

# The Dialogic and Religious Theme of Welfare in Harald Høffding and the Authors Around *Heretica*

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**Abstract** Contradicting the belief that Danish modernist literature is solely of a secular nature, this article aims to show how religious ways of understanding have been of crucial importance for the literary idiom and the theme of welfare. A short description is given of the dialogic and religious theme of welfare in Danish post-war modernism, as it was expressed by the authors around the magazine *Heretica*. For these authors truth lies in intersubjectivity. The meeting between people engaged in dialogue is where the collective creation of meaning takes place. These authors were qualifying the early welfare state in a particular way with the assertion that a relationship to one's surroundings, based on dialogue and a religious mode of interpreting existence, is more conducive to a welfare-thinking than the idea of the sovereignty of the individual. As a basis for this, the article calls attention to an evident, but rather ignored condition of the modern conception of welfare. The Danish philosopher Harald Høffding was the first in the world to work out a welfare-principle. He expressed a dialogic and democratic standpoint, a fellowship and an ideal concerning equality, and consequently a distinct philosophical basis for the later realization of the formation of the welfare state. Høffding pointed out that welfare-thinking has a decisive precondition in the commandment concerning charity in the Gospels and the historical development of this in Christianity.

**Key words** welfare-principle; dialogue; religion; modernism; intersubjectivity

Existential and religious issues of the welfare state in Danish post-war literary modernism, constitutes a neglected field of critical inquiry. Contradicting the widespread belief that the modernist literature of the welfare state is solely of a secular nature and has a cultural-radical foundation, this article aims to show how religious ways of understanding and of expression have been of crucial importance for the literary idiom and the theme of welfare.

Against the prevailing view of the period in Danish literary history, I argue that immediately following the war literature was seen as a place where the individual and the community were considered, debated and artistically articulated. The traditional account of Danish post-war modernism claims that modernist literature is secular and

deals with a lonely being in a world of fragmentation and meaninglessness. However, a closer and more open-minded study will show that a great number of the modernist works from the period are altogether different.

This has mainly to do with two factors. Firstly, it has to do with a distinct effort regarding dialogue. It is not in or by the isolated individual that meaning is found or created, but rather through the exchange between two or more subjects. Secondly, it has to do with a religious perspective, according to which the important measure is not formed by the values the lonely human intellect is able to set up, but by the values that are given to a human being, by other people, in corporation with others, or by an act of divinity. What is being longed for in a great number of these modernist works is to move beyond the isolated individual and, by means of a dialogue with the other, to move towards a sense of community. Very often this is carried out in an artistic practice where the reader is involved in a dialogic enterprise.

### **Harald Høffding: Welfare-Principle on a Christian Basis**

This article aims to give a short description of the dialogic and religious theme of welfare in Danish post-war modernism, as it was expressed in the circle of authors around the magazine *Heretica* in the years immediately following the Second World War.

However, as a basis for this it should prove suitable first of all to call attention to an evident, but in the history of ideas rather ignored condition not only of the artistic formulations in postwar modernism of the theme of welfare, but also of the modern conception of welfare as such. Reading a number of the common expositions and examinations of the welfare state and its historical, political and religious preconditions I have noticed two things. How rarely the research has reached back to *The New Testament* — for instead mainly to talk about the protestant working morality and conduct empirical investigations of the attitudes of different religious groups towards the welfare state. And to what extent the significance of the Danish philosopher Harald Høffding (1843 – 1931) has been disregarded. Yet it was Høffding who was the first in the world to work out a welfare-principle, namely in his *Etik* (Ethics) in 1887. Today, Høffding is not widely known, but in his lifetime and up to the 1950ties he was an internationally famous philosopher, whose works were translated into many languages and who was several times nominated for the Nobel Prize.

In the abandonment of the Christian ethics, positivism had to try to give the grounds for a morality which does not seek refuge with a divine authority. The contribution of Harald Høffding lies in continuation of the utilitarianism in Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806 – 73), whose normative theories on ethics claim that the correct action ethically is the one that compared to the other options, produces the greatest amount of positive values. And that means that the ethical values of an action depend on its ability to increase the amount of happiness. The principle of utility is formulated this way: The greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number of people. Among the problems in this ethics are how different forms of values can be compared, which yardstick they can be measured by, and how a just and/or fair distribution of boons can be based.

