde jeg ogsaa tage det fra ham, om han end ikke havde dette at befrygte, ja! Hvad værre var, hvis jeg kunde det, da vilde jeg i samme Øieblik, som jeg gav ham det, tage det fra ham.’” (“If I,” said he, “by my wish or by my gift could give him the highest good, then I could also take it from him, even if he did not have this to fear, oh! What was worse, if I could do that, then I would, in the same moment as I gave it to him, take it from him.”) This paradox recalls Kangas’ definition of the gift as non-phenomenal. *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:24; Kangas, “Logic of Gift,” 116.

134. Kierkegaard continues, “Derfor vil jeg takke Gud, at det ikke er saaledes; min Kjærlighed har kun tabt sin Bekymring og vundet Glæden; thi jeg veed det, at jeg ved al min Anstrængelse dog ikke var istand til at bevare ham det Gode saa sikkert, som han selv vil bevare det; han skal og ikke takke mig derfor, ikke fordi jeg fritager ham, men fordi han slet Intet skylder mig.” (Therefore, I will thank God that it is not like this; my love has only lost its worry and won joy; for I know that I, by all my exertion still am not able to preserve that good as securely as he himself

It thus follows that this good is accessible to each and every human being, regardless, writes Kierkegaard, of “om hans Arm var udrakt til at byde over Riger og Lande, eller til at indsamle nødtørftige Gaver, der falde fra Riges Bord” (whether his arm was outstretched to rule kingdoms and countries, or to gather the scanty gifts, which fell from the table of the rich).<sup>135</sup> Howard and Edna Hong cite Matthew 15:27 and Luke 16:21 in reference to this passage.<sup>136</sup> And yet Kierkegaard is not quoting scripture verbatim. If we consult the 1830 *Forordnet Alter-Bog for Danmark* and the 1819 authorized Danish translation of the New Testament, we find that Kierkegaard has inflected these verses to condemn the *Nytaarsgaver*, and to point ahead to the next talk, i.e., “Al god og al fuldkommen Gave er ovenfra.”

In Matthew 15:27, which appears as part of a selection for the *Forordnet Alter-Bog*, we see the word *Smuler* (crumbs) where, based on Kierkegaard’s talk, we would expect to find *Gaver*. The Apostle quotes a Canaanite woman, who has asked for Jesus’ help in exorcising a demon from her daughter. After Jesus tells her that he has been sent only to aid the House of Israel, and that it is not right to deprive children of bread in order to feed the dogs,<sup>137</sup> she replies, “Jo, Herre! Hunde æde dog og af de Smuler, som falde af deres Herres Bord.” (Yes, Lord! Yet dogs ate of those crumbs that fell from their master’s table.)<sup>138</sup> Likewise, if we turn to Luke 16:21 in the authorized Danish Bible, we find that Kierkegaard has replaced *Smuler* with *Gaver* in his reworking of this text, as well. The Evangelist writes of Lazarus, “Og han begierede at mættes af de Smuler, som faldt af den Riges Bord.” (And he desired to be satisfied by those crumbs, which fell from the table of the rich.)<sup>139</sup> In the substitution of *Gaver* for the apostles’ *Smuler*, the *Nytaarsgaver* are evoked, and, as gifts in the everyday sense, they appear meager in relation to the gift of faith.

Kierkegaard no doubt harbored misgivings about the *Nytaarsgaver* long before his relations with Heiberg soured. Strictly brought up by a pietist father,<sup>140</sup> he was ever distrustful of the blandishments of vision.<sup>141</sup> From this austere perspective, the *Nytaarsgaver* could only be seen as corruptions of the inherently spiritual medium of the book. In stark contrast to the godless *Nytaarsgaver*, the talks in *To opbyggelige Taler*—as their titles suggest—radically desecularize the concepts of the New Year and the gift.

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will preserve it; that is why he shall not thank me, not because I exempt him, but because he does not owe me anything at all.) *To opbyggelige Taler*, 1843, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:24–25.

135. *To opbyggelige Taler*, 1843, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:22.

136. Hong and Hong, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 505n13.

137. Matt. 15:22–26.

138. *Forordnet Alter-Bog for Danmark* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1830), 53,

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Forordnet\\_Alter\\_Bog\\_for\\_Danmark/ISphAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Forordnet+Alter-Bog+for+Danmark&printsec=frontcover&bsh=ncc/1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Forordnet_Alter_Bog_for_Danmark/ISphAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Forordnet+Alter-Bog+for+Danmark&printsec=frontcover&bsh=ncc/1). Cf. “She said, ‘Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’” Matt. 15:27 (Revised Standard Version).

139. *Det Nye Testamente*, 1819, quoted in Bruun and Cappelørn, “*To opbyggelige Taler*, 1843.

Tekstkommentarer,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-2t43-kom-root>. Cf. Lazarus, “who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table.” Luke 16:21 (Revised Standard Version).

140. “Søren blamed his father for messing up his life by having him raised in Christianity from childhood. . . . He [sc. the father] . . . felt closer ties with the Congregation of Moravian Brothers, the *Herrnhuter* (*Herrnhut*, literally, ‘the Lord’s keeping’), which with its hold among the peasant community he would have known from his childhood.” Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36–37.

141. “Like many Christian moralists since Augustine, Kierkegaard readily identifies ‘the glance’ or ‘gaze’ as ‘the lust of the eye,’ the epitome of those seductive powers that chain us to the realm of sense.” George Pattison, *Kierkegaard, Religion and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17.

## THE BOOK AS METONYM

Kierkegaard leveled the standard of the disappearing book not just at the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver*, but also against other bibliophilic editions, both those in print and those in his imagination. When reduced to an unread thing, the book frequently serves as a metonym in Kierkegaard's authorship for the epidemic loss of inwardness that had struck Copenhagen in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Unlike the previous pseudonymous works, *Stadier paa Livets Vei* (Stages on life's way) broadens Kierkegaard's censure of bibliophiles beyond Heiberg—although he is not necessarily exempted from scrutiny here, either. If we turn to the title page of *Stadier*, we find that the editorial pseudonym allegedly responsible for this work is a bookbinder by the name of Hilarius. With much bowing and scraping, the humble handworker excuses himself for having had the audacity to publish the sundry papers he found lying around his shop: “At en Bogbinder vilde være Forfatter kunde kun vække billig Fortørnelse i den litteraire Verden og bidrage til, at man kastede Vrag paa Bogen, men at en Bogbinder hæfter, til Trykken beforder og udgiver en Bog, at han ‘ogsaa paa anden Maade end som Bogbinder søger at gavne sine Medmennesker,’ vil den billigtænkende Læser ikke tage ilde op.” (That a bookbinder would be an author could reasonably awaken resentment in the literary world and lead to them spurning the book, that a bookbinder sews a book, conveys it through the press, and publishes it, that he “also seeks in another manner other than as a bookbinder to benefit his fellow human beings,” the reasonable reader will not resent.)<sup>142</sup> Hilarius is hesitant to enter the Republic of Letters because of the rampant assumption that the physical labor required to manufacture a book is inferior to the intellectual work that goes into the creation of its verbal text. Those harboring this prejudice do not believe that there is—or should be—a point of contact between these two activities. Through this bookbinder, who admits that he does not belong amongst the literati, Kierkegaard draws a sharp distinction between the text, for which the author is responsible, and the text block, which the printer prints and the binder sews together. As the author of Hilarius, Kierkegaard implicitly dismisses books that are, like the *Nytaarsgaver*, sold in publisher's bindings. Hegel, who had defined poetry as a sonorous ideality, would not have had it otherwise.

Much later in *Stadier*, the diarist *quidam* of “‘Skyldig?’ – ‘Ikke-Skyldig?’ En Lidelseshistorie. Psychologisk Experiment” (“Guilty?” / “Not guilty?” A tale of woe: A psychological experiment) is revealed to have been the fictitious creation of the pseudonym Frater Taciturnus. It is fitting, then, that we find Taciturnus' own critique of bibliophilism anticipated by *quidam*. Recounting his breakup with his fiancée one year after the fact, *quidam* recalls that he counseled himself to be patient at that time. His goal—much like Kierkegaard's with his own ex-fiancée, Regine Olsen<sup>143</sup>—was to free the beloved of her attachment to him.<sup>144</sup> It is the biographical—and not the bibliographical—that is at stake here, but that does not prevent *quidam* from coming up with a bookish illustration of forbearance: “Et Pragtværk koster 6 Rbdlr.; naar man ikke er hidsig, saa kommer Godtkjøbs-Udgaven, og Bogen er dog den samme. . . . Hos en Antiquar og under Haanden kjøber man for Halv-Priis.” (A deluxe book costs six rixdollars; if one is not hot-headed, then a bargain edition comes out, and the book is the same, after all. . . . With a

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142. *Stadier paa Livets Vei. Studier af Forskjellige*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:14.

143. Hannay, *Kierkegaard*, 156ff.

144. “Saa blev der vel endogsaa Tale om en ny Forbindelse, en ny Forelskelse. / Det var jo dette, jeg vilde; saa er hun jo fri.” (Then there is probably even talk of a new connection, a new love. / It was this I wanted, after all; then she is free, after all.) *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:281

second-hand bookseller or under the counter one buys for half-price.)<sup>145</sup> If, however, one is interested in the book-object, then the fine edition is certainly not interchangeable with a cheap one. Not only might the binding of the former be gilt decorated; its text block may also distinguish itself with fine paper, gilt edges, ornaments, or plates. What *quidam* no doubt means is that the *texts* of both editions are the same, and yet he tellingly insists that the *books* themselves are identical. Equating the book with its text and heedless of the book-object's physical appearance or condition, *quidam* counsels us to wait to buy what we want in a bargain edition or secondhand. The takeaway is that one should be long-suffering in matters of the heart, but Kierkegaard has once again divided the poet from the publisher, two roles that Heiberg and others had sought to cohabit in their *Nytaarsgaver*.

Later in *Stadier*, Taciturnus, having dropped the guise of *quidam*, launches a direct attack on deluxe editions in "Skrivelse til Læseren" (Letter to the reader): "At tage Lidenskaben fra Poesien og erstatte det Tabte ved Decorationer, yndige Egne applauderede Skovpartier, fortryllende Theater-Maaneskin er Fortabelse, ligesom det at ville bode paa Bøgers Slethed ved Indbindingens Elegance, hvad der jo ikke kan interessere Læsere men i det Høieste Bogbindere." (To take passion away from poetry and to replace this loss with decorations, delightful locations, applauded woodland scenes and enchanting theater-moonshine is perdition, just as wanting to mend the badness of the book with the elegance of the binding; this cannot interest readers, after all, but at most bookbinders.)<sup>146</sup> In an uncanny moment, poor Hilarius finds himself and his trade rudely addressed in the very text that he has been kind enough to see through the press. The silent brother thus makes plain what was suggested obliquely via the self-abnegating character of the bookbinder, viz., that the book-arts are but ancillary to poetry.

Could it be that Kierkegaard, through Taciturnus, is referring to one book in particular in the passage quoted above? When perusing Heiberg's *Urania. Aarbog for 1846* (Urania: Yearbook for 1846),<sup>147</sup> one finds lithographs of idyllic and sylvan landscapes by Emil Bærentzen (figs. 3–8), who, incidentally, painted the iconic portrait of Regine from the time of her engagement to Kierkegaard. These illustrations correspond to the images listed by Taciturnus in the "Skrivelse." *Stadier*, however, was published on April 30, 1845,<sup>148</sup> and the 1846 installment of *Urania* did not appear until December 22, 1845,<sup>149</sup> while the two earlier volumes of *Urania* have only astronomical diagrams for illustrations.<sup>150</sup> Did Kierkegaard somehow anticipate the contents of Heiberg's fourth and final *Nytaarsgave*? Is it conceivable that Kierkegaard, through his clandestine connection to C. A. Reitzel (who published the first pseudonymous authorship at the behest of J. F. Giødwad, Kierkegaard's go-between),<sup>151</sup> somehow learned of these lithographs at an early stage of their production, and then proceeded to steal a march on Heiberg?

That is one possibility. But it seems just as likely that Kierkegaard-Taciturnus is referring to a different yearbook, the *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog* (Gæa: Aesthetic yearbook) of Peder Ludvig

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145. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:275.

146. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:376.

147. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1846* (Copenhagen: Reitzel).

148. Søren Bruun, Leon Jurnow, and Jette Knudsen, "Stadier paa Livets Vei. Tekstredøgørelse," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K6:7.

149. Peter Tudvad, "Journalen JJ. Tekstkommentarer," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-jj-kom-root>.

150. Heiberg, *Urania. Aarbog for 1844*, 60; Johan Ludvig Heiberg, ed., *Urania. Aarbog for 1845* (Copenhagen: Bing), 64, 83.

151. Frithiof Brandt and Else Thorkelin, *Søren Kierkegaard og pengene* (Copenhagen: Spektrum, 1993), 25.



Møller, the first volume of which, though dated 1845,<sup>152</sup> was made available by December 1844.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, it is probable that Kierkegaard was at work on “Skrivelse til Læseren” by February 1845,<sup>154</sup> and, in the installment of *Gæa* that had appeared two months earlier, there are illustrations very much like those mentioned by the pseudonym (figs. 9–13). But regardless of whether Kierkegaard intended these dismissive remarks for *Gæa*, Møller may have taken them personally. That, in any case, would explain the hostile tone of “Et Besøg i Sorø” (A visit to Sorø),<sup>155</sup> Møller’s review of *Stadier* in the 1846 volume of *Gæa* (which like its predecessor, had appeared in December of the previous year).<sup>156</sup>

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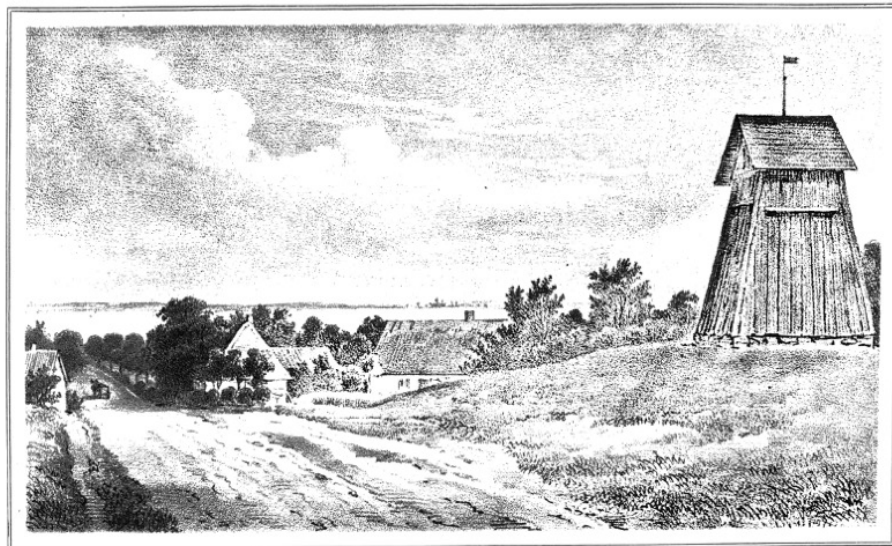
152. P. L. Møller, ed., *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog* (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845).

153. *Den store danske*, s. v. “Gæa,” by Erik Skyum-Nielsen, <https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/G%C3%A6a>.

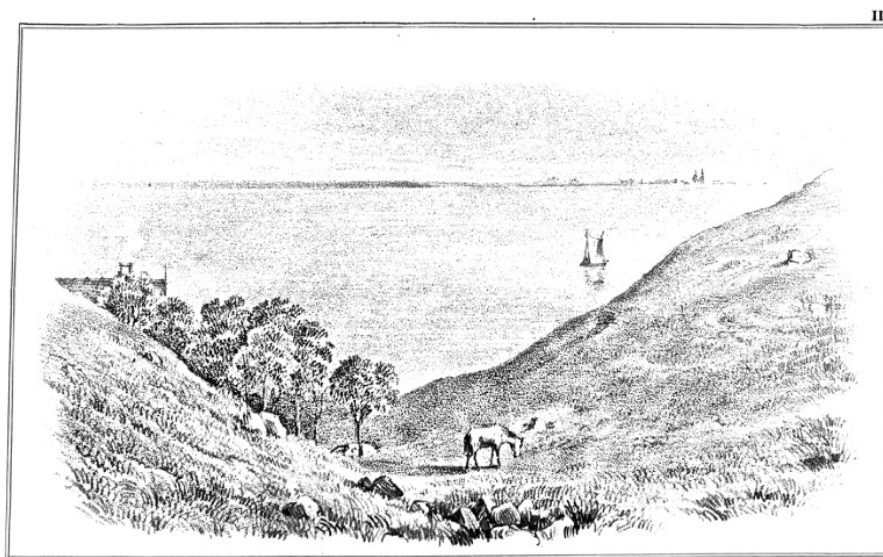
154. “Da udarbejdelsen af kladden til morgen- og midnatsstykkerne samt indskudsstykkerne efter bedste skøn er sket i dec. 1844 og i jan. 1845, kan SK have renskrevet dagbogen i feb., sideløbende med, at han udarbejdede kladden til ‘Skrivelse til Læseren’; den kladden renskrev han i marts.” (Since the composition of the rough draft to the morning and midnight pieces, and also the inserted pieces, to the best of our judgement happened in December 1844 and, in January 1845, Kierkegaard could have made a fair copy of the diary in February, parallel with which he was composing a rough draft to “Skrivelse til Læseren”; this rough draft he made a fair copy of in March.) Bruun, Jaurnow, and Knudsen, “*Stadier paa Livets Vei. Tekstreddegørelse*,” K6:82.

155. P. L. Møller, “Et Besøg i Sorø. Corpusfeuilleton,” in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1846), 144–87.

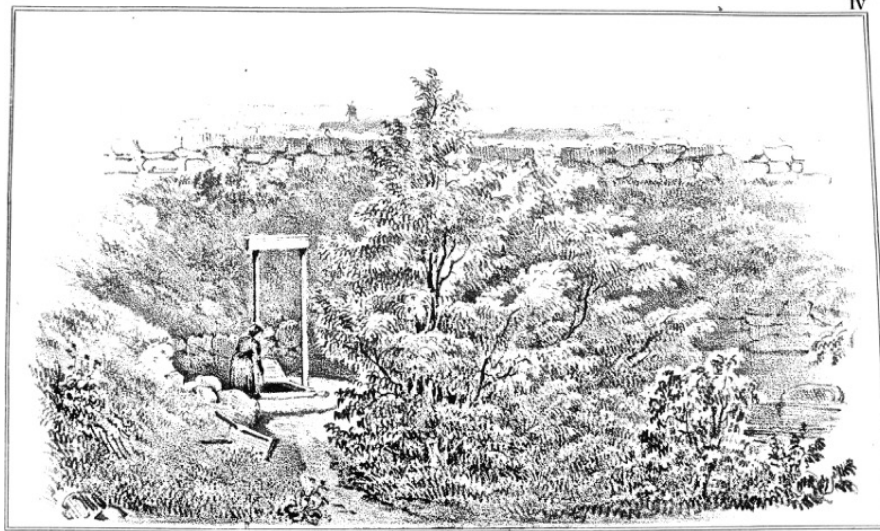
156. *Den store danske*, s. v. “Gæa.”



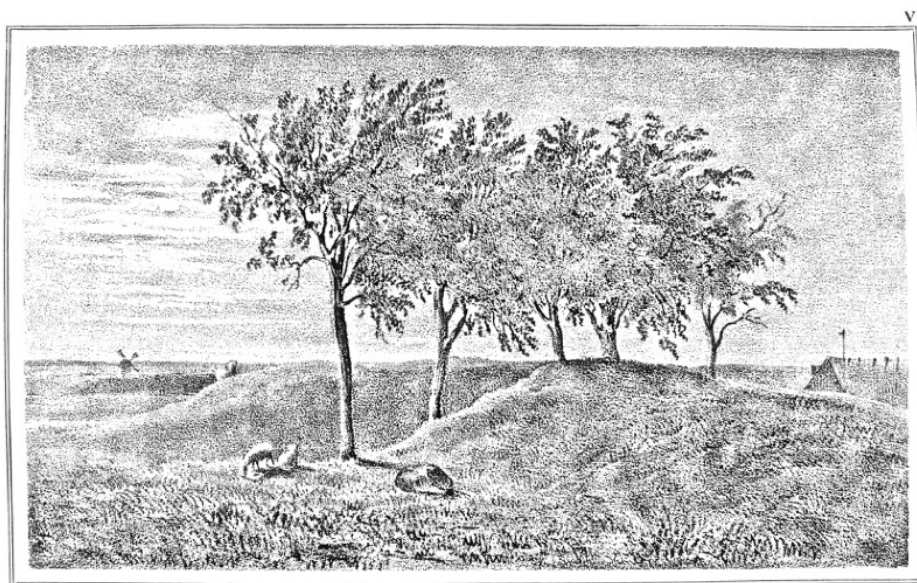
**Fig. 3** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), ii. Private collection; photo by TWS.



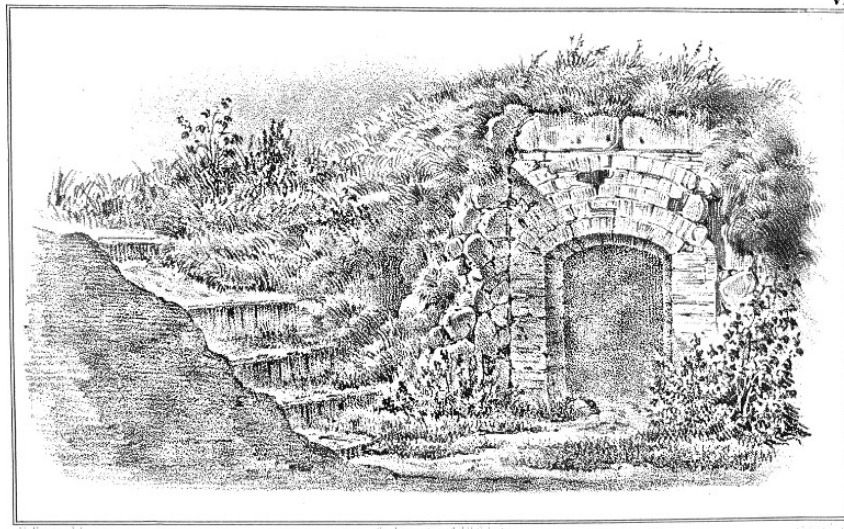
**Fig. 4** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), iii. Private collection; photo by TWS.



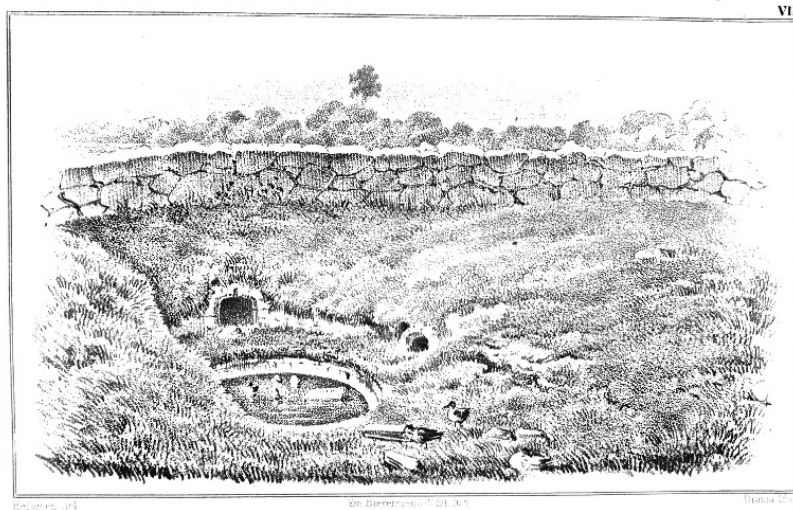
**Fig. 5** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), iv. Private collection; photo by TWS.



**Fig. 6** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), v. Private collection; photo by TWS.



**Fig. 7** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), vi. Private collection; photo by TWS.



**Fig. 8** Emil Bærentzen, lithograph, in *Urania. Aarbog for 1846*, ed. J. L. Heiberg (Copenhagen: Reitzel), vii. Private collection; photo by TWS.



**Fig. 9** Clemens, posthumous study, in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845), 1. Private collection; photo by TWS.



Fig. 10 Klæstrup, composition, in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845), 55. Private collection; photo by TWS.



**Fig. 11** Skovgaard, composition, in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845), 254. Private collection; photo by TWS.

# Smaadigte

af

P. L. Møller.

## Nattfiolen.

Først naar Mørket falder paa,  
Lause Skygger gjennem Haven gaae,  
Kommer jeg til Live,  
Kan min Sjæl sig rive  
Løs fra Støvet, hvor den bunden laa.

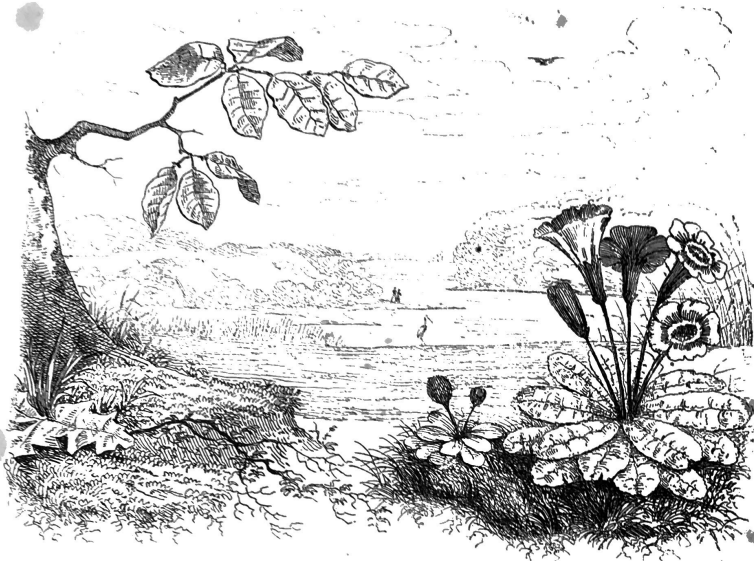
Først naar Alt, hvad Nande fik,  
Luffet har for Dagens Pragt sit Blik,  
Nabner jeg mit Bøger,  
Dg jeg vederbøger  
Dem, som vaage, med min Himmeldrif.

Naar i Nattens tætte Flor  
Sylles hvert Forgængeligheds Spor,



Fig. 12 Ottesen, composition, in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarbog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845), 344. Private collection; photo by TWS.





