

Julius Petersen offentliggjorde først sit bevis i sin doktorafhandling *Om Ligninger, der løses ved Kvadratrødder, med Afbendelse på Problemers Løsning ved Passer og Lineal* (Ferslew, Kjøbenhavn, 1871). Beviset blev kendt i udlandet da Petersen gengav det i bogen *De algebræiske Ligningers Teori* (Høst & Son, 1877), som blev oversat til fransk samme år: *Théorie des équations algébriques* (Høst & Son, 1877) og til tysk året efter: *Theorie der algebraischen Gleichungen* (Høst & Son, 1878).

Felix Klein: *Vorträge über ausgewählte Fragen der Elementargeometrie* (Teubner, 1895). Kleins bevis er en mere udførlig version af Petersens bevis. En mere udførlig diskussion kan findes i Jesper Lützen: *Why was Wantzel Overlooked for a Century*, som endnu ikke er udkommet.

Hilbert op. cit. P. 297 i *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*.

35. Isaac Newton: *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Reg. Soc. London, 1687). Lemma 28. Dette bevis er meget omdiskuteret. Se Bruce Pourciau: "The Integrability of Ovals: Newton's Lemma 28 and its Counterexamples" in *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 55 (2001), pp. 479-499.
36. Se Henk Bos: *Redefining Geometrical Exactness* (Springer, 2001), pp. 37 og 349.
37. Philip J. Davis og David Park (ed): *No Way. The Nature of the Impossible* (Freeman and Co. 1987).
38. John D. Barrow: *Impossibility. The Limits of Science and the Science of Limits* (Oxford University Press, 1998).
39. John Brockman: *The Unknown and the Unknowable: A Talk with Joseph Traub*. http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/traub/traub_p2.html (4. august 2008).

JON STEWART

The Finite and the Infinite: Johan Ludvig Heiberg's Enigmatic Relation to Hegelianism

The Danish poet and philosopher Johan Ludvig Heiberg describes what he refers to as "the demon of distraction" of his youth. According to his own autobiographical statements, this "demon" prevented him from appreciating the truth and value of finite things. Heiberg also indicates that his encounter with Hegel's philosophy in 1824 provided him with the solution to this problem. What exactly it was in Hegel's philosophy that Heiberg found so attractive has long been a fixed point of speculation in the literature. The present article argues that Hegel's dialectical understanding of the finite and the infinite provided Heiberg with the solution to this problem. In several of his works, both poetical and philosophical, Heiberg returns to this point, arguing that the way to overcome the contemporary crisis of subjectivism, relativism and nihilism is to understand the infinite truth in the immanent finite sphere. He thus takes his own crisis of youth to be characteristic of the general crisis of the age, which, after his encounter with Hegel's philosophy, he dedicates himself to combating.

Johan Ludvig Heiberg's many talents cannot be adequately captured under a single rubric or confined to a single sphere of activity. He is best known today as a poet and a dramatist, the author of classic works such as *Elves' Hill* and *The Soul after Death*. However, the other aspects of his intellectual activity and authorship have fallen into neglect. His works on astronomy and other natural sciences, for example, are rarely treated in the secondary literature. In this paper I wish to address another of the lesser-known aspects of Heiberg's work, namely, his philosophy.

Perhaps one reason that this aspect of his thought has been neglected is that he has often been regarded as, in the words of Sibbern, a "dilettante in philosophy."¹ This caricature was also cultivated by Søren Kierkegaard, who regularly mocked Heiberg's philosophical endeavors, famously, yet enigmatically, referring to him as "Dr. Hjortespising" in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.² To this day many people still regard him as a second-rate imitator

of German philosophical systems. However, this criticism misses the point. Heiberg's work entailed applying German philosophy to fields such as criticism, aesthetics, poetry and theater. Since few, if any, of his efforts were directed toward philosophy for its own sake, it is not a question of whether he was in his own right a great philosopher. He was simply using philosophical tools to pursue a different agenda (indeed, in a manner not entirely unlike Kierkegaard).

His main philosophical point of orientation was G.W.F. Hegel, whom he met in Berlin in 1824. In his so-called "Autobiographical Fragments," penned in 1839, He describes the revelation by means of which he finally came to grasp Hegel's philosophy. He explains the situation thus as he was returning from Berlin to Kiel:

While resting on the way home in Hamburg, where I stayed six weeks before returning to Kiel, and during that time was constantly pondering what was still obscure to me, it happened one day that, sitting in my room in the König von England with Hegel on my table and in my thoughts, and listening at the same time to the beautiful psalms which sounded almost unceasingly from the chimes of St. Peter's Church, suddenly, in a way which I have experienced neither before nor since, I was gripped by a momentary inner vision, as if a flash of lightning had illuminated the whole region for me and awakened in me the theretofore hidden central thought. From this moment the system in its broad outline was clear to me, and I was completely convinced that I had grasped it in its innermost core, regardless of however much there might be in the details which I still had not made my own and perhaps never will. I can say, in truth, that that strange moment was just about the most important juncture in my life, for it gave me a peace, a security, a self-confidence which I had never known theretofore.³