To a great extent Harald Høffding replaced the conceptions of utility and happi-

ness with “the principle of welfare”: a specification of the yardstick that must be used when evaluating actions. The object of the welfare-principle is not the individual or momentary inclination, rather the lasting vital necessities of the human race, and therefore it places the point of judgment at the effects of an action. As a consequence, in Høffding’s *Etik* there is no rule of universal validity concerning ethics — egoism is not in philosophical meaning unethical, but it is inexpedient from the view of the common good and in regard to the freedom of the others. To form an ethics, it is necessary to choose a standpoint, an end, for which you want to act. You can choose only to show consideration for yourself, for your family, your social class, your nation, or the human race, but Høffding argues in favor of the universal humanity: the potential conflict between the individual and the society is solved in seeing the display and development of the single human being as the purpose of the society. But this end will be achieved by a citizen in the best way when he not only asserts his independence, but also with love gives himself to the others.

In 1889, two years after the publication of Harald Høffding’s *Etik*, the literary historian Georg Brandes (1842 – 1927) published the article “Aristokratisk Radikalisme” (Aristocratic radicalism) in the magazine *Tilskueren*. In this article Brandes joined several of the viewpoints of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900), among others that a democratic society is a leveling organization, an inane mash and a barbarism without culture or strength. On the contrary the only task of the human race is to produce a few great human beings, who are the purpose of history and mankind. The people are the detour that nature makes to produce these few greats, as the large quantity of people can be only one of three things: bad copies of the great ones, opposition against the great ones, or a tool for the great ones. The many shall obey, the few command. And the few are the geniuses, the supermen, who also in the political sense shall seize the power and rule — in opposition to the morality of welfare, which is built upon the slave morale of Christianity, the small people envying the great. According to Nietzsche and Brandes, progress must instead be measured by victims, as there is no progress in preserving the lives of the weak and useless people, but only in bringing up a stronger, higher kind of man, no matter how many mediocre lives that may cost: “En jævn Middelmaadighedslykke sikret det størst mulige Flertal af de elendige Kreaturer, vi nu til Dags kalde Mennesker, vilde for ham [Nietzsche] intet virkeligt Fremskridt være. Men for ham [...] vilde Opfostringen af en stærkere, højere Menneskeart end den, som omgiver os (’overmennesket’), selv om den kun kunde opnaas ved at Masser af Mennesker, som vi kende dem, ofredes til Bedste derfor, være et stort, et virkeligt Fremskridt.” (A plain happiness of mediocrity ensured the greatest number of those miserable livestock that nowadays are called human beings, would for him [Nietzsche] not constitute any real progress. But to him [...] the bringing up of a stronger, higher kind of man than the one that surrounds us (“the superman”), even if it only were possible to reach that goal by the sacrifice of lots of people as we know them, would be a great, a real progress.) (Brandes/Høffding 33).

In other words, Georg Brandes, who wholeheartedly joins the views of Nietzsche, dissociates himself from the ideal of the greatest possible happiness for the

greatest number of people. To Brandes, the issue is happiness for the best and strongest, who necessarily must despise the crowd over which they rule. As it at one point is summarized: “Næsten er noget, der skal overvindes.” (One’s neighbor is something which must be overcome.) (Brandes/Høffding 42) — at the expense of his fellow creature the great human being must be his own creator and legislator. “Det er godt at være uselvsk, siges der. Men hvad vil det sige; godt? Godt for hvem?” (It is good to be unselfish, they say. But what does that mean; good? Good for whom?) (Brandes/Høffding 23). Here the modern concept of humanity and the collective idea of happiness are undermined. Happiness and welfare becomes the prerogative of the sovereign individual and equals the creation and liberation of this individual.

In a succeeding issue of *Tilskueren* Harald Høffding put forward an objection in the form of the article “Demokratisk Radikalisme” (Democratic radicalism), in which he in the light of his principle of welfare rejects the philosophy of the superman — as great people according to the welfare-principle are tools for more extensive ends than themselves, namely what they are working for. To Høffding and the welfare-principle it is all about the development of human beings who can work for the things that can be beneficial to the greatest possible number of people. And that is the measure for greatness; the ability to work for as much welfare for as many people as possible: “[...] fremfor alt gælder [det] om at udvikle Mennesker, som i stort Omfang og med stor Kraft kunne arbejde for, hvad der kan komme mange, maaske alle til Gode. [...] Og hvilken anden Maalestok har man for Storhed, der skal være ét med storstillet Godhed, end netop den; om der er Vilje og Ævne til at arbejde for saa stor velfærdMøller som muligt, for saa mange som muligt?” ([...] above all the most important thing is to develop people, that in a large scale and with great power could work for things of benefice to many, maybe everybody. [...] And what other measurement do you have for greatness than precisely that; if there is will and ability to work for as much welfare as possible, for as many people as possible?) (Brandes/Høffding 56).