#### Om Foraaret.

Nu er det Vaar, nu flytter man paa Landet,  
 Ud under Vaarens friske, lette Tag,  
 Hvor Millioner nysudhængte Flag  
 Forkynde festlig Glæde Nat og Dag,  
 Og vaie stolt, og speile sig i Vandet. —  
 Jeg flytter med, jeg flytter og paa Landet,  
 Ud fra de kolde, livsforladte Mure.  
 Jeg længes ogsaa efter Et og Andet,  
 Som for Exempel Kildevandet,  
 Naar det jomfruelig af Jorden springer frem,  
 Og efter Bonden, som ufølsom gaaer  
 I denne søde, ambrasyldte Vaar,  
 Og sine Marker alvorstfuldt besaaer,  
 Og ønsker kun et rigt velsignet Aar, —  
 Og efter Duer, som erotisk kurre,  
 Og — efter ikke meer at kuffelurre.  
 Jeg længes efter Skovens grønne Hjem,  
 For paa Dianas skjulte Jagt at lure,

Fig. 13 Ottesen, composition, in *Gæa. Æsthetisk Aarvog*, ed. P. L. Møller (Copenhagen: printed by the editor, 1845), 360. Private collection; photo by TWS.

“Et Besøg i Sorø” would illicit a vituperative response from Kierkegaard, namely, “En omreisende Æsthetikers Virksomhed, og hvorledes han dog kom til betale Gjæstebudet” (An itinerant aesthete’s activities, and how he still came to pay for the banquet), which was published in *Fædrelandet* on December 27, 1845, by none other than Frater Taciturnus.<sup>157</sup> This open letter would trigger what is now known as the *Corsair* affair. Owned and operated by Meir Aron Goldschmidt, *Corsaren* (The corsair) was a revolutionary satirical journal, on which Møller had served as a *sub-rosa* editor.<sup>158</sup> Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms had hitherto been praised by *Corsaren*,<sup>159</sup> but, in “En omreisende Æsthetikers Virksomhed,” Taciturnus insisted on being attacked by the despised rag, as this would, he claimed, redound more to his honor. To give Møller further encouragement, Taciturnus went so far as to reveal the critic’s affiliation with *Corsaren*,<sup>160</sup> a breach of Golden Age print-etiquette—one might even say print-ethics.<sup>161</sup> *Corsaren* proceeded to mercilessly caricature Kierkegaard for several months.<sup>162</sup>

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157. “En omreisende Æsthetikers Virksomhed, og hvorledes han dog kom til at betale Gjæstebudet,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:79–84.

158. “P. L. Møller . . . påtog sig . . . at redigere bladet i de ti uger, da Goldschmidt efter strafafsoningen rejste til Frankrig. Men Møller var i øvrigt ikke knyttet til bladet, turde og ville ikke være det, og skrev selv kun meget få bidrag til *Corsaren*.” (P. L. Møller . . . took on . . . editing the paper for the ten weeks when Goldschmidt, after serving his sentence, traveled to France. But Møller was otherwise not connected to the paper, dared not or would not be, and wrote only very few contributions for *Corsaren* himself.) Elias Bredsdorff, *Goldschmidts “Corsaren.” Med en udførlig redegørelse for striden mellem Søren Kierkegaard og “Corsaren”* ([Aarhus]: Sirius, 1962), 94–95.

159. P. L. Møller and M. Goldschmidt, “*The Corsair*, and Related Publications, 1841–1848,” in *The Corsair Affair and Articles Related to the Writings*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 92–95.

160. “Gid jeg nu blot snart maatte komme i *Corsaren*. Det er virkelig haardt for en stakkels Forfatter at staa saaledes udpeget i dansk Literatur, at han (antaget, at vi Pseudonymer ere Een) er den eneste, som ikke udskjeldes der. Min Foresatte, Hilarius Bogbinder, er bleven smigret i *Corsaren*, dersom jeg ikke husker feil; Victor Eremita har endog maattet opleve den Tort, at blive udødeliggjort – i *Corsaren*. Og dog, jeg har jo allerede været der; thi *ubi spiritus, ibi ecclesia: ubi P. L. Møller, ibi Corsaren*.” (If only I might just now get into *Corsaren* soon. It is really hard for a poor author to stand pointed out in Danish literature like this, that he [assuming that we pseudonyms are one] is the only one who is not vilified there. My superior, Hilarius Bookbinder, has been flattered in *Corsaren*, if I am not mistaken; Victor Eremita has even had to experience that humiliation of being immortalized—in *Corsaren*. And yet, I have indeed already been there; for *ubi spiritus, ibi ecclesia* [where the spirit is, there is the Church]: *ubi P. L. Møller, ibi Corsaren*.) “En omreisende Æsthetikers Virksomhed,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:84. Latin trans. Hong and Hong, *Corsair Affair*, 46.

161. In regard to Møller, Elias Bredsdorff writes, “Kierkegaards angreb og angiveri kom utvivlsomt til at skade ham meget og medvirkede til at ødelægge de chancer, denne ellers ganske begavede mand måtte have haft for en akademisk karriere i Danmark. Allerede i 1846 forlod han Danmark og vendte aldrig mere tilbage. I Frankrig, hvor han tilbragte sine sidste år, gjorde sygdom og armod det af med ham, og han døde der i 1865 som en skuffet og fortvivlet mand. Den eneste berettigelse som Kierkegaard kunne påberåbe sig for offentligt at have identificeret P. L. Møller med *Corsaren* var, at Møller selv i *Erslews Forfatterlexikon* havde opgivet, at han var medarbejder ved *Corsaren*.” (Kierkegaard’s attack and informing undoubtedly came to harm him greatly and contributed to ruin the chances this otherwise quite talented man must have had for an academic career in Denmark. As early as 1846, he left Denmark and never again returned. In France, where he spent his last years, illness and poverty finished him off, and he died there in 1865 a disappointed and despairing man. The only justification that Kierkegaard could invoke for having publicly identified P. L. Møller with *Corsaren* was that Møller himself, in *Erslews Forfatterlexikon*, had stated that he was a collaborator at *Corsaren*.) Building on the work of Paul Rubow, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong excuse Kierkegaard on the basis of the *Erslews Forfatterlexikon* article, and claim that, in any case, Møller was not qualified for the university chair in aesthetics. Bredsdorff, *Goldschmidts “Corsaren,”* 101–2; Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, historical introduction to *Corsair Affair*, xxviii–xxix.

162. See Møller and Goldschmidt, “*The Corsair*,” 105–37.

The lampoon of the *Nytaarsgaver* hit Heiberg, and perhaps Møller as well, but Kierkegaard's wider aim exceeded any particular book or its editor. Indeed, the book serves as a critical figure in Kierkegaard's spiritual diagnosis of Golden Age Denmark. In Frater Taciturnus' "Skrivelse til Læseren," for example, a facile, pseudo-scientific survey of the existential categories is given its thematic *coup de grâce* when the bookbinder is brought in: "Paa den systematiske 'Rutschbane' . . . gaer det saaledes: § 17 Angeren, § 18 Forsoningen, § Systemet færdigt, slutteligen nogle Vink for Bogbinderen med Hensyn til Indbindingen. I Vælskbind er det nemlig Metaphysiken, i Kalveskindsbinding Systemet." (On the systematic "rollercoaster" . . . it goes like this: § 17 Repentance, § 18 Atonement, § The system is complete, concluding with some hints to the bookbinder in respect to the binding. In half-binding it is metaphysics, in full calf, the system.)<sup>163</sup> Here, what might otherwise have been only a fragment of a system,<sup>164</sup> i.e., a metaphysics, is given the deceptive veneer of comprehensiveness by its prestigious binding.<sup>165</sup> Heedless of expense, the would-be systematician has had the book's boards bound entirely in calfskin, rather than just the spine and corners, as in a half-binding. Such an embellishment seems to be enough to endow the book with an aura of omniscient authority, as the worldlings of this superficial age will not actually trouble themselves to read it—that, in any case, would seem to be the larger implication of this passage.

As in the writings of Frater Taciturnus, bookbinding also serves as a dubious guarantor for a pseudo-system in the *Efterskrift*. Here Johannes Climacus writes, "Hvad Under saa, at Systemet holder sig. Stolt overseer det Indvendinger, og møder der en enkelt Indvending, der synes at tildrage sig lidt Opmærksomhed, saa lade de systematiske Entrepreneurer en Copist afcopiere Indvendingen, som derpaa indregistreres i Systemet, og ved Indbindingen er saa Systemet færdigt." (What wonder, then, that the system survives. Proudly it ignores all objections, and if there is a single objection that seems to attract attention, then the systematic entrepreneurs have a copyist copy the objection, which is then registered in the system, and with the binding the system is then ready.)<sup>166</sup> Rather than answer their opponents, the authors of this pseudo-system prefer to subsume them, and then let the saffian and gold leaf have the last word. In a gilded age, philosophical discourse is no longer a living dialogue that can be inwardly appropriated. Instead, academic knowledge has been reified in the static surfaces of the book-object, for which the binding is the *ne plus ultra*.<sup>167</sup>

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163. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:413.

164. And here we have an anticipation of Climacus' objection to Hegel in the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* "at man ved ham fik et System, det absolute System færdig – uden at have en Ethik" (that through him we got a system, the absolute system—without having an ethics). *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:115.

165. Although *Den danske ordbog* defines *vælskbind* as "bogbind af skindmateriale, som regel fåreskind, kalveskind eller oksehud – findes som både halvbind og helbind" (binding of leather material, as a rule sheepskin, calfskin or ox hide—found as both half-binding and full-binding), the Gyldendal *Dansk-engelsk ordbog* renders *vælskbind* as simply "half-binding." I take the latter definition of this word to be the correct translation in this context, as the *vælskbind* is contrasted unfavorably with full-binding, insofar as Frater Taciturnus' academic philosopher would obviously prize the system over a mere metaphysics. *Den danske ordbog*, s.v. "vælskbind," <https://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=v%C3%A6lskbind>; *Dansk-engelsk ordbog*, s.v. "vælskbind."

166. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:118.

167. Of course, Kierkegaard himself has inscribed this very claim on a page. But that irony does not doom his existential project. In her *Schriftskepsis* (a work that occasionally engages with Kierkegaard), Sabine Mainberger writes that philosophy "ist tendenziell – nicht aufgrund der Verfehlung einzelner Autoren, sondern historisch – Diskurs geworden – Einteilung und Reflexion von Wissenstypen, selbst ein bestimmter Wissenstyp, Theorie, die nur schriftlich verfertigt werden kann, und in diesem Sinne nicht Lebensweise ist, sondern 'Literatur.' Wer ein anderes Verständnis erinnern will, kann sich diesem Zustand nicht einfach entziehen. Daß Philosophie gelebt werden soll, kann nur unter den Voraussetzungen des literarisierten Denkens gefordert werden. Das heißt, auch

Like Taciturnus, Climacus troubles the supposed finality and completeness of the system by insinuating that an illusory systematicity can be projected via paratextual means. Both pseudonyms refer to the peritext of the binding, but a system can also be feigned via prefatory paratexts (e.g., prefaces, introductions) or epitexts (i.e., paratexts that are physically separate from their main texts)<sup>168</sup> that make false promises.<sup>169</sup> It should by now be clear that bookbinding stands in for all of the bibliographical sleights of hand that, figuratively speaking, make a book “a closed book”: an unassailable, self-contained episteme. Since such a text does not require a readerly contribution for its completion, it can never be appropriated; it can only be learned by rote.<sup>170</sup>

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dieser Anspruch ist Teil einer allgemeinen Buchkultur und kann deren Rahmen nicht sprengen. Aber er kann eine Literatur in gutem Sinne gegen eine in schlechtem wenden: z. B. ein Schreiben, das vielstimmig ist und zugleich seine eigene Grenze kennt, gegen eines, das vereinheitlicht” (shows tendencies—not on the basis of the transgression of individual authors, but historically—to become discourse: division and reflection of types of knowledge, even a particular type of knowledge, theory, which can only be produced in writing, and in this sense is not a way of life, but “literature.” The one who will recall a different understanding cannot simply avoid this condition. That philosophy should be lived can only be demanded under the preconditions of thought-made-literary. That also means that this requirement is part of a universal book culture and cannot break open its frames. But it can use a literature in a good sense against a literature in a bad sense, e.g., a writing that is polyvocal and at the same time knows its limits, against one that standardizes). Sabine Mainberger, *Schriftskeptis. Von Philosophen, Mönchen, Buchhaltern, Kalligraphen* (Munich: Fink, 1995), 13.

168. “A paratextual element, at least if it consists of a message that has taken on material form, necessarily has a *location* that can be situated in relation to the location of the text itself: around the text and either within the same volume or at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance. Within the same volume are such elements as the title or the preface and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text, such as chapter titles or certain notes. I will give the name *peritext* to this first spatial category – certainly the more typical one . . . . The distanced elements are all those messages that, at least originally, are located outside of the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others). This second category is what, for lack of a better word, I call *epitext*.” Genette, *Paratexts*, 4–5.

169. In what would be the first and final installment of his “Det logiske System” (The logical system), Heiberg, in the third person, writes in the 1838 volume of his journal *Perseus*, “Endvidere har han det Formaal, ved nærværende Fremstilling og dens Forsættelse at bane Veien for den Æsthetik, som det længe har været hans Ønske at levere, men som han ikke kan udsende i Verden, uden iforveien at have givet den det logiske Støttepunct.” (Furthermore, he has the goal by the present exposition and its sequel to pave the way for the aesthetics, which it has long been his wish to provide, but which he cannot send out into the world without having given it the logical base in advance.) Once it became obvious that a completed system was not forthcoming, Kierkegaard could not resist taking a dig at Heiberg behind two of his pseudonymous personae. As Johannes *de silentio*, he describes himself in *Frygt og Bæven* as “en Extra-Skriver, der hverken skriver Systemet eller Løfter om Systemet” (an auxiliary copyist, who neither writes the system nor *promises* of the system); and, as Johannes Climacus, he opines in *Philosophiske Smuler*, “At skrive en Piece er nemlig Letsindighed – men at love Systemet, det er Alvor; og det har gjort mangen Mand til en høist alvorlig Mand baade i egne og Andres Øine.” (To write a pamphlet, you see, is improvidence—but to promise the system, that is earnestness; and it has made many a man into a highly earnest man, both in his own and in the eyes of others.) Jon Stewart identifies Heiberg as the target of this latter remark. “Det logiske System. Første Afhandling, indeholdende: Paragrapherne 1–23,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 2:115–16; *Frygt og Bæven. Dialektisk Lyrik*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:103; *Philosophiske Smuler, eller: En Smule Philosophi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:305; Stewart, *Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, 309, 610.

170. Yet Daniel Berthold has argued—and quite convincingly, I might add—that Hegel consciously demands his readers’ participation: “Hegel’s telling,” he writes, “like Kierkegaard’s, is a telling that locates the meaning of the text in the way the reader lives what she reads” (62). Furthermore, “Hegel’s deployment of the philosophical proposition confounds the ordinary conception of the relation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ subject and object—and hence, by implication, between author and reader. Meaning is not fixed ‘inside’ the subject of the proposition or inside the mind of the author, the writing subject, but only in an encounter with the ‘outside’” (93). Thus, he concludes, “Only with the reader’s ‘transmutation’ of the text does meaning arise” (169). In short, Kierkegaard may have misjudged Hegel, or perhaps committed a willful misprision against him. Here I leave the interpretation of Hegel to Hegel scholars. My focus instead is on Kierkegaard’s rhetoric of the book, and, in this case, it happens to

Kierkegaard's *Taler* confronted a society obsessed with change and the new, and so they must, in some sense, have had the *Nytaarsgaver* in their sights (both Heibergian and otherwise). In fact, Climacus explicitly links the *Nytaarsgaver* and the new at one point in the *Efterskrift*.<sup>171</sup> This connection is by no means limited to the “Nytaar” in *Nytaarsgaver*. It is also related to the flashy publisher's bindings in which these books were sold. The commercial purpose of these bindings was, first of all, to distinguish the *Nytaarsgaver* from everyday books. But, more importantly, the *Nytaarsgaver* were also engaged in differentiated competition with each other, which meant that their publishers wanted decorated papers that would catch the browsers' eyes.

Bookbinding thus emerges as a *leitmotif* in Kierkegaard's critique of novelty. For instance, when Climacus addresses the controversy surrounding a new hymnal for the Danish Church,<sup>172</sup> his approach, which gets to the nub of the issue, is neither theological nor aesthetic, but bibliographical. The schisms within the Church that made this question a contested one are not worth pursuing—not in this context, anyway.<sup>173</sup> What is important here is that the new, rather than being idolized as the driving force behind nineteenth-century European society, is instead shown up to be a mere surface phenomenon. Truly, “there is nothing new under the sun.”<sup>174</sup> That is perennial wisdom behind Climacus' cultural critique.

*Mundus vult decipi* might be the motto of the so-called spy talking to Climacus about the hymnal fracas. “Som man siger” (As one says), the spy tells us, “skal Conventet nu være kommet til det Resultat, at det denne Gang er en ny Psalmebog, Tiden fordrer. Og at den fordrer det, er jo meget muligt” (the Convention is supposed to have come to the result that this time it is a new hymnal that the age demands. And that the age demands it is indeed quite possible, but), he adds quickly, “deraf følger endnu ikke, at den behøver den” (that still does not mean that it needs it).<sup>175</sup> In other words, the impetus for a new hymnal does not spring from any lack or fault with the musical or poetical content of the current edition in use. Instead, this desire is a symptom of the modern craze for the new as such.

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revolve around Hegel, or rather, the Kierkegaardian caricature of Hegel. Daniel Berthold, *The Ethics of Authorship: Communication, Seduction, and Death in Hegel and Kierkegaard* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011).

171. “Imidlertid har jeg dog som Forfatter et Held fremfor Udgiveren af Enten – Eller, thi Nyhedens Interesse og den store Bog og Forførerens Dagbog foranledigede et Opløb, da man troede der var Noget paafærde, saa Værket blev kjøbt, og jo endog nu skal være udsolgt, ak et høist betænkeligt Argument for Bogens Godhed; man fristes næsten til at antage, det var en Nytaars-Present. . . I Forhold nemlig til Tivolis Forlystelser og litteraire Nytaars-Præsenter gjelder det for Stüvenfångere og saa for Dem, som blive fangne, at Forandring er høieste Lov.” (Meanwhile, however, as an author I have good fortune in preference to the editor of *Enten – Eller*, for the interest of novelty and the big book and “The Seducer's Diary” brought about a crowd, since they thought there was something on the go, so the work was purchased, and indeed even now is said to be sold out; alas, a highly dangerous argument for the goodness of the book; one is nearly tempted to assume it was a New Year's present. . . . That is to say, in comparison with the amusements of Tivoli and literary New Year's presents, so it applies to potboiler writers, and then for you, who are captivated by them, that change is the highest law.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:261. Unable to find a satisfactory definition for *Stüvenfångere*, I have settled on the “potboiler writers” of the Hongs. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, ed. and trans., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); 1:286.

172. “In 1843, Bishop Jakob Peter Mynster had published an appendix to the 1798 hymnbook then in use. The appendix was rejected by the Copenhagen Pastoral Convention, which then had a provisional hymnbook prepared for publication in 1845. . . . In 1837, [Nikolaj Frederik Severin] Grundtvig had already begun the publication of a collection of hymns, *Sang-Værk til den Danske Kirke*.” Hong and Hong, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 2:262.

173. For an overview of the divisions in the Danish Church during the Golden Age, see Jørgen Bukdahl, *Søren Kierkegaard and the Common Man*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 19–53.

174. Eccles. 1:9 (Revised Standard Version).

175. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:433.

That being the case, the spy arrives at the following logical solution: “Hvorfor hitter dog Ingen paa et Forslag, der ligger saa nær, nærmere maaske end Mangen troer: at man gjorde et midlertidigt Forsøg med at lade den gamle indbinde paa en ny Maade, om ikke den forandrede Indbinding skulde gjøre det, især hvis man tillod Bogbinderen at sætte bag paa: den nye Psalmbog.” (Why has no one thought of a proposal that lies close at hand, closer than many believe? That one could make an attempt for the time being to let the old hymnal be bound in a new manner, to see if the changed binding should do it, particularly if one had the bookbinder set on the spine: The New Hymnal.)<sup>176</sup> “Bogen er dog den samme,” as *quidam* might say, but the melancholy diarist is not typical of his time. Most people, the spy assumes, can satisfy their craving for novelty with the mere semblance of change. If the cover is fresh and the hymnal bears a new title, then that ought to quiet the unrest, since it has little to do with the psalms themselves, at least according to the spy.

You will recall that Kierkegaard resumed hostilities against the Heibergian *Nytaarsgaver* in his second authorship, in “Krisen og en Krise i en Skuespillerindes Liv” of 1848. That same year, in *Christelige Taler* (Christian talks), bookbinding writ large had already come under fire. In “Tanker som saare bagfra – til Opbyggelse” (Thoughts that wound from behind—for upbuilding) VI, entitled “Det er dog saligt – at lide Forhaanelse for en god Sag” (Yet it is blessed—to suffer insult for a good cause), Kierkegaard contrasts the so-called “seierige Kirke” (“Church triumphant”) of institutionalized Christendom with the “stridende” (militant) Church of authentic Christianity. The distinction is, respectively, one between the outward acquisition of worldly good fortune, and the true victory of inward appropriation—which often comes at the cost of great suffering.<sup>177</sup> This stark dichotomy leads Kierkegaard to the following bibliographical analogy: “Saa lidet som Den, der har indkjøbt og pragtfuldt ladet indbinde alle de Bøger, han har at bruge til sin Examens-Læsning, med Sandhed kan siges at have taget sin Examen: ligesaa lidet er Christenheden i christelig Forstand den seierige Kirke.” (As little as the one who has purchased and has had magnificently bound all of the books he has for use for his exam-reading in truth can be said to have taken his exam, just so little is Christendom the Church triumphant.)<sup>178</sup> Here he means the Church triumphant in its genuine sense (i.e., not in scare quotes). If those finely bound textbooks have yet to be read, then they have not become part of their owner’s mind or spirit. They remain but static objects in space, rather than sonorous texts in time, and their richly decorated covers only remind us of their reification. Likewise, the so-called Church triumphant of Christendom exists only as a rigid, brick-and-mortar institution, while the true Church triumphant is a living embodiment of spiritual truth won in the face of worldly travail.

Favoring the ideal text over the bound volume, Kierkegaard demonstrates a marked preference for the disappearing book in his satirical writings. As I have intimated, however, his own books perform something of a *volte-face*. Rather than dissolving into sonority, the so-called

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176. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:434

177. “Nu, det forstaaer sig, den ‘seierige Kirke’ har i udvortes Forstand seiret over Verden, det vil sige, den har verdsligt seiret over Verden (thi gudeligt seire over den kan man kun indvortes): saa staaer der, som for alle Seierherrer, blot een Seier tilbage, den at seire over sig selv, at blive Christen. Saa længe man ikke er opmærksom herpaa, er Begrebet ‘Christenhed’ af alle Sandsebedrag det allerfarligste. I Christenheden er derfor det Christelige endnu bestandigt stridende.” (Now, obviously the “Church triumphant” has triumphed over the world, that is to say, it has temporally triumphed over the world [for to triumph over it religiously can only be done internally]: so there remains only one triumph, as for all conquerors, that of triumphing over oneself, to become a Christian. As long as one is not aware of this, the concept of “Christendom” is, of all hallucinations, the most dangerous. In Christendom, therefore, the Christian is the perpetually militant.) *Christelige Taler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 10:236–37.

178. *Christelige Taler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 10:237.

ironic books reinscribe themselves, making the reader aware of their physical existence. Resisting synthesis or sublation, two parallel modalities—the text in time and the book in space—alternate in a fractured or ironic dialectic. It is this so-called ironic book to which we now turn in the third and final chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: THE IRONIC BOOK

In his monograph *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel and Kierkegaard*, Fred Rush makes the ground-breaking discovery that Kierkegaard “targets Hegel’s conceptions of dialectic . . . with roughly Schlegelian resources.”<sup>1</sup> Chief among these “resources” is Romantic irony, or what Friedrich Schlegel describes as the “Wechsel von Selbstschöpfung und Selbstvernichtung” (fluctuating between self-creation and self-destruction),<sup>2</sup> and “dieser wunderbare ewige Wechsel von Enthusiasmus und Ironie” (this wonderfully perennial alternation of enthusiasm and irony).<sup>3</sup> In the latter passage, Schlegel treats irony as a purely negative moment, whereas Romantic irony refers to the endless succession of positions and negations so prized by the Jena theorist. Concluding with the absolute, Hegel’s dialectic is closed, whereas Schlegel’s is open or—as Rush has it—“ironic”;<sup>4</sup> it builds up only to tear down, and then builds up again, in a never-ending cycle of possibilities.

Although Rush is the first—to my knowledge—to trace Kierkegaard’s open dialectic back to Schlegel, he is not the only one to discover a dialectic of this sort in the Dane. In a lecture given in Geneva in 1963, in celebration of Kierkegaard’s sesquicentennial, Paul Ricoeur spoke of how Kierkegaard “buil[t] an anti-dialectic out of those unresolved contradictions he called paradoxes.”<sup>5</sup> Otherwise known as a “fragmented” or “fractured dialectic,”<sup>6</sup> this concept is defined by Michael O’Neill Burns in *Kierkegaard and the Matter of Philosophy: A Fractured Dialectic*, as “a non-totalizable account of dialectical structure that does not emerge from, or arrive at, a synthetic unity of opposites.”<sup>7</sup> Antonymous to Hegelian dialectic, the ironic and the fractured dialectics are essentially synonymous, although the former has been identified with Schlegel and the latter with Kierkegaard. These Schlegelian and Kierkegaardian dialectics do not pursue the dead-end of the “intentional fallacy.”<sup>8</sup> Instead, they multiply readings upon readings, which contradict and complement each other in an unending process.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 213.

2. Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragmente (Athenaeum-Fragmente)*, in “Athenaeum”-*Fragmente und andere frühromantische Schriften* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2018), 82; *Athenaeum Fragments*, in *Friedrich Schlegel’s Lucinde and the Fragments* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 167.

3. Friedrich Schlegel, *Gespräch über die Poesie*, in “Athenaeum”-*Fragmente*, 233; Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry*, in *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, trans. and ed. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), 86.