He regarded this experience as the turning point in his life and claims that it influenced all of his subsequent writings. Hegel's philosophy became the guiding inspiration for his later works in any number of different fields. "It is certain," he writes, "that the new light which dawned on me has had a definite influence on all my subsequent undertakings, even on those where one would not suspect a connection."⁴ One of these "undertakings" was his work at the Royal Theater, a place where one would hardly expect to find Hegel's philosophy resented. To put this statement in perspective, one should note that while Heiberg goes on for more than two full pages about Hegel with this enthusiastic tone, his wife, the celebrated actress, Johanne Luise Heiberg, receives only a few brief lines.⁵

In a passage from the Preface to the first edition of his collected prose writings in 1841, Heiberg again comes to talk about the significance that Hegel's philosophy had for his intellectual development. He explains as follows why he selected his treatise, *On Human Freedom*,⁶ as the first piece in the collection:

it is not without significance that this collection begins with my treatise *On Human Freedom*, which is more than sixteen years old. For I regard this work with justice as the first step on the road of my authorship as a prose writer. ... But this treatise also shows itself as the *correct* beginning since it—not to mention having the historical distinction of being the first work in Danish in which Hegel's philosophical ideas were communicated to the reading public—was the first treatise in which I set forth a definite view, to which I tied all of my following works since then, and this not merely directly, namely in the other genuinely philosophical treatises, but also indirectly, since all the rest of my more significant shorter works, and in particular the aesthetic and critical ones, expressed the same view, each in its particular direction, or was closely affiliated with it at least with an invisible tie of kinship.⁷

Heiberg thus ascribes to Hegel's philosophy the origin of and inspiration for his works in other fields. Given the breadth of his intellectual activity, the strength of a statement of this kind is not to be underestimated.

The question that I wish to address is what was it about Hegel's philosophy that Heiberg found so attractive and so inspiring. Although he had little philosophical training prior to meeting Hegel in Berlin, Heiberg was nonetheless profoundly and irrevocably influenced by the encounter. What did Heiberg see in Hegel's philosophy? How can we explain the zealous tone in his account of his philosophical revelation? Before attempting to answer these questions, we must first look at some background information about Heiberg and his understanding of Hegel.

I. Heiberg's "Demon of Distraction"

In his "Autobiographical Fragments," Heiberg recounts how he, as a young man, struggled with what he refers to as his "demon of distraction."⁸ His interests in a variety of different fields made it difficult for him to focus on any single one of them for an extended period of time. While this versatile disposition proved to be an asset in later life, for the young Heiberg it was somewhat problematic since he had great difficulties making up his mind about what his ultimate vocation should be.

He describes his situation as a student at the University of Copenhagen: "I meandered here and there in different studies as I pleased but concentrated particularly on poetry and aesthetics."⁹ After he graduated in 1817 with a dissertation on Calderón,¹⁰ his interests remained as diverse as ever. After receiving his degree, Heiberg still had no clear plan for his life. In his "Autobiographical Fragments" he explains the different directions that he was pulled in:

During the entire period discussed here, I had indeed been so distracted that by an age of more than twenty-seven years, I had yet to come to any firm decision about what should actually be my field in the world. All my earlier poetic works had been published, just as had my doctoral dissertation (on Calderón) which concerned aesthetics; a play of mine (*Tycho Brahe's Prophecy*) had been performed...in 1819, and yet I still did not know whether I should be a poet and an aesthetic theorist, a doctor, a natural historian, a diplomat or even a surveyor or registered land inspector. For one person counseled me to do one thing and another to do another. On the one hand, I had studied medicine for two years, yet, on the other, from my early childhood on I had occupied myself quite *con amore* with natural history and had gained a very good knowledge of it. Then again, the great influence which my first acquaintance with geometry... had exercised on my entire course of thinking, brought some of my superiors to the idea that I should become a practicing geometer, to which end I began to receive instruction in map-sketching.... Finally, my patronesses...wanted to persuade me to seek appointment in the diplomatic field, to which they believed me remarkably well-suited, and with this intention they set to work the ambassadors of Austria and Naples.¹¹

Unable to dedicate himself to any of these options, he instead went to Paris, where his exiled father was living. A stay in the French capital would, it was doubtless thought, give him the time and peace to consider more precisely what he actually wanted to do with his life.

Thus, Heiberg spent the years 1819-22 in Paris.¹² There he was obliged to earn a living by various means, which included working as a journalist, and even giving guitar lessons. Far from helping him to decide what profession to pursue, the stay in Paris seems only to have made the problem more acute. He writes, "However, here too I was followed by my demon of distraction, in that I first studied natural history, as if that would be my field, then the theater, as if I had predicted that I would become a theater poet (at that time I wrote my *Nina*), then finally music, as if I were fated to earn my bread by this art."¹³ Even at this age, Heiberg was an avid drama fan and spent much of his time visiting the different Parisian theaters in order to see what the most popular trends were. He would later introduce French vaudeville to the Danish stage.

In 1822 Heiberg received an appointment as Danish lecturer at the University of Kiel. The two years he spent there were characterized by dissatisfaction and pecuniary need.¹⁴ It is not clear if Heiberg's "demon of distraction" continued to plague him during this period to the same extent as before, but he makes it clear that he was unhappy there. He was still employed in Kiel when he traveled to Berlin, met Hegel, and began to familiarize himself with the Hegelian system. Thus, as he indicates in the passage quoted above, this was the turning point in his life since the discovery of Hegel's philosophy enabled him to still his

demon of distraction. For the first time in his life he felt a sense of "peace, a security, a self-confidence"¹⁵ that the demon had never permitted him to enjoy prior to this time.