Harald Høffding defines welfare as “den til sund og kraftig Livsvirksomhed knyttede Lystfølelse” (the feeling of pleasure tied to healthy and vigorous activity of life) (Brandes/Høffding 59), and the principle of welfare is defined as a democratic principle, as it has the universal good in mind: “velfærdMøllersprincippet er et demokratisk Princip, for saa vidt det forbyder at glemme de manges Lidelser over de faas Nydelser.” (The principle of welfare is a democratic principle, as it forbids that you forget the sufferings of the many in favor of the pleasures of the few.) (Brandes/Høffding 67).

Harald Høffding’s point is that the greatest feeling of happiness comes from using one’s strength for a purpose that reaches beyond oneself: “[...] han vil kunne have den største Lykkefølelse, den, at raade over et stort Fond af Kraft, som anvendes til et Formaal, der ikke blot omfatter hans egen Person, men uendelig mange flere.” ([...] the person that will be able to experience the greatest feeling of happiness is the one which possesses a big fund of strength, that is used for a purpose which not only includes his own person but infinitely many more.) (Brandes/Høffding 60).

And this in turn is due to the fact that everything, including the lives of the small and the great people, is connected and is part of a whole: “De levende Væseners Kaar ere indfiltrede i hverandre.” (The conditions of the living creatures are entangled in each other.) (Brandes/Høffding 57). Because: “[...] i langt flere Tilfælde, end man hidtil har tænkt sig, er Individernes Lykke solidarisk, naar man blot gør sig Umage for at finde de fælles Betingelser.” ([...] in far more instances that you previously have thought, the happiness of the individuals is a thing of solidarity, as long as you just make the effort to find the common conditions.) (Brandes/Høffding 67).

In other words, here Harald Høffding is expressing a dialogic and democratic standpoint, a fellowship and an ideal concerning equality — and consequently a distinct philosophical basis for the later realization of the formation of the welfare state.

During the article, Harald Høffding a few times points out the historical and religious preconditions for this mindset and perception. The first time as part of an argumentation for, that the genuine intellectual aristocracy will not, as Georg Brandes thinks, perceive itself as an end, but as a means to an end: “Det højeste er at være den store Tjæner. Det gamle Ord beholder sin Sandhed (det er jo ogsaa sagt af et Stormenneske): “Den iblandt eder, som vil være stor, skal være de andres Tjæner”. Æren er den, at være det store Middel, at være meget for de mange” (The highest is to be the great servant. The old Word is still true (as it is said by a truly great man): “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister”. The honor is to be the great means, to be of great importance for the many.) (Brandes/Høffding 61).

The inlaid quotation is from The Gospel according to Matthew and Luke, and the great man who spoke these words, was of course Jesus. As it is expressed in Matthew: “[...] Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (*The King James Bible*, 20,25 – 28).

This “inversion of values” takes place everywhere in the Gospels: God comes not in the form of a king, but as the son of a poor craftsman, and Jesus says, that God has hidden the path to salvation from the wise, the sensible, the clever ones, those which usually is in charge amongst human beings, and instead has revealed the path to salvation to the ones without authority, the simple ones, the poor, all those that normally are nothing in the eyes of the world. Jesus states that the first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first. The Son of God came to the human beings to be their servant, to give his life for their sake.

Harald Høffding’s second pointing out the preconditions of the mindset of the welfare-principle comes in the form of a contradiction of the assertion of Georg Brandes, that Julius Caesar guaranteed for every progress in that age. The answer of Høffding is:

Det virkeligt grundlæggende fandtes ved Oldtidens Slutning snarest i det, som

bevægede sig i den store Masse, hos de mange smaa, de foragtede og de lidende. Her kom noget frem, som viste sig at have mere Livskraft i sig end Cæsars Værk. Af Askensens, Dogmatismens og Overtroens Svøb har der udviklet sig paa den ene Side en Selvfølelse, en Følelse af Værd selv hos det ringeste Menneske, en Følge af den Vøgt, Kristendommen lagde paa hvert enkelt Menneskes Sjæl og dens Frelse, paa den anden Side en inderligere og mere omfattende Menneskelighedsfølelse end man hidtil havde kendt. Det blev de nye Kræfter, der kunde føre Slægten videre. De blev ikke skabte af Kristendommen. De ædleste Strømninger indenfor den græske Filosofi førte dem med sig; men de styrkedes, inderliggjordes og udbredtes ved Kristendommen. De bedste Mænd paa Kejsertroenen i Rom vare i deres bedste Foranstaltninger besjælede af denne Aand. Men først under helt nye historiske Forhold kunde den i fuldere Maal komme til Gennembrud. Det er denne Aand, ikke Cæsars Aand, som er det sande Fremskridts Aand, omfattende alt, det store som det ringe. (Brandes/Høffding 63 – 64)