4. “Hegelian dialectic dictates conditions for its own systematic closure”; meanwhile, “Schlegel’s ironic dialectic does precisely the opposite, specifying systematically constraints on non-closure.” Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 10.

5. Paul Ricoeur. “Philosophy after Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jonathan Rée and Jane Chamberlain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 15.

6. Ricoeur, “Philosophy after Kierkegaard,” 10ff.

7. Michael O’Neill Burns, *Kierkegaard and the Matter of Philosophy: A Fractured Dialectic* (London: Rowan & Littlefield, 2015), 61.

8. W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” in *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 3–18, <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.stolaf.edu/stable/j.ctt130jn4t>.

9. “Systems of fragments are dedicated to advancing interpretation *as such*; that is *all* they are for.” Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 89.



Not so with Friedrich Kittler's "disappearing book."<sup>10</sup> In his *Aufschreibesysteme* (*Discourse Networks*), Kittler illustrates this concept with the opening scene of Goethe's *Faust*, in which the titular anti-hero peruses a Nostradamus manuscript and is confronted by a spirit. The media theorist suggests that there is a mutuality between Faust and the spirit he summons forth ("Described or designated signs are supposed to be able to hear the reader."),<sup>11</sup> and yet Faust is far from being this being's equal.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the episteme of the disappearing book is decidedly monological; and, aesthetically, the disappearing book is monistic, since the reader experiences it only as a temporal voice, rather than as a spatial object. On the other hand, what I will call the ironic book is dualistic. Not only does it exhibit a non-teleological dialectic in terms of its epistemology, such as the "Wechsel" of Schlegel or the "indirecte Meddelelse" (indirect communication) of Kierkegaard;<sup>13</sup> by gesturing towards the bibliographical medium, and by accentuating the paratextual and narratological frames of the body text, the ironic book of Kierkegaard and his Dano-Germanic predecessors presents the aesthetic correlate to this epistemological instability: a fractured dialectic between the inner and the outer, or between time and space.

## THE DIALECTICS OF COMMUNICATION

In his classic essay, "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes laments the common misconception that "a text is . . . a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God)."<sup>14</sup> According to Jacques Derrida, such communication was even supposed to be free from linguistic strictures, a "transcendental signified," which he defines as "a concept simply present for thought, independent of a relationship to language, that is of a relationship to a system of signifiers."<sup>15</sup> Of course, Derrida dismisses the transcendental signified out of hand: "The signified is inseparable from the signifier . . . . The signified and signifier are the two sides of one and the same production."<sup>16</sup> And yet the transcendental signified—rather than printed matter—was thought to circulate in what Friedrich Kittler calls "the discourse network of 1800,"<sup>17</sup> and hence the book-object itself could only be a hindrance to this aesthetic experience.<sup>18</sup>

Hegel and Goethe were two of the central nodes in this network. The former offered his audience "das absolute Wissen" (absolute knowing), or knowledge unconditioned by language<sup>19</sup>—

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10. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks: 1800 / 1900*, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 54.

11. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

12. *Goethe's Faust: Part One and Selections from Part Two*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), lines 482–513.

13. *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret, 2014), 7:250.

14. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 279.

15. Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva," in *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 19.

16. Derrida, "Semiology," 18.

17. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 3ff.

18. "A man's book counted only when it disappeared as a book." Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 54.

19. Hegel thus describes "das absolute Wissen" (absolute knowing) not as a sum total of epistemic propositions, but as a "Gestalt des Geistes" (shape of Spirit), which "seinem vollständigen und wahren Inhalte zugleich die Form

in other words, a transcendental signified. This faith in a transcendental signified is evident in a biographical anecdote related by Terry Pinkard, in which Hegel telescoped the closing sections of *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*The Phenomenology of Spirit*) to meet a publisher's deadline,<sup>20</sup> making quick work of the Early Moderns (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and his contemporaries (Kant, Fichte, and Schelling) in just a few pages.<sup>21</sup> According to Peter Singer, the *Phänomenologie* commemorates Hegel's own achievement of absolute knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Whether the sequence of signifiers is contracted or protracted is unimportant, as the knowledge it represents exceeds language itself.<sup>23</sup>

Famously, Kierkegaard found this sort of Hegelian bombast quite dubious.<sup>24</sup> He was also critical of Goethe's relativization of good and evil,<sup>25</sup> and his rejection of a transcendent Deity.<sup>26</sup> Yet Kierkegaard was not just irritated by *what* Hegel and Goethe taught; he was also piqued by *how* they taught. To wit, these titans of Idealism and Classicism (respectively) addressed their audience unequivocally and unilaterally, via a teleological dialectic. Goethe, the Sage of Weimar, was invested in transforming the lives of his readers, not by dialogical persuasion, but via his

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des Selbsts gibt" (gives its complete and true content the form of the Self). G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 15th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2020), 582; G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 485.

20. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 227.

21. Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 586–87; Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 488–90. See also J. N. Findlay, "Analysis of the Text," in Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 591.

22. "There can scarcely be a more momentous conclusion to a work of philosophy. The closing pages of *The Phenomenology of Mind* are no mere *description* of the culmination of all human history; they *are* that culmination." Peter Singer, *Hegel: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93.

23. "Hegel's sentences rise above the stuff on which his handwritten first draft was recorded. . . . The logic of the signified . . . triumphs because the materiality of the signifiers becomes 'beyond reach' for readers and opponents." Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 168.

24. "Hegelianism promised to make absolute knowledge available by virtue of a science of logic. Anyone with the capacity to follow the dialectical progression of the purportedly transparent concepts of Hegel's logic would have access to the mind of God (which for Hegel was equivalent to the logical structure of the universe). Kierkegaard thought this to be the hubristic attempt to build a new tower of Babel, or a *scala paradisi*—a dialectical ladder by which humans can climb with ease up to heaven." William McDonald, "Søren Kierkegaard," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University, 1997–, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard/#Rhet>.

25. Heiberg recommended Goethe's naturalistic understanding of repetition to the pseudonymous author of *Gjentagelsen* in the article "Det astronomiske Aar," and so Kierkegaard scorned this Goethean wisdom in an unpublished reply, writing, "Misforstaaelsen som De har tilveiebragt, viser sig allerbedst ved at betragte det 'gyldne Ord af Goethe' som De har citeret, men som ved at citeres paa den Maade maaske blev Guld, man lod Friheden omkomme i." (The misunderstanding that you have brought about shows itself best of all by regarding the 'Golden words of Goethe' that you have cited, but, as by being cited in that manner, perhaps became gold in which one let freedom perish.) In his *Kierkegaard og Goethe*, Carl Roos sums up Goethe's position, as articulated by Heiberg, and rejected by Kierkegaard: "Goethes mening er til syvende og sidst, at ondt og godt udvikler sig spontant i mennesket ligesom klinte og hvede på marken, mennesket er også som moralsk væsen naturbundet, 'friheden' er en illusion, der består ingen mulighed for valg eller beslutning." (Goethe's opinion, when all is said and done, is that evil and good develop spontaneously in the human being just like corn and wheat in the field; the human being is also bound to nature as a moral being; "freedom" is an illusion; there is no possibility for choice or resolution.) Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Det astronomiske Aar," in *Urania. Aarvog for 1844*, ed. Johan Ludvig Heiberg (Copenhagen: Bing), 102; *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, ed. P. A. Heiberg and V. Kuhr (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1912), 4:264–65; Carl Roos, *Kierkegaard og Goethe* (Copenhagen: Gad, 1955), 30–31.

26. "Goethes Gud var 'immanent,' til stede i 'naturen,' han forlangte ikke lidelse og død, men handling og liv, og således mødes i Kierkegaard og Goethe to livsanskuelser, der aldrig kan forsones, to tusindårige former for modsat tro." (Goethe's God was "immanent," present in "Nature"; he did not demand suffering and death, but action and life, and thus, in Kierkegaard and Goethe, two life-views meet that can never be reconciled, two one-thousand-year-old forms of opposite faith.) Roos, *Kierkegaard og Goethe*, 228–29.

looming reputation.<sup>27</sup> To Merold Westphal's query, "Could the question of authorship be fundamental rather than peripheral to Kierkegaard's quarrel with Hegel?"<sup>28</sup> I answer with a resounding *yes*, and would add that the same might be said of Kierkegaard's feud with Goethe.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, this "question of authorship" is inextricably linked to bibliographical aesthetics, as the domineering author of the disappearing book is supposed to overshadow all of the paper, leather, and ink.

Kierkegaard classifies Hegel's writings as "en ligefrem Meddelelse" (a direct communication),<sup>30</sup> and he would undoubtedly say the same of Goethe's, as well. To communicate directly does not necessarily mean choosing prose over poetry; rather, it is to impart "a single 'theological' meaning": the revelations of what Barthes calls an "Author-God." In bestowing the transcendental signified, the deified author terminates the dialectic, offering no chance for reinterpretation or revision. Under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, Kierkegaard, in the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelige Efterskrift* of 1846, expresses his exasperation with these pretensions to supralingustic communication. Indeed, he writes that "er det virkelig faldet mig paa, om jeg ikke er i en Misforstaaelse, om jeg ikke forudsætter Noget hos Læsere, og feiler i at forudsætte det. Thi jeg vil være ganske oprigtig: min Forestilling om Meddelelse gennem Bøger er høist forskjellig fra hvad jeg ellers seer fremsat desangaaende, og fra hvad man stiltiende anseer for givet" (I have wondered whether or not I have misunderstood, whether or not I am presupposing something with readers, or failing to presuppose it. For I will be completely candid: my notion of communication through books is extremely different from what I otherwise see expressed on the subject, and from what is tacitly regarded as given).<sup>31</sup> The assumption here is that existential truths can be seamlessly transferred from the author's mind to the reader's. In this sense, even a novel like Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*) would be

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27. Thus, Dorothea E. von Mücke writes of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, "Books 10 and 11 refrain from delivering the materials for exact correspondences between art and life. Instead, these books provide a sustained reflection on the historical conditions for the possibility of the young man's emergence as a radically innovative artist, whose innovation consists neither in how his art expresses his own experience nor in how art represents life in more general terms, but rather in the way in which art intervenes in the life of its audience" (159). "Most important," von Mücke continues, "he [sc. Goethe] does not conceive of himself primarily as a writer but rather as somebody who can exert a decisive influence through his presence" (166). Dorothea E. von Mücke, *The Practices of Enlightenment: Aesthetics, Authorship, and the Public* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

28. Merold Westphal, "Kierkegaard and the Anxiety of Authorship," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (March 1994): 11–12.

29. It has long been presumed that Kierkegaard lambasted Goethe and Hegel because they were Johan Ludvig Heiberg's heroes, and Heiberg had given *Enten – Eller* a lukewarm review. The first to pursue this thesis is, to my knowledge, Henning Fenger, who writes, "It was Heiberg's review of March 1, 1843, which set Kierkegaard off. . . . The *Papers* show how his fury swells, turning into a regular tidal wave. . . . Kierkegaard's about-face can be traced in his subsequent production, which turns not merely against Heiberg himself, the *Rector magnificus* of literature. . . . From now on, the torpedoing of Goethe and Hegel became a mission for Kierkegaard." This interpretation, however, overlooks substantial differences between Goethe-Hegel and Kierkegaard, especially in respect to authorship and the book. Henning Fenger, *Kierkegaard, the Myths and Their Origins: Studies in the Kierkegaardian Papers and Letters*, trans. George C. Schoolfield (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 147–48. See also Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 236–37.

30. "Hegels Meddelelse i de samfulde sytten Bind er en ligefrem Meddelelse; har han da Ingen fundet, der har forstaaet ham, saa bliver det værst for Hegel." (Hegel's communication in the seventeen full volumes is a direct communication; if, then, he has not found anyone who has understood him, then it's all the worst for Hegel.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:71n.

31. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:250.

considered a direct communication,<sup>32</sup> as it imparts a *Weltanschauung*—or what Kierkegaard would call a “Livs-Anskuelse” (life-view)—under the imprimatur of Goethe’s signature.<sup>33</sup> Climacus, on the other hand, asserts that an author should not expect his readers to follow him on his existential path;<sup>34</sup> instead, it would be best if he preserved their autonomy, for only then will they be able to realize the ethical truth for themselves:

Den indirecte Meddelelse gjør det at meddele i en anden Forstand til en Kunst, end man ellers antager ved at tænke sig det saaledes, at Meddeleren har at fremsætte Meddelelsen for en Vidende, at denne kan bedømme den, eller for en Ikke-Vidende, at denne kan faae Noget at vide. Men det Næste bryder man sig ikke om, det der netop gjør Meddelelsen saa dialektisk vanskelig: at Modtageren er en Existerende, og at dette er det Væsentlige. At standse en Mand paa Gaden og staae stille for at tale med ham, er ikke saa vanskeligt som i Forbigaaende at skulle sige en Forbigaaende Noget uden selv at staae stille eller sinke den Anden, uden at ville bevæge ham til at gaae samme Vei, men netop tilskynde ham til at gaae sin egen Vei: og saaledes er Forholdet mellem en Existerende og en Existerende, naar Meddelelsen angaaer Sandheden, som Existents-Inderlighed.

(Indirect communication makes communicating into an art in a different sense than what one otherwise assumes, supposing that the communicator has brought forward the communication for one who knows, so that this one can judge it, or for one who doesn’t

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32. The young Kierkegaard’s own words, recorded in a notebook in 1836, clearly indicate that the novel *Wilhelm Meister* communicates its standpoint directly, rather than leaving the dialectic open, as indirect communication would: “Skulde jeg med faa Ord sige, hvad jeg egl. anseer for det mesterlige ved *Goethes Wilhelm Meister*, vilde jeg sige, at det er den afrundede Styrelse, der gaaer igjennem det Hele, den hele Fichtiske moralske Verdensorden, der i Romanen selv mere doctrinairt udvikles, der er immanent til Stede i det Hele, som efterhaanden leder Wil[helm] til det Punct, som i Theorien, om jeg saa maa sige, er givet, saaledes at ved Rom[anen]s Slutning den Verdens Anskuelse, Digteren har gjort gjeldende, ligesom den før existerede uden for Wilhelm, nu levende er optaget i ham, og deraf det fuldendte Totalindtryk denne Roman udøver maaske fremfor nogen anden, det er virkelig den hele Verden opfattet i et Speil, en sand Mikrokosmos.” (If I should say in a few words what I really consider to be masterful about *Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister*, I would say that it is the rounded-off Providence that goes through the whole, the whole Fichtean moral world-order that the novel itself develops more doctrinairely, is immanently present in the whole, which afterwards leads Wilhelm to the point that in theory, if I may say so, is given, so that by the novel’s conclusion the world-view that the poet has put forth, just as it existed before outside of Wilhelm, is now a part of him, and thus the perfect total impression this novel exerts perhaps above any other; it really is the whole world captured in a mirror, a true microcosmos.) *Notesbog 3*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 19:102.

33. As Joakim Garff argues, Kierkegaard expected *Bildung* or a life-view from Hans Christian Andersen’s novel *Kun en Spillemand* (*Only a Fiddler!*) in an 1838 review entitled *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer* (From the papers of one still living). Joakim Garff, “Andersen, Kierkegaard – and the Deconstructed *Bildungsroman*,” trans. K. Brian Söderquist, *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2006): 89ff, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110186567.83>. See also Hjärdis Becker, “From *Weltanschauung* to *Livs-Anskuelse*: Kierkegaard’s Existential Philosophy,” *HUMANA.MENTE: Journal of Philosophical Studies* 18 (2011): 1–18; and Lee C. Barrett, “Life-View,” in *Individual to Novel*, tome 4 of *Kierkegaard’s Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 89–95.

34. According to Kittler, “Philosophical discourse . . . proclaimed the destiny of man to be authorhood . . . . Women stood at the origin of discourse only insofar as they represented the Mother; insofar as they existed as a plurality, they were charged with reading.” There were, of course, women authors in nineteenth-century Europe, but, as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar have observed, the *topoi* of authorship were thoroughly masculinized. In this dissertation, I treat the author as a male figure in order to foreground the challenge to authority—and to masculine authority, in particular—that Kierkegaard’s unauthoritative output poses. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 67; Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 3ff.

know, so that this one can learn something. But no one worries about the next thing, that which precisely makes communication so dialectically difficult: that the receiver is an existing person, and that this is the essential. To stop a man on the street and to stand still in order to talk to him is not so difficult as having to say something as one walks by to someone else walking by without standing still oneself or delaying the other, without wanting to prevail upon him to go the same way, but precisely to urge him to go his own way; and thus is the relation between one existing person and another, if the communication concerns truth as existence-inwardness.)<sup>35</sup>

To grant readers the freedom to forge their own pathways is to leave the dialectic open, in a state of irony or fracture. The technique of *indirecte Meddelelse* is based on this non-teleological dialectic. Kierkegaard's *indirecte Meddelelse* involves depriving the work of its august author because this author's very presence is largely responsible for capping off the dialectic. To quote Barthes in the above-cited essay, "To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing."<sup>36</sup>

One year after the publication of the *Efterskrift*, Kierkegaard targeted the presumption of direct communication in "Den etiske og den etisk-religieuse Meddelelses Dialektik" (The ethical and the ethical-religious communication's dialectic), a lecture series he planned but never delivered.<sup>37</sup> A passage from the lecture notes reads as follows: "Det Ethiske veed ethvert Msk. / Hvorledes forandres nu Meddelelsens Dialektik. / 1) Gjenstanden gaaer ud; thi da alle veed den, saa er her ingen Gjenstand at meddele, – at ville gjøre et Forsøg paa saaledes at meddele det Ethiske er netop u-etisk. / 2) Meddeleren gaaer ud – thi naar Enhver veed det, saa kan den Ene jo ikke meddele den Anden det. / 3) Modtageren gaaer ud – thi naar Meddeleren gaaer ud, gaaer ogsaa Modtageren. / Der bliver kun een Meddeler: Gud." (Every person knows the ethical. / Now how is the dialectic of communication changed? / [1] The object goes out; for since all know it, here, then, is no object to communicate—to want to make an attempt like this to communicate the ethical is precisely unethical. / [2] The communicator goes out—for if everyone knows it, then the one indeed cannot communicate it to the other. / [3] The recipient goes out—for if the communicator goes out, the recipient goes, too. / There remains only one communicator: God.)<sup>38</sup> So, if an author styles himself a source of ethical-religious truth, then he is usurping the place of God—a serious charge, especially coming from Kierkegaard. By adopting the methods of indirect communication, such as pseudonymity, Kierkegaard avoids a self-apotheosis in respect to his text and its reader.<sup>39</sup> Leaving the dialectic open in his absence, he grants the reader extensive—if not absolute—hermeneutical liberties.<sup>40</sup>

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35. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:250–51.

36. Barthes, "Death of the Author," 279.

37. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Thomas Eske Rasmussen, "Den etiske og den etisk-religieuse Meddelelses Dialektik.' Tekstredegørelse," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K27:798.

38. "Den etiske og den etisk-religieuse Meddelelses Dialektik," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 27:395.

39. "For Kierkegaard . . . the very limited ability of the author to control the process of communication is at once a structural necessity and personal choice; it is a 'voluntary effacement,' a kind of self-denying ordinance in which the author, who in fact is not God, willingly agrees to play a role other than God vis-à-vis text and reader." Westphal, "Anxiety of Authorship," 18.

40. Cf. Steven M. Emmanuel, who claims "that what Kierkegaard created, consciously or unconsciously, in the process of writing was an implied version of himself" (252). This notion of an "implied author" (which is attributed to Wayne C. Booth) is thrown in the teeth of the deconstructionist critic Louis Mackey, who had written in *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, "There is no such thing as the point of view for Kierkegaard's work: no superintendent signified that organizes, finally, its inscriptions" (190). Like Mackey, Stuart Dalton refuses to

Hegel and Goethe's disappearing books, on the other hand, were supposed to overwhelm their readers with a godlike presence,<sup>41</sup> communicating an immutable transcendental signified. Simulated speech—uninterrupted, irrefutable, and one-sided—serves as an aesthetic correlate for the transcendental signified, since speech, in its invisibility and fleetingness, is the closest that language can come to the extralinguistic. The model of the book conceived by the Danish critic Johan Ludvig Heiberg in “Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie” (Contribution to the philosophy of the visible) also immerses its readers in the authorial voice, but with the difference that these imagined sounds do not eclipse the book-object, which remains an integral part of the aesthetic experience, especially for the bibliophile. Since the eye, and not the ear, is dominant in the so-called Heibergian book, the author's orality—according to Klaus Müller-Wille—is *aufgehoben* in

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imagine a transcendent authorial ground for the writing: “Steven Emmanuel suggests that we shift our focus from the actual author to an ‘implied author’ as the organizing principle of Kierkegaard’s texts . . . . Yet the pseudonymous works would seem to argue that the author in any form (actual or ‘implied’) is ‘irrelevant’ to understanding the texts. An ‘implied’ author remains a method of systematization that the texts themselves resist” (135n17). While I agree with Dalton, we must also heed Christopher Norris, who declares, “It should be obvious by now that Kierkegaard carries deconstruction only to the point where its strategies supposedly come up against a undeconstructible bedrock of authenticated truth” (41). In other words, truth is not something that is in the text, but that does not mean that it is nowhere to be found. According to Emmanuel, “Kierkegaard does not attempt to communicate directly the truth about human existence, but rather to enable others to discover that truth for themselves by removing the illusion that leads them away from the truth. . . . But this type of truth can only be appropriated by the existing individual, who recreates it in self-activity” (250). Steven M. Emmanuel, “Reading Kierkegaard,” *Philosophy Today* 36, no. 3 (Fall 1992); Louis Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986); Stuart Dalton, “How to Avoid Writing: Prefaces and Points of View in Kierkegaard,” *Philosophy Today* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2000); Christopher Norris, “Fictions of Authority: Kierkegaard, de Man, and the Ethics of Reading,” in *Intersections: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory*, ed. Tilottama Rajan and David L. Clark (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

41. Cf. Daniel Berthold, who writes that Hegel and Kierkegaard, “both . . . seek to enact their own deaths as authors, effectively disappearing as reliable guides for the reader” (9). Indeed, Berthold rejects the image of Hegel as an autonomous author: “Since one cannot express purely inward intentions without directly saying something other than what one meant to say—that is, since language inherently reshapes the privacy of the inner into the ‘external’ sphere of the social construction of meaning—the commonsense idea that the author has a privileged access to the meaning of his or her work becomes senseless. Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, as a text, effectively obscures the boundaries between inner and outer and hence of author and reader” (18). As Berthold puts it elsewhere, “Meaning is not fixed ‘inside’ the subject of a proposition or inside the mind of the author, the writing subject, but only in an encounter with the ‘outside’” (93). This argument is convincing, but I am not seeking to craft an exacting portrait of Hegel. Instead, I aim to demonstrate that Kierkegaard adopted the ironic book as a challenge to the disappearing book of a Hegelian strawman.

One should also note that Goethe, late in life, diverged from the disappearing book. Andrew Piper writes that in his last novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (Wilhelm Meister’s years of travel), “literary work, and thus the ‘work’ itself,” are found “not in some ideal and crucially immaterial space, but instead in the material event of publication—the circulation, distribution, and reproduction that shaped its reception” (45). Daniel Berthold, *The Ethics of Authorship: Communication, Seduction, and Death in Hegel and Kierkegaard* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

the visual image of the page,<sup>42</sup> i.e., “both annulled and preserved.”<sup>43</sup> Unlike the open-ended *either/or* of a fractured or ironic dialectic, this sublation, this *both-and*, is stable or closed. A human being, however, experiences space and time as independent of each other—that, at least, is Jamie Aroosi’s gloss on the Kierkegaardian pseudonym Anti-Climacus. Aroosi thereby concludes that the modalities of space and time cannot be mediated,<sup>44</sup> and that the book for us is either a spatial object or a temporal flow of significations, but it cannot be both simultaneously.<sup>45</sup>

While Hegel, Goethe, and the late J. L. Heiberg each asserted himself as a full stop on his writing (in the Barthesian sense), the Romantics and Kierkegaard had a number of techniques for withdrawing from their ironic books, leaving dialectical ellipses. Accordingly, the readers of these ironic books do not have a univocal encounter with authorial *Geist*. To the contrary, they are arrested at the surface of the page, and it is up to them—in the absence of the author—to read for themselves. Phenomenologically, this experience stands in stark contrast to that of the disappearing book. With the disappearing book, the author’s voice-in-time replaces the book-in-space for as long as the reader reads on. With the ironic book, on the other hand, the reader senses an undulation from the outwardness of the signifier to the inwardness of the signified. Several German media theorists of the present day take this to be the dialectic of reading as such,<sup>46</sup> but the Romantics and Kierkegaard went one step further, penning works that actually acted out this flux between the outer and the inner, which I shall term an aesthetics of fracture.

Rejecting the Idealist paradigm of the disappearing book and its overweening author,<sup>47</sup> the Romantics absented themselves from their ironic books by refusing to claim authorship in the proprietary, bourgeois sense. As Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy write, “Anonymity effaces the authors only in order, through what is referred to as ‘symphilosophy’ or

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42. “Synen anses vara det högsta av alla sinnen. I sin dialektiska argumentation försöker Heiberg visa att synen är kapabel att ‘upphäva’ (i den hegelianska meningen ‘aufheben’) all andra sinnen. I detta sammanhang hänvisar Heiberg just till skriftmediet och läsandets akt.” (Sight is thought to be the highest of all senses. In his dialectical argumentation, Heiberg attempts to show that sight is capable of ‘sublating’ [in the Hegelian meaning of *aufheben*] all other senses. In this connection, Heiberg refers precisely to written media and the act of reading.) Klaus Müller-Wille, “‘De er rigtig nok godt indbunden.’ Om bokens poetik hos Johan Ludvig Heiberg och Søren Kierkegaard,” in *Mellem ånd og trykksværdte. Studier i trykkeulturen og den romantiske litteratur*, ed. Robert W. Rix (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2015), 83–84. See “Bidrag til det Synliges Philosophie,” in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1861), 2:358.

43. McDonald, “Kierkegaard,” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard/#Aesth>.

44. Jamie Aroosi, “The Responsibility to Revolt: Søren Kierkegaard and the Politics of Love,” St. Olaf College, November 12, 2020, <https://www.stolaf.edu/multimedia/play/?e=3194>, 8:25.

45. Aroosi, “Responsibility to Revolt,” 6:00. See also Leonardo F. Lisi, *Marginal Modernity: The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 41ff; and Michael Strawser, *Both/And: Reading Kierkegaard from Irony to Edification* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 125.