Hegel's philosophy is known for its insistence on the system. This system gave Heiberg a structure by means of which he could organize and determine the relative importance of his numerous interests. Many of his Hegelian writings contain structured hierarchies of, for example, the arts or genres of poetry, etc. Once he became comfortable with a system that was sufficiently abstract and comprehensive to accommodate all of his disparate interests, he was no longer obligated to devote himself to one at the expense of the others. There was thus no reason for him to exclude any of his quite varied fields of study since they all found their proper place somewhere in the system.

Thus the young Heiberg was easily distracted and perhaps not particularly focused. The Hegelian philosophy then, presumably in part due to its systematic structure, helped him to overcome his demon of distraction. But this raises a second question: Why was he so distracted in the first place? Why was he unable to focus on a single discipline?

II. Heiberg's Disdain for the Finite

Heiberg notes, in the passage quoted above, that Hegelian philosophy was a profound inspiration to him in the various activities that he pursued: poetry, theater, natural science, and of course philosophy. "It is certain," he writes, "that the new light which dawned on me has had a definite influence on all my subsequent undertakings, even on those where one would not suspect a connection."¹⁶ He then attempts to explain this by referring to the relation of the finite to the infinite:

Thus, for example, I would never have come to write my vaudevilles and in general would never have become a poet for the theater if I had not learned, by means of the Hegelian philosophy, to see the relation of the finite to the infinite and had not won thereby a respect for the finite things which I previously did not have, but which it is impossible for the dramatic poet to do without. If, further, I had not, with the same philosophy, learned to understand the meaning of limitation, I would neither have limited myself nor chosen for my presentation small and limited frameworks, which I had previously disdained.¹⁷

There are a couple of important clues in this passage about the importance of Hegel's thought for Heiberg's development.

First, Heiberg states that as a young man he lacked respect for "finite things." By this he appears to refer to the numerous empirical objects and events that comprise most of what

people experience. The commonplace and transitory nature of such things can make them seem to be of little lasting importance. But Hegel's philosophy teaches that the absolute truth of the Idea is to be found, not beyond, but rather in the midst of such empirical particulars. The trick is of course to be able to discern them and separate them from the bad infinity of genuinely meaningless particulars.

Second, Heiberg, while being pursued by his demon of distraction, seems to have been seeking some grand forum for the presentation of his ideas. He was unwilling to accept "limitation" or otherwise settle for less than his ideal of the "infinite." This need to produce work of nothing less than infinite scope and importance not surprisingly inhibited his ability to produce any work at all. Hegel's philosophy then taught him that genius can also emanate from finite works. In order to produce anything, one must limit oneself. Thus, Heiberg gained a new appreciation for the finite empirical details of the world, which he no longer regarded as trivialities but rather as potential agents of truth and beauty.

III. Hegel's Philosophy: *The Infinite in the Finite*

The interpretation of Heiberg's autobiographical remarks presented above finds support in a number of different works from his literary corpus. There he returns in a variety of different contexts to the question of the relation of the finite to the infinite, limitlessness to limitation.

The lesson that he claims to have learned can be found in several analyses in Hegel's primary texts since it constitutes a fundamental feature of the speculative method as such. Hegel's much disputed method of course follows a three-step process. First some positive position is posited. Then at the second stage this position is negated. But negation can take a number of forms. It can be straightforward indeterminate negation, where the original term is simply denied. This is the form of negation found in classical logic. For example, "south" may be negated with "not south." This negation gives us no positive information about what the true direction is; we know only that it is *not* south. Any position can be negated in this way. This is the stage of nihilism, relativism, irony, etc. Many people, including the young Heiberg, stop at this point.

Hegel's philosophy, however, continues to advance by reconceiving negations as opposites. "South" can also be negated by "north." This new negation not only positively identifies the true direction but permits us to advance to the third stage in which a broader concept (in this case "longitude") encompasses both the original position and its negation. Our original limited and finite concept leads to its opposite and the combination of the two leads to a broader concept. This process can continue to infinity (in our example to "direction," "space," etc.). Far from being without value, the first finite and limited stage is a necessary step in the development of the infinite and helps to define it.

A. Heiberg's "Life and Death"

The lone claim to fame of Franz Howitz (1789-1826) is as the originator of a philosophical dispute that took place in Denmark in 1824 concerning the issue of free will.¹⁸ When Howitz died on April 3, 1826, Heiberg wrote a memorial poem for him that appeared in the *Nyt Aftenblad*.¹⁹ Entitled "Life and Death," the poem reflects Heiberg's newly found appreciation of finite existence.

The poem follows a three-step Hegelian movement. The first step, i.e., the initial positive stage, describes the world of nature, which is developed into ever more complex forms, culminating in human self-consciousness.²⁰ Thus, the basic terms of spirit and nature, human beings and the world are established. The first section of the poem thus seems to be a kind of praise of existence and life. We are cast into the world and are encouraged to enjoy it while it lasts.

The second, negative stage voices a sense of alienation from the world. Since death and destruction are the natural result of everything, it is difficult to find meaning in our finite endeavors. In short, it seems impossible to find truth in a finite world. Here death is viewed as the final word on life:

You viewed the sun of life in the dawn,
But forgot the night descending on the glory of the day;
All life is but an assurance of death.