(At the end of the antiquity the truly fundamental was, if anything, found in what was happening in the masses, the many small people, the despised and the suffering. Here something appeared which proved to possess more vitality than the work of Caesar. From the shawl of asceticism, dogmatism and superstition on the one hand a self-esteem has developed, a feeling of worth even in the lowest human being, as a consequence of the importance Christianity attached to the soul and salvation of every single human being, and on the other hand a more intense and extensive feeling of humanity than had been known till then. That became the new forces which were able to carry on mankind. They were not created by Christianity. The noblest aspects of Greek philosophy brought them along; but they were made stronger, were intensified and were widely distributed by Christianity. The best men on the imperial throne in Rome were in their finest arrangements animated by this spirit. But not until entirely new historic conditions it could to a larger extent have its breakthrough. It is this spirit, not the spirit of Caesar, which is the true spirit of progress, including everything, the great and the small. )

In this way, Harald Høffding attach the decisive importance to the role of Christianity in the development of the self-esteem, a value of even the most inferior human being, due to the significance that Christianity attribute to the soul and salvation of every single human being. This more intense and extensive feeling of humanity was made stronger was widely distributed by Christianity, the real vitality of the age. The Christian acknowledgement of the rights of those who are suffering, the deepening and expansion of the emotional life and of the view of the fellow human being, which in this way expresses itself, is the clearest precondition of the welfare-principle. Or in other words; the Christian commandment concerning charity is the most important historical basis for the democratic welfare. As it is said in the Gospel according to Matthew: “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? [ … ] Thou

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [...] If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come [and] follow me.” (*The King James Bible*, 19,16 – 21).

Indeed Harald Høffding had his starting point in utilitarianism but he transcended its more narrow principle of happiness, as the welfare-principle in the end does not identify the supreme good with the happiness of the individual, but considers the utmost purpose of being as the appearance of men of sterling characters, who have a feeling of happiness in working for the common good. And Høffding stated himself, that a decisive precondition of this was the commandment concerning charity in the Gospels and the historical development of this in Christianity. You could add, that even in *The Old Testament* it is of vital importance for happiness to live in a safe fellowship with other people, e. g. in Ecclesiastes: “Two [are] better than one; [...] For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.” (*The King James Bible*, 4,9 – 10). What an edifying formulation of the dialogic-religious basis for the modern concept of welfare with its idea of happiness built upon a feeling of solidarity.

Harald Høffding had an eye for that welfare-thinking has its origins in the concept of equality expressed in the commandment concerning charity in the evangelical accounts of Jesus Christ, which since as a consequence of the historical development of Christianity in a new way has marked human beings understanding of themselves, their relations to each other, and the way they organize their society. Right from the evangelical message that everybody has equal rights, to the Danish welfare-society, that was not based on a mentality of “noget for noget” (give and take), meaning that you get in the same measure as you have given, but based on a mentality of “noget for ingenting” (something for nothing), meaning that you can have without making an account for how much you have given. And that is precisely the relationship that exists in the Gospels between the gracious God and the sinful human being.

In Denmark, for most people Georg Brandes is synonymous with “the modern breakthrough”, and therefore also a symbol of democracy and welfare-thinking. Contrary to this myth, Brandes was an antidemocrat, an adversary of Cabinet responsibility and disgusted with the concept of a society based on the principle of welfare. To him society was primarily to perceive as a thing that restrain the superman in his natural and beneficial self-realization. And that means that you strongly have to question a widespread understanding of a cultural-radical basis for the modern welfare state, and instead point to the welfare-principle of Harald Høffding on a Christian basis as a decisive precondition.

### ***Heretica* : Dialogic-Religious Modernisms**

A great deal of the modernist literature in the Danish post-war period was centered around the renowned literary magazine *Heretica*, published in the years 1948 to 1953. This magazine must be seen as the centre of that particular tension between tradition and modernity, which was being articulated in the period 1945 – 65. The literary field around *Heretica* consisted of authors who broke through before the Second World War, e. g. Karen Blixen (1885 – 1962); some that broke through during the 1940s,

e. g. Martin A. Hansen (1909 – 1955), Ole Sarvig (1921 – 1981), Thorkild Bjørnvig (1918 – 2004) and Ole Wivel (1921 – 2004) and some that did not break through before the 1950s or even the 1960s, e. g. Jørgen Gustava Brandt (1929 – 2006), Tage Skou-Hansen (1925 – ) and Per Højholt (1928 – 2004). In itself this is a very compound body of writers, inviting untraditional lines of connection as opposed to an account of modernism as unified and determined by conflicting generations. Actually, around the magazine three generations of authors would gather to create several kinds of modernism, which have informed Danish literature ever since.