46. See Aleida Assmann, “Die Sprache der Dinge. Der lange Blick und die wilde Semiose,” in *Materialität der Kommunikation*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 238–39; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2, 109; Susanne Strätling and Georg Witte, “Die Sichtbarkeit der Schrift zwischen Evidenz, Phänomenalität und Ikonizität. Zur Einführung in diesen Band,” in *Die Sichtbarkeit der Schrift*, ed. Susanne Strätling and Georg Witte (Munich: Fink, 2006) 7; Sybille Krämer, “Zur Sichtbarkeit der Schrift oder: Die Visualisierung des Unsichtbaren in der operative Schrift. Zehn Thesen,” in Strätling and Witte, *Sichtbarkeit der Schrift*, 76.

47. “Aesthetically, it [sc. autonomy] refers to a positive, formal characteristic, which is most frequently described in terms of a work’s self-sufficiency, its unity as a self-enclosed totality or an organic whole, which has its organizing principle and meaning within itself.” Lisi, *Marginal Modernity*, 2.

‘sympoetry,’ to better assure the universality of the vision of the whole.”<sup>48</sup> In this spirit, if we are to discuss the fragments of Friedrich Schlegel or Novalis, quotation marks should perhaps be set around each name, for Friedrich published four of his own fragments in Novalis’ *Blütenstaub*,<sup>49</sup> and Friedrich’s *Athenaeum-Fragmente* include a number of aphorisms penned by August Wilhelm Schlegel (his brother), Novalis, and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Caroline Böhmer and Dorothea Veit—who were or would become the wives of August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, respectively—are also said to have contributed to the *Athenaeum-Fragmente*,<sup>50</sup> and yet they are not credited in the scholarly apparatuses of the editions I consulted.<sup>51</sup> Peter Firchow adds, however, that “though the work is largely Friedrich’s, the very notion of a shared creation, of a collaborated work of art, gives us an idea of how fresh (in a double sense) the fragments were, how much against the usual conceptions of what a literary work should be like.”<sup>52</sup> One of these “usual conceptions” is the singular, autonomous author, whereas “the *Fragments* of the *Athenaeum*” are “without an objective and without an author,”<sup>53</sup> who would otherwise serve as what Barthes calls a “final signification.” Put another way, the dialectic of the authorless fragment is ironic, fractured, or open. Indeed, the same could be said of Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous books, even if these contain—*ironia ironiarum*—patently autobiographical elements, which we will bear witness to further below. Much like the Romantic fragment, Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous production recruits the reader in an ongoing reconception of the work,<sup>54</sup> where the author is no longer the dialectical *alpha* and *omega*.

So as to create space for the reader as an active agent in an open dialectic, Kierkegaard believed that he had to evacuate himself from the text. Thus, in “En første og sidste Forklaring” (A first and last declaration) a pamphlet appended to the *Efterskrift*, Kierkegaard proclaims in his own name, “Der er . . . i de pseudonym Bøger ikke et eneste Ord af mig selv.” (There is . . . not a single word by me in the pseudonymous books.)<sup>55</sup> In regard to *Enten – Eller* in particular—which did not have an author on its title page, but an editor—Climacus suggests in the *Efterskrift* “at der ingen Forfatter er, er et Fjernelses-Middel” (that there is no author is a means of distancing).<sup>56</sup> Pseudonymity is said to restrict us to what stands on the page, denying us recourse to the author,<sup>57</sup>

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48. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 45.

49. “From *Blütenstaub*,” in *Friedrich Schlegel’s Lucinde*, 160.

50. “The *Athenaeum Fragments*—this extreme limit of romantic writing, which Friedrich valued particularly—are a collective and anonymous ensemble, jointly authored by the two Schlegel brothers, their wives, Novalis, and Schleiermacher.” Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *Literary Absolute*, 14.

51. Johannes Endres, ed., “*Athenaeum*”-*Fragmente*, 287; Peter Firchow, introduction to *Friedrich Schlegel’s Lucinde*, 15–16.

NB: As Kittler might point out, such an omission recalls the discourse network of 1800: “Women could not write poetry because they *were* Poetry” (172).

52. Firchow, introduction to *Friedrich Schlegel’s Lucinde*, 16.

53. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *Literary Absolute*, 40–41.

54. “Poetry solicits intervention by other perspectives in the form of active readers.” Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 73.

55. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:570

56. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:229.

57. “No thinker and writer ever tried as Kierkegaard did to leave the reader alone with the work,” writes Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. “The dialectic of thought and existence is properly that of the reader with the work, not of the reader’s curious interest in the writer.” Ed Mooney puts it somewhat more poetically: “Creating distance between texts and authors reduces their looming authority. The printed word is released to speak on its own.” Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, foreword to *Kierkegaard’s Thought*, by Gregor Malantschuk, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong ([Princeton]: Princeton University Press, 1971), viii; Edward F. Mooney,



whose implicit or explicit intent would otherwise serve as a crutch for the commonsensical reader or critic.

I would insist that not just the pseudonymous works, but also the signed, are indirect communications. Kierkegaard repeatedly stresses in the prefaces to the veronymous<sup>58</sup> *opbyggelige Taler* (upbuilding talks) that he “ikke har Myndighed til at prædike” (does not have authority to preach) and “ingenlunde fordrer at være Lærer” (by no means demands to be a teacher).<sup>59</sup> Lacking a basis in a conspicuous author, the *Taler*, too, must be animated by the reader, not in order to produce definitive results, but to initiate an open-ended dialectic. Aesthetically, this dialectic is manifest in a fluctuation between the outer and the inner, i.e., between the surface of the page and the depths of its meaning(s). The ironic book, then, does not disappear. To the contrary, the reader is repeatedly reminded of it.

## REINSCRIPTION

In Jean Paul’s novel *Siebenkäs*, the narrator addresses the reader in an aside: “Ich habe oft ganze Bücher über das Ich und ganze Bücher über die Buchdruckerkunst durchgelesen, eh’ ich zuletzt mit Erstaunen ersah, daß Ich und die Buchstaben ja eben vor mir sitzen. / Der Leser sei aufrichtig: hat er nicht sogar jetzo, da ich darüber zanke, vergessen, daß er hier Buchstaben vor sich hat und sein Ich dazu?” (I have often read through whole books on the self and whole books on the art of printing, ere I saw in the end with astonishment that self and the letters sat right in front of me. / The reader will be honest: Has he not, even now, while I am squabbling over it, forgotten that he has letters in front of him and, into the bargain, his self?)<sup>60</sup> Jean Paul’s narrator thus suggests that the spellbinding power of the written word may not only render us oblivious to the book at hand; we could even lose track of our egos, albeit temporarily. Undoubtedly in reference to this passage, Kittler writes, “Jean Paul once had to remind his readers (in the middle of an address to the reader) that what they were reading, without noticing it, was in printed type.”<sup>61</sup> Kittler is implying that, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the disappearing book was ubiquitous; or, in other words, print was universally experienced as a transparent medium, one that could facilitate a direct encounter between authorial and readerly spirits, like that between Nostradamus and Faust in the opening

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“Pseudonyms and ‘Style,’” in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, ed. John Lippitt and George Pattison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 207. See also Westphal, “Anxiety of Authorship,” 20.

58. *Veronymous* is a coinage of Michael Strawser, who employs this term to differentiate the signed works from the pseudonymous ones (174). As he notes, the word “will be useful in distinguishing between writings Kierkegaard signed with his own name and those he did not, without giving the impression that the former are works of ‘direct communication’” (192n2). Strawser is suggesting that some of Kierkegaard’s signed writings—perhaps by design—lack the authorial presence presupposed in “direct communication.” Strawser is flying in the face of Kierkegaard’s own division of the authorship into “ligefremme Meddelelse” (direct communication) and its opposite in *Om min Forfatter-Virksomhed* (On my author-activity), but perhaps one is most faithful to the deliberately unauthoritative Kierkegaard by disregarding his *ex-cathedra* pronouncements. *Om min Forfatter-Virksomhed*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 13:13.

59. E.g., *To opbyggelige Taler*, 1843, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:13.

60. Jean Paul Richter, *Siebenkäs. Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornenstücke oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2016), 111.

61. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 114.

scene of Goethe's drama.<sup>62</sup> *Contra* Kittler, there was in fact a thriving aesthetic countermovement contemporaneous to the disappearing book, one that stressed the opacity of inscription.

So, rather than folding *Siebenkäs* into a discussion of the book's invisibility, as Kittler does,<sup>63</sup> I would instead emphasize that this passage foregrounds the physicality of the page. Such a move, I argue, is characteristic of both German and Danish Romanticism.<sup>64</sup> In consolidating the discourse network of 1800, Kittler collapses Romanticism into Idealism and Classicism, but conventional German literary history sharply distinguishes between *Klassik* and *Romantik*.<sup>65</sup> This latter approach, I argue, is the right one, at least insofar as the book is concerned. Alluding to the book's material existence, the Romantics disrupted the illusion of a transcendent union between author and reader and extricated themselves from the discourse network of 1800 in the process. One must note, however, that these references to the book's corporeality—what I will call reinscription—must first be processed in the mind of the reader, and it is here that irony arises. As we sink into the text, it is as though we are hearing a “virtual orality”<sup>66</sup>—and yet the content of

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62. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5. See *Goethe's Faust*, lines 354–517.

63. In fact, Jean Paul was constantly adverting to the book, as Monika Schmitz-Emans has demonstrated in a series of insightful articles. In “Vom Leben und Scheinleben der Bücher,” she remarks, “Jean Paul hat es wie wenige andere Autoren darauf angelegt, seine Leser auf das Buch aufmerksam zu machen.” (Jean Paul has, like few other authors, set out to draw his readers' attention to the book) (21). Instead of being a gimmick, these allusions to the book in hand underscore for the reader that thought must always materialize if it is to circulate or be preserved. Schmitz-Emans writes in her “Das *Leben Fibels* als Transzendentalroman,” “Indem er [sc. Jean Paul] die bildende Funktion der Schreibkunst, ihre wichtige Rolle bei der Vergewisserung über Gedachtes und seine Gegenstände, betont, ist er vielen seiner pädagogischen Zeitgenossen sogar voraus.” (As he [sc. Jean Paul] emphasizes the forming function of the art of writing, its important role in securing what is thought and its objects, he is even much further ahead of his pedagogical contemporaries) (153). Indeed, as Schmitz-Emans explains in “Die Buch-Körper als Träger ästhetischer Botschaften,” for Jean Paul “die sinnlich-physische Dimension von Botschaften” (the sensuous-physical dimension of messages) is “bedeutungskonstitutiv” (constitutive of meaning) (271). As we shall see, it is for Kierkegaard, as well. Monika Schmitz-Emans, “Vom Leben und Scheinleben der Bücher. Das Buch als Objekt bei Jean Paul,” *Jahrbuch der Jean-Paul-Gesellschaft* 28 (1993); Monika Schmitz-Emans, “Das *Leben Fibels* als Transzendentalroman. Eine Studie zu Jean Pauls poetischen Reflexionen über Sprache und Schrift,” *Aurora. Jahrbuch der Eichendorff-Gesellschaft für die klassisch-romantische Zeit* 52 (1993); Monika Schmitz-Emans, “Die Buch-Körper als Träger ästhetischer Botschaften. Von Jean Pauls Bücherphantasien zur modernen Buchkunst,” *Jahrbuch der Jean-Paul-Gesellschaft* 48–49 (2014).

64. Markus Kleinert writes of Jean Paul, “The author, who stayed only for visits in the literary centers of the time, kept his distance from the ideals of Weimar Classicism as well as from the projects of Romanticism in his texts” (156). “The peculiarity of the works,” Kleinert continues, “belonging neither to Classicism nor to Romanticism, was a provocation” (157). I, however, will class Jean Paul as a Romantic insofar as he rejects the idealism of the disappearing book. Markus Kleinert, “Jean Paul: Apparent and Hidden Relations between Kierkegaard and Jean Paul,” in *Literature and Aesthetics*, tome 3 of *Kierkegaard and His German Contemporaries*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

65. According to David E. Wellbery, “German literary historiography normally distinguishes between Classicism (*Klassik*) and Romanticism (*Romantik*) as two differently oriented movements in literary and cultural history around the turn of the nineteenth century. The former term is more restricted in its temporal scope and cast of players insofar as it refers principally to the joint endeavors of Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and a few other figures during the last decade of the eighteenth century, whereas Romanticism extends well into the nineteenth century and includes a large number of writers, from Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, and the philosophers Johan Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling to Joseph Eichendorff, Clemens Brentano, and E. T. A. Hoffman, to mention only some of the major names. In Hegel, the two movements are sometimes thought to converge, or find their dialectical synthesis. . . . The first part of Kittler's book fits well with the scholarship produced in the English-speaking world. Beneath the title ‘1800’ it collectively treats most of the Classical and Romantic writers mentioned as participating in a common enterprise, or rather a common discourse network.” David E. Wellbery, foreword to *Discourse Networks*, by Kittler, xvi.

66. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5.

this simulated speech announces the paper and ink before us. This “Verfremdungseffekt” (alienation effect) abruptly returns us to reality,<sup>67</sup> where the book is a mere object in space.

Ultimately, there is no *telos* in sight for this fluctuation between the inwardness of textuality and the outwardness of bookishness.<sup>68</sup> As mentioned above, cutting-edge media theory has identified such an oscillation with reading *tout court*, but the ironic book deliberately exaggerates this effect, manifesting the ironic dialectic of Schlegelian Romanticism. Like Schlegel, Jean Paul, and the young J. L. Heiberg, Kierkegaard also presented his readers with ironic books.

Accordingly, Kierkegaard demonstrates an awareness of reading’s aesthetic—the alternation between the internal and external, or between time and space—in a revelatory journal entry from 1847:

Jeg gjør da Forskjel i min Interpunktion. Jeg interpungerer anderledes i et videnskabeligt end i et rhetorisk Skrift. . . . Men desto værre kjender jeg egl. ingen dansk Forfatter, der egl i Idealitetens Forstand er opmærksom paa Interpunktionen, de følge blot det grammaticalske Normativ.

Især i det Rhetoriske er min Interpunktion afvigende fordi den er udviklet. Det der især beskæftiger mig er det arkitektoniske-dialektiske, at der paa eengang for Øiet viser sig den Sætningernes Proportion, som igjen for Stemmen, naar man læser høit, er Rythmen – og jeg tænker mig bestandigt en Læser der læser høit. – Deraf kommer det igjen at jeg stundom sparer meget paa Brugen af Comma. Hvor jeg saaledes vil have en Subdivision under et Semicomma, da inddeler jeg ikke saadanne Sætninger. fE ‘hvad man skylder en Anden eller hvad man skylder sig selv.’ I denne Henseende lever jeg i en stadig Strid med Sætterne, der velmenende sætte Comma overalt og derved forstyrre mig Rythmiken. . . .

For Alt maa jeg gjentage, at jeg tænker mig Læsere, som læse høit og som da baade ere øvede i at følge hver en Tankes Svingning i det Mindste og igjen i at kunne eftergjøre det med Stemmen. Jeg vil ganske roligt underkaste mig den Prøve, at en Skuespiller eller en Taler, der er vant til at modulere læser til et Forsøg et lille Stykke af mine Taler: og jeg

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67. The *Verfremdungseffekt* is, of course, the term used by Berthold Brecht to describe the techniques of his 1920s anti-naturalistic theater. Brecht’s intent was to create a distance between audiences and the performance they were observing (*Brewer’s Dictionary of Modern Phrase & Fable*). But my borrowing of *Verfremdung* is not really so anachronistic, after all. Writing in 1964, Ernst Nef declares, “Daß die Zerstörung der Illusion sowohl für die frühromantischen Komödien wie für das modern Drama grundlegende Bedeutung besitzt, hat die literarhistorische Forschung schon längst erkannt.” (Literary historical research has already long recognized that the disruption of illusion for the early Romantics as well as for modern drama possesses fundamental importance.) It is also worth noting that Friedrich Schlegel understood irony in analogous theatrical terms, writing that it was “eine permanente Parekbase” (a permanent parabasis). Ernst Behler defines the classical dramaturgical term *parabasis* as “the sometimes capricious, frivolous address of the poet through the chorus and the coryphaeus to the audience that constitute a total disruption of the play.” *Brewer’s Dictionary of Modern Phrase & Fable*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Epic theatre,” [https://bridge.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BRC\\_INST/1808il4/alma991001053629702971](https://bridge.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BRC_INST/1808il4/alma991001053629702971); Ernst Nef, “Das Aus-der-Rolle-Fallen als Mittel der Illusionszerstörung bei Tieck und Brecht,” *Zeitschrift für Deutsch Philologie* 83 (1964): 191; *Philosophische Lehrjahre, 1796–1828, nebst philosophischen Manuskripten aus den Jahren 1796–1828*, vol. 18 of *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler (Munich: Schönningh, 1958–), 85; Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 150.

68. Leah Price differentiates between “text” and “book” (17). For her, the former is “a linguistic structure,” whereas the latter is “a material thing” (20). Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). See also Karin Sanders, “Bogen som ting og skulptur,” *Edda* 100, no. 4 (2013): 315, [https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen\\_som\\_ting\\_og\\_skulptur](https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen_som_ting_og_skulptur).

er overbeviist om, at han skal tilstaae, at Meget, som ellers oplyses ved instruerende Vink af Forf:, vil han her finde givet ved Hjælp af Interpункtionen.

(I make the difference, then, in my punctuation. I punctuate a rhetorical writing differently from a scientific one. . . . But for the worst, I really know of no Danish author who is actually attentive to punctuation in the sense of ideality; they merely follow the grammatical norm.

Particularly in the rhetorical, my punctuation is deviant because it is developed. That which particularly occupies me is the architectonic-dialectical, that which at once shows the clause's proportion, which again for the voice, when one reads aloud, is the rhythm—and I constantly think of a reader who reads aloud. Hence, we turn back again to why I sometimes very much spare the use of the comma. Where I will have a subdivision under a semicolon, I surely do not divide such clauses. For example: "What one owes another or what one owes oneself." In this respect, I live in a constant conflict with the typesetters, who well-meaningly set a comma everywhere and thereby disturb the rhythm for me. . . .

All in all, I must repeat that I imagine readers who read aloud, and who are then both practiced in following every turn of thought in the slightest and are able to imitate it again with their voice. I will quite calmly subject myself to the test that an actor or an orator, who is accustomed to modulating his voice, will attempt to read a little piece of my talks; and I am convinced that he shall confess that much that he would otherwise have to determine for himself, that is otherwise explained by an instructional hint from the author, he will find given here by the help of punctuation.)<sup>69</sup>

With finely trained ears, Kierkegaard's ideal readers measure the pace of their tongues against the length of the clauses, which their eyes would perceive thanks to the punctuation marks. So, rather than vanishing, the Kierkegaardian book, for all of its orality, remains firmly in place, as any recitation is dependent on—and not elevated above—the inscription on the surface of the page.

Kierkegaard scholars, however, have tended to treat Kierkegaard's *Taler* as garden-variety disappearing books. In reference to the preface to *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, Finn Frandsen writes of "bogens selv-opløsning" (the book's *self-dissolution*),<sup>70</sup> and Stephen M. Emmanuel claims that "in the discourses, Kierkegaard uses punctuation as a means of negating the sensuousness of the text."<sup>71</sup> While I employ *text* to designate language in its ideality, Emmanuel uses the word here as a synonym for *writing*. In other words, Emmanuel is arguing that periods, commas, etc. neutralize the book's tangibility. Under this model, mellifluous speech is supposed to displace the book, but Kierkegaard is adamant that any good recitation depends on a continued and acute awareness of the printed page, including the unvoiced marks that map out the clauses and sentences in space. As per the "architektoniske-dialektiske," writing and orality, or exteriority and interiority,<sup>72</sup> fluctuate. Kierkegaard's books, then, are just as ironic as Jean Paul's.

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69. *Journalen NB*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 20:99.

70. Finn Frandsen, "Forord: Kierkegaards paratekst," in *Denne slyngelagtige eftertid. Tekster om Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. Finn Frandsen and Ole Morsing (Århus: Slagsmark, 1995), 2:381.

71. Steven M. Emmanuel, "Punctuation," in *Objectivity to Sacrifice*, tome 5 of *Kierkegaard's Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Ashgate: Farnham, 2015), 176.

72. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates fears that script "will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own." Plato,

The Romantic canons of Germany and Denmark contain numerous examples of ironic books, which stage a conflict between absorption (when we forget about the book-object) and alienation (when we are forcefully reminded of the book-object). The Romantics adopted this aesthetics of fracture in order to trouble the disappearing book. Based on the assumption that an author could bestow the transcendental signified, the disappearing book imagined readers as entirely passive, waiting only to receive the *Weltanschauung*, absolute knowledge, etc., from the hand of the author. The Romantics, however, gave the lie to this myth of direct communication. They would remind us that an author's address is not immediate, but that it has been rearticulated by the exigencies of print. Kierkegaard, too, recalled the medium of the message for his audience. While he was no doubt familiar with the precedent set by the German Romantics, the ironic books of the early J. L. Heiberg would have provided local inspiration. Before Heiberg founded the above-named Heibergian book on a closed dialectic of sublation, he had conceptualized the reading experience as an open dialectic of fracture.

With the publication of the play *Julespøg og Nytaarsløier* (Christmas jest and New Year's fun), Heiberg clashed with the esteemed poets Bernhard Severin Ingemann and Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig. While Ingemann and Grundtvig believed that they could deliver a transcendental signified to their readers, the young Heiberg stressed the inevitable indirection and irony of written communication. *Julespøg*, therefore, not only offers a critical reflection on dramaturgy, but also considers the material conditions for the manufacture and dissemination of books, as Klaus Müller-Wille has demonstrated.<sup>73</sup> Fittingly, *Julespøg* is not merely invested in dispelling theatrical illusion,<sup>74</sup> but seeks to disrupt the fantasy of the disappearing book through an aesthetics of fracture, i.e., a flux between absorption and alienation. Struggling to convince two fire marshals that a rumored conflagration is only a fiction, the author-character of the play must also assure the diegetic audience that he is in perfect control of the situation: "Naar mit Manuscript bliver trykt, vil De see, det er sandt, som jeg siger." (When my script is printed, you will see that what I say is true.)<sup>75</sup> If Heiberg's readers have begun to picture the stage in their mind's eye, then

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*Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, eds. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 275a. See also Plato, *Letters*, 344c–e.

73. My reading of Heiberg's piece and the subsequent fallout surrounding it will lean on the valuable work of Müller-Wille, who writes, "Da seine Komödie allerdings als Lesedrama konzipiert ist, kann es nicht verwundern, dass er sich nicht mit einer solchen Reflexion über die besonderen technischen Bedingungen der theatralen Performanz begnügt, sondern auch kritische Überlegungen über die materiellen Voraussetzungen der Buchproduktion und -distribution in die Komödie einbaut. Dabei geht er explizit auf die Effekte des modernen Buchmarktes ein, aufgrund derer man beginnt, Bücher in erster Linie als Waren zu betrachten." (Since his comedy, mind you, is conceived as a closet drama, it cannot be astonishing that he is not satisfied with one such reflection on the particular technical conditions of the theatrical performance, but also incorporates critical observations on the material prerequisites of book production and distribution into the comedy. At the same time, he explicitly enters into the effects of the modern book market, on the basis of which one begins to view books first and foremost as wares.) Klaus Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher. Hans Christian Andersens Materialästhetik* (Paderborn: Fink, 2017), 161.

74. The first way that Heiberg accomplishes this ironic reflection is through the appearance of characters from other playwrights' pieces, namely, the wanderer from Adam Oehlenschläger's *Sanct Hansaften-Spil* (Midsummer night's play) (1:315–16.), and Enrico and the titular heroine from B. S. Ingemann's *Blanca* (1:332ff., 1:350ff., 1:414ff.). A more direct means of disillusionment is the author-character's direct address to the public in the first scene (1:319); and, in the intermezzo, actors even play the part of audience members (1:319, 1:368ff.), à la Ludwig Tieck's *Der gestiefelte Kater (Puss-in-Boots)* (50ff.). *Julespøg og Nytaarsløier*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1862); *Ludwig Tieck's Puss-in-Boots and the Theater of the Absurd: A Commentated Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. Gerald Gillespie (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2013).

75. *Julespøg*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter*, 1:463.

this impression will be cancelled by the hint that the text has already materialized as the book in hand. Since such a reminder can only serve those who are consumed with the action of the play, an ironic, unresolvable dialectic emerges.

An even more overt gesture of reinscription is enacted in the play's final scene. Thalia, the Greek Muse of comedy, addresses the author-character:

Du er min Herre, jeg din Tjenerinde,  
Det mærker jeg saa tidt; selv her min Rolle  
Jeg spille maa, som du har skrevet den,  
Og derfor gaaer jeg ogsaa nu, vist ikke  
Af egen Drift, nei, men fordi du har  
I Manuscript skrevet Ordet: Gaaer.

(*Gaaer.*)

(You are my master; I, your maidservant,  
So often I notice that; even here my role  
I must play, as you have written it,  
And, therefore, I am also leaving now, certainly not  
By my own urge, but because you have  
Written in the script the word: Leaves.

[*Leaves.*] <sup>76</sup>

Referring to the play's stage directions, Thalia forcefully recalls for us that we are not watching a fleeting performance, but are instead perusing a relatively stable, printed artifact. When the voice of an imaginary character "inside" the book adverts to what is inscribed on the surface of the page, a fractured or ironic dialectic between the outer and the inner is manifest.

In *Julespøg*'s staging of a thing-theater's play-within-a-play, Heiberg targets the ethereal aesthetics of Ingemann specifically. While Ingemann and Grundtvig had allegedly paid little attention to their media, and imagined a direct spiritual channel from author to reader, the youthful Heiberg understood that written communication was inevitably circuitous; immersion in the text alternates with distancing in an open dialectic. Given the bibliographical thread running through *Julespøg*, it is unsurprising that one of the characters in this thing-theater is "en Ungmø, i Form af en indbunden Bog" (a damsel in the form of a bound book), who is named Grammatica.<sup>77</sup> Serving as a memento for the embeddedness of the text, she throws her opposite, the Flute, into relief. Hegel would put poetry on a continuum with music in his *Ästhetik*,<sup>78</sup> and so the Flute need not

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76. *Julespøg*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter*, 1:477.

77. *Julespøg*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter*, 1:424.