At birth life enters into a pact with death;
With every step it comes nearer its bridegroom,
An inexperienced bride in a spring-time dress.²¹

We are thus left to yearn for some enduring truth that we will never find in the limited world that we dwell in. Our existence is vain, and we are separated from the truth and the absolute.

The third and final section of the poem resolves the dilemma by suggesting that life and death are part of a greater whole. Death is usually understood (as in the second stage) as something finite and meaningless. However, the proper speculative understanding of it is as the natural, necessary opposite of life. The former view of death is negated in a speculative way, and death and life are now seen to represent a conceptual pair that is dialectically related.

Indeed, we strive on the shore of earthly life
To see in life death and death in life,
But often in vain we seek the truth.

Oh blessed he who after sorrow and grief
 Opens his eye, which previously aimlessly stared,
 And sees the whole as a grand Idea!²²

Heiberg thus enjoins his readers to see "the whole" which consists of the dialectical unity of life and death. Death is not just a limitation; it also gives infinite meaning in its dialectical opposite.

This new conception of death allows us to overcome our sense of meaninglessness and alienation from the world. We are thus reconciled with creation and our own existence. Life and death constitute a natural cycle, with each making possible the other. With this realization, one feels a sense of identification with the world, knowing that existence is not just fleeting but contains something enduring. Heiberg describes someone who has grasped this higher unity as follows: "Then he feels that nothing can disappear / From this circle which encompasses everything, / And that his spirit can connect the whole."²³ Here one sees the same kind of theodicy that one finds in Hegel. The goal of a speculative understanding of, for example, world history is to overcome the sense of alienation that one feels when contemplating the calamitous, seemingly irrational events of history. Hegel argues that, if viewed speculatively, these seeming irrational events form patterns that evince the dialectical progress of the idea of freedom. So also here, an appreciation of the greater whole can help to reconcile us with the fact of our own personal destruction. Heiberg contrasts this positive, speculative stage with the previous negative one: "And death is no longer regarded as the power of time, / No, it is spirit's victory over time, / For time is weak and subordinate to the force."²⁴ Heiberg thus makes a case not for personal immortality but for the immortality of spirit.

Heiberg makes his Hegelian inspiration explicit by drawing an analogy between the conceptual pair of life and death and that of being and nothing, from the beginning of Hegel's logic: "In the birth of the inborn forces, / Everything encompasses its nothing in its breast; / It knows its nothing is attached to its being."²⁵ Coming into existence and going out of existence are simply the mirror image of the same general concept: "And one dares bravely surrender to death: / For what endures, ceases to exist; but the same law / Commands that what ceases to exist, again, endure."²⁶ One should avoid sticking to the one side of these kinds of dialectical structures. The truth lies not on the one finite side or the other, but in their infinite unity.

With this poem, Heiberg finds consolation after the death of a friend by applying the same Hegelian methodology that he used to reconcile his demon of distraction. In this *piece d'occasion* one can thus see the same motif that Heiberg uses to portray his own intellectual development. This is a good example of how he takes Hegel's philosophy and imports it into an entirely different area and context, giving it poetic expression in accordance with his own agenda.

B. Heiberg's "A Few Words about the Infinite"

Another text where Heiberg addresses the issue of the relation of the finite to the infinite is his short essay from 1828, "A Few Words about the Infinite."²⁷ The piece begins with a brief sketch of the contradiction that he believes many of his contemporaries find themselves in. On the one hand, they have become skeptics and do not believe that they, as limited, finite beings, can know the truth. On the other hand, they nonetheless claim to know the truth in, for example, the sciences or religion. Although a general skepticism is dominant, people still refuse to give up on the concepts of truth, beauty and God. Heiberg argues that this paradox can be resolved by better understanding the concept of infinity. He writes, "The easiest way to sublimate this *contradiction* and grasp it as a rational *opposition* is to regard both the finite and the infinite as abstractions, which have no real existence individually but only exist in their internal unity so that each is in a certain respect the opposite of itself."²⁸ Again, the infinite should be understood as conditioned by the finite and thus as its dialectical other.

This speculative conception of infinity stands in contrast to the common sense view, which Hegel called "the bad infinity" and Heiberg labels "the *continuous* infinity."²⁹ This view understands infinity not in its necessary relation to the finite but as the endless repetition involved in adding one new unit after another. This conception of an infinity of particulars leads to skepticism and nihilism. He explains, "This view is manifest when one speaks of the insignificance of all human affairs and the imperfection of all human arrangements, or when one praises unattainable ideals and refers to the infinite perfectibility of human beings, in the sense of a continuous progress in time towards perfection which is never attained."³⁰ In the face of the infinity of particulars, all human activity looks hopelessly trivial.

Heiberg believes that by conceiving infinity in Hegel's speculative manner, we can overcome the skeptical doubts of the age. He emphasizes that the finite and the infinite are mutually related, with the one conditioning the other. When we understand that our experience of finite particulars affords us access to the infinite, we can better appreciate the value of these particulars and restore our sense of truth and beauty. Heiberg claims that this new conception of infinity will help us to a more sophisticated and stable sense of piety: "If one admires the Creator in space, it is not because of the infinite number or the infinite extension of His works, for that which could create one work could also easily produce the rest; but one admires the creating force, as something discrete, irrespective of the quantity of what has been created."³¹ He thinks that it is obtuse to simply gape at the infinity of particulars and to hope by this means for some cheap form of edification or humility. It is far worthier to grasp the divine in terms of a speculative whole, which creates and rules the universe.