In the years after the War *Heretica* was setting the agenda for the cultural debate and quickly received the status of a Parnassus. Today it is undoubtedly difficult to perceive, in its entirety, the significance of the gathering around this magazine and the aura by which it was surrounded, especially for young readers and poets. But *Heretica* was not merely a Parnassus, rather a melting pot for various thoughts and ideas on poetry. The name of the magazine suggests heresy or heretical writings, and *Heretica* were the voice of a group of authors, who manifested themselves with a new understanding of existence and a new literature opposing that outlook and literature, which had been dominant in the previous years, and according to many had failed in a definitive way in connection with the Second World War. Internally the editors and writers of the magazine disagreed on many subjects, but a marked common denominator was to emphasize the individual human being and art as counterweights to alienation, nihilism and mass ideologies of a political or cultural nature.

*Heretica* is often considered by Danish literary historians as representing an aloof and secluded form of late symbolism, located in an ivory tower or a waiting room, but a joint concern for most of the authors around *Heretica* was an active and engaged opposition towards the modern ideology which stressed the sovereignty of the individual and the ensuing relativism of values. To be sure, the modern experience is that everything is tied to a point of view and that nothing remains unaffected by it. At the same time, the authors around *Heretica* attempted by artistic means to show that it certainly is possible to combine the experiences tied to the point of view with a belief in and an interpersonal experience of the existence of points of view formed in human communities or by a divine entity. This meant that the authors around *Heretica* were creating and qualifying the early welfare state in a particular way with the assertion that a relationship to one's surroundings, based on dialogue and a religious mode of interpreting existence, is more conducive to a certain welfare-thinking than the worship of the lonely intellect and the promotion of the idea of the sovereignty of the individual, which has characterized Western Europe since Descartes (1596 – 1650) and the Enlightenment.

Consequently, in the works by the authors around *Heretica* we often find a certain kind of double understanding: from the viewpoint of the individual everything is fragmented, but from a viewpoint based on dialogue or religious belief all the parts are connected and everything has its meaningful place. Notable examples of literary expressions of this by members of *Heretica* are Martin A. Hansen's short story "Midsummerfesten" (Midsummer's Party, 1946) and Ole Sarvig's novel *Havet under mit vindue* (*The Sea Beneath My Window*, 1960). Yet, within the limits of this essay a

more practicable example is Peter Seeberg's (1925 – 99) short story "Patienten" (The Patient) (published in *Eftersøgningen*, The Search, 1962). The earliest part of Seeberg's work thematizes the traditional modernist issue of the lonesome and futile attempt by the individual to create meaning out of the apparently meaningless. However, in "Patienten" a decisive change in Seeberg's work occurs in so far as the solution to the problem of meaning and identity appears by virtue of something one is granted. In the short story a nameless I is attacked by the illness of modernity and welfare, "almindeligt bortfald" (ordinary lapse), which means that close to all limbs and organs must be amputated and replaced by prostheses. After a while the patient begins to wonder if after this complete replacement he is still himself. In the last lines of the text a surprising answer to the question of "who am I" is given:

"Kan du kende mig," siger jeg hver dag til min hustru, når hun kommer. "Ja, det kan jeg da," svarer hun og stryger mig over håret. "Elsker du mig," hvisker jeg, for jeg vil gerne vide det hver dag. "Jeg elsker dig mere end nogensinde," siger hun mildt hver dag. "Men du kan ikke se mig," siger jeg så højt, stemmen kan bære mig. "Jo," siger hun. "Nej, ikke rigtigt," siger jeg, "det kan du ikke forstå. Jeg er større, end du tror, hvad du kan se, er slet ikke mig." "Åh jo," græder hun, "det er dig. Det er dig." "Så lad det være mig," siger jeg. Hver dag. (Seeberg 31)

("Do you Aecognize me", I ask my wife every day when she comes to see me. "Yes, of course I can", she answers and strokes my hair. "Do you love me", I whisper, because I really want to know every day. "I love you more than ever", she says mildly every day. "But you can't see me", I say as loud as my voice allows. "Yes", she says. "No, not really", I say, "you can't understand. I am larger than you think, what you see is not me at all". "Oh yes", she cries, "it is you. It is you". "Then let it be me", I say. Every day.)