78. "Die Poesie ist ihrem Begriffe nach wesentlich *tönend*, und dies Erklingen darf ihr, wenn sie *vollständig* als Kunst heraustreten soll, um so weniger fehlen, als es ihre einzige Seite ist, nach welcher sie mit der äußeren Existenz in realen Zusammenhang kommt. Denn gedruckte oder geschriebene Buchstaben sind freilich auch noch äußerlich vorhanden, jedoch nur gleichgültige Zeichen für Laute und Wörter. Sahen wir nun zwar die Wörter schon früher gleichfalls als bloße Bezeichnungsmittel der Vorstellungen an, so gestaltet doch die Poesie wenigstens das zeitliche Element und den Klang dieser Zeichen und erhebt sie dadurch zu einem von der geistigen Lebendigkeit dessen, wofür sie die Zeichen sind, durchdrungenen Material." (Poetry is by nature essentially musical, and if it is to emerge as fully art it must not lack this resonance, all the more because this is the one aspect in virtue of which it really comes into connection with external existence. For printed or written letters, it is true, are also existent externally but they are only arbitrary signs for sounds and words. Earlier we did regard words as likewise means for indicating ideas, but poetry imposes a form, at least on the timing and sound of these signs; in this way it gives them

represent music per se, but rather an Idealist conception of poetry as temporal and invisible. Grammatica effectively draws a curtain across the imaginary stage of the mind and redirects the readers' attention to the pages in front of them by correcting the punctuation of the Flute's speeches, which, of course, would be withheld from the audience were *Julespøg* to be performed.<sup>79</sup> Once again, the effect is one of Romantic irony, as a character in the closet drama abrogates the illusion. With Heiberg pulling the strings, the reader is made to waffle between skeptical distance and suspended disbelief. In the former position, one is conscious of the book-object; in the latter, one is immersed in the alternative universe of textuality.

As a wind instrument, the Flute is capable of drawing out the breath or sigh of the soul. This *oh*, as a placeholder for the transcendental signified, is what flows through the disappearing book.<sup>80</sup> Grammatica, on the other hand, insists on reinscription. Not yet a Hegelian at this time,<sup>81</sup> Heiberg makes a travesty of the disappearing book in the character of the Flute. But the audience is also encouraged to identify the Flute with a contemporary Danish author, the aforementioned Ingemann. After the Flute agrees to make the prosodic and orthographical alterations insisted upon by Grammatica, she exclaims, “Jeg hilser dig som Dannemand!” (I salute you as a Danish man!) The Flute, however, is perplexed: “Jeg beder om Forladelse. Jeg er *ingen Mand*; jeg er en Fløite.” (I beg your pardon. I am no man; I am a flute.)<sup>82</sup> Ingemann is pilloried for sentimentality throughout *Julespøg*—his *Blanca. Et Søragespil* (*Blanca: A tragedy*) is roundly abused<sup>83</sup>—and

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the higher status of a material penetrated by the spiritual life of what they signify.) G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 3:320; G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 2:1036.

79. “Angeregt durch diesen Verweis auf die Interpunktion des Textes werden die Zuschauer auch auf die fortlaufende Steigerung der Ausrufungszeichen in der Replik der Flöte achten. Die Beobachtung der Interpunktion des Textes geht mit einer Aufmerksamkeit für dessen bloße Materialität einher. Der Blick des Lesers wird sozusagen von dem repräsentierten Geschehen auf der Bühne der Bühne abgelenkt und auf das Schriftbild des Buches verwiesen, das der Leser im Augenblick der Lektüre in der Hand hält.” (Prompted through this reference to the punctuation of the text, the member of the audience will also regard the continual increase of exclamation marks in the replies of the Flute. The observation of the punctuation of the text is accompanied by an attentiveness to its bare materiality. The gaze of the reader is, so to speak, diverted from the represented events on the stage of the stage, and referred to the script of the book that the reader holds at hand in the moment of reading.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 162.

80. Kittler writes of Faust's groan in the first scene of Goethe's drama, “The sigh ‘oh!’ [*ach!*] is the sign of the unique entity (the soul) that, if it were to utter another signifier or (because signifiers exist only in the plural) any signifier whatsoever, would immediately become its own sigh of self-lament; for then it would have ceased to be soul and would have become ‘Language’ instead.” Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 3.

81. Heiberg dates his Hegelian conversion to the time immediately after his 1824 stay in Berlin, during which he met Hegel. *Autobiographiske Fragmenter*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 11:498ff.

82. *Julespøg og Nytaarsløier*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter*, 1:442; emphasis mine.

83. The Flute sings, “O du, for hvem min Sjæl skal evig brænde! / Gud eller Dæmon vorde du for mig!! / Elsk eller had mig, Pige uden Ende!!! / Umaadelig!!!!” (Oh you, for whom my soul shall burn eternally! / You will become a god or a demon for me!! / Love or hate me, girl without end!!! / Tremendously!!!!) Grammatica then corrects the comma placement in the penultimate line, and the mounting exclamation points parody—to give one example—Enrico's lamentation for his beloved in act 2, scene 5 of *Blanca*: “Hun kommer ei — o! alle gode Engle! / Hvor er Du? Blanca! — sover Du maaskee? / Dog nei, hvor kan Du sove, naar Du troer / Dig sveget af Din Ven? for vil jeg troe, / At Du er død - - o! Gud i Himlen! — død! / Dræbt af Din ven! — dræbt af Din troe Enrico! / - - O! selv af Døden skal min Røst Dig vække.” (She does not come — Oh! All good angels! / Where are you? Blanca! — Are you sleeping, perhaps? / But no, how could you sleep when you believe yourself to be / Betrayed by your friend? I would sooner believe / That you were dead - - Oh! God in heaven! — Dead! / Killed by your friend! — Killed by your faithful Enrico! / - - Oh! Even from death shall my voice awake you.) *Julespøg*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs poetiske Skrifter*, 1:441; B. S. Ingemann, *Blanca. Et Søragespil* (Copenhagen: Brännich, 1815), 123–24.





written communication is inherently indirect or mediated, and so Heiberg is obligated to provide some remedial instruction.<sup>90</sup>

Most likely, Müller-Wille is correct in his assumption that Jean Paul's *Leben Fibels* (Life of Fibel) was the inspiration for Heiberg's *A-B-C-Bog*,<sup>91</sup> since Jean Paul is one of the progenitors of Romantic reinscription. Indeed, like *Leben Fibels*, the *A-B-C-Bog* has an animal woodblock.<sup>92</sup> Such illustrations are characteristic of Reformation-era reading instruction; they evoke an Early Modern materialism at odds with what is now recognized as the discourse network of 1800.<sup>93</sup> Heiberg's *A-B-C-Bog* also foregrounds the physicality of the signifier, as it displays various forms of ornamentation and a plethora of typefaces, in different weights and sizes.<sup>94</sup> Here Heiberg aims to show up Grundtvig for his lack of editorial judgement at the helm of the journal *Danne-Virke*.<sup>95</sup> Müller-Wille speculates that Grundtvig disregarded typographical niceties because of "det levende Ord" (the living word),<sup>96</sup> a doctrine of his that privileged the sacraments and the oral recitation of the Apostles' Creed over writing—and even over scripture itself.<sup>97</sup> With the flourishes of an *abecedarium*, Heiberg, however, impresses upon Grundtvig the indispensability of orthographical

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90. "A-B-C striden" (The A-B-C feud) would continue through May 10, 1817, with two more rounds of publications by each side. See "Pegepind til den ny Abc," in *Grundtvigs værker*, <http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/tekstvisning/8548/0#{%220%22:0,%22v0%22:0,%22k%22:0}>; Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Pegepind mod Pegepind," *Nyeste Skilderie af Kjøbenhavn* April 12, 1817, columns 449–54, [http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/img/title4788\\_fax001.pdf](http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/img/title4788_fax001.pdf); "Erklæring [i striden med Heiberg]," in *Grundtvigs værker*, <http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/tekstvisning/8547/0#{%220%22:0,%22v0%22:0,%22k%22:0}>; Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Vaaren og Freden," *Nyeste Skilderie af Kjøbenhavn*, May 10, 1817, columns 577–79, [http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/img/title4789\\_fax001.pdf](http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/img/title4789_fax001.pdf).

91. "Inte minst på grund av denna verkliga utpräglade uppmärksamhet för bokens materialitet förmodar jag att Heiberg var en väldigt uppmärksam läsare av Jean Pauls skrifter. Heibergs ABC-bok kan betecknas som en reaktion på Jean Pauls roman *Leben Fibels* (1812) som också kretsar kring en ABC-boks iscensättning." (Not least because of this really pronounced attention to the materiality of the book, I imagine that Heiberg was an immensely attentive reader of Jean Paul's writings. Heiberg's A-B-C book can be characterized as a reaction to Jean Paul's novel *Leben Fibels* [1812], which also circles around an A-B-C book's production.) Müller-Wille, "Om bokens poetik," 74n.

92. Jean Paul Richter, *Leben Fibels des Verfassers der Bienrodischen Fibel* (Hamburg: Tredition, n.d.), 195–217; *Ny A-B-C-Bog*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 10:30.

93. "The first German-language primers, during the Reformation, introduced consonants and consonantal combinations very differently. Grüssbeutel's *Little Voice Book*, presented *ss* as a hissing snake, *pf* as a snarling cat being barked at by dogs. . . . The sixteenth-century conception of language directed children toward the many languages of creation, toward the materiality and opacity of signs." Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 38–39.

94. *Ny A-B-C-Bog*, in *Johan Ludvig Heibergs prosaiske Skrifter*, 10:3ff.

95. "Zunächst wird die Inszenierung des sprachlichen Mediums von Heiberg genutzt, um auf sprachlich-stilistische Mängel in Grundtvigs Teksten aufmerksam zu machen." (First of all, the production of the linguistic medium is used by Heiberg in order to draw attention to the linguistic/stylistic deficiency in Grundtvig's texts.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 168.

96. "Hinter der Schriftinszenierung verbirgt sich auch ein direkter Angriff auf Grundtvigs phonozentrische Überlegungen zum 'lebendigen Wort,' die mit einer ausgeprägten Form von Schriftkritik einhergeht. Heiberg verbindet seine Abrechnung mit der älteren Romantik also mit einer subtilen Medienreflexion." (Behind the production of writing, there is also a direct attack hidden on Grundtvig's phonocentric consideration for "the living word," which is accompanied by a pronounced form of writing-critique. Heiberg connects his reckoning with the older Romanticism with a subtle media-reflection.) Müller-Wille, *Sezierte Bücher*, 168

NB: The phrase "det levende Ord" (the living word) appears in the Grundtvigian corpus as early as 1812, in an article entitled "Om Censur." "Om Censur. Med særdeles Betragtning af Sjællands Klerkemøde," in *Grundtvigs værker*, part 2, <http://www.grundtvigsværker.dk/tekstvisning/6435/0#{%220%22:0,%22v0%22:0,%22k%22:2}>.

97. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 2:189n44.

precision, foregrounding the book's "material inscription."<sup>98</sup> Paying little heed to typography, the older poet believed in an unbroken line of spiritual communication between him and his audience, *à la* the disappearing book. The Romantic Heiberg, on the other hand, understood author-reader relations as inevitably dependent on the middle term of print. Unlike the Classicists and Idealists (and the latter camp would come to include this same J. L. Heiberg), the Romantics recognized the fact that most of their communication with their public was via a medium and was thus indirect. Accentuating their withdrawal from their books, the Romantics triggered an aesthetics of fracture, an oscillation between the outer and the inner, or the book and the text.

Müller-Wille suggests that Kierkegaard learned a great deal from the early Heiberg's *Ny A-B-C-Bog*, only to turn its techniques back against the pseudo-Hegelian Heibergian book.<sup>99</sup> As I stated in chapter 2, I do not believe that Kierkegaard targets Heiberg's *Nytaarsgaver* for their Idealism. To the contrary, he censures these gift-books for being materialistic trifles. With that said, Kierkegaard does challenge the disappearing book of Idealism on other occasions, as he posits an open dialectic between inward content and outward form, with the former calling attention to the latter.<sup>100</sup> Here he is in league with his Romantic predecessors, although his reinscription techniques are usually subtler than theirs.

Kierkegaard occupied himself with what Jerome J. McGann calls the "much more extensive textual field," i.e., "the physical form of books and manuscripts (paper, ink, typefaces, layouts)."<sup>101</sup> According to Bent Rohde and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, "Når Kierkegaard skrev sine bogmanuskripter, må han have set den trykte side for sig. Sammen med en klar forestilling om bogens format og titelbladets typografi synes han at have haft en udviklet fornemmelse for, hvordan overskrifter, fremhævelser og andre differentieringer i satsen burde håndteres." (When Kierkegaard was writing his book manuscripts, he must have seen the printed page in front of him. Together with a clear notion of the book's format and the title page's typography, he seems to have had a developed feeling for how headings, emphasis, and other differentiations in type ought to be handled.)<sup>102</sup> Although Rohde and Cappelørn maintain that Kierkegaard "næppe har kigget ret meget i skriftbogen" (has hardly peeked very much into the type specimen book),<sup>103</sup> Johnny Kondrup points out that the philosopher's manuscripts contain annotations regarding "opsætning,

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98. I borrow "material inscription" from the subtitle of Daniel Selcer's fine monograph. Daniel Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription*, Philosophy, Aesthetics and Cultural Theory (London: Continuum, 2010).

99. "Slutligen vänder han Heibergs tidiga komisk-ironiska talang mot Heibergs senare konservativ-akademiska medieteorier där aspekten av bokens materialitet bara betonas för att stödja en hegeliansk estetik." (Finally, he turns Heiberg's earlier comic-ironic talent against Heiberg's later conservative-academic media theory, where the aspect of the book's materiality is only emphasized in order to support a Hegelian aesthetic.) Müller-Wille, "Om bokens poetik," 90.

100. H. P. Rohde writes that "den mere intime system med bogens æstetiske ydre opfattet i nøje relation til den indre, som dæmper hos Kierkegaard, har været ny eller ikke sædvanlig herhjemme" (the more intimate occupation with the book's aesthetic outer, understood in close relation to the inner, which dawns with Kierkegaard, was new or not customary at home) (xlii) in Denmark. "Når Kierkegaard tager ordet mod bibliofil pragtlyst" (When Kierkegaard takes the floor against bibliophilic love of display), writes H. P. Rohde, "er det netop modsætningen mellem det ydre og det indre, han hæfter sig ved" (it is precisely the contrast between the outer and the inner to which he pays attention) (xliv). H. P. Rohde, "Søren Kierkegaard som bogsamler," in *Auktionsprotokol over Søren Kierkegaards bogsamling*, ed. H. P. Rohde (Copenhagen: Det kongelige Bibliotek, 1967).

101. Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 12.

102. Bent Rohde and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, "Kierkegaard som bogproducent, tilrettelægger og forlægger," in *Tekstspejle. Om Søren Kierkegaard som bogtilrettelægger, boggiver og bogsamler* ([Esbjerg]: Rosendahl, 2002), 16.

103. Rohde and Cappelørn, "Kierkegaard som bogproducent," 25.

skriftsnit, -grader, -størrelser” (layout, type, type-weights, type-sizes).<sup>104</sup> A comparison of three title pages set in the contemporary Reitzel house style (figs. 14–16) to the title page of the first edition of *Enten – Eller* (fig. 17) demonstrates that, although Kierkegaard was dismissive of ostentation, he nevertheless sought to distinguish his books from the others on the market.<sup>105</sup> Subtly deviating from Reitzel’s typographical conventions, Kierkegaard disrupts (at least for his contemporaries) the illusion of a transparent textuality, the automatic recession of writing behind its meaning. Note, for example, that Kierkegaard’s title is set in a bold Fraktur, whereas the titles of the other books are in Textura; and only *Enten – Eller* has an elegant swelled dash over its publication information.

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104. Cf. Rohde and Cappelørn, who maintain that Kierkegaard “næppe har kigget ret meget i skriftbogen” (has hardly peeked into the type specimen book). Johnny Kondrup, “Ekspressiv typografi hos Søren Kierkegaard?” in *Litterat på eventyr. Festskrift til Finn Hauberg Mortensen*, ed. Erik Damberg, Harry Haue, and Jørgen Dines Johansen (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2006), 39; Rohde and Cappelørn, “Kierkegaard som bogproducent,” 25.

105. Jens Bjerring-Hansen speaks of “den upåfaldende uniform, som bøgerne fra Reitzel af guldalderens forfattere var iført – neutralt oktavformat, uden illustrationer – et signal om kvalitet” (the unremarkable uniform, in which the books of the Golden Age’s authors were dressed—neutral octavo format, without illustrations—was a signal of quality). Jens Bjerring-Hansen, “Holberg, hurtigpressen og ‘læserevolutionen’ i guldalderen. En fjernlæsning af den danske kanon,” in Rix, *Mellem ånd og trykssværite*, 52.

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Forfatteren til

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Trykt i Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

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Fig. 14 [Thomasine Gyllembourg], *Nye Fortællinger*, ed. J. L. Heiberg, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1840), 2: t.p. New York Public Library; photo by Google.

# Kun en Spillemand.

Original Roman

i tre Dele

af

H. C. Andersen.

---

Forste Deel.

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Kjøbenhavn.

Vaa Universitets-Boghandler C. A. Reitzels Forlag.

Trykt hos Bianco Luno & Schneider.

1837.



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Fig. 15 H. C. Andersen, *Kun en Spillemand. Original Roman* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1837), 1: t.p.  
Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent; photo by Google.

# Stemninger og Tilstande.

Scener og Skildringer af et Ophold  
i Kjøbenhavn.

af  
**Henrik Hertz.**

Introite! nam et heic dii sunt.

Andet Oplag.

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**Kjøbenhavn.**

Paa Universitets-Boghandler C. A. Reitzels Forlag.

1839.

Digitized by Google

Fig. 16 Henrik Hertz, *Stemninger og Tilstande* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1839), t.p. UCLA Library; photo by Google.

# Enten — Eller.

## Et Livs-Fragment

udgivet

af

**Victor Eremita.**

---

**Første Deel**

indeholdende A.'s Papirer.

---

Er da Fornæsten alene vedt,  
ere Elidenfaderne Fødninger?

Young.

---

**Kjøbenhavn 1843.**

**Faaes hos Universitetsboghandler C. A. Reitzel.**

**Trykt i Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.**

Fig. 17 Søren Kierkegaard [Victor Eremita, pseud.], *Enten – Eller. Et Livs-Fragment* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1843), 1: t.p. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress; photo by TWS.

At times, Kierkegaard's purpose in devoting himself to bibliographical detail was twofold, according to Kondrup:

Man kunne kalde dette *mere* en vekselvirkning mellem mening og typografi – et dialektisk forhold, hvor typografien ikke blot tjener til at formidle meningen, men virker tilbage på tekstens indhold og bliver en del af meningen. Der er tale om et legende samspil, hvor typografien ikke blot udtrykker teksten (som god typografi skal gøre), men hvor teksten også peger på typografien og inddrager den i sin betydningsdannelse. Et forhold, hvor typografien m.a.o. bliver en del af tekstens semantik.

(One could call this *more* an interplay between meaning and typography—a dialectical relationship, where typography does not merely serve to communicate the meaning, but reacts on the text's content and becomes a part of the meaning. It is a playful interaction, where typography does not merely express the text [as good typography shall do], but where the text also points to the typography and involves it in its formation of meaning. A relationship where typography, in other words, becomes a part of the text's semantic.)<sup>106</sup>

Kondrup describes this dialectic as a “vekselvirkning.” “Interplay” is probably the best translation in this context, but one of the meanings of the root verb *veksle* is lost: to “alternate.”<sup>107</sup> Indeed, there is an alternation between the inwardness of meaning and the outwardness of type, in an ironic or fractured dialectic.

As an example of these typographical dialectics, Kondrup refers to a page from the first edition of *Philosophiske Smuler* (fig. 18).

være in suspensio ligesom den Samtidiges. Han har  
da ingen Umiddelbarhed mere for sig, men heller in-  
gen Tilblivelsens Nødvendighed, men kun Tilblivel-  
sens **Saaledes**. Den Senere troer da vel i Kraft

Fig. 18 Søren Kierkegaard [Johannes Climacus, pseud.], *Philosophiske Smuler, eller: En Smule Philosophi* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1844), 124. Private collection; photo by TWS.

The penultimate word of the sentence Kondrup alludes to has been spaced out for emphasis, and the last word is triply emphatic: (1) It is spaced out; (2) it is bold; and (3) it is in a larger font size than it normally would be in this context.<sup>108</sup> The sentence refers to someone who believes in Christ

106. Kondrup, “Ekspressiv typografi,” 40.

107. *Dansk-engelsk ordbog*, 4th ed. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1998), s.v. “veksle.”

108. “‘Tilblivelsens’ er spatieret, dvs. fremhævet på almindelig vis, mens ‘Saaledes’ er ekstraordinært fremhævet. Rent teknisk er ordet sat med en fed type i samme skriftgrad som brødskriften (10 pkt.), men da værket



without being his immediate contemporary. It reads, “Han har da ingen Umiddelbarhed mere for sig, men heller ingen Tilblivelsens Nødvendighed, men kun T i l b l i v e l s e n s **S a a l e d e s**.” (He then has no more immediacy for himself, nor any of the necessity of coming into existence, but only the *like this of coming into existence*.)<sup>109</sup> For Kondrup, the word *Saaledes* is an example of “autologisk typografi” (autological typography),<sup>110</sup> in that it “står som en afstikkende blok eller knytnæve i brødteksten, et faktum, der ikke forbinder sig hverken med fortid eller eftertid, mulighed eller nødvendighed, men isoleret bryder ind i enhver sammenhæng. Det er . . . en illustration af selve inkarnationen, det eviges indbrud i historien” (stands as an incongruous block or fist in the ordinary type, a fact which connects it with neither the past nor the future, possibility nor necessity, but in isolation interrupts every connection. It is . . . an illustration of the Incarnation itself, the eternal breaking into history).<sup>111</sup> By implication, this type calls attention to itself as type, but in doing so it doubles back on its meaning, and this meaning is reflected in the type, and so on and so forth. Instead of synthesis or *Aufhebung*, a fractured dialectic arises, as readers must employ their sensuous and intellectual faculties by turns, in a perpetual dance of signifier and signified.

## PARATEXTS

The classic definition of the paratext can be found in Gérard Genette’s 1987 monograph *Seuils (Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation)*:

A literary work consists, entirely or essentially, of a text, defined (very minimally) as a more or less long sequence of verbal statements that are more or less endowed with significance. But this text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations. And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its “reception” and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book. These accompanying productions, which vary in extent and appearance, constitute what I have called elsewhere the work’s *paratext*.<sup>112</sup>

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fremhævelsesmidler i øvrigt følger et system, hvor trinnet efter spatiering består af fed skrift i en mindre grad end brødskriften, er ordet ‘Saaledes’ relativt større end blot fed skrift. ‘Saaledes’ har m.a.o. fået en tredobbelt fremhævelse.” (*Tilblivelsens* is spaced out, i.e., emphasized in the normal way, while *Saaledes* is extraordinarily emphasized. Technically, the word is set in bold type in the same font size as the body text [10 pt.], but since the work’s means of emphasis for the rest follows a system where the step after spacing consists in a bold typeface in a smaller font size than the body text, the word *Saaledes* is relatively larger than merely bold type. *Saaledes* has, in other words, gotten a triple emphasis.) Kondrup, “Ekspressiv typografi,” 44.

109. Johannes Climacus [Søren Kierkegaard], *Philosophiske Smuler, eller: En Smule Philosophi* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1844), 124.

110. Kondrup, “Ekspressiv typografi,” 56n25.

111. Kondrup, “Ekspressive typografi,” 44.

112. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

As McGann rightfully notes, “The text/paratext distinction as formulated in *Seuils* will not, by Genette’s own admission, explore such matters as ink, typeface, paper, and various other phenomena.”<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the paratexts, much more so than the body text, are intimately related to the book-object, for the reification of the body, in the words of McGann, “may induce paratextual effects.”<sup>114</sup> While an aesthetics of autonomy might imagine the main text of a novel or poem to be independent of any one material instantiation, paratextual publication information, for example, can really only refer to an actual book that has come into physical existence.

We remarked in chapter 1 that writing is ancillary to speech under the logocentric regime.<sup>115</sup> And since prefaces are supplemental to the body text, they are writing to the second power, so to speak.<sup>116</sup> “Written prefaces are phenomena external to the concept,”<sup>117</sup> declares Derrida in *La dissemination (Dissemination)*, in an allusion to the notorious preface of Hegel’s *Phänomenologie*.<sup>118</sup> A distinction must be drawn here between the preface and the introduction, although they are both paratexts of a sort. While the preface is a public-facing inscription, the introduction is a necessary component in the text’s internal machinery.<sup>119</sup> If the introduction forms a systematic whole with the body, then the preface is a mere external appendage, i.e., writing *qua* writing.

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113. McGann, *Textual Condition*, 13.

114. Genette, *Paratexts*, 3.

115. Speech is defined in Plato’s *Phaedrus* as “the living, breathing discourse of the man who knows,” while writing only “can be fairly called an image” of speech. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 276a.

116. “Metaphysics consists of excluding non-presence by determining the supplement as *simple exteriority*, as pure addition or pure absence.” Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Fortieth Anniversary Edition, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 181.

117. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 15.

118. The relevant section of this paratext reads as follows: “Eine Erklärung, wie sie einer Schrift in einer Vorrede nach der Gewohnheit vorausgeschickt wird – über den Zweck, den der Verfasser sich in ihr vorgesetzt, sowie über die Veranlassungen und das Verhältnis, worin er sie zu anderen früheren oder gleichzeitigen Behandlungen desselben Gegenstandes zu stehen glaubt –, scheint bei einer philosophischen Schrift nicht nur überflüssig, sondern um der Natur der Sache willen sogar unpassend und zweckwidrig zu sein. Denn wie und was von Philosophie in einer Vorrede zu sagen schicklich wäre – etwa eine historische *Angabe* der Tendenz und des Standpunkts, des allgemeinen Inhalts und der Resultate, eine Verbindung von hin und her sprechenden Behauptungen und Versicherungen über das Wahre –, kann nicht für die Art und Weise gelten, in der die philosophische Wahrheit darzustellen sei. – Auch weil die Philosophie wesentlich im Elemente der Allgemeinheit ist, die das Besondere in sich schließt, so findet bei ihr mehr als bei anderen Wissenschaften der Schein statt, als ob in dem Zwecke oder den letzten Resultaten die Sache selbst und sogar in ihrem vollkommenen Wesen ausgedrückt wäre, gegen welches die Ausführung eigentlich das Unwesentliche sei.” (It is customary to preface a work with an explanation of the author’s aim, why he wrote the book, and the relationship in which he believes to stand to other earlier or contemporary treatises on the same subject. In the case of a philosophical work, however, such an explanation seems not only superfluous but, in view of the nature of the subject-matter, even inappropriate and misleading. For whatever might appropriately be said about philosophy in a preface—say, a historical *statement* of the main drift and the point of view, the general content and results, a string of random assertions and assurances about truth—none of this can be accepted as the way in which to expound philosophical truth. Also, since philosophy moves essentially in the element of universality, which includes within itself the particular, it might seem that here more than in any of the other sciences the subject-matter itself, and even in its complete nature, were expressed in the aim and the final results, the execution being by contrast really the unessential factor.) Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 11; Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 1.