Nihilism is the result of disdain for transitory finite particulars. It can be overcome by understanding infinity as an integrated whole rather than an endless series of particulars. He writes,

Our perception of greater or lesser perfection in things results from the fact that we observe their progress in time, that is, in the continuous infinity. Even

here the philosophical view must seek the discrete, for only there can it find repose. It is worthier and far more elevated to conceive infinity in the most despised and most finite things (it is this which makes Goethe great as a poet), than to constantly lead thought toward the beyond and the unattainable.³²

The idea here is that by simply focusing on the transitory element of existence, we implicitly imply that there is no enduring element or that whatever endures lies in some other sphere beyond our finite world.

As in "Life and Death" Heiberg contends that infinity is best understood in terms of Hegel's three stage dialectic. He explains,

To assign what has been set forth here to the conceptual triplicity which runs through all of philosophy, the finite is the first, immediate standpoint; the continuous infinity is nothing other than the reflection of the finite, which, when it finds a limit, naturally goes beyond it; and the speculative moment is the discrete infinity, which after having received an infinite content, returns to the form of the finite.³³

Here again he seems to trace his own autobiographical development. At each of the three stages, the notion of infinity plays an important role, each time being revised conceptually. The second stage is characterized as the stage of modern crisis: relativism, nihilism, and skepticism. The solution appears at the third stage, where Hegel's speculative dialectic supplies a new higher position. Heiberg presents a similar analysis of this concept in his Hegelian logic from 1832, *Outline of the Philosophy of Philosophy or Speculative Logic*.³⁴ This anticipates the main lines of his short monograph, *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*.

C. Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy*

In his treatise from 1833, *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, Heiberg again identifies the great cultural crisis of his day as a loss of belief in truth, beauty and God. Since the Enlightenment, people have become skeptics about anything that cannot be empirically tested, quantified and confirmed. The absolute has been vanquished, leaving only a plurality of meaningless, finite particulars. This has resulted, he argues, in a general sense of alienation from both culture and the world. One response is to attempt to preserve the absolute by transporting it to some other sphere. One such attempt is the argument that truth, beauty and the divine exist in a realm beyond what we can perceive and are thus not subject to empirical justification. Heiberg explains: "Religion, art, and poetry, since they were not able to posit themselves in the undertakings of the age, necessarily had to posit themselves beyond them."³⁵ While this might seem at first glance to be a good strategy of defense, it nevertheless

only serves to enhance the sense of alienation. By positing truth and beauty in the beyond, the advocates of this view are essentially saying that we have no access to them and are indeed forever condemned to ignorance and error. Thus, instead of solving the problem, they ultimately make it more serious. Since the truth lies in the beyond, our lives in this sphere appear entirely meaningless and trivial.

The solution to this crisis is to restore truth and beauty to the sphere of our existence. Only in this way can they be known and enjoyed, and thus consign meaning to our lives. We must bring the objects of the transcendent sphere down to earth, where they can be meaningful for human existence. Heiberg explains, "Thus, the infinite, having departed from our finite relation, can only be won back by seeing these relations in their *truth*, i.e., recognizing them as striving toward philosophy."³⁶ This is the key to overcoming the crisis of alienation. Again we must learn to see the infinite, not in the infinite beyond, but in the finite particulars. This is the task of philosophy:

Only philosophy can go into the many details of our finite goals, particularly our political ones. Only it can see their tendency toward the infinite and, with this knowledge, clarify their obscure aspects. Only it is in a position to sublimate them without destroying them; on the contrary, in their sublation to the infinite it affirms their validity. In this manner our finite undertaking becomes grafted into the infinite, the human into the divine, and the limitation has disappeared; our sciences become philosophy, and our state wins back its regulating form.³⁷

Philosophy, namely, Hegel's philosophy holds the key since it teaches us how to recognize the enduring truth in the midst of finite things in the different spheres of culture. Heiberg thus makes the claim that philosophy will restore beauty to art and God to religion by bringing them back from the realm of the transcendent. He continues,

But just as philosophy confirms the legitimacy of our finite undertakings, specifically by showing how the infinite is their goal, so also, by the same action, it reinvests the infinite in its rights by determining it as the goal, and thereby, as it were, giving it an estate in the actual world. Far from wanting to make art, poetry and religion superfluous, on the contrary, philosophy wants to create for them recognition in actuality. It wants to do this for its own sake, since it cannot do without them. If at the moment they lack this recognition, it is not because people doubt the truth as substance but only because they question whether it is contained in the contingent forms in which these activities present it.³⁸

Philosophy shows the infinite element in our "finite undertakings." This is precisely what Heiberg lacked as a young man. The reason for his demon of distraction was an inability to

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only serves to enhance the sense of alienation. By positing truth and beauty in the beyond, the advocates of this view are essentially saying that we have no access to them and are indeed forever condemned to ignorance and error. Thus, instead of solving the problem, they ultimately make it more serious. Since the truth lies in the beyond, our lives in this sphere appear entirely meaningless and trivial.