The patient seeks the solution to his crisis of identity in another human being closest to himself. The disparate parts of which the patient consists are taken into possession by means of an acceptance: "Så lad det være mig" (Then let it be me). An interpersonal, dialogic act of creation that echoes Genesis gathers the parts into a whole existence, an identity and a shared reality, which is repeated "every day". This means that the identity and meaning one is unable to find for oneself is granted from the outside; in other words, love and confirmation of identity come from somewhere else.

The modern loss of places in which meaning may be found and the ensuing feeling of meaninglessness is, therefore, not only oppressive but also liberating. Modernity, according to this perspective, is emphasizing the necessity of replacing a worldview according to which you are forming life in your own image in favor of one where you are willing to be formed by somebody or something else. As such the problems concerning identity and reality is no longer a crushing self-responsibility but something that to great relief comes from somewhere else, from one's fellow man, from an act of narrative, from nature or from God. Identity and reality is therefore not to be understood as a lonely struggle but something that is created between people or be-

tween human beings and God.

While the cultural-radical modernism, which emerged in Denmark around 1960 and is best represented in the writings of Klaus Rifbjerg (1931 – ), expresses the official story of secular liberation in the twentieth-century, the authors around *Heretica* and several of the authors that had first appearances in the following decades contributed artistically to the foundation of values characteristic of the welfare-thinking with their emphasis on dialogue, the existential and the religious. In other words, in the very establishment of a modernist literature in Denmark and the almost simultaneous establishment of the Danish welfare state, there existed another narrative on welfare than the one of the alienation and loneliness of modern man as told by secularised criticism and cultural-radical modernism.

Deeply inspired by Søren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855), for several of the authors around *Heretica* truth lies in intersubjectivity. The meeting between the literary work and the reader, between people engaged in dialogue, is where the collective creation of meaning takes place. It is based upon the ability to tell stories, to communicate, to identify with the worlds and viewpoints of others — and this takes place through language and literature. As expressed by one of the first editors of the magazine, Bjørn Poulsen (1918 – 2000), in a letter from the 25th of August 1949 to the young aspiring poet Per Højholt: “*Heretica* er tænkt som et Væv af Dialoger mellem Mennesker, som vel ikke er enige, men paa Talefod med hinanden [...]” (*Heretica* is intended as a web of dialogues between people who are on speaking terms but hardly in agreement [...]) (Andersen and Svindborg 231). This statement, I believe, is an outstanding illustration of a fundamental basis for and a decisive content of a welfare state and the mindset of which it is an expression.

Furthermore, it is notable that this understanding is analogous to the development of the philosophy of the subject in the twentieth century, e. g. the critical reflection on the tradition of Descartes. This development finds that knowledge is not the lonely effort of the subject. Knowledge is created and developed through the relation to the other. The subject does not have any immediate access to itself, but has to understand itself through interaction with others and by interpretation of common linguistic and cultural signs. In this process, the creation of identity becomes a joint matter of dialogue. A change from position to relation, from intention to process, from self-created to granted, from monologue to dialogue. This can be observed, for instance, in the dialogue-thinking of Martin Buber (1878 – 1965), the personalism of Gabriel Marcel (1889 – 1973) and the critical reflection of Paul Ricœur (1913 – 2005).

The authors around *Heretica* were highly important for the cultural and institutional environment and development in the years following the War — most notably as a result of their dominant position in regard to cultural matters and the cultural policies concerning the construction and maintenance of the welfare state.

Right from the beginning *Heretica* and the publishing company behind it, Wivels Forlag, were financed by a single man, the patron of the arts Knud W. Jensen (1916 – 2000). He was the wealthy owner of a cheese factory, and in 1952 he spent a great deal of his funds to buy the biggest publishing company in Denmark, Gylden-

dal. A motivation for this acquisition was to ensure that the authors around *Heretica* and subsequent generations of Danish authors would have an effective foundation from which to operate, and that they, as far as possible, could reach the rapidly expanding book market in the welfare state.