119. “The Introduction (*Einleitung*) has a more systematic, less historical, less circumstantial link with the logic of the book. It is *unique*; it deals with general and essential architectonic problems; it presents the general concept in its division and its self-differentiation. The Prefaces, on the other hand, are multiplied from edition to edition and take into account a more empirical history.” Derrida, *Dissemination*, 17

Kierkegaard plays on the distinction between the body and the preface in his *Taler*. He does the same in *Til Selvprøvelse*, which, like many of the main texts of the *Taler*,<sup>120</sup> addresses “min Tilhører” (my listener) or “m. T.”<sup>121</sup> This simulated orality heightens the perceived interiority or spirituality of the main or body texts; speech is conducive to inward retention in its fleetingness and invisibility, as the *Phaedrus* teaches us.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, Kierkegaard has prefaced these collections, and prefaces, as Derrida would have it, are writing or outwardness. The forewords to Kierkegaard’s *Taler* frequently double down on their exteriority by referring to a “Bog” (book), instead of to a “Tale” or “Taler.”<sup>123</sup> Such paratextual allusions to the bibliographical object should disabuse us of the notion that the main text is somehow rarified. Alternatively, the deliberate immanence of the paratext could make the body seem all the more transcendent in comparison. That is the paradox of the paratext, according to Finn Frandsen.<sup>124</sup> In an aporetic state, the main text is either materialized or etherealized, but it cannot be both simultaneously. This dialectic of fracture is already known to us as that of the ironic book.

At first glance, Kierkegaard’s *Christelige Taler* (Christian talks) appear to break the mold of the other *Taler*. Not only is this collection itself without a preface; none of the first three parts has a preface, either. An unadulterated phonocentrism might suit these über-spiritual *Christelige Taler*, but the fourth and final part of the volume is in fact prefaced. Both the form and content of this foreword generate a tension between the absorption of virtual orality and the *Verfremdungseffekt* of material inscription.

“Af disse Taler” (Of these talks), writes Kierkegaard in the preface to part 4 of *Christelige Taler*, “som dog mangle et Væsentligt i at være og derfor heller ei bleve kaldte Prædikener, ere de tvende (II og III) holdte i Frue-Kirke. Om det end ikke sagdes ham, vil den Kyndige vel selv let paa Formen og Behandlingen kjende, at disse tvende ere ‘holdte Taler,’ skrevne for at holdes, eller skrevne som de ere holdte” (which, lacking something essential, have therefore not been called sermons, two [II and III] were held in the Church of Our Lady. Even if it were not told to him, the knowledgeable reader will probably easily be able to recognize by the form and treatment that these two are “held talks,” written to be held, or written as they were held).<sup>125</sup> Significantly, Kierkegaard does not decide whether writing or speech has priority; these two addresses were

120. E.g., *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:23.

121. The “Forbemærkning” (Preliminary remark) and each of the three main texts of *Til Selvprøvelse* (For self-examination) apostrophize “m. T.” In a singular instance, *Tvende ethisk-religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger* (Two ethical-religious treatises) uses this abbreviation, but that is probably by mistake, as the title of the work strongly suggests writtenness. *Til Selvprøvelse. Samtiden anbefalet*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 13:41, 13:49–50, 13:53–54, 13:58, 13:87–88, 13:91, 13:97, 13:100, 13:102, 13:106; *Tvende ethisk-religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 11:108.

122. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a

123. *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:13; *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:63; *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:113; *To opbyggelige Taler, 1844*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:183; *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1844*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:231; *Fire opbyggelige Taler, 1844*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:289; *Tre Taler ved tænkte Leiligheder*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:389; *Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:121, 8:257; *Lilien paa Marken og Fuglen under Himlen*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 11:9.

The “Forord” to 1850’s *En opbyggelig Tale* comes full circle: “Jvf. Forordet til to opbyggelige Taler 1843.” (Cf. the preface to *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*). *En opbyggelig Tale*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 12:261.

124. “Parateksten . . . burde ophæve læserens illusion om at møde teksten i ‘nøgen tilstand’” (The paratext ought to annul the reader’s illusion of meeting the text “in the nude”), writes Frandsen, “men som paradoksalt nok snarere bidrager til at styrke denne illusion” (but which paradoxically enough sooner contributes to strengthening this illusion). Frandsen, “Forord: Kierkegaards paratekst,” 2:367–68.

125. *Christelige Taler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 10:261.

either penned so that they could be proclaimed later, or they were inscribed in accordance with an earlier oral delivery. This *either/or* is diametrically opposed to the Heibergian book's *both-and*, in which the author's voice is forever *aufgehoben* in the image of the page. While the Heibergian book is held fast in a *telos* of sublation, Kierkegaard's non-teleological ironic book manifests a constant slippage between the exteriority of the book and the interiority of simulated vocality.

In preparation for our study of *Forord* and the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, a few words ought to be said about the Romantic fragment, as this genre undoubtedly served as a prototype for the freestanding Kierkegaardian paratexts. Indeed, before Kierkegaard published either *Forord* or the *Efterskrift*, he used the Romantic fragment as a basis for *Enten – Eller. Et Livs-Fragment* (Either/or: A fragment of life) and *Philosophiske Smuler, eller: En Smule Philosophi* (Philosophical fragments or a fragment of philosophy). According to Rush, the Romantic fragment “is . . . part of some greater whole that can, because of its status as a part, *only obliquely* give an indication of the whole.”<sup>126</sup> Put another way, fragments offer insight into an ideal totality—whether that be the autonomous work of art or the absolute—without providing complete or uninterrupted access to it. The resulting oscillation between the outwardness of a fragmentary inscription and the inwardness of an ideal entity is characteristic of the ironic book.

In her translation of *Philosophiske Smuler*, M. G. Piety renders the noun in the title as “crumbs,”<sup>127</sup> but “fragments” more strongly conveys the text's Romantic resistance to systematicity.<sup>128</sup> The system is, after all, complete and ideal, like the absolute itself. Indeed, as Hegel might have it, the system *is* the absolute, in the identity of thought and being.<sup>129</sup> The fragment, on the other hand, is only a tangible piece of something; it is an inscription, whereas the system is sheer ideality. Perhaps to naturalize the genre of the fragment and to conceal his debt to Friedrich Schlegel, Kierkegaard opted for a purely Scandinavian word—and not one derived from the Latin *fragmentum*—for the title of *Philosophiske Smuler*.<sup>130</sup>

At first glance, it might seem unlikely that Kierkegaard would have had an interest in the Romantic fragment. For one thing, in the magister dissertation *Om Begrebet Ironi*, he is notoriously hostile towards F. Schlegel, author of the famous *Lyceum-* and *Athenaeum-Fragmente*.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, there is not much in Kierkegaard's archive to suggest that he engaged with Schlegel beyond the hatchet-job on the novel *Lucinde* in his dissertation. “About Schlegel,” writes Jacob Bøggild, “Kierkegaard's journals and papers maintain a silence which is almost

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126. Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 85; my emphasis.

127. Piety writes, “The Danish word ‘*Smuler*’ means ‘bits, scraps, crumbs, or trifles.’ For years it has been translated in English as ‘fragments.’ But ‘fragments’ is not among a dictionary's favoured options for ‘*Smuler*,’ and it guarantees that the nimble irony of that topsy-turvy title is lost.” M. G. Piety, introduction to *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xvi.

128. See David F. Swenson, trans., *Philosophical Fragments, or: A Fragment of Philosophy*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936); Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, ed. and trans., *Philosophical Fragments, Johannes Climacus*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

129. “Den systematiske Idee er Subjekt-Objektet, er Eenhed af Tænken og Væren; Existents derimod er netop Adskillelse.” (The systematic idea is subject-object, is the unity of thought and being; existence, on the other hand, is precisely separation.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, 7:118.

130. According to *Den Danske Ordbog*, the Danish *smule* comes from the Swedish *smula*. The *Ordbog over den Danske Sprog* indicates that the word *Fragmenta* had been in circulation in Danish at least since the publication of Ludvig Holberg's *Peder Paars* (1719–20). *Den Danske Ordbog*, s.v. “smule,” <https://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=smule>; *Ordbog over den Danske Sprog*, s.v. “Fragment,” <https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=fragment>.

131. *Om Begrebet Ironi med stadigt Hensyn til Socrates*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 1:321–34.

complete; the few remarks that can be found are of absolutely no significance,”<sup>132</sup> and I would concur with this assessment.<sup>133</sup> Kierkegaard did possess *Friedrich Schlegel's sämtliche Werke* (Friedrich Schlegel's collected works),<sup>134</sup> but this edition did not include the *Fragmente*, and, in the opinion of K. Brian Soderquist, “there is little evidence that Kierkegaard read Schlegel's fragments on irony.”<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, as Bøggild reminds us, “as any ironologist will know, what is not mentioned directly is not necessarily of no importance.”<sup>136</sup> Indeed, the absence of philological evidence does not prove that Kierkegaard did not read something, as reading only occasionally leaves a material trace. Given the contemporary importance of Schlegel's fragments and Kierkegaard's own preoccupation with this literary-philosophical form, it would be strange if Kierkegaard had not perused the *Lyceum-* and *Athenaeum-Fragmente* at some point before commencing his “authorship proper.”<sup>137</sup>

In *Forord* and the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, Kierkegaard developed a variation on the Romantic fragment: the independent paratext or -texts.<sup>138</sup> By writing works that were “only” paratextual, Kierkegaard traded the stability of the system for a Romantic-ironic flux between the part and the whole. “What is immediately striking is that nothing comes ‘after’ and these prefaces, these *forewords*,” writes Mads Fedder Henriksen, “stand by and for themselves. As a matter of fact, the book [sc. *Forord*] was published as a separate work with no text preceding or following it.”<sup>139</sup> As we learn in the preface to these prefaces, the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene has sworn to his wife that he will not become an author, but he manages to circumvent this pledge by penning only prefaces.<sup>140</sup> After all, Notabene reasons, “Forordet er væsentlig forskjelligt fra Bogen, og . . . at skrive et Forord er noget ganske Andet end at skrive en Bog.” (The preface is essentially different from the book, and . . . writing a preface is something completely different than writing a book.)<sup>141</sup> It is indeed; William McDonald and Mark

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132. Jacob Bøggild, “The Fine Art of Writing Posthumous Papers: On the Dubious Role of the Romantic Fragment in the First Part of *Either/Or*,” *Kierkegaardiana* 19 (1998): 109, <https://tidsskrift.dk/kierkegaardiana/article/view/31197/28693>.

133. See *Journalen BB*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 17:67, 17:97; *Notesbog 3*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 19:99; *Journalen NB26*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 25:35; “*Æsthetica. Ældre*,” in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 27:141–42; and *Bibelsk eksegese, Faustlæsninger, dogmatik m.m.*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 27:173.

134. Rohde, *Auktionsprotokol*, 97; *Friedrich Schlegel's sämtliche Werke*, 10 vols. (Vienna: Mayer, 1822–25).

135. K. Brian Soderquist, *The Isolated Self: Truth and Untruth in Søren Kierkegaard's On the Concept of Irony* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2013), 126–27.

136. Bøggild, “Posthumous Papers,” 109.

137. To the best of my knowledge, this term does not originate with Kierkegaard himself, but with the translators Howard and Edna Hong: “Certain published works are not included. *From the Papers of One Still Living* was a review, as was *Two Ages*. *The Concept of Irony* was an academic dissertation. Kierkegaard therefore considered *Either/Or* as the beginning of his authorship proper.” Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., *The Point of View: On My Work as an Author, The Point of View for My Work as an Author, Armed Neutrality*, by Søren Kierkegaard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 315n9.

138. Kierkegaard was not the first to compose a free-standing paratext. As Hugh S. Pypers points out, Chopin published his 24 *Preludes* in 1838–39. Hugh S. Pypers, “Promising Nothing: Kierkegaard and Stanisław Lem on Prefacing the Unwritten,” in *Prefaces and Writing Sampler*, ed. Robert L. Perkins, *International Kierkegaard Commentary* 9 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006), 69.

139. Mads Fedder Henriksen, “A Preface to the ‘Preface’ of *Prefaces*,” *Kierkegaardiana* 20 (1999): 10, <https://tidsskrift.dk/kierkegaardiana/article/view/31172/28672>.

140. “Enden blev, at jeg lovede ikke at ville være Forfatter. Men . . . saaledes forbeholdt jeg mig Tilladelse til at turde skrive ‘Forord.’” (The ending was that I promised not to want to be an author. But . . . in this way I reserved permission for myself to dare to write “prefaces.”) *Forord. Morskabslæsning for enkelte Stænder efter Tid og Leilighed*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:475.

141. *Forord*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:468

C. E. Peterson have each pointed out that this distinction between the preface and the book (i.e., the main text) is a comic echo of the preface to Hegel's *Phänomenologie*.<sup>142</sup> "I den nyere Videnskab har Forordet faaet sit Banesaar" (In modern science, the preface has received its mortal wound),<sup>143</sup> Notabene quips, gesturing towards the front matter of the *Phänomenologie*.<sup>144</sup>

Unlike this famous foreword of Hegel's, none of Notabene's prefaces precede a main text. Instead of encountering a philosophical idea or poetic image, we are detained by a paratext, by mere writing. Soon enough, however, we begin to envision what the body texts would have been like, had they been written. As ironic distance gives way to enthusiasm, we catch momentary glimpses of these imaginary books. *Forord*'s dialectics between paratext and text are, I would argue, isomorphic to the interplay between the Romantic fragment and the absolute. Neither the hypothetical main text nor the absolute is determined once and for all, but the contours of both occasionally become visible.

This same fractured dialectic applies to the book-length Kierkegaardian paratext, the *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*. Although this work dwarfs its predecessor by a magnitude of nearly five,<sup>145</sup> Climacus refers to it not only as a "Piece" (pamphlet) but also as a "Smule" (fragment/crumb).<sup>146</sup> On one hand, the pseudonym is being ironic, but, on the other, he is earnestly stressing the *Efterskrift*'s merely supplemental nature.<sup>147</sup> This text may

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142. According to William McDonald, "Prefaces, in its form as a 'book' of 'prefaces' that are not the prefaces to any book, is a parodical allusion to Hegel's remarks on philosophical prefaces. . . . Nicolaus Notabene . . . writes a book consisting of nothing but prefaces, thereby avoiding the Hegelian problem of the relation between preface and book." "In the case of preface VII," writes Mark C. E. Peterson, "the hilarious descriptions of mediation as transubstantiation and his [sc. Notabene's] biting critique of the very concept of a preface all point directly toward Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* with its own famous preface." William McDonald, translator's introduction to *Prefaces: Light Reading for Certain Classes as the Occasion May Require*, by Nicolaus Notabene, by Søren Kierkegaard (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), 11–12; Mark C. E. Peterson, "Ringing Doorbells: Eleventh Books and Authentic Authorship in Preface VII," in Perkins, *Prefaces and Writing Sampler*, 98.

143. *Forord*, in Søren Kierkegaards skrifter, 4:468.

144. Johnny Kondrup, "Forord. Tekstkommentarer," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-f-kom-root>.

145. "Formatet" (The format) of *Philosophiske Smuler* "er lille oktav, ca. 116 x 183 mm. . . . Omfanget er 164 sider" (is crown octavo, circa 116 x 183 mm. . . . The extent is 164 pages). "Formatet" (The format) of *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift* "er stor oktav, ca. 143 x 232 mm. . . . Omfanget er 496 sider, svarende til 31 ark" (is demy octavo, circa 143 x 232 mm. . . . The extent is 496 pages, corresponding to 31 sheets). My claim that the *Efterskrift* is almost five times longer than the *Smuler* is based on the page counts of the first editions, but since these are printed in different formats, the *Efterskrift* is actually about six times the length of the *Smuler* in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, where each work is printed in the same format. Jette Knudsen and Johnny Kondrup, "Philosophiske Smuler. Tekstredogørelse," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K4:171; Finn Gredal Jensen, Jette Knudsen, and Kim Ravn, "Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift. Tekstredogørelse," in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, K7:7.

146. "Hvad der her bydes er igjen en Piece, *proprio martre, proprio stipendio, propriis auspiciis*. Forfatteren er forsaavidt Proprietair, som han er Selveier af den Smule han eier, men iøvrigt ligesaa langt fra at have Hoveribønder, som fra selv at være en saadan." (What is offered here is again a pamphlet, *proprio martre, proprio stipendio, propriis auspiciis* [by one's own hand, at one's own expense, on one's own behalf]. The author is the property owner insofar as he is the freeholder of the crumb that he owns, but for the rest he is just as far from having peasant drudges as he is from being one himself.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:12; Latin trans. Hong and Hong, *Postscript*, 1:8.

147. "Saaledes var Løftet om Fortsættelsen beskaaffent. Det er derfor i sin Orden, at det indfries i en Efterskrift, og saare langt fra, at Forfatteren, hvis der ellers er noget vigtigt ved hele Sagen, kan beskyldes for fruentimmeragtigt at sige det Vigtigste i et Postscript." (The promise of a sequel was constituted like this. It is therefore in order that it is fulfilled in a postscript, and, if there is otherwise something important in the whole affair, the author is very far

employ the numbered divisions of a scientific apparatus in a travesty of systematic completeness,<sup>148</sup> but it remains a fragment, physically separated from the *Smuler*, to which it is a mere pendant. Ultimately, we do not find the autonomous, ideal whole in either the skimpy and crumbly main text (i.e., the *Smuler*) or in its hulking paratext (i.e., the *Efterskrift*). Once readers realize that the *Efterskrift* is but an appendix to a collection of fragments, they should be under no illusions; absolute knowledge will not come from the hand of Johannes Climacus. Only the true system can yield the ultimate secret of the universe, whereas all man-made, so-called systems are incomplete—that is to say, fragmentary.<sup>149</sup>

Like Schlegel, Kierkegaard—it would seem—considered the truth to be elusive. Neither of them is defeatist nor pessimistic, however. To the contrary, each would affirm that one must constantly strive towards truth; otherwise, they would not have bothered to write fragments (or independent paratexts).<sup>150</sup> Fragmentary texts are the best expression for this striving, since they do not pretend to offer finalized results. Indeed, Kierkegaard—like Johannes Climacus—shares Lessing’s preference for “*den einzigen immer regen Trieb nach Wahrheit*” (the absolute always-active drive for truth) over “*die reine Wahrheit*” (the pure truth).<sup>151</sup>

## “ET CHINESISK ÆSKESPIL”

*Enten – Eller* is supposed to be the work of five individuals: Victor Eremita (2:11–22), A (2:23–303), Johannes the Seducer (2:304–432), B or Assessor Wilhelm (3:13–318), and the Jutland parson (3:320–332). One might even count up to seven with Cordelia Wahl (Johannes’ seducee), whose letters A transcribes (2:301–2); and Ludvig Blackfeldt, whose suicide note is copied out by B (3:235n). These manuscripts were allegedly found in a second-hand escritoire by the book’s editor, Eremita.<sup>152</sup> “Det sidste af As Papirer er en Fortælling, betitlet: Forførerens Dagbog” (The

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from being charged with saying, in a womanly manner, the most important thing in a postscript.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:20–21.

148. *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:13–17.

149. “Et Tilværelsens System kan ikke gives. Altsaa er et saadant ikke til? Ingenlunde. Dette ligger ei heller i det Sagte. Tilværelsen selv er et System – for Gud, men kan ikke være det for nogen eksisterende Aand.” (A system of existence cannot be given. Does such a thing really not exist then? By no means. Nor is that implied in what has been said. Existence itself is a system—for God, but it cannot be that for any existing spirit.) *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:114.

150. Famously, Climacus closes his *magnum opus* with “Forstaelsen med Læseren” (The understanding with the reader), declaring that “Forstaelsen er Tilbagekaldelsen” (the understanding is the revocation) of the *Efterskrift*, but with the assurance “at det at skrive en Bog og tilbagekalde den er noget Andet end at lade være at skrive den” (that to write a book and revoke it is something other than to go without writing it). *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:563.

151. *Eine Duplik*, in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s sämtliche Schriften* (Berlin: 1825–28), 5:100, quoted in *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:103.

152. “Jeg lukker Secretairen op for at trække min Pengeskuffe ud . . . See, da er Skuffen ikke til at bevæge. Ethvert Middel er forgjæves. . . En Haandøxe blev hentet. Med den bibragte jeg Secretairen et Gru vækkende Hug. . . Om mit Slag har rammet netop dette Punkt eller den totale Rystelse i Secretairens hele Organisation har været Anledningen, det veed jeg ikke, men det veed jeg, at der sprang en hemmelig Dør op, som jeg aldrig før havde bemærket. Denne lukkede for et Gjemme, som jeg naturligiis heller ikke havde opdaget. Her fandt jeg til min store Overraskelse en Masse af Papirer, de Papirer, der udgjøre det foreliggende Skrifts Indhold.” (I open the escritoire up in order to take out my till . . . Look, then the drawer won’t move. Every means is in vain. . . An axe is fetched. With that, I give the escritoire a horrific slash. . . If my blow hit exactly this point, or the total jolt to the escritoire’s

last of A's papers is a narrative entitled: "The Seducer's Diary"), writes Eremita: "Her møde nye Vanskeligheder, idet A ikke erklærer sig for Forfatter men kun for Udgiver. Det er et gammelt Novellist-Kneb, som jeg ikke skulde have videre at indvende imod, naar det ikke bidrog til at gjøre min Stilling saa forviklet, idet den ene Forfatter kommer til at ligge inden i den anden som Æsker i et chinesisisk Æskespil." (Here we are met with new difficulties, as A does not declare himself to be author but only editor. This is an old novelist trick, which I should not have anything against which to object, if it did not contribute to making my position so complicated, as the one author comes to lie inside the other like boxes in a Chinese puzzle.)<sup>153</sup> Of course, the irony is that Eremita himself is one of the nested narrators in what is actually a novel.

Readers of *Enten – Eller* may regard this "gammelt Novellist-Kneb" (old novelist trick) with skeptical distance at one moment, and genuine interest at the next. Although aware that the found manuscript is a fictional conceit, we nevertheless find ourselves asking some curious questions: Why were these personal papers not removed from the secretary before it was sold? Did their owner die a sudden and tragic death? etc. This dialectic of repulsion and attraction is that of German Romantic irony, and our aesthetic sense for the book at hand fades in and out accordingly. Unsurprisingly, several scholars have observed the affinities of *Enten – Eller*, *Gjentagelsen*, and *Stadier paa Livets Vei* with the novels of the German Romantics.<sup>154</sup> According to Jon Stewart, "Some of the German Romantic authors clearly paved the way for Kierkegaard by making use of different kinds of ploys and masks to distance themselves as authors from their works," and as an example of a German Romantic novel that served as a model for Kierkegaard in this respect,

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whole organization was the cause, I don't know, but I do know that a secret door flew open, which I had never noticed before. It closed on a hiding place that I naturally had not discovered, either. Here I found to my great surprise a mass of papers, these papers that make up the present publication's contents.) *Enten – Eller*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:13–14.

153. *Enten – Eller*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:16.

154. Of *Enten – Eller* and *Stadier paa Livets Vei*, F. J. Billeskov Jansen writes, "De tyske Romantikere, som Kierkegaard var dybt indlevet med, har givet hans Livsanskuelsesromaner et mangefarvet Spil i Stilen, en Vekselvirkning af Ironi og Patos." (The German romantics, with whom Kierkegaard was deeply familiar, have given his life-view novels a multicolored play in their style, an alternation of irony and pathos.)

George Pattison would no doubt agree: "At first glance many English-speaking readers might well fail to see any resemblance between what I have called Kierkegaard's novels and what they are accustomed to think of as a novel. The narrative is minimal, and what there is of it is constantly interrupted by long sections of philosophy, aesthetic criticism, psychological analysis—even a sermon. Far from all this excluding these books from the rank of 'literature,' however, it rather highlights the very strong connection they have with the novelistic traditions of German Romanticism, and virtually all of Kierkegaard's (to us) outlandish techniques can be traced back to Romantic models."

Like Pattison, Sylvia Walsh maintains that the miscellaneousness of *Enten – Eller* affirms its identity as a novel: "Mimicking the penchant of the romanticists and others of the time for the use of the fragment or aphoristic form to indicate the incomplete and imperfect nature of life and literature in striving for an unattainable infinity, *Either/Or* is subtitled 'A Fragment of Life' and is made up of a mixture of literary genres—aphorisms, essays, diaries, letters, and a sermon—that corresponds to what Friedrich Schlegel has dubbed an 'arabesque' novel."

Lastly, Judith Purver "examines Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings in the context of German Romantic narrative theory and practice, and his reception of both. Although usually regarded as opposed to Romanticism, Kierkegaard employs narrative techniques – notably formal diversity and self-reflexivity – that fulfil central tenets of early Romantic theory. He also receives important impulses from the fiction of later German Romantics, such as [Achim von] Arnim, [Adelbert von] Chamisso, and [Clemens] Brentano: besides aspects of content these concern structural devices such as fictitious editors, multiple narrators, and intertextual references." F. J. Billeskov Jansen, *Studier i Søren Kierkegaards litterære Kunst* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1987), 23; George Pattison, "Kierkegaard as Novelist," *Journal of Literature and Theology* 1, no. 2 (1987): 210–11; Sylvia Walsh, *Living Poetically: Kierkegaard's Existential Aesthetics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 63; Judith Purver, "Without Authority: Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works as Romantic Narratives," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* (2007): 401, <https://doi-org.libproxy.berkeley.edu/10.1515/9783110192926.2.401>.