The solution to this crisis is to restore truth and beauty to the sphere of our existence. Only in this way can they be known and enjoyed, and thus consign meaning to our lives. We must bring the objects of the transcendent sphere down to earth, where they can be meaningful for human existence. Heiberg explains, "Thus, the infinite, having departed from our finite relation, can only be won back by seeing these relations in their *truth*, i.e., recognizing them as striving toward philosophy."³⁶ This is the key to overcoming the crisis of alienation. Again we must learn to see the infinite, not in the infinite beyond, but in the finite particulars. This is the task of philosophy:

Only philosophy can go into the many details of our finite goals, particularly our political ones. Only it can see their tendency toward the infinite and, with this knowledge, clarify their obscure aspects. Only it is in a position to sublimate them without destroying them; on the contrary, in their sublation to the infinite it affirms their validity. In this manner our finite undertaking becomes grafted into the infinite, the human into the divine, and the limitation has disappeared; our sciences become philosophy, and our state wins back its regulating form.³⁷

Philosophy, namely, Hegel's philosophy holds the key since it teaches us how to recognize the enduring truth in the midst of finite things in the different spheres of culture. Heiberg thus makes the claim that philosophy will restore beauty to art and God to religion by bringing them back from the realm of the transcendent. He continues,

But just as philosophy confirms the legitimacy of our finite undertakings, specifically by showing how the infinite is their goal, so also, by the same action, it reinvests the infinite in its rights by determining it as the goal, and thereby, as it were, giving it an estate in the actual world. Far from wanting to make art, poetry and religion superfluous, on the contrary, philosophy wants to create for them recognition in actuality. It wants to do this for its own sake, since it cannot do without them. If at the moment they lack this recognition, it is not because people doubt the truth as substance but only because they question whether it is contained in the contingent forms in which these activities present it.³⁸

Philosophy shows the infinite element in our "finite undertakings." This is precisely what Heiberg lacked as a young man. The reason for his demon of distraction was an inability to

value the importance of his various "finite undertakings." After realizing the true value of them via Hegel's philosophy, he was able to pursue his interests in a meaningful way.

The second part of this treatise is dedicated to an analysis of literary criticism. Here Heiberg runs through a number of writers and sorts them out according to their credentials as "speculative poets."³⁹ His favorites are Dante, Calderón and Goethe. Indeed, he regards Goethe as the artistic parallel to Hegel. He explains that speculative poetry distinguishes itself from realist or empirical poetry since the former "lets the finite lose itself in the infinite or presents the finite, not for its own sake, but as a vehicle for the presentation of the infinite."⁴⁰ He explains that the realists, among whom he counts Shakespeare and Walter Scott,⁴¹ dwell on the finite things and fail to see the deeper enduring truth that is infinite.⁴² In an extended encomium for Goethe, Heiberg explains what makes him a great speculative poet:

all of his portrayals both of characters and of events are kept as subordinate moments in the unity, as finitudes, which are only valid inside their limits. Only when they are seen in this way, are they seen in their sublation, and therefore in their truth. However, he effects this sublation, unlike Dante and Calderón, with a very abstract perception of the finite in universality. On the contrary, no one goes into more details of nature and human life than he. No one lingers with greater desire on all our finite determinations and relations. Indeed, he has taught us that poetry, without becoming either trivial or unpopular, can go much more deeply into these details, determinations and relations than had previously been suspected. What is grandiose, what is imposing, in Goethe is thus seen in the love with which he seems to lose himself in these finitudes, while he suddenly surprises us by standing above them and recognizing them for what they are.⁴³

While he meticulously explores the particular, Goethe never loses sight of the universal. By keeping a dialectical balance between the finite and the infinite, Goethe thus does in literature what Hegel does in philosophy. Heiberg identifies with Goethe for his ability to show the enduring truth of works of literature. In short, Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age* should, like the other texts discussed here, be interpreted autobiographically.

Given Heiberg's own autobiographical accounts of what he found in Hegel's philosophy and given the recurrent motif of the dialectical relation of the finite to the infinite in his works, it seems safe to conclude that this is the key to understanding his relation to Hegel or, perhaps better, his interpretation of Hegel. As a young man, Heiberg experienced a crisis of distraction characterized by relativism, nihilism and subjectivism. He later came to believe it was not his unique personal experience but rather a general crisis of his age. After overcoming his personal crisis by means of Hegel's philosophy, he made it his mission to share that remedy with his contemporaries.