In the summer of 1952, Knud W. Jensen asked Martin A. Hansen for advice about buying Gyldendal, and in his *Dagbøger* (Diaries) for 21 December 1952, Hansen summarises the conversations as follows:

Jeg opfattede det saaledes, at Knud for det første anede, at han med Gyldendal kunde realisere en Kongstanke, nemlig at hans store Firma i Ost efterhaanden kunde glide ind som en fast Støtte for et Kulturarbejde, isÓr Litteraturen — men vel Kunsten stort set. Jeg tror, uden at han over for mig har udtalt det direkte har en lignende Tanke som Brygger Jacobsen i sin Tid, men at han vil gøre denne Kulturstøtte væsentlig praktisk — hvad han kunde ved at faa Gyldendal. Dels var det hans Tanke ikke først og fremmest at støtte Litteraturen og Digterne ved Legater, men gennem Bogpolitik og Bogsalg og gode Vilkaar. (Hansen, *Dagbøger* 1931 – 55, 806)

(I gathered that Knud first of all sensed that with Gyldendal he could realize a grand idea, namely that his large cheese factory could gradually become a permanent means of support for cultural work, especially literature, but most likely art as such. I think, without him ever expressing it to me, that he has an idea similar to that of Brewer Jacobsen in his days, but that he will want to make his cultural support rather practical — which he could accomplish by buying Gyldendal. By implication his idea was not primarily to support literature and the poets through grants, but through book policy and book sales and good conditions.)

As it turned out, the assumption of Martin A. Hansen was absolutely correct. A few years later Knud W. Jensen established the art museum, Louisiana, north of Copenhagen, a museum which during the 1960s simply became the temple for modernist art to the new welfare-segment.

Neither *Heretica*, nor Gyldendal, nor Louisiana was paid solely with Knud W. Jensen's cheese-money. An immense expansion of Jensen's factory in 1952 was financed by a Marshall-loan; in other words, a cultural expansion tightly woven into the colossal upheaval of Danish society, which would soon prove to be a crucial phase in the formation of the welfare state. The circle of authors around *Heretica* must therefore be seen to play an important role in the formation of the cultural institutions which became a result of mindset of the welfare state. Cf. a letter from Jensen to Martin A. Hansen 19 February 1952:

Vi har fået Marshall-Lån til vor smeltefabrik i Sydhavnen og er nu i gang med bygningen [ ... ]. Vi bliver et par hundrede mennesker derude, ca. 50 funktionærer, 50 mandlige og 100 kvindelige arbejdere, og det er pludselig gået op for mig, hvilket ansvar man egentlig er pålagt overfor alle disse mennesker.

Jeg vil derfor gerne nu realisere mange gamle drømme og planer om foranstaltninger til gavn for medarbejderne. Der er noget vist paradoksalt ved, at man i så mange år har beskæftiget sig med kulturkritik og været så enig med Grønbech og alle andre revsere af det moderne storby menneskes livsvilkår i dag, og så samtidig selv driver en fabriksvirksomhed, hvor arbejderne sidder ved samlebåndet, og har et kontorpersonale, hvis arbejdsvilkår ikke adskiller sig væsentligt fra andre kontorer. Man er så tilbøjelig til at sige, at det er hele grundlaget for kulturen, som er forkert, og det nytter ikke med lapperier, men jeg tror synspunktet er uholdbart, og at vi hver på vores vis må søge at realisere netop visse lapperier, som angiver en retning mod noget bedre. Der findes rundt omkring mange virksomhedsledere som uden nogen som helst kulturel eller filosofisk ballast har realiseret mange tiltalende ideer til gavn for personalet. Jeg vil nu prøve at se, hvad der findes af den slags i Danmark og Sverrig, og så må vi se hvad jeg kan få realiseret selv under de nye forbedrede pladsforhold, vi får i Sydhavnen. (Hansen *Kætterbreve*. Martin A. *Hansens korrespondance med kredsen omkring Heretica* 916 – 17)

(We have had a Marshall-loan for our melting-factory in Sydhavnen and are now building it. [...] We will be a couple of hundred people out there, approximately 50 officials, 50 male and 100 female workers, and suddenly it has dawned upon me, the extent of responsibility you really have to all these people. Consequently, now I would like to realize many old dreams and plans concerning arrangements of benefit to the employees. It is a certain paradox, that I for so many years has been occupied with critique of culture and so much has agreed with Grønbech and all other castigators of the conditions of life today for the modern people in the large cities, and then at the same time has run a manufacturing industry, where the workers is placed at the assembly line and has an office staff, whose working conditions are not markedly different from those of others offices. Then you are inclined to say that is it the very basis for culture which is wrong and that patching is not useful, but I do not think that point of view is valid, instead we must precisely, each in his own way, try to realize a certain patching, which points towards something better. Round about many factory managers exist, that without any kind of cultural or philosophical equipment have realized many pleasant ideas to the benefit of the staff. Now I will investigate what exists of that kind in Denmark and Sweden, and then we will see what I myself am able to realize under the new, improved accommodations that we are going to have in Sydhavnen.)