Stewart goes on to cite E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Lebens Ansichten des Katers Murr* (*The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*).<sup>155</sup> Hoffmann poses as the editor of this book, a ruse that Kierkegaard himself would employ for the Climacus and Anti-Climacus publications.<sup>156</sup> The *Lebens Ansichten* also serve as a template for Kierkegaard's more novelistic writings (i.e., *Enten – Eller*, *Gjentagelsen*, and *Stadier paa Livets Vei*), as these fictions all revolve around found manuscripts or epistles.

In *Gjentagelsen*, for example, Kierkegaard mediates his communication through the diegetic pseudonym of Constantin Constantius, who then embeds the correspondence of a second pseudonym within his text. In the first part of the novel, Constantin recounts a second trip to Berlin, which he undertook “for at forsøge Gjentagelsens Mulighed og Betydning” (in order to test the possibility and meaning of repetition).<sup>157</sup> In part 2, Constantius publishes letters allegedly sent to him by a young man, who had been seeking counsel in a romantic matter loosely resembling Kierkegaard's own.<sup>158</sup> What we eventually learn is that these are not transcriptions of “real” letters—or even letters that were “really” a part of the fictional world Constantius inhabits. Instead, the pseudonymous author has poetically composed the young man and his correspondence.

The page preceding this jolting bit of news is designed to look like an envelope,<sup>159</sup> addressed to “*Velbyrdige Hr. N. N. / denne Bogs virkelige Læser*” (Distinguished Sir *nomen nescio* / this book's real reader).<sup>160</sup> According to Johnny Kondrup, “Det brev, der tilintetgør hele den forudgående fiktion, adskilles fra resten af bogen ved hjælp af et konvolut blad. Dette blad mærker et skel mellem historien og dens opløsning, samtidig med at det fungerer som en indpakning af den tilsyneladende fortrolige meddelelse til læseren, den ‘virkelige Læser’” (This letter, which destroys the whole preceding fiction, is separated from the rest of the book by the help of a letter-leaf. This leaf marks a boundary line between the story and its dissolution; at the same time, it functions as a wrapping for the apparently confidential communication to the reader, the “real reader”).<sup>161</sup> So, if we manage to overcome the hackneyed epistolary ploy and lose ourselves in the story, then the illusion is suddenly broken by this missive, which owns up to the narrative's contrivance. As alluded to above, the saga of the young man is based on Kierkegaard's broken engagement to Regine Olsen, but now this “true” story turns out to have been made up, according to Constantin Constantius. Given that Constantius is a diegetic pseudonym himself, we emerge from one fictional world only to fall back into another, whereas our aesthetic perception of the book-object depends on a momentary estrangement from the diegesis.

No sooner do we open *Stadier paa Livets Vei* than we are reminded of the tome before us by the pseudonym, one Hilarius Bogbinder (bookbinder). The book that he has “sammenbragte,

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155. Jon Stewart, *Faust, Romantic Irony, and System: German Culture in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2019), 321.

156. *Philosophiske Smuler, eller: En Smule Philosophi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:213; *Efterskrift*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 7:7; *Sygdommen til Døden. En christelig psykologisk Udvikling til Opbyggelse og Opvækkelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 11:115; *Indøvelse i Christendom*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 12:7.

157. *Gjentagelsen. Et Forsøg i den eksperimenterende Psychologi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:26–27.

158. Walter Lowrie, *Kierkegaard* (New York: Harper, 1962), 1:254ff.

159. “Det tegnede rektangel forestiller ydersiden på en konvolut, mens det efterfølgende brev skal forestille at være indlagt heri – eller skrevet på bagsiden af papiret, således som det var almindeligt på SKs tid.” (The drawn rectangle presents the outside of an envelope, while the subsequent letter shall represent having been laid therein—or written on the backside of the paper, as was normal in SK's time.) Flemming Harrits, Finn Hauberg Mortensen, and Sophia Scopetá, “*Gjentagelsen*. Tekstkommentarer,” in Cappelørn et al., *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, <https://tekster.kb.dk/text/sks-g-kom-root>.

160. *Gjentagelsen*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:89.

161. Kondrup, “Expressiv typografi,” 52.

befordrede til Trykken og udgiven” (brought together, conveyed to the press, and published), as the title page puts it,<sup>162</sup> is supposed to have been based on papers once belonging to a deceased litterateur and his associates.<sup>163</sup> Like the frame narrative of *Either/Or*, this well-worn premise both bores and intrigues, with concrete book and ideal text alternating in an aesthetics of fracture. The cache Hilarius discovers contains some purloined and found manuscripts. After taking part in a demonic banquet in the “*In vino veritas*” episode, Victor Eremita swipes Assessor Vilhelm’s writings,<sup>164</sup> which are stolen again by William Afham (pseudonymous author of “*In vino veritas*”)<sup>165</sup> and printed in the following chapter, “Adskilligt om Ægteskabet mod Indsigelser af en Ægtemand” (Many things about marriage against objections by a married man);<sup>166</sup> and the pseudonym Frater Taciturnus attests to having fished up *quidam*’s diary, the basis for the ““Skyldig?” – ‘Ikke-Skyldig?’” chapter, from the depths of Søborg lake.<sup>167</sup> In a concluding “Skrivelse til Læseren” (Letter to the reader), Frater Taciturnus admits to having concocted *quidam* and his journal.<sup>168</sup> As one diegetic plane cancels out the other, there is a Romantic-ironic undulation between alienation and absorption, as the book-object is foregrounded and then—by

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162. *Stadier paa Livets Vei. Studier af Forskjellige*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:7.

163. “For adskillige Aar siden sendte en mig velbekjendt Literatus en betydelig Mængde Bøger til Indbinding *item* adskillige Bøger Skrivpapir, som skulde hæftes i Quarto. . . . Og som det gaaer som Tydsken siger: heute roth morgen todt . . . . Som en stræbsom Mand og god Borger, der redeligen giver hver Sit, faldt der mig aldrig Andet ind, end at jeg havde sendt Hr. Literatusen Alt tilbage, da jeg engang finder en lille Pakke skrevne Papirer. . . . Saa er det da skeet, . . . den brave Seminarist og Candidatus i Philosophien . . . gjorde mig opmærksom paa, at min Fortjeneste blev større derved, at det ikke var en Bog men flere Bøger, jeg udgav, formodentlig af flere Forfattere. Min lærde Ven antager nemlig, at der maa have været et Broderskab, et Selskab, en Forening, hvis Caput eller Hovedsmand hiin Literatus har været, som derfor har opbevaret Skrifterne.” (Several years ago, a *literatus* who was well known to me sent me a considerable quantity of books to be bound *item* multiple books of writing paper that should be stitched in quarto. . . . And, it goes as the German says: *heute roth morgen todt* [today red, tomorrow dead]. . . . As an industrious man and good citizen, who honestly gives each his own, it never occurred to me other than that I had sent Hr. *literatus* everything back, then I find a little packet of written papers one day. . . . So it then happened, . . . the honest seminarist and candidate in philosophy . . . drew my attention to the fact that my merit was greater in that it was not one book but several books I was publishing, presumably by several authors. My learned friend assumes that there must have been a fraternity, a society, a club, whose *caput* or head was that *literatus*, who therefore had kept the writings.) *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:11–14.

164. Note the different spelling of the assessor’s name, compared with the “Wilhelm” of *Enten – Eller*. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:81.

165. Eremita “springer ind ad Vinduet, just som han springer ud stode de Andre hos, de havde søgt ham, triumpherende holder han et Papir i sin Haand og raaber: ‘et Manuscript af Hr. Assessoren. Har jeg udgivet hans andre, saa er det ikke mere end Skyldighed, ogsaa at udgive dette.’ Han stak det i Lommen eller rettere han vilde stikke det i Lommen, thi som han bøiede Armen om og allerede havde Haanden med Manuscriptet halvt i Lommen, listede jeg det fra ham” (jumps in through the window; just as he jumps out, the others were standing by; they had been looking for him; triumphantly he holds a paper in his hand and shouts, “A manuscript by Hr. Assessor. If I have published his others, then it is no more than duty to also publish this.” He stuck it in his pocket or rather wanted to stick it in his pocket, for as he bent his arm and already had his hand with the manuscript half in his pocket, I stole it from him). *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:83.

166. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:85–171.

167. “Jeg trak til, da steeg en Boble op fra Dybet. . . . Indsvøbt i Voxdug, som var forsynet med flere Segl, laae en Æske af Palisander-Træ. . . . I Æsken fandtes et paa meget fiint Postpapir særdeles omhyggeligt og nydeligt skrevet Hefte.” (I reeled in, then a bubble rose from the deep. . . . Wrapped up in oilcloth, which was provided with several seals, lay a box of Brazilian rosewood. . . . In the box, there was a notebook of very fine letter paper, which had been inscribed most carefully and attractively.) *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:177.

168. “M. k. Læser! Dersom Du paa nogen Maade er af Faget, vil Du øieblikkeligen see, at den Figur, som her er manet frem, er en dæmonisk i Retning af det Religieuse, det vil sige hen til det.” (My dear reader! If you are by any means of the profession, you will momentarily see that the figure that is conjured up here is a demoniac in the direction of the religious, i.e., going up to it.) *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:369.

means of an illusion—foreclosed. Frater Taciturnus’ confession recalls Constantin Constantius’ claim to have invented the Young Man, not least because *quidam* is also a patent stand-in for Kierkegaard. But before readers can indulge their prurient interest in Kierkegaard’s scandalous autobiography, a pseudonym disrupts them, dismissing the gossip as a fiction. In these moments of *Verfremdung*, we are acutely conscious of the paper and ink before us, and yet—ironically—we must first plunge into the narrative in order to become fully alienated by it.

Kierkegaard drew inspiration for this “chinesisk Æskespil” from *Don Quixote*,<sup>169</sup> but he also admired the German Romantic homage to Cervantes in works like Hoffmann’s *Kater Murr*.<sup>170</sup> As Stewart points out, “When reading Hoffmann’s foreword it is difficult to avoid thinking of Victor Eremita who purports to publish a text by other authors that he by chance came into possession of.”<sup>171</sup> Straight-faced, Hoffmann states that a friend gave him a cat’s manuscript to publish, but that the printed sheets were not only riddled with typographical errors;<sup>172</sup> the life of one Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler interrupts the Tomcat Murr at inopportune moments, for the feline had used Kreisler’s book as blotting paper, and it was then accidentally printed along with Murr’s own autobiography.<sup>173</sup> According to Jeremy Adler, “Kierkegaard’s *Either/Or* adapts its

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169. In the prologue, Cervantes pretends to despair over his inability to suitably preface Don Quixote’s story, declaring to a friend, “I have decided that Don Quixote should remain buried in the archives of La Mancha” (5), i.e., as a manuscript. With an exciting contest imminent at the end of part 1, chapter 8, the narrator admits to his reader, “But the difficulty in all this is that at this very point and juncture, the author of the history leaves the battle pending, apologizing because he found nothing else written about the feats of Don Quixote other than what he has already recounted” (64). Fortunately, as the narrator explains in the next chapter, “One day when I was in the Alcaná market in Toledo, a boy came by to sell some notebooks and old papers to a silk merchant; as I am very fond of reading, even torn papers in the streets, I was moved by my natural inclinations to pick up one of the volumes the boy was selling, and I saw that it was written in characters I knew to be Arabic. And since I recognized but could not read it, I looked around to see if some Morisco, who knew Castilian, and could read it for me, was in the vicinity, and it was not very difficult to find this kind of interpreter . . . I urged him to read the beginning, which he did, extemporizing a translation of Arabic into Castilian and saying that it said: *History of Don Quixote of La Mancha. Written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arab Historian*” (67). Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Edith Grossman (New York: Ecco, 2003).

170. “Together with the direct reading of Cervantes’ work, it is very likely that the general atmosphere created around the *Quixote* by the Romantics had somehow also influenced Kierkegaard. . . . To authors like Tieck, Schelling or the brothers Schlegel—to mention the most representative ones—the book of Cervantes was more than a capital work. They considered it to be an outstanding piece of Romantic literature *avant la lettre*.” Óscar Parcero Oubiña, “Miguel de Cervantes: The Valuable Contribution of a Minor Influence,” in *Literature, Drama and Music*, tome 3 of *Kierkegaard and the Renaissance and Modern Traditions*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 15.

171. Stewart, *Faust, Romantic Irony*, 322.

172. According to Hartmut Steinecke, “Da Hoffmann den Druck nur teilweise selbst überwachte, kam es zu zahlreichen Druckfehlern.” (Since Hoffmann only partly oversaw the printing himself, there came to be numerous misprints.) And yet, in the preface, he even managed to recoup these *errata* as part of the novel’s Romantic confusion: “Weder der Kater Murr, noch der unbekannte Biograph des Kapellmeisters Kreisler soll sich mit fremden Federn schmücken, und der der Herausgeber bittet daher den günstigen Leser dringend, bevor er das Werklein liest, nachfolgende Änderungen zu veranstalten, damit er von beiden Autoren nicht besser oder schlechter denke, als sie es verdienen.” (Neither Murr the cat nor the anonymous biographer of Kapellmeister Kreisler should be decked out in false plumage, and the editor therefore begs his gentle reader, before perusing this little work, to make the following alterations so as not to think either better or worse of the two authors than they deserve.) Hartmut Steinecke, “Zur Textgestalt,” in *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr, nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern*, by E. T. A. Hoffmann (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2017), 447; Hoffmann, *Lebens-Ansichten*, 9; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr, together with a Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Waste Paper*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 1999), 4.

173. “Als der Kater Murr seine Lebensansichten schrieb, zerriß er ohne Umstände ein gedrucktes Buch, das er bei seinem Herrn vorfand, und verbrauchte die Blätter harmlos teils zur Unterlage teils zum Löschen. Die Blätter

[sc. *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr's*] polar structure.”<sup>174</sup> In other words, the counterposed Murr and Kreisler anticipate *Enten – Eller's* A and B (or Assessor Wilhelm).

In the preface, Hoffmann tries to put a good face on the unintentionally garbled text of the first printing of the *Lebens-Ansichten* with the following declaration: “Wahr ist es endlich, daß Autoren ihre kühnsten Gedanken, die außerordentlichsten Wendungen, oft ihren gütigen Setzern verdanken, die dem Aufschwunge der Ideen nachhelfen durch sogenannte Druckfehler.” (Finally, it is a fact that authors often owe their boldest notions and most remarkable turns of phrase to their kind typesetters, who assist the inspiration of their ideas by perpetrating what are called printer’s errors.)<sup>175</sup> Kierkegaard’s pseudonym A effectively cribs this passage for his *Diapsalmata*,<sup>176</sup> under the heading “**Probat Raad for Forfattere**” (**Effective advice for authors**): “Man nedskriver sine egne Betragtninger skjødesløst, man lader dem trykke, i de forskjellige Correcturer vil man da efterhaanden faae en Mængde gode Indfald. Fatter derfor Mod I, som endnu ikke har dristet Eder til at lade Noget trykke, ogsaa Trykfeil ere ikke at foragte, og at blive vittig ved Hjælp af Trykfeil maa ansees for en lovlige Maade at blive det paa” (One writes down one’s own reflections anyhow; one has them printed; in the various proof sheets, one will then eventually get a number of good ideas. Therefore, if you take courage—you who still have not dared to have something printed—printer’s errors are not to be despised, and to become witty by the help of a printer’s error must be considered a legitimate way to become that.)<sup>177</sup> Both *Kater Murr* and *Enten – Eller* make the troubling insinuation that it is not quite the author’s words that we are reading, but the typesetter’s.<sup>178</sup> In a “chinesisk Æskespil,” the compositor is the last figure standing between author and reader.

Much like the Romantic fragment by several hands, a literary work that includes the typesetter in the artistic process boldly reacts against the disappearing book and its mythology of the autonomous author. Welcoming the humble compositor into the community of creatives (if only ironically), Hoffmann and A remind us that an author must depend on a series of intermediaries if he is ever to communicate in print. Upon this realization, we feel distanced from the text, and cognizant of the book before us. Alienation supersedes immersion, and vice versa, in an aesthetics of fracture.

Kierkegaard played with this idea in one of his earliest publications, “Kjøbenhavnspostens Morgenbetragtninger i Nr. 43” (*Kjøbenhavnsposten's* morning observations in no. 43), which appeared in J. L. Heiberg’s *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post* on February 18, 1836. In this article, Kierkegaard already had in place one of the rudiments of his mature media theory: namely, that print is not transparent but opaque. Put another way, a book or newspaper is not a membrane through which the transcendental signified passes from the author’s mind to the reader’s. Kierkegaard points out that to publish means cooperating with typesetters, who might unwittingly

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blieben im Manuskript und – wurden, als zu demselben gehörig, aus Versehen mit abgedruckt!” (When Murr the cat was writing his *Life and Opinions*, he found a printed book in his master’s study, tore it up without more ado and, thinking no ill, used its pages partly to rest his work on, partly as blotting paper. These pages were left in the manuscript—and were inadvertently printed too, as if they were part of it!) Hoffmann, *Lebens-Ansichten*, 8; Hoffmann, *Life and Opinions*, 4.

174. Jeremy Adler, introduction to *Life and Opinions*, by Hoffmann, x.

175. Hoffmann, *Lebens-Ansichten*, 8; Hoffmann, *Life and Opinions*, 4.

176. Judit Bartha, “E. T. A. Hoffmann: A Source for Kierkegaard’s Conceptions of Authorship, Poetic-Artistic Existence, Irony and Humor,” in Stewart, *Literature and Aesthetics*, 120.

177. *Enten – Eller*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 2:28.

178. Stewart writes of *Kater Murr*, “Further distance (and confusion) is created by the intrusion of a number of typographical errors.” Stewart, *Faust, Romantic Irony*, 322.

distort one's intended message. Under the anonym B, the fiery young journalist scoffs, "At Sætteren virkelig er Medarbejder i Kjøbenhavnsposten, det synes den selv at have anerkjendt, idet den ikke, som andre Blade, drager en bestemt Grændse mellem Forfatternes Feil og Sætterens (Trykfeil), men hæver det Hele til en høiere Eenhed under Benævnelsen 'Rettelser'; hvoraf det da bliver en Følge, at Forfatterne kan bruge Sætteren til Pareerplade." (That the typesetter really is a collaborator at *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, it seems to have acknowledged that itself, as it does not, like other papers, draw a firm boundary between the author's mistakes and the typesetter's [printer's errors], but raises the whole thing to a higher unity under the designation 'corrections,' by which it then becomes a consequence that the authors can use the typesetter for a vantage.)<sup>179</sup> While unskilled hacks exploit the necessity of mediation to cover up their solecisms, the better writers lament their lack of control in the publishing process. Communication via print is, therefore, doubly ironic. Not only can the audience not read the author's mind; they are twice removed from that mind, for they do not see the author's manuscript, but only the finished sheets produced by the pressmen. It takes only a single misplaced comma, or even a little smudge, to abrogate the illusion of a transcendent *tête-à-tête*, for these accidents instantly recall the printed page before us.

Once Kierkegaard had developed his game of nested pseudonymous narrators, he foregrounded the intermedial role of the typesetter in order to establish an additional line of defense between himself and his readers. The result is an aesthetic in which the physical book is first made present at the expense of the ideal text, but then the ideal text is made present at the expense of the physical book, and so on and so forth.

"Sæt der var en Bog" (Suppose there were a book), writes *quidam* in his final diary entry, "som engang var trykket og ikke kunde trykkes om, og der var ingen Plads at rette i den, men iblandt Trykfeilene fandtes en Læsemaade, der i Betydningsfuldhed overgik hvad der stod paa samme Sted i Texten: saa maatte den nøies med at blive staaende blandt Trykfeilene, men der dog med sin Betydningsfuldhed" (that was printed once and could not be printed again, and there was no space to correct in it, but, among the *erratum*, there was a reading that surpassed in importance what was in the same place in the text: so, it must be content to remain standing among the *erratum*, but still there with its importance).<sup>180</sup> The pseudonym is writing metaphorically; he is describing his own existence, but he is also speaking to the ironies of print. In reference to this passage, Tom Grimwood suggests that "errors in this case are typically a mechanical production; arising from the use of industrial printing—bad typesetting, or worn out machinery. Such errors are inherent to the *material reproduction* of the text."<sup>181</sup> If the quirks of the medium are privileged above authorial intent, then, according to Grimwood, one has effectively turned traditional hermeneutics on its head: "To suggest that the most expressive reading of a text might reside in the printing errors—and that it is here where the 'fullness of meaning' appears—is, of course, an inversion of the typical reading process."<sup>182</sup> No longer the privileged locus of presence, the author is supplanted by the printed page, which is ultimately the press's responsibility. Thus, the employees at the printing house are yet another mask behind which an ironic author might hide. His readers are held at a distance at one moment, but submerged in the text at the next, in the cycle of Romantic irony. The aesthetic effect is one of fracture, as the reader senses the book now as a material object, now as an intellectual one.

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179. "Kjøbenhavnspostens Morgenbetragtninger i Nr. 43," in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 14:14n.

180. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:368.

181. Tom Grimwood, "Kierkegaard's Printing Errors: On a Curious Passage from *Stages on Life's Way*," *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 3–4 (2013): 916.

182. Grimwood, "Printing Errors," 914.

As stated above, Kierkegaard spent a great deal of time and energy instructing typesetters, both indirectly and directly.<sup>183</sup> His aim was not to engineer a pipeline to his reader, but rather to underscore the fact that this communication was mediated, i.e., indirect. Indeed, Kierkegaard thought of type as something spiritless, devoid of the author's presence. As he writes in his own name in *En literair Anmeldelse* (A literary review), "I Alt har man Haandbøger, og Dannelsen i Almindelighed bestaaer snart i at være perfectioneret i et større eller mindre Indbegreb af saadanne Haandbøgers Betragtninger, og man excellerer i Forhold til sin Færdighed i at tage det Enkelte frem, ligesom Sætteren tager Lettere frem." (There are handbooks for everything, and culture in general will soon consist in being perfected to a greater or lesser degree in such handbooks' meditations, and one will excel in relation to his proficiency in bringing out the individual meditation, just like the typesetter bringing out letters.)<sup>184</sup> Although printers are not expected to understand the books they usher through the press, the words we normally attribute to an author are, nevertheless, more immediately the work of compositors. If one of these workers makes a mistake, irony arises, as the author "says" something at odds with his meaning. Such errors alert readers to the fact that an anonymous laborer is serving as their literary idol's go-between. In *Enten – Eller*, Kierkegaard takes advantage of this circumstance by implying that it is not ultimately Victor Eremita who stands between him and his reader, but that the outermost box in the game, before the author, is the typesetter. Once oblivious to the printed page, the reader now becomes acutely aware of it, as *Verfremdungseffekte* alternate with moments of immersion in an aesthetics of fracture.

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183. "Hvor tæt og direkte Kierkegaard har samarbejdet med sætterne, ved vi ikke; men gennem de mange satsanvisninger, han noterede på siderne i trykmanuskripterne, har han i al fald gjort det indirekte." (How closely and directly Kierkegaard collaborated with the typesetters, we do not know; but through the many instructions he noted on the side of the manuscripts for the printer, we know that he in any case did so indirectly.) At least something is known about Kierkegaard's direct collaboration; it was disruptive. Hother Ploug tells this rather amusing anecdote about his father and Kierkegaard: "*Fædrelandets Kontor*" (*Fædrelandet's* office) was "tillige en Slags Klub for Giøwads mere personlige Vennekreds. . . . Blandt disse Venner kan nævnes Brødrene *Carl* og *Ernst Weis*, *Christian Winther* og endelig *Søren Kierkegaard*. Denne sidste kom der daglig, og i Vinteren 1843 [: 1842–43] blev Korrekturen paa *Enten – Eller* saa at sige læst paa *Fædrelandet's* Kontor, et Forhold, der bidrog til, at [Carl] Ploug aldrig kom i noget personligt venligt Forhold til den berømte Tænkter. Man forestille sig, hvad det vil sige, naar man skal have sit Blad færdig til bestemt Tid . . . da at have en upraktisk og af sig selv meget optagen Mand siddende hos sig, ustandselig demonstrerende og fortællende uden at tage mindste Hensyn til den Ulejlighed, han gjør" (also a sort of club for Giøwad's more personal circle of friends. . . . Among these friends can be mentioned the brothers *Carl* and *Ernst Weis*, *Christian Winther*, and finally *Søren Kierkegaard*. The latter came there daily, and, in the winter of 1843 [i.e., 1842–43], the proof sheets of *Enten – Eller* were, so to speak, read in *Fædrelandet's* office, a circumstance that contributed to [Carl] Ploug never coming into any personal, friendly relationship with the famous thinker. One might imagine what it would mean if one should have his paper ready at a certain time . . . then to have an impractical and self-absorbed man sitting there, incessantly making a great show of it and narrating without taking the least consideration of the inconvenience he is causing). Rohde and Cappelørn, "Kierkegaard som bogproducent," 25; Hother Ploug, *Carl Ploug. Hans Liv og Gerning* (Copenhagen; Gyldendal, 1905), 110–11, quoted in Bruce H. Kirmmse, comp. and ed., *Søren Kierkegaard truffet. Et liv set af hans samtidige* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1996), 88–89.

184. *En literair Anmeldelse. To Tidsaldre, Novelle af Forfatteren til "en Hverdagshistorie," udgiven af J. L. Heiberg. Kbhv. Reitzel. 1845*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:99.

## A KIERKEGAARDIAN CODA

Friedrich Schlegel believed that the absolute, in the words of Rush, “evades *any particular* understanding,”<sup>185</sup> but that “finite discursive beings can . . . ‘approximate’ (*annähern*)” it by producing “a plentitude of different structures that find their roots in the absolute.”<sup>186</sup> Asko Nivala emphasizes that this process is inevitably mediated through the written word, and that one draws closer to the absolute only along a *via negativa*.<sup>187</sup> Novalis, F. Schlegel’s collaborator, was somewhat less sanguine. According to Rush, for him, “the absolute evades *all* understanding.”<sup>188</sup> “Wir *suchen* überall das Unbedingte” (We *seek* above all the Absolute), writes Novalis in the *Blütenstaub* (*Pollen*) of 1798, “und *finden* immer nur Dinge” (and always *find* only things).<sup>189</sup> The dichotomy between the absolute and things is salient only in the original German. “The absolute (*das Unbedingte*) is not a being or a thing (*Ding*) alongside other things,” Nivala explains.<sup>190</sup> And yet it is only through things that the absolute can be approached, as fragmentary inscriptions are fundamental to this heuristic procedure. Pendulating from these fragments to the absolute in an open dialectic, Schlegel and his readers experience an aesthetics of fracture—a flux between outwardness and inwardness—in the manner of the ironic book.