Notes

1. Frederik Christian Sibbern: *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser formæmelig om Hegels Philosophie, betragtet i Forhold til vor Tid* (C.A. Reitzel, 1838), pp. 8f.
2. Kierkegaard: *CUP1*, p. 184; *SKS*, vol. 7, p. 169. (*CUP1* = *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, vols. 1-2, trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton University Press, 1992), vol. 1. *SKS* = *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, vols. 1-28, K1-K28, ed. by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Jette Knudsen, Johnny Kondrup and Alastair McKinnon. (Gad Publishers, 1997-).)
3. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in his: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11 (C.A. Reitzel, 1861-62), vol. 11, p. 500f.; *OSP*, p. 65. (*OSP* = *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart (C.A. Reitzel, 2005) (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 1)). For a discussion of this famous passage, see Henning Fenger: *The Heibergs*, trans. by Frederick J. Marker (Twayne Publishers Inc., 1971), p. 73. Niels Thulstrup: *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, trans. by George L. Stengren (Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 14-7. Grete Borsand Heyerdahl: 'Den filosofiske omvendelse, eller: Hvordan blir man hegelianer, eller: Idéhistorie i praksis', in her: *Idéhistoriske smuler* (Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1979), pp. 116-33. All references to Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter* are to this edition from 1861-62, unless otherwise noted.
4. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, p. 501; *OSP*, p. 66.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 503; *OSP*, p. 67.
6. Heiberg: *Om den menneskelige Frihed. I Anledning af de nyeste Stridigheder over denne Gjenstand* (Kiel, Universitäts-Boghandlung, 1824). (Reprinted in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 1, pp. 1-110.)
7. Heiberg: 'Foretale', to *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-3 (J.H. Schubothes Boghandling, 1841-43), vol. 1, p. xiv. (Reprinted in Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11 (C.A. Reitzel, 1861-62), vol. 10, p. 590.)
8. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, p. 495; *OSP*, p. 62.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 489f.; *OSP*, p. 58.
10. Johannes Ludovicus Heiberg: *De poësis dramaticae genere hispanico, et praesertim de Petro Calderone de la Barca, principe dramaturgum* (Popp, 1817). (Reprinted in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, pp. 1-172.)
11. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, pp. 491f.; *OSP*, p. 59f.
12. See Henning Fenger: 'Jean-Louis Heiberg et son premier séjour à Paris', in: *Rencontres et courants littéraires franco-scandinaves, Actes du 7e Congrès International d'Histoire des Littératures Scandinaves (Paris 7-12 juillet 1968)* (Lettres Modernes Minard, 1972), pp. 129-43. See also H. Schwanenflugel, *Peter Andreas Heiberg: En biografisk Studie* (Schuboths, 1891), pp. 566-70.
13. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, pp. 495f.; *OSP*, p. 62.
14. See Heinrich Detering: 'Heibergs Kieler Glück und Elend', in his: *Andersen und andere. Kleine dänisch-deutsche Kulturgeschichte Kiels* (Boyens, 2005), pp. 45-59.
15. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, p. 501; *OSP*, p. 65. Quoted in full above.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 501; *OSP*, p. 66. Quoted in full above.
17. Heiberg: 'Autobiographiske Fragmenter', in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 11, pp. 501f.; *OSP*, p. 66. Compare Heiberg's remarks on this in his *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik. Som Ledetråd ved Forlesninger paa den kongelige militære Højskole* (Andreas Seidelin, 1832), § 32, Remark 2, pp. 14f.; *HSL*, p. 60. "Aesthetics often presents works of poetry as limited modifications of poetry, which cannot go beyond the limit of the poetic genre to which they belong without destroying themselves. By contrast, the genre of poetry, by doing so, only sublates itself and passes over to a new genre of poetry. Thus, the poetic works are ensured of their determinate being. And when criticism recognizes a poet's talent within a certain scope, but thus not outside it, then it is because it regards him as a something not as a nothing, and it is a misunderstanding when one fails to see in this limitation the positive determination of his quality." (*HSL* = *Heiberg's Speculative Logic and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart (C.A. Reitzel, 2006) (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 2)).
18. See Oluf Thomsen: *F. G. Howitz og hans Strid om Villens Frihed* (Levin & Munksgaard, 1924). Harald Høffding: 'F. G. Howitz', in his: *Danske Filosofer* (Gyldendal, 1909), pp. 81-8. O. Waage: 'Strid om den menneskelige Villens Frihed og Sædelærens Grundlag', in his: *J. P. Mynster og de filosofiske Brøgeleer paa hans Tid i Danmark*

- (C. A. Reitzel, 1867), pp. 39-104. Jens Himmelstrup: *Sibbern* (J. H. Schultz, 1934), pp. 175-83. Carl Henrik Koch: 'A. S. Ørsted og striden om viljens frihed', in his: *Den Danske Idealisme 1800-1880* (Gyldendal, 2004), pp. 177-208.
19. Johan Ludvig Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden. Helliget Mindet af Franz Gotthard Howitz', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, 15 (April 15, 1826), pp. 127-8. (Reprinted in: *Poetiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11, Copenhagen (C. A. Reitzel, 1862), vol. 8, pp. 79-88.)
 20. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 127. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 82.)
 21. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 127. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 82.) "Du skæd Livets Sol i Morgenrøden, / Men glemte Natten over Dagens Pragt; / Alt Liv er en Forsikring kun om Døden. // I Fødselen det indgaar Dødens Pragt; / Ved hvert et Skridt sin Brudgom det sig nærmer, / En uerfaren Brud i Fornærsdragt."
 22. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 128. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 86.) "Vel stræbe vi, paa Jordelivets Strande, / I Livet Død, i Døden Liv at sæe, / Men tidt forgievers søge vi det Sande. // O salig den som efter Sorg og Væ / Faaer Øiet op, det stærkt for iblinde, / Og seer det Hele som en stor Idee!"
 23. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 128. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 86.) "Da følger han at intet kan forsvinde / Af denne Kreds som indbefatter Alt, / Og at hans Aand det Hele kan forbinde."
 24. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 128. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 86.) "Og Døden sees ei meer som Tidens Magt, / Nei, den er Aandens Seier over Tiden, / Thi svag er Tiden, Kraften underlagt."
 25. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 128. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 87.) "I Intet i sin Barni, / Det veed, det Intet ved det Væren hefter."
 26. Heiberg: 'Livet og Døden', in: *Nyt Aftenblad*, op. cit., p. 128. (*Poetiske Skrifter*, vol. 8, p. 88.) "Og tør sig modigt Døden overgive: / Thi hvad som blev, for-gaer; men samme Lov / Befaler hvad forgik, igjen at blive."
 27. [Johan Ludvig Heiberg]: 'Et Par Ord om det Uendelige', in: *Kjøbenhavnss flyvende Post* 100 (December 15, 1828), [pp. 413-4]. *CPL*, pp. 163-6. (*CPL* = Heiberg's *Contingency Regarded from the Point of View of Logic and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart (Museum Tusulanum, 2008 (Texts from Golden Age Denmark, vol. 4)).
 28. Ibid., [p. 413]. *CPL*, p. 164.
 29. Ibid., [p. 414]. *CPL*, p. 164.
 30. Ibid., [p. 414]. *CPL*, p. 164.
 31. Ibid., [p. 414]. *CPL*, p. 165.
 32. Ibid., [p. 414]. *CPL*, p. 165.
 33. Ibid., [p. 414]. *CPL*, p. 166.
 34. Heiberg: *Grundtræk til Philosophiens Philosophie eller den speculative Logik*, op. cit., §23; *HSL*, p. 53: "The first member presents the immediate or abstract infinity, an infinity in which nothing may be distinguished, an infinity for the understanding, which seeks to maintain it in its determinacy and difference from the finite. The second member presents the negation of this abstract infinity, i.e., finitude. But its immanent dialectic consists of its own demand to sublimate itself, (which is expressed by the infinite series,...). The third member, which is the negation of the negation, or the positive, thus presents the true infinity, which is the sublation of the abstract infinity through the medium of finitude." See also §20, §34. See also Heiberg: 'Recension over Hr. Dr. Rothes Treenheds- og Forsoningslære', in: *Persens, Journal for den speculative Idee* 1 (1837), pp. 10-31, especially pp. 20-5. (Reprinted in: *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 2, pp. 12-39, especially pp. 26-32.)
 35. Heiberg: *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid* (C. A. Reitzel, 1833), p. 26. *OSP*, p. 101.
 36. Ibid., p. 26. *OSP*, p. 101.
 37. Ibid., p. 27. *OSP*, p. 101f.
 38. Ibid., pp. 27f. *OSP*, p. 102.
 39. Ibid., p. 38. *OSP*, p. 108.
 40. Ibid., p. 38. *OSP*, p. 108.
 41. Ibid., pp. 42f. *OSP*, p. 111.
 42. See ibid., p. 38. *OSP*, p. 109: "Realism is the view, which stops with *things* which are finite; idealism, by contrast, is the conviction of their sublation in the *Idea*, in the infinite."
 43. Ibid., pp. 45f. *OSP*, p. 113.

ASGER SØRENSEN

Om værdien af værdi i etik og moral – nogle indledende overvejelser¹

Værdier skabes globalt, hyltes lokalt og anerkendes som grundlæggende for kultur, økonomi, ja, for næsten enhver orden af menneskelige aktiviteter. Der er kun få, der i dag analyserer selve værdibegrebet. For 100 år siden de sådanne analyser meget udbredte. I disse indledende refleksioner gribes til de diskussioner. Først overvejes nogle semantiske og grammatiske aspekter til definition af værdibegrebet. Dette leder til en analyse af mulige strategier, der kan føre til en mere bevidst reduktiv tilgang og endelig en mere hypotetisk tilgang. På det grundlag giver jeg nogle bud på, hvordan refleksionerne over værdier kan bringes videre og forhåbentlig bidrage konstruktivt til praktisk etik.

Værdier kan betragtes som globaliseringens mest markante udtryk. Værdier hyltes lokalt og anerkendes som grundlæggende for opdragelse, kultur, økonomi, ja, for næsten enhver orden af menneskelige aktiviteter. Og ikke bare for enhver orden af menneskelige aktiviteter. Sammenstød mellem civilisationer, konflikter og etiske værdier og konkurrence mellem transnationale koncerner og nationer. Man kunne tro, at det ville afføde en universel mistro til værdidommet, men værdier anerkendes ikke desto mindre som grundlæggende for rationalitet og politik. Så værdirelativisme er et uomgængeligt vilkår i en globaliseret verden. I dette perspektiv er både et økonomisk og et kulturelt perspektiv på værdier at være hjemmøgt af værdi.

Alle gode, alt hvad man ønsker, kan altså i dag betragtes som en værdi eller i det mindste som en substans betragtes som mål for altings stræben. Måske omvendt også sige, at værdi kan spille denne altfavnende rolle, fordi det som ordet flydende eller måske ligefrem en tom betegnelse, og fordi det som begreb er meningsunderbestemt og selvstændiggjort i forhold til sit grundlag. I dette sidste perspektiv et fokus på værdi nye former for kommunikation mellem eksisterende normativ