Contrary to the myth concerning the magazine, in this letter the socially engaged and welfare-forming central movement of the authors around *Heretica* is expressed: from the critique of culture by the individual to a concrete work for the cultural and social public utility, financed by one of the foundations of the welfare state, the Marshall-loans, and realized in the form of a politics concerning culture, that from the personal initiative form the basis for a transition to public funding of the arts.

At a meeting at Krogerup Højskole in the autumn of 1960 Knud W. Jensen, Ole

Wivel, Thorkild Bjørnvig and Bjørn Poulsen, together with one of the most important authors of the next generation, Villy Sørensen (1929 – 2001), proposed the idea that a democratic state has an obligation to support art of quality. The effect of this proposal came quickly and had far-reaching implications: the establishment in 1961 of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs and in 1964 of the National Arts Council, the political organ that distributes public funding of the arts. The first Minister of Cultural Affairs was Julius Bomholt (1896 – 1969), who in the early 1940s made the acquaintance of Martin A. Hansen. In the years from 1946 to 1950, Hansen was a committee member of The Danish Union of Authors and in that capacity he wrote several articles about the necessity of publicly funded support of authors – thoughts that clearly had an inspirational effect on Bomholt when the opportunity to realize them presented itself.

In other words, the leading figures of *Heretica* acted as spearheads for ensuring Danish artists far better opportunities for making a living and in disseminating modern art to the population of the welfare state, who by then had more time and greater economic and educational resources to be engaged with and informed by contemporary art and literature. Actually, it would be fair to claim that Knud W. Jensen and the authors around *Heretica* represent the decisive change from art financed by a private patron to art financed by grants from the state, and with that a change from an ancient hierarchic and individually controlled financing of the arts to the model of the modern welfare state.

Contrary to the widespread belief that the authors around *Heretica* were living in an ivory tower secluded from the outside world, it was in fact common and natural for these authors to move about in numerous cultural and institutional contexts and to cross the borders between different genres and environments. As a consequence the author became an important figure in the discussion of values. This is certainly true in the case of Martin A. Hansen, whose enormous significance as an author and as a cultural figure to a large extent can be explained by his function as a link connecting different areas of knowledge, such as literature, theology, history, archeology and general debate of public matters, and that he used a variety of forms of publicity such as lectures and fictional texts that he or others read aloud in the radio. This behavior contributed to a change in and expansion of the role of the author: instead of being something elevated and distant, the author was now someone who was near and present — a human being you could meet, hear lecture and engage in debate with. Or to put it in other words, the author functioning as an arranger of dialogues concerning the common cultural values.

The godfather of the Danish culture-radicals, Georg Brandes, defined the task of literature as debating problems. My point is that literature has significantly more legitimate tasks than that, and that you can debate problems in many other ways than it is done in a literature debating and imitating reality. More often than not such a literature will define a debate of problems as a phenomenon of politics and ideology, in the narrow sense of these terms. To consider the matter in such a constricted way, as Brandes did and as a number of leading Danish literary historians have done ever since, has restrained the acknowledgment of the fact that also forms of modernism such as those that were expressed in *Heretica* just as well influenced and interacted

with the organization of society, both in regard to its foundation and its practical elaboration.

If as a part of the fundamental definition of democracy you must include dialogue, then literature has a significant role to play in the discussion of values a democracy must feed upon. Indeed, the democratic form itself is to move away from locked positions to movable relations. A common denominator between the democratic understanding of life and society, welfare-thinking and a literature that is a part of the formulation of the basis for these things, can be found in a novel by the youngest of the authors I am interested in, namely Svend Åge Madsen's *Sæt verden er til* (Suppose the world exists, 1971): "Ord er hver for sig meningsløse, uden betydning. Og dog kan de, når de anbringer sig i den rette sammenhæng, udgøre en betydningsfuld sætning." (Separately words are meaningless, without significance. And yet they can, when they place themselves in the right combination, constitute an important sentence) (Madsen 339).

As the above should make apparent, I am essentially concerned with interpersonal relationships, the ability to put oneself in the place of others and be put there by something other than oneself. For the modern ego-fixation this is inherently extremely difficult, while it is the very content of Christianity. A decisive basis for the mindset which has manifested itself in the welfare state must be the recognition of the value of interpersonal relationships, that the creation of identity is a consequence of acts of dialogue or by divine creation. In other words, something granted, and under no circumstances something, the individual can obtain alone.

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