As Rush stated above, Kierkegaard would eventually take up the Romantic-ironic dialectic himself. All the same, he made his academic debut as a harsh critic of Friedrich Schlegel. It should come as no surprise, then, that Kierkegaard’s ironic book is somehow different from Schlegel’s. Indeed, while Schlegel and his *Symphilosophen* leveraged writing in pursuit of the absolute, Kierkegaard had a perhaps more modest goal in mind for himself and his reader.

According to Sanne Elisa Grunnet, Kierkegaard finds fault with the German Romantics for not taking an ironic stance towards their irony.<sup>191</sup> Since Schlegel et al. refused to ultimately abandon their ironical perspectives, they were unable to return to themselves from the otherworld.<sup>192</sup> Put differently, they failed to achieve what Kierkegaard calls “*behersket Ironi*”

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185. Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 41.

186. Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 46.

187. “According to Schlegel, the intuitive knowledge of the absolute cannot be immediate, but it must be mediated through symbolic characters” (78), writes Asko Nivala. Furthermore, “Schlegel emphasized never-ending mediation and communication between people as the means to approach the absolute. One could grasp the absolute only through negating mediation, but the Schlegelian notion of negation did not have the same kind of closed and determined conceptual structure as Hegelian dialectics has” (86). In sum, “The best possible presentation technique could be cross-exposure of the world from different perspectives and even from opposite angles in order to pinpoint negatively the borders that delimit the absolute” (88). Asko Nivala, “Mediality and Intermediality in Friedrich Schlegel’s Early Romantic Thought,” in *Afterlives of Romantic Intermediality: The Intersection of Visual, Aural, and Verbal Frontiers*, ed. Leena Eilittä and Catherine Riccio-Berry (Lanham: Lexington, 2016).

188. Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 41.

189. Novalis, “Vermischte Bemerkungen. 1797–1798,” in *Fragmente und Studien. Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984), 5; *Pollen*, in *Pollen and Fragments: Selected Poetry and Prose of Novalis*, trans. Arthur Versluis (Grand Rapids: Phanes, 1989), 25.

190. Nivala, “Mediality and Intermediality,” 87.

191. “Kierkegaard bebrejder romantikerne, at de ikke forholder sig ironisk til deres egen ironi.” (Kierkegaard reproaches the Romantics for not relating ironically to their own irony.) Sanne Elisa Grunnet, *Ironi og subjektivitet. En studie over S. Kierkegaards disputats “Om Begrebet Ironi”* (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1987), 112.

192. “At forholde sig ironisk til ironiens bevægelse vil sige, at man placerer sig i det standpunkt udenfor alle ironiens mulige standpunkter. Der findes kun ét eneste punkt udenfor alle disse, nemlig inde i én selv. / Det er netop denne vendte tilbage til sit eget selv – i en ny virkelighed – som Kierkegaard efterlyser og ikke finder hos romantikerne.” (To relate ironically to the movement of irony means that one places oneself in the standpoint outside of all of irony’s possible standpoints. There is only one single point outside of all of these, namely, inside of

(*mastered irony*).<sup>193</sup> Chasing after the absolute, Schlegel loses himself—and the truth therein, Kierkegaard would argue. For the Dane, the only thing worth struggling for is already in our possession, in our selves.<sup>194</sup> In order to make an inward turn towards this truth, we must first subjugate irony or ironize it.

Since the truth is not something outside of us, but is within us in advance, *how* we read is much more important than *what* we read.<sup>195</sup> In this spirit, the pseudonym *quidam* writes in *Stadier paa Livets Vei*, “Tag en Bog, den maadeligste, der er skreven, men læs den med den Lidenskab, at det er den eneste, Du vil læse: Du læser tilsidst Alt ud af den ꝛ: saa meget, som der var i Dig selv, og mere læste Du Dig dog aldrig til, om Du saa læste de bedste Bøger.” (Take a book, the most mediocre one that has ever been written, but read it with the passion that it is the only book you will read; you will at last read everything out of it, i.e., as much as was in you yourself, and you really will never read more, even if you then read the best books.)<sup>196</sup> If the truth is ours from the get-go and ready to be recalled, Socrates’ critique of writing—that it can only serve as an *aide-mémoire*<sup>197</sup>—loses its teeth. With the right approach, even the scribblings of a rank amateur can remind us of what is essential. Though he was no doubt a consummate author, Kierkegaard expected his writings to perform this same ancillary function. As an “Anledning” (occasion),<sup>198</sup> his body of works is not a direct communication of knowledge from an authoritative author to his readers, but rather a subtle hint to them to recollect what they already know.

How, then, do we go about uncovering a truth that belongs to us in the here and now? Since speech is analogous to ideality (as per logocentrism), recitation is the best reading practice for revealing “Alt” (everything) within ourselves. Hence, Kierkegaard contravenes the already-

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oneself. / It is precisely this turn back to one’s own self—in a new reality—that Kierkegaard is searching for and does not find with the romantics.) Grunnet, *Ironi og subjektivitet*, 114.

193. *Begrebet Ironi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 1:353.

194. Indeed, the truth is within us from either a speculative-Socratic or a Christian-Socratic perspective. According to Jamie Turnbull, “As a representative of the claim Kierkegaard attributes to the speculative thinker, namely, that truth lies immanently in human nature, Socrates’ maieutics can be said to consist in asking questions in order to *remind* the recipient of what he already knows” (19). Turnbull defines Kierkegaard’s project as Christian-Socratic: “The role of the Christian Socrates is to tease out the absolute paradox: a truth *latent within* but which *did not originate in*, human nature” (20). Jamie Turnbull, “Communication/Indirect Communication,” in *Classicism to Enthusiasm*, tome 2 of *Kierkegaard’s Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

195. George Pattison has written a fine paper on the dangers of certain forms of reading, as Kierkegaard understood them. Pattison opines “that if we were really true to the spirit of Kierkegaard’s understanding of reading, we would get the message and, once we had got the message, would throw the book away and plunge into existence” (291). Kierkegaard, according to Pattison, rejects an aesthetic mode of reading which “is to be taken out of myself . . . to lose myself in my book, as we say in English” (293). Rather than a “return to self in the sobriety of ethico-religious resolve,” this type of reading leads to “the loss of self in aesthetic intoxication” (296). Yet, when we read a book like *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843* (Three upbuilding talks, 1843), writes Pattison, the text “Bekræftelsen i det indvortes Menneske” (Confirmation in the inner person) “has called us out of the self-loss of aesthetic contemplation in order to return us to ourselves in a radical and heartfelt manner” (300). George Pattison, “If Kierkegaard Is Right about Reading, Why Read Kierkegaard?” in *Kierkegaard Revisited*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Jon Stewart (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997).

196. *Stadier*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 6:338.

197. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a.

198. “Mellem Menneske og Menneske er dette det Høieste; Discipelen er Anledning til at Læreren forstaaer sig selv, Læreren Anledning til at Discipelen forstaaer sig selv.” (Between person and person, this is the highest; the disciple is an occasion for the teacher to understand himself, the teacher for the disciple to understand himself.) *Philosophiske Smuler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:231.



dominant practice of silent reading,<sup>199</sup> making urgent requests for a vocal accompaniment in a number of his prefaces. The most emphatic of these is found in 1851's *Til Selvprøvelse. Samtiden anbefalet* (For self-examination: Recommended for contemporaneity): "Min kjere Læser! læs, om muligt, høit! Gjør Du det, lad mig takke Dig derfor; gjør Du det ikke blot selv, bevæger Du ogsaa Andre dertil, lad mig takke dem især, og Dig atter og atter! Du vil ved at læse høit stærkest faae Indtrykket af, at Du har ene med Dig selv at gjøre, ikke med mig, der jo er 'uden Myndighed,' ei heller med Andre, hvilket vilde være Adspredelse." (My dear reader! Read, if possible, out loud! If you do this, let me thank you for it; if you do it not merely yourself, if you also move others to do it, let me thank them each in particular, and you again and again! By reading out loud, you will most strongly get the impression that you have to do with yourself alone, not with me, who is "without authority," after all, nor with others, which would be a distraction.)<sup>200</sup> While recitation is normally identified with traditions of communality,<sup>201</sup> Kierkegaard prefers that you pronounce his words in solitude. In so doing, you will turn towards yourself,<sup>202</sup> and here you will find, in the words of *quidam*, "saa meget, som der var i Dig selv" (as much as was in you yourself).

Kierkegaard solicited his readers' living speech from almost the start of the authorship, namely, in the preface to *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843* (Three upbuilding talks, 1843), where the collection is described as seeking "hiint vel-villige Menneske, der læser høit for sig selv, hvad jeg skriver i Stilhed, der med sin Stemme løser Skriftegtenes Fortryllelse, med sin Røst kalder frem, hvad de stumme Bogstaver vel ligesom have paa Munden, men ikke formaae at udsige uden megen Møie, stammende og afbrudt, i sin Stemning frelser de fangne Tanker, der længes efter Befrielse" (that sympathetic person who reads aloud for himself what I write in silence, who with his voice loosens the spell of the characters, who calls forth with his voice what the mute letters probably had just on the tip of their tongue, but were not able to enunciate without much trouble, stammering and interrupted, who saves in his tuning the trapped thoughts that long for liberation).<sup>203</sup> You may remember that the authors of the disappearing book pretended to have little use for their readers. In fact, this construct implied that it was the readers who needed the authors. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, admits his heteronomy, as his voiceless inscriptions remain shrouded in silence until someone comes to their aid. The magic is not in the author's hands, but in the writing system itself, and it imposes absence and muteness, not presence and voice. Only a well-disposed reader can lift the curse and break the silence in which the writer is condemned to toil. This orality, however, does not cancel out the booklet.<sup>204</sup> In Kierkegaard's imagined scenario, the collection of talks remains an object in space, going off in search of its next encounter.<sup>205</sup>

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199. "This love of the recital of familiar pieces, of the orality and music of poetry, was part of a traditional, or 'intensive,' relationship between the reader/listener and the printed word. This relationship was disappearing in the nineteenth century." Martyn Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia C. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 343.

200. *Til Selvprøvelse*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 13:33.

201. "Conservatives . . . regretted the way that individual, silent reading was dissolving traditional forms of sociability." Lyons, "New Readers," 343.

202. As Tom Millay points out, oral reading is more suited for appropriation than silent reading is. "What does reading aloud have to do with appropriation?" he asks. "When you read aloud, you simply experience the text addressing you—you in particular—to a greater extent than you would reading silently." Thomas J. Millay, *You Must Change Your Life: Søren Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Reading* (Eugene: Cascade, 2020), 47–48.

203. *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:63.

204. Cf. Emmanuel, "Punctuation," 176.

205. "Lille, som den er, smutter den vel igjennem, da den skjøtter sig selv og gaaer sin Gang og passer sit Ærinde og kjender sin gaadefulde Vei – til den finder hiin Enkelte, som jeg med Glæde og Taknemmelighed kalder

In 1847, Kierkegaard returned to this theme of the wandering book in *Opbyggelige Taler i forskellige Aand* (Upbuilding talks in various spirits). The foreword to the first part states that the collection “søger hiin Enkelte, til hvem den ganske giver sig hen, af hvem den ønsker at modtages som var den opkommen i hans eget Hjerte; hiin Enkelte, hvem jeg med Glæde og Taknemlighed kalder *min* Læser, hiin Enkelte, der i Villighed læser langsomt, læser gjentagende, og som læser høit—for sin egen Skyld” (seeks that individual, to whom it wholly abandons itself, by whom it wishes to be received as if it had arisen in his own heart; that individual, whom I with joy and thankfulness call *my* reader; that individual, who willingly reads slowly, reads repeatedly, and who reads aloud—for his own sake).<sup>206</sup> Analogizing orality and inwardness, Kierkegaard recommends recitation to his reader as a means of reappropriating what already lies in “hans eget Hjerte” (his own heart). The author hints that this full-throated reading is best performed solo (in a rebuff of tradition), but he also stresses the necessity of reading intensively (in a bow to tradition).<sup>207</sup> After all, the truth in one’s inner self cannot be grasped in its entirety, let alone in one sitting. Therefore, in the foreword to the third part of *Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand*, Kierkegaard asserts that this book “bestemtes ikke til ‘at udfylde Nysgjerrigheden et ledigt Øieblik’” (is not determined “to fill a free moment with curiosity”).<sup>208</sup> Likewise, he admonishes the reader in the preface to each series of *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger. Nogle christelige Overveielser i Talers Form* (Works of love: Some Christian deliberations in the form of talks) that “disse christelige Overveielser, som ere Frugten af megen Overveielse, ville forstaaes langsomt men da ogsaa let, medens de vistnok ville blive meget vanskelige, om Nogen ved flygtig og nysgjerrig gjør sig dem meget vanskelige” (these Christian deliberations, which are the fruit of much deliberation, will be understood slowly but then also easily, while they probably will become quite difficult if someone by cursory and inquisitive reading makes them quite difficult for himself).<sup>209</sup> In sum, Kierkegaard’s readers can only begin to comprehend *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger* by leaving time for soul-searching and reflection, since the work’s true meaning lies not in the author’s mind or on the page, but in the readers themselves.

It should by now be clear that we are never permitted to close one of Kierkegaard’s books after a single perusal, and contemplate a fixed, objective truth. We may, however, draw closer and closer to the truths within us if we read repeatedly and out loud. Unlike the teleological dialectics of Hegel (which are supposed to grind to a halt at *das absolute Wissen*), Kierkegaard’s open dialectics mimic those of Schlegel in their irresolution, as there is no autonomous author to serve as a full stop, as Barthes would have it. Aesthetically, the result is the ironic book, which seesaws from the outer to the inner, sometimes quite deliberately so. But whereas Schlegel and his cohort

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*min* Læser.” (Small as it is, it surely scurries through when it shifts for itself and goes its way and minds its errand and recognizes its mysterious way—until it finds that individual, whom I with joy and thankfulness call *my* reader.) *Tre opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:63.

206. *Taler i forskjellig Aand*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:121.

207. Following the historian Rolf Engelsing, scholars of reading tended to imagine that “extensive” reading largely replaced “intensive” reading after the “Leserevolution” (reading-revolution) of the mid-eighteenth century. As Robert Darnton writes, “Before this ‘*Leserevolution*,’ readers tended to work laboriously through a small number of texts, especially the Bible, over and over again. Afterwards, they raced through all kinds of material, seeking amusement rather than edification.” Cf. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, who write of the *Leserevolution*, “This highly disputable thesis has in fact been disputed.” Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” in *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 203; Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, introduction to *A History of Reading*, 25–26.

208. *Taler i forskjellig Aand*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 8:317

209. *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger. Nogle christelige Overveielser i Talers Form*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 9:11, 9:211.

hover between the inscribed fragment's surface and the depths of the absolute, Kierkegaard and his readers pivot between the superficiality of the page and the profundity of the self. It is here, in the self, that each of us can discover what we might call “en Sandhed, som er Sandhed *for mig*” (a truth that is truth *for me*),<sup>210</sup> even if—ironically—this truth is ultimately provisional.

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210. *Journalen AA*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 17:24.

## POSTSCRIPT

For orthodox Kierkegaardians, the aesthetic is the bottommost stage on life's way, and it must be set aside if one is to ascend to the more rarified ethical and religious spheres.<sup>1</sup> However, according to James Collins, "Kierkegaard did not intend this schema to be understood according to any temporal order, nor did he mean that one way of life is left completely behind, as one would leave behind the lower steps of a ladder."<sup>2</sup> And while the existence of the aesthete—that ne'er-do-well worshipper of art, the erotic, and the erotic-as-art—is central to Kierkegaard's concept of the aesthetic, he never lost sight of the etymology of the word, which had entered the vernacular through Alexander Baumgarten's 1750–58 Latin treatise *Aesthetica*. Baumgarten derived his titular term from the Greek *αἰσθητά*, which means simply "hvad der kan sanses" (that which can be sensed).<sup>3</sup> In the title of my dissertation, aesthetics has been understood in this most basic—for lack of a better word—sense. Unlike Kant, who focused on the non-conceptual "freie Schönheiten" (free beauties) of visual art,<sup>4</sup> Kierkegaard developed a dynamic literary aesthetics over the course of his authorship, in which the sensuous experience of the book-object fluctuates with vocalizations or the reflective hallucinations of the text, in a "fractured" or "ironic dialectic"<sup>5</sup> (hence what I call the ironic book).

The aesthetic, then, is far more than a stunted existential position for Kierkegaard; it is also a necessary presupposition for communication. Theodor W. Adorno brushes against this idea in his *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. In addition to the aesthetic as "the realm of art works and the theory of art," and "as department,"<sup>6</sup> Adorno writes of a "third sense of 'aesthetic' . . . somewhat peripheral to Kierkegaard's usual use of language. It is found only in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Here 'aesthetic' refers to the form of subjective communication and

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1. For example, in *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness*, Stephen N. Dunning writes, "Thus there is a total of three stages, and they constitute a progression (although without any implication of logical 'necessity'), rather than utterly discrete or diffusely overlapping spheres." Much more recently, Fred Rush made essentially the same claim in his *Irony and Idealism*: "We shall assume that Kierkegaard holds that the sequence of these transitions is necessarily cumulative (i.e. that one cannot pass over a stage and still transition between spheres) and progressive (i.e. that each subdivision within a sphere or each sphere is itself superior in some way to its predecessor)." Stephen N. Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness: A Structural Analysis of the Theory of Stages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4; Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 216.

2. James Collins, *The Mind of Kierkegaard* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 45.

3. *Ordbog over det danske sprog*, s.v. "Æstetik," <https://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=%C3%A6stetik&tab=for>.

4. "In der Beurteilung einer freien Schönheit (der bloßen Form nach) ist das Geschmacksurteil rein. Es ist kein Begriff von irgend einem Zwecke, wozu das Mannigfaltige dem gegebenen Objekte dienen, und was dieses also vorstellen sollte, vorausgesetzt; wodurch die Freiheit der Einbildungskraft, die in Beobachtung der Gestalt gleichsam spielt, nur eingeschränkt werden würde." (In the judging of a free beauty [according to mere form] the judgment of taste is pure. No concept of any end for which the manifold should serve the given object and thus which the latter should represent is presupposed, by which the imagination, which is as it were at play in the observation of the shape, would merely be restricted.) Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, ed. Wilhelm Weichel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 147; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), 114.

5. Paul Ricoeur and Fred Rush use these different terms for the same dialectical figure, respectively. Paul Ricoeur. "Philosophy after Kierkegaard," in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, ed. Jonathan Rée and Jane Chamberlain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 10ff; Rush, *Irony and Idealism*, 10.

6. Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 61 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 14.

justifies itself on the basis of Kierkegaard's concept of existence. . . . Accordingly, aesthetic means precisely the manner in which inwardness—as the mode of subjective communication—is manifested, since it cannot, according to his doctrine, become 'objective.'"<sup>7</sup> "Subjective communication" is ostensibly synonymous with "indirecte Meddelelse" (indirect communication),<sup>8</sup> and *indirecte Meddelelse* is founded on the ironic book's aesthetics of fracture, as we saw in the final chapter. Whereas the authors of "the disappearing book"<sup>9</sup> eclipsed the book-object, presenting themselves as pure voice, meaning, or presence,<sup>10</sup> Kierkegaard chose to hide behind a series of pseudonyms, or otherwise refused to sermonize.<sup>11</sup> In the vacuum left by his absence, an ironic, oscillating dialectic between the book and the reader's inward truth arises.<sup>12</sup> An alternation between the book's spatial and temporal modalities is the aesthetic complement to Kierkegaard's maieutic epistemology.

The Jehovah of 1843's *Frygt og Bæven* (Fear and trembling) was apparently able to command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac without the aid of a sensuous medium;<sup>13</sup> and yet, the next year in *Philosophiske Smuler* (Philosophical fragments), Kierkegaard's pseudonym Johannes Climacus was already stressing the indispensability of "Anledningen" (the occasion),<sup>14</sup> whether that meant seeing "en ny Lærer: Guden i Tiden" (a new teacher: the god in time),<sup>15</sup> or reading about Jesus' time on Earth.<sup>16</sup> As Peder Jothen puts it in *Kierkegaard, Aesthetics, and Selfhood: The*

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7. Adorno, *Kierkegaard*, 15.

8. Nowhere in the *Efterskrift* does the pseudonym Johannes Climacus use the phrase *subjektive Meddelelse* (subjective communication). However, under the heading "Den subjektive eksisterende Tænker er opmærksom paa Meddelelsens Dialektik" (The subjective existing thinker is attentive to the dialectic of communication), he writes that, unlike the objective thinker, "er den subjektive Tænker som eksisterende væsentligen interesseret i sin egen Tænkning, er eksisterende i den. Derfor har hans Tænkning en anden Art af Reflexion, nemlig Inderlighedens, Besiddelsens, hvorved den tilhører Subjektet og ingen Anden" (the subjective thinker is, as existing, essentially interested in his own thinking, is existing in it. Therefore, his thought has another sort of reflection, namely that of inwardness, of possession, by which it belongs to the subject and no one else). Adorno quotes this passage in reference to "subjective communication." *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret, 2014), 7:73; Adorno, *Kierkegaard*, 15.

9. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks: 1800 / 1900*, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 54.

10. For Friedrich Kittler, the disappearing book's archetype is the encounter between Faust and the spirit of the Nostradamus manuscript in the first scene of Goethe's drama. Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, 5. See *Goethe's Faust: Part One and Selections from Part Two*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), lines 418–513.

11. Kierkegaard stresses repeatedly that he "ikke har Myndighed til at prædike" (does not have authority to preach) and "ingenlunde fordrer at være Lærer" (by no means demands to be a teacher). E.g., *To opbyggelige Taler, 1843*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 5:13.

12. "Socrates' maieutics can be said to consist in asking questions in order to *remind* the recipient of what he already knows" (19). "The role of the Christian Socrates is to tease out the absolute paradox: a truth *latent within* but which *did not originate in*, human nature" (20). Jamie Turnbull, "Communication/Indirect Communication," in *Classicism to Enthusiasm*, tome 2 of *Kierkegaard's Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

13. *Frygt og Bæven. Dialektisk Lyrik*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:107, 4:115. Cf. Gen. 22:2.

14. *Philosophiske Smuler; eller: En Smule Philosophi*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:220ff.

15. *Philosophiske Smuler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:306.

16. "Selv om den samtidige Generation ikke havde efterladt Andet end disse Ord: 'vi have troet at Guden Anno det og det har viist sig i en Tjeners ringe Skikkelse, har levet og lært iblandt os, og er derpaa død' – det er mere end nok." (Even if the contemporary generation had not left anything other than these words: "We have believed that the god *anno* this and that has appeared in the poor figure of a servant, has lived and taught amongst us, and has thereupon died.) *Philosophiske Smuler*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 4:300.

*Art of Subjectivity*, “Christ has an aesthetic dimension.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, the ethical-religious can only be made legible through the aesthetic, as in through the book.

His contempt for effete bibliophiles notwithstanding, Kierkegaard engineered a sophisticated aesthetics of the book, not merely in terms of typography and ornamentation, but in the fundamental sense of *αισθητά*. Nevertheless, he has been misconstrued as a foe of the aesthetic,<sup>18</sup> and thus his relation to this concept needs to be reassessed, given its vital role in his dialectics of communication.

This dissertation has also uncovered the neglected affinities between philosophy and bibliography, two fields long considered to be at odds with one another.<sup>19</sup> One of the few Anglophone philosophers to transcend the bibliophobia of his field is Daniel Selcer, who, in *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription*, favors “notions of early modern materiality” over what he calls “the Platonic model,” which “understands the book and its pages as a mere container for a text that transcends it.”<sup>20</sup> To gain the upper hand against Johan Ludvig Heiberg and Peder Ludvig Møller, Kierkegaard doubled down on this Platonic idealism in the satirical writings against the *Nytaarsgaver* (New year’s gifts), and yet his own books (as objects) were just as meticulously designed as these precious curios,<sup>21</sup> albeit much less ostentatiously.

Rereading Kierkegaard, we can now apply what Jerome J. McGann calls “a materialist hermeneutics,”<sup>22</sup> and “explore such matters as ink, typeface, paper, and various other phenomena which are crucial to understanding textuality.”<sup>23</sup> By now, it should be abundantly clear that such bibliographical analyses are not concomitant, but essential. Pointing ahead to a truth already in our

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17. Peder Jothen, *Kierkegaard, Aesthetics, and Selfhood: The Art of Subjectivity* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3.

18. Eric Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 5ff.

19. According to the Platonic Socrates, writing “will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own” (275a). “You know,” Socrates continues, “writing shares a strange feature with painting. The offsprings of painting stand there as if they were alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent. The same is true of written words. You’d think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever” (275d–e). Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

20. Daniel Selcer, *Philosophy and the Book: Early Modern Figures of Material Inscription* (London: Continuum, 2010), 200.

21. “Når Kierkegaard skrev sine bogmanuskripter, må han have set den trykte side for sig. Sammen med en klar forestilling om bogens format og titelbladets typografi synes han at have haft en udviklet fornemmelse for, hvordan overskrifter, fremhævelser og andre differentieringer i satsen burde håndteres.” (When Kierkegaard was writing his book manuscripts, he must have seen the printed page in front of him. Together with a clear notion of the book’s format and the title page’s typography, he seems to have had a developed feeling for how headings, emphasis, and other differentiations in type ought to be handled.) Bent Rohde and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, “Kierkegaard som bogproducent, tilrettelægger og forlægger,” in *Tekstspejle. Om Søren Kierkegaard som bogtilrettelægger, boggiver og bogsamler* ([Esbjerg]: Rosendahl, 2002), 16.

22. Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 15.

23. McGann conceives of “textuality” as a synthesis of the material and the ideal, rather than as a purely linguistic construction, as I have throughout this dissertation. In this, I follow Leah Price and Karin Sanders. McGann, *Textual Condition*, 13; Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 20; Karin Sanders, “Bogen som ting og skulptur,” *Edda* 100, no. 4 (2013): 315, [https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen\\_som\\_ting\\_og\\_skulptur](https://www.idunn.no/edda/2013/04/bogen_som_ting_og_skulptur).

possession, the aesthetics of the book are, as Kierkegaard once wrote of irony, “ikke Sandheden, men Veien” (not the truth, but the way).<sup>24</sup>

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24. *Om Begrebet Ironi med stadigt Hensyn til Socrates*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 1:356.